

change management

from AXA ICAS, Europe's leading EAP provider



ICAS WELLBEING

A CHANGE IS AS GOOD AS A REST

This old saying no longer applies in many instances. Nowadays we are all faced with the challenge of adapting to a world where ever-increasing change has become a fact of life.

Business survival in the 21st Century is often dependent upon an organisation's ability to experiment, innovate and adapt.

However, research has shown that changes in the workplace can be a significant cause of ill-health and the Health and Safety Executive have taken steps to include the management of change as one of their six key management standards by which organisations will be measured in their management of workplace stress.

THE 'STRESS' OF CHANGE

Holmes and Rahé's research conducted in the late sixties indicated that there was a strong corollary between change and stress.

Even positive, self generated change such as moving house or starting a family is likely to bring stresses with it.

This is even more so when the change is 'forced' upon the individual.

The good news is that people can be helped to learn how to manage change and how to adapt to it therefore reducing the likelihood of them experiencing long-term stress as a result.

This 'change hardiness' is central to the training that AXA ICAS provides for both managers and employees.

Whilst the business world recognises the need to embrace the concept of change we, as human beings, can find the prospect a daunting one.

Handled badly, change can be a major factor in contributing to stress in the workplace. Handled well and it can be a source of new energy and enthusiasm for individuals.

William Bridges, author of *Jobshift* and *Managing Transitions*, makes the point that change and transition are two separate entities.

Change is situational; in other words the external factors such as a new office location, new procedures, new policy and so on.

Transition however is the psychological process that people need to go through in order to work through and come to terms with the new situation.

Change therefore is external, but transition is internal and unless transition occurs, the change, however well conceived, is likely to be fraught with difficulties.

Many organisations spend a great deal of attention and energy focussing on the operational outcomes of the proposed changes but with little attention to helping their employees adapt psychologically to the new situation.

The result? Demotivation, foot-dragging, rumour mongering, subtle sabotage and a whole range of similar, not always deliberate, negative human reactions that can turn the best laid plans into an unmanageable quagmire.

HOW AXA ICAS CAN HELP YOUR ORGANISATION

AXA ICAS can help you to manage transitions more effectively by enabling both managers and employees to cope more effectively with the psychological aspects of change

Previous clients have found this helpful in the following instances:

- during mergers and acquisitions
- during or following a period of 'downsizing' or rationalisation
- when implementing radically new working systems or procedures
- moving locations or altering internal work teams

CASE STUDY: MANAGER TRAINING

The merger of two major charities brought with it the need for major structural change especially within the retailing arm of the organisation. AXA ICAS was asked to help with a series of management training programmes aimed at enabling managers to understand how to manage the changes at a personal level and, at the same time, develop strategies for developing their newly formed teams to meet the commercial challenges facing them.

The benefits were that the managers from both organisations were better able to work together to meet their new objectives.

AXA ICAS CONSULTANCY

We can work with you at the beginning of any change process enabling you to ensure that the psychological aspects are considered right from the start.

We can help monitor the process of change through focus groups and tailored employee questionnaires and change management audits.

We can help ensure that your organisation sends the right messages out to the workforce by working with you helping facilitate the communication process.

AXA ICAS TRAINING

We are also able to help by providing training that is directly linked to the changes occurring in your organisation.

Typically, the type of training programmes that are found to be beneficial are:

Managing the Transition Process – Training for Managers

Designed to help managers deal effectively with the transition process for themselves and, importantly, how to support their staff through the various phases.

The objectives will always depend upon your specific needs but often include helping managers:

- have a greater understanding of the change process and the impact this has on individuals
- identify techniques for dealing with peoples reactions to change and supporting them through it,

enabling productive management of change

- develop strategies and skills for delivering difficult messages to individuals, and then dealing with emotional reactions
- identify resources that can be used by themselves and their teams for ongoing support

Change: Problem or Opportunity? - Training for Employees

Many organisations are now beginning to recognise that their staff will often need some help coming to terms with major changes such as reorganisation or relocation.

Such large-scale changes can often leave staff feeling disempowered and demotivated which is why the Health & Safety Executive is keen to encourage organisations to manage transitions effectively.

AXA ICAS training can help employees understand better the change process and the typical feelings that they are likely to have which will help 'normalise' the experience for them.

In addition we help individuals identify ways in which they can regain control over areas of their work and life they may have thought was not possible.

Our programmes for employees work best designed as part of an overall change management strategy.

A typical programme is usually aimed at helping employees gain:

- a clear understanding of the factors driving your specific organisational changes

- a greater understanding of the change process and the impact this may have on them as individuals
- techniques to increase their level of personal control during and immediately after the changes
- a clear understanding of the support available to them both within the organisation and outside

CASE STUDY: CORPORATE RESTRUCTURING

A large multi-national organisation needed to relocate a number of its essential support services to other locations throughout the world requiring the loss of many positions in the UK over a protracted period. AXA ICAS worked with the client organisation and their outplacement agency to provide support to those affected by the relocations in the form of training and coaching for individuals to enable them to deal with the psychological and emotional impact of the changes.

The result was that many key personnel were able to see the benefits of remaining with the organisation and relocating to new locations or work positions where that was an option. It also greatly enhanced the image of the organisation in the minds view of those departing employees who recognised the level of support the organisation was providing for them.

WHY USE AXA ICAS?

As the UK's leading Behavioural Risk Management consultancy, AXA ICAS has the experience and expertise to support organisations in dealing with the psychological impact of change within the workplace. Our broad portfolio of services meets the needs of a wide range of organisations in providing strategic, preventative and support interventions.

Our consultants, who have all held management positions within organisations are experienced in the field of behavioural risk combining psychology, counselling and human resource expertise with a practical approach to developing solutions.

WHAT SOME OF OUR COURSE DELEGATES HAVE SAID:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the course and it was an insight into situations, emotions and planning for the future"

"Very enjoyable course. In my opinion the facilitator approached sensitive issues in a very professional, concise, and competent manner. Many thanks."

"The issues discussed apply both to the work and personal areas of life, and as such have given me a heightened sense of control over all aspects of life. I have found this course very helpful."

"It was a well presented course. It helped me to look on the positive side of the change."

"I was very pleased with the content of the course, especially as some of the tips can be beneficial in my personal life as well as in my work environment".

"This course has helped me to understand my next steps after the changes take place. I know I need to complete an action plan and the course has channelled my ideas and views to help me be positive and I look forward to life after Company X."

"Outstanding course both in content and presentation. I can identify many areas that can improve my life. I will certainly look at further courses and developing my life skills further."

If you would like to find out more about how AXA ICAS can help protect your organisation against the risks associated with change then please call AXA ICAS on **0800 17 0800**

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