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**Keywords:**

change management, office relocations, communication strategies, stages of change, government, project delivery

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# Managing resistance to change in workplace accommodation projects

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Received (in revised form): 17th September, 2002

## Abstract

The new management paradigm states that managing people is about managing feelings. For many people, change is a very personal and emotional issue, and can be difficult, especially when it involves their work environment. Employee resistance can pose significant obstacles to the planning and development of an office space relocation, particularly for projects that attempt to change the way in which people work. The relocation of employees is expensive, in terms of both operational costs and investments. This paper deals with both the psychological as well as the economic impacts of introducing a change. It is intended to equip facility managers who are delivering projects to understand not only the change process, but also more importantly, to discern why employees resist change and provide them with a multifaceted approach to facilitating the change process. One key element for managing the resistance to change is the use of effective, ongoing and varied communication vehicles. This paper includes an inventory of recommended communication tools that have proved to be both effective and successful. It will share experiences through 'lessons learned', that will demonstrate how 'skipping steps' in the process can jeopardise the success of the project. It is hoped to establish that time and resources expended towards the management of the resistance to change equate to time and effort well spent and can make the difference between success and failure.

## INTRODUCTION

As the provider of office accommodation for over 180,000 Public Service employees, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) has a great deal of experience in managing accommodation projects and dealing with the effects of change on employees. One of its current initiatives is to introduce the 'Workplace of Choice' strategy as a means of modernising many of the facilities, accommodation policies and work processes within government. Like many private sector organisations, it is re-evaluating the way it uses its space, and has concluded that the

‘workplace’ plays a larger role in organisational effectiveness than previously thought.

The ‘Workplace of Choice’ initiative has identified a number of key principles which will help govern current and future real property decisions:

- basing an individual’s accommodation on his or her function and not job status
- not confining employees to their individual workstations — workplaces should provide a number of non-traditional work settings, including teaming areas, lounges, privacy areas and relaxation rooms
- offering an element of control over one’s personal environment, whether it be the position or height of the furniture, the lighting level, the temperature or the degree of privacy one has
- presenting opportunities to work away from the office through teleworking, satellite offices and flex-time arrangements, and providing the technical and management expertise to enable this type of work to succeed
- providing access to key amenities that will enable employees to conduct a number of non-work tasks through facilities provided by, or in private partnership with, the organisation (eg travel agencies, restaurants, fitness facilities, day care centres, dry cleaning, etc.).

## **Workplace of Choice**

Although the ‘Workplace of Choice’ is designed to improve workplace conditions for government employees, the initiative has been met with some resistance. This paper is a collection of research done and the issues encountered while attempting to bring about positive change in the Canadian federal workplace. Most importantly, it includes a strategy for managing resistance to change in the context of office accommodation.

### **JOHN’S STORY**

For 18 years now, ‘John’ has worked for the same company, in the same department and even in the same building. During this time John has had his offices moved only twice. These moves were welcomed — the first being a simple move down the hall to a better view of the cityscape, and the second to the office with a bigger mahogany desk as John worked his way up the corporate ladder. John has always enjoyed having his office. He likes the privacy. He likes the fact that he can decorate the walls with pictures of his favourite classic cars. John is average. John enjoys his current occupation and his status within the organisation. John is content.

The story begins on a Monday morning. As always, John shows up at the office at 8:45a.m. He has his coffee (one and a half cream) from his favourite coffee shop in his hand and the daily newspaper tucked neatly under his arm, ready to tackle his eight-hour workday. Entering the hallway leading to his office, John notices a

number of people gathered in the vicinity of his office, huddled around one of the floor's more boisterous and 'informative' employees. John curiously approaches what looks like a small mob when one of them motions John to come over. 'Did you hear the news?' one employee whispers loudly. 'What news?' John asks. 'The company has just decided to consolidate the three main offices into one large building on the other side of the city.' John gasps in shock. 'And what's worse,' they continue, 'the company is talking about eliminating all enclosed offices for managers and directors under the heading of "efficiency".' Immediately John begins to panic. A number of thoughts race through his head simultaneously: 'What will happen to my desk?' 'How will I be able to concentrate?' 'Where am I going to put my pictures?' 'I can't move ... I just finally got a permanent parking space!' 'Where am I going to find a cup a coffee as good as this one?' 'Here we go with more company cost cutting!' It is at this point in time that John has entered the change process ... and he is not pleased.

