

Adaptability Guide

Managing Change Tool



Purpose

This handout is a resource for leaders to use when they follow up with team members about their adaptability development during a change. Adapt this form as needed to meet your team's needs.

Think about the following questions as you prepare to follow-up with your team:

- What are my expectations for change management development and application of adaptability tools to build skill?
- What do I need to be sure to communicate?
- What positive feedback can I give on their development in change management?
- What corrective feedback am I going to give on their development of change management skills?

Key Messages to Share and Reinforce

We need leaders who have a high competence in Change Management. Change Management is about inspiring others to embrace change by displaying the proper attitude toward change, while helping them understand the need for and benefits of change. It is also engaging key stakeholders in the communication and planning processes to ensure buy-in and being flexible and adaptable in the face of organizational change.

Adaptability is defined by three core dimensions:

1. Our ambiguity threshold measures how much ambiguity and change (and related feelings of uncertainty and stress) you can absorb.
2. Everyone has an internal monologue that responds to events. If your internal monologue is negative, you will tend to interpret change in its most negative light.
3. Our personal energy supply. This part of adaptability measures your access to high levels of physical, emotional and mental energy, which are critical to adaptability.

Additional Key Messages

What additional messages do you need to share with your team around change management and adaptability?

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Next Steps

Use these questions to drive the discussion with your team member(s) and continue to reinforce and support their development.

- What is your goal around improving your adaptability / change management skills?
- Tell me about what you have been working on.
- What have you learned so far? What have you “stumbled” over?
- What is your next step? What are your plans to get there?
- What can I do to support you? When should we touch-base on this next?

Practices to Develop Adaptability

Raise your Ambiguity Threshold:

- **Anticipate the Future** – Take time regularly to think about the future and its personal and organizational impact.
- **Accept Uncertainty** – Accept the discomfort that arises from making decisions with less information or data than you might want, or not having the answer. See failure as an opportunity to learn more and do better next time.
- **Apply Flexibility** – This practice involves making quick course corrections when something unforeseen happens, while continuing to focus on and making progress toward our goals. Flexibility requires the ability to improvise by finding ways to move forward with what is available, rather than waiting for more support from the organization.
- **Be Tenacious** – See problems as opportunities. A critical component of tenacity is balancing reality with determination to achieve goals and objectives. Adaptable people are tenacious, but not when the evidence tells them it is time to alter course.
- **Exercise Curiosity** – This practice focuses on opening up the range of sources of information, ideas and opportunities that you entertain. Building a desire to learn about the unknown helps you deal more effectively with ambiguity and uncertainty.

Make your Internal Monologue More Positive:

- **Use Control** – Seek out and focus on the smallest facet of the situation that you can influence personally. It also involves thinking before emoting. This allows you to manage the quality of your emotional response, to even random and uncontrollable events, such as hurricanes and business disasters.
- **Take Ownership** – Personal responsibility and accountability are at the heart of this practice. Using it requires that you not waste time on blaming and/or complaining, regardless of the cause of a situation. When a negative event strikes, stop and ask yourself, “What can I personally do to overcome this?”
- **Examine the Scope** – When you examine the scope, ask yourself, “What aspects of my life will this event impact?” This practice helps you put events, even adverse ones, in their appropriate context by drawing boundaries.
- **Manage the Time Span** – To manage the time span, ask yourself, “How long will this really last?” This helps assign even the most negative events a definite beginning and ending, so you can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Increase Energy Supply:

- **Create Meaning** – By aligning personal meaning and doing what matters most, you will create a focus and a source of energy that can help you cut through a lot of chaos.
- **Be Healthy** – This practice involves paying serious attention to your health. Physical well-being is the bedrock of personal energy; it is impossible to sustain high performance without it. This practice also reflects the importance of a balanced life.
- **Renew and Recover** – Like elite athletes, effective people often build highly structured renewal rituals into their day; brief breaks to correspond with the natural rhythm of energy stores, which cycle every 90 to 120 minutes.