



EASING TRANSITIONS THROUGH CHANGE

Change is part and parcel of organisational life. As a manager, you need to help yourself and your staff make sense of the psychological transitions that occur during times of change. William Bridges' Transition Model provides a good reference for us to understand the broad stages of transition and what a manager can do at each stage.

BRIDGES' TRANSITION MODEL



ENDING

Letting go of the current way (i.e. what we're used to and familiar with)



In this phase, staff might experience:

Shock, denial, a sense of loss, sadness, anger, frustration. You may observe displays of these emotions, or refusal of staff to speak to you about the change - a sign of denial.



Here's what you can do as a manager:

- ☐ Communicate openly and offer as much detail about the change as possible
- ☐ Help your staff to process the impact that the change has on them, for example, what will they be doing differently from now
- ☐ Be prepared for feelings of denial - remain calm and show empathy towards staff who display 'negative' emotions
- ☐ Assure staff of your support and schedule regular time to check in on them/their progress



NEUTRAL ZONE

The old is done with but the new is not here yet.



In this phase, staff might experience:

Confusion, resentment, scepticism, anxiety about their role/identity. You may observe staff questioning the objectives of change and choosing to go back to their old ways of working.



Here's what you can do as a manager:

- ☐ Encourage staff to continue to share how they feel and how they are doing with regard to the change
- ☐ Share your own hopes and optimism about what the change will help to achieve
- ☐ Start to openly acknowledge staff who show efforts towards new ways of working



NEW BEGINNING

Seeing and looking forward to new possibilities.



In this phase, staff might experience:

Optimism, openness to possibilities, renewed energy and hope, commitment to mastering their new role. You may observe staff asking more 'how do I do this' questions and requesting for help with new ways of working.



Here's what you can do as a manager:

- ☐ Build in time and space for progress checks at your team meetings.
- ☐ Start collecting success stories (could be from other parts of the organisation) to share with your staff
- ☐ Offer little incentives and rewards to staff who start to show consistency in applying new ways

Reference:

Bridges, W. (2009) *Managing Transitions, Third Edition*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

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