### **OH JOHN!**

John is reacting as most people would in this situation. While John is not averse to change in general, the way in which John discovered that such a major change would be occurring in his life will influence his attitude towards, and acceptance of, that change. In this case, John's reaction to the change is likely to be negative if not managed properly. John is what has been referred to as an 'OH!' person, someone who is not adverse to change, but can be influenced to either commit to change or fight it, depending on how he or she perceives its effects. Within any large number of people, the 'OH!'s will comprise 60 per cent of the group. The other 40 per cent will most likely be split into either the 'GO!' group or the 'NO!' group. The 'GO!' group can be characterised as those individuals within an organisation who welcome change, or even encourage it. On the other end of the spectrum is the 'NO!' group. Individuals who make up this camp have a tendency to resist change altogether. Regardless of whether the change is good or bad, individuals who fall within the 'NO!'s see 'change' as a threat and will resist it in every capacity.

The 'GO!' group is important to the change process, for its members will become allies in making and accepting change. The 'NO!' group is also very important to identify for they will serve as an obstacle to the change process. It is not likely that they will be brought onboard during the change process, thus, the key is to minimise the negative effects they can have on the wavering 'OH!' group. Since the 'GO!'s are generally already convinced and the 'NO!'s will never contribute positively, the majority of the resources of any change exercise should focus on the 'OH!' majority. As a result, this paper focuses on developing a process not only to mitigate the negative effects of an accommodation change, but also to bring the 'OH!'s into the fold, thus improving the chances for a successful and fruitful accommodation change.

## **Resistance to change**

## THE STAGES OF CHANGE

### Psychological stages

The same basic psychological approaches can be applied to change management as to the stages of bereavement. Denial, anger, bargaining and acceptance are the stages people go through in coping with loss in their lives. Within a change management context, these stages can be adapted to reflect discovery, denial, resistance and acceptance. Not everyone goes through all the stages, nor do all people reach the acceptance stage. Nonetheless, this basic framework will be helpful in identifying and understanding the various types of behaviours likely to be encountered during the change process as well as developing strategies for addressing and dealing with them.

### Discovery

#### STAGE I: DISCOVERY

The first stage of the change process is the 'Discovery Stage'. In the scenario concerning John, the story ended with John discovering senior management's plan to consolidate the company's three locations into one. John had just entered the discovery stage and, because of the manner in which the information was presented, John panicked. While this stage is usually the quickest to move through, for the change management team it can be one of the longest to prepare for. An effective communication strategy and plenty of information at this stage can lay a solid foundation upon which the employees' trust and understanding can be built. This phase is critical, for it can set the tone for the rest of the project.

### Communication plan

#### The strategy

During this discovery phase, a good communication plan is key to preparing occupants for receiving any news concerning a major accommodation change. As one of the first tasks of the project team (see Appendix 1), the communication plan should outline when, where and how the occupants will receive information concerning the project. Specifically, a communication plan should include preliminary information on the project, who will be affected, and where the occupants will be able to find out more information on the move. If executed correctly, this plan should help to create a surprise-free environment and minimise the stress associated with the employees' discovery of a move. Like John from the story, when people are not given enough information, they tend to assume the worst and will naturally resist or even resent the change they are going to have to undergo. John's reaction could have been much more positive had the project team prepared and carried out an effective communication plan whereby the occupants would have discovered senior management's plan simultaneously and not as second-hand information through word of mouth.

### Project vision

Under ideal conditions, a communication plan would evolve from a *vision for the project* (see Appendix 2) laid out by senior management. This vision should set both the goals and objectives for the project. Unfortunately, this is not always possible, as it can

## Senior management

be difficult to get senior management together to discuss accommodation issues. If this is the case, it may be up to the project team to seek out senior management's intentions and draw up a similar type of document themselves. The vision for the project will not only ensure that everyone is working from the 'same page', but it also sets out the criteria by which the project's success will be measured afterwards.

## Town hall meeting

In drafting the communication plan, one must be sure to give employees and clients plenty of notice prior to the move date. Before the rumour mill takes over, it is important to make a formal announcement to 'get it out in the open'. One approach is through a town hall meeting where employees are given the opportunity to hear directly from senior management that there is a move being planned. It is also an opportunity for management to address fears and concerns about the possibility of downsizing. In many cases, guaranteeing a degree of job security may be one of the most effective ways of alleviating employees' fear of change.<sup>1</sup> These sessions typically include a review of the basic concepts, senior management's vision or objectives for the new space and the benefits and challenges associated with the change. The town hall meeting allows employees to share their concerns and offers an opportunity to enter into a dialogue about the move. Details concerning the why, where, when and who are essential at this stage. The information given must be honest and balance the negative elements and the positive effects of the move.

## Denial

### STAGE II: DENIAL

Once everyone has been made aware of the project, the majority of the occupants will enter the next stage of the change referred to as the 'denial stage'. Most people will initially take the 'I'll believe it when I see it' attitude to the proposed changes. Typical responses at this point are: 'I've seen this before' and 'it's never going to happen', with the majority of people resolving to carry on with business as usual. This type of denial generally stems from the occupants' perception of senior management's ability to carry out similar projects in the past. Other occupants may feel that the move will affect them so adversely that it is better to reject the idea of a potential move altogether. These people convince themselves that by 'waiting the project out', it will eventually go away and things will return to normal.

## Communication tools

### The strategy

In helping employees through the denial stage, the communication plan and tools are key. While many of these issues can be addressed at the town hall meeting, the lasting effectiveness of this meeting can be minimal. It is imperative that communication is ongoing throughout the entire project. This can take the form of a project website where employees can find out specific information about the project from their desktop. Also, the development of an

electronic bulletin board can enable employees to pose questions to the project team, submit comments on different aspects of the project and view comments made by co-workers.

### **Project wall**

Another extremely useful communication tool is what we refer to as a 'project wall'. This is simply a wall or room which is dedicated to providing employees with specific information on the project. This room or wall can exhibit concept drawings, project time lines, pictures of the future worksite and other project information useful to employees. This tool will be critical to convincing employees of the reality of the project and getting them to acknowledge that the change will occur. This room or wall will be used throughout the entirety of the project and will become a reservoir for all future project information relevant to the occupants. The project room or wall should also contain a suggestion box for employees so they can alert the project team to any major oversights or ask burning questions.

### **STAGE III: RESISTANCE**

### **Resistance**

Once reality sets in and the occupants realise that 'Hey! This looks like it's really going to happen!', they will generally enter the next stage of the change process, the 'resistance stage'. In this stage many of the occupants may show signs of frustration or even anger towards the project after taking into consideration how the change will affect their lives personally. It is imperative that the project team considers how the change may affect employees.

For example, a move may mean a:

- change in co-workers or networking patterns, thus having an impact on the friendships and contacts developed over the years
- disruption to commuting patterns and travel arrangements
- loss of amenities (favourite restaurants or a nearby gym)
- or the loss of a prime parking space.

### **Employee concerns**

Along with social concerns, employees may also have practical and logistical concerns. These can range from worries about building standards to concerns about office sizes and access to natural light. In more recent years, many organisations have been using moves as an opportunity to modernise the work environment. This can involve the elimination of private offices or reduction of office sizes to open up the lines of communication between employees by providing more common spaces and teaming areas. Organisations introducing hotelling programmes to their staff may be eliminating the number of workstations all together. These changes can have a significant impact on staff, especially on those employees who have been with the organisation for some time and are accustomed to a more traditional office environment. Those losing an enclosed office with a view, an entitlement many employees spend their entire career trying to obtain, may find these types of changes very difficult to deal with. Those affected are likely to feel extremely

vulnerable, as they realise they will be losing a great deal of privacy, their personal space and a symbol of their status within the organisation. Taking all these issues into consideration, it is no surprise that changes to office accommodation are met with such high levels of resistance (see Appendix 4).

## Loss of control

Despite the inconveniences associated with accommodation changes, employee resistance largely stems from feeling an inability to influence the changes that are taking place in their lives and their workplace. Picture a car spinning out of control, the future unknown, people's first instinct is to fight the momentum of the car instead of trying to keep the car in control and ride the spin out to safety. Similarly, some employees can feel a loss of control in accommodation projects and automatically resist them.

Consequently, the key to overcoming employee resistance is not only to provide the occupants with ample information but to get them directly involved with the project and give them the sense of control they need to move to the next stage of the change process.

## The strategy

As set out by the project team's communication plan, all the communication tools used thus far should be updated to address the resistance stage of the process. Employees are no longer going to be satisfied with general project information or concept drawings. They will be looking for detailed information to ascertain the effect the changes will have on them personally. It is up to the project team to ensure that the communication tools inform the employees of key project dates, time frames, interim moves, adjacency matrices, stacking diagrams and any other major developments in the project since the initial announcement.

## Project details

If the project also involves relocation, employees will need to know how the change will affect their daily routine. To assist employees in envisioning their new work location, it is helpful to put together a manual outlining the hot spots, amenities and services in the area. A detailed map showing how to get to the office from various locations, the availability of bus routes and parking and information on parking fees can help to ease employees' tension over the relocation.

## Employee participation

In addition to these communication activities, the key to winning employee support and moving through the resistance stage is to enable the occupants themselves to influence the development of their future workspace. It is crucial that employees participate in the planning process so that their work environment can be properly aligned with the work that they do. Getting them to participate is also the best way to get their buy-in, as they become meaningful contributors and thus have more of a stake in the project's success.

## Employee involvement

Employee participation can take many forms. The key to making

**Managing expectations**

it a productive exercise is to manage the expectations and limit the choices of the participants. Providing employees with a 'blank cheque' in developing their workspace will be met with disaster. If it does not break the project's budget, it will definitely send the project months into delay as employees try to meet each of their own distinct needs. Instead, allow the employees to vote on the colour scheme or the line of furniture; this can go a long way to getting employees on board without delaying the project's schedule or increasing costs. The project room could house a number of mock-up workstations where employees can come in and examine the different options. Tangible examples such as these can be invaluable in preparing the occupants for the change and for creating buy-in.

**Focus group**

Employee participation can also take the form of focus groups, in which project team members (ie designer) meet with individual organisational units to solicit ideas for the new workspace. From these, the project team can ascertain each group's prerogatives for their work environment. For some it may be storage and security, for others it may be privacy, while for others it may be removing the barriers to open communication. This can also become the venue for discussing adjacencies and access to common spaces such as printers, photocopiers, meeting rooms and kitchen facilities. Again, it is imperative that the designer and the project team set the boundaries of what can be changed and what cannot to manage the expectations of the employees. It is also critical that these focus groups be carried out in an orderly fashion and managed effectively, as these meetings have the potential to become venting sessions for resistant or disgruntled employees. In cases where these types of meetings may not be realistic, employees could participate through the use of questionnaires where they can highlight their preferences on a select number of project details.

**Feedback**

To ensure that the advances made during this stage are not in vain, it is essential that employees be given feedback on how their input is being incorporated into the design process and that their contributions have been valued. The project room/wall will become more important as it is likely to be where staff will discover whether or not they have had any 'real' influence on the design of the project.

**Small victories**

**Buy-in**

Finally, in moving employees through the resistance stage, the significance of 'small victories' should not be underestimated. Sometimes it is the small things that can go the furthest in minimising resistance and getting employee buy-in for a project. Instead of focusing on the state-of-the-art boardroom or employee cafe, highlight the smaller, more personal features of the project. It may be the promise of flat screen monitors for staff or the chance for them to choose a new chair for their workstation that will win the occupants over. One low-cost option is to allow employees to

select workstation accessories from a set list to customise their individual workstations. These small gestures can go a long way towards tempering resistance and can actually help generate enthusiasm for the project and move employees to the next stage of the project.

#### **STAGE IV: ACCEPTANCE**

### **Acceptance**

The final phase of the change process is the ‘acceptance stage’, during which employees reach a full understanding of the transformation that will occur and are ready to move forward. Early acceptance allows for easier project management and project development. Acceptance may follow the completion of the project as well, however. People sometimes cannot envision the end product and how they will fit into the new environment, and only after the change do they understand its benefits or problems. Unfortunately, not everyone will accept the change even after it has happened. Still, it is important not to abandon these individuals for they can still undermine the success of the project and have a negative effect on overall morale.

#### **The strategy**

### **Celebration**

This is the time to celebrate. If all the proper communication vehicles have been used and their input incorporated, most employees should be at the acceptance stage. An open house of the new space is a nice way to celebrate the success of the move. A move-in day orientation will contribute to the speed at which employees become familiar with their new environment. This move-in celebration could include gift packages with mugs, coasters, T-shirts, service maps, a seating plan and listings of amenities. At this point, it is important to explain any existing variations from the original project plan. This will ensure that employee trust is maintained as well as encouraging acceptance of the changes.

### **Measuring client satisfaction**

One of the tools used in generating acceptance for the new work environment is the post-occupancy evaluation (POE), which is a method of ascertaining levels of client satisfaction within the new workplace. A POE is generally conducted between six months and a year after the move-in. Conducting a POE before six months may be too premature, as occupants require a period of adjustment with any type of accommodation modification. Conversely, waiting longer than a year to conduct a POE is ineffective, as the newness of the space has worn off and clients begin to find deficiencies caused by changes in their programmes or functional requirements.

Conducting a POE can serve many purposes. By asking employees how they feel about their new working environment, an employee questionnaire can:

### **Post-occupancy evaluation**

- help employees feel involved and help with their acceptance of the change
- highlight major deficiencies in the new work environment

- provide the basis for project adjustments
- act as a learning tool for future projects
- help measure performance in terms of service delivery.

A POE can take many forms, the most common being interviews, employee satisfaction surveys or suggestion boxes. Recent adaptations of Internet technology such as online discussion boards and online client satisfaction surveys have made conducting POEs a cost-effective and efficient method of measuring client satisfaction.

### **Online survey**

Using an online bulletin board, occupants of the space can be notified of any changes or issues within the workplace and then have the opportunity to input their comments. This method keeps everyone aware of the issues that exist and their proposed solutions.

Online employee satisfaction surveys can be easily created through a third-party provider. Web-based technology allows the user to e-mail occupants a web address which will take them to an online survey containing all the questions deemed relevant and important. Once employees have finished filling in the form, the information is recorded and stored to allow for simple and easy analysis.

### **Office etiquette**

Another way of increasing acceptance of a new work environment is through the use of office protocols or 'office etiquette'. Office etiquette can be defined as a set of rules or guidelines, agreed to or imposed, for establishing acceptable behaviour within the office environment.

There are a number of benefits to establishing office etiquette. First, it can significantly help ease employees into a new work environment. This is especially valuable when the new environment requires employees to work differently from the way they had in the past. This can include moving from enclosed offices to an open team setting or from dedicated workstations to a hotelling system. Secondly, when established before the move, office etiquette can alleviate employees' fears concerning a number of common workspace issues such as storage, cleanliness, noise and privacy. Finally, if developed properly, office etiquette can be an effective, low-cost mechanism for getting the most out of employees by improving the quality of their daily work lives.

### **Productivity and morale**

For the purpose of this paper, the establishing of office etiquette is referred to as a tool that will increase acceptance after a move. It is not necessarily reserved for new workplaces, however, but can be used to benefit long-standing work settings as well. Unfortunately, most organisations overlook the importance of office etiquette and suffer needlessly in terms of lower levels of employee morale and productivity (see Appendix 3).

### **Protocols**

Establishing office etiquette is not difficult, but there is a right way and a wrong way of doing it. The success of office etiquette protocols, meaning the likelihood of the occupants adhering to them, is very much dependent on the method by which those guidelines are established. Any set of protocols established in

secrecy or imposed upon staff are destined to fail. Successful office etiquette is one that emerges from the occupants themselves and is believed in and supported by the group.

Some approaches to establishing office etiquette include:

## Approaches

- Suggestion boxes — a physical box in a common area where people can anonymously drop off suggestions for office protocol.
- Electronic bulletin boards — using the Internet to create a virtual discussion board. People can login and read or respond to statements by colleagues concerning everything from perfume odours to privacy issues. Employees are notified of new postings via an automatically generated e-mail message.
- The democratic approach — this approach involves getting all the employees of a particular work group together to discuss any issues of concern. Common concerns are tabled, recommendations are made, and protocols are voted on.
- Space committees — instead of bringing all the employees together for one exercise, a committee that consists of either elected members or volunteers from each of the different work teams within an office. This group would meet at regular intervals to discuss office protocols and general office use concerns. This is especially useful if the space contains groups from different organisations. The committee can also double as a forum to talk about any deficiencies in the space or as a social committee to help improve morale or camaraderie throughout the office.

Establishing office etiquette is neither time consuming nor costly, but it is an extremely effective tool in alleviating many of the concerns associated with a new work environment. In fact, despite initial efforts to bring employees into the fold during the course of a project, the absence of office etiquette can actually turn employees who have reached the acceptance stage back into resisters. This is because they find themselves left without knowing how to use or interact with their new workspace, naturally giving rise to feelings of frustration and anger.

## LESSONS LEARNED: PWGSC'S EXPERIENCES

The following examples, taken from across Canada, are representative of success stories as well as some projects that did not quite meet their intended objectives.

## Lessons learned

The first example involves a move within the National Capital Region. The move involved relocating employees from an older facility in Ottawa, Ontario, which included large enclosed offices, inexpensive parking and available day-care facilities to a smaller building in the adjacent province of Quebec. In comparison, the new location had an open office environment, limited and more expensive parking and no readily available day care — this represented quite a hard sell involving some very touchy issues. The

**Importance of employee involvement**

communication strategy used during the project was extensive and resulted in mitigating the impact of many employee concerns. A POE done one year after move-in, however, revealed that omitting an important step in the communication process had serious repercussions. Failure to involve the employees directly in the design of their interior workspace, based on the tasks they perform, resulted in lower levels of employee satisfaction with their personal work environment. Employees felt as though they were thrown into an open environment against their will, and many cited their productivity as being negatively affected. Many of the employees were in the resistance stage, even one year after the move. This was unfortunate, as this project was to be one of a number of marquee demonstration sites showcasing innovative offices and, from a design aspect, it still remains one of the most dynamic workplaces in the capital. The problems are being addressed, but not without associated costs, from both a financial and an emotional perspective.

**Importance of a clear vision**

The second example involves a client undergoing a major internal reorganisation. What at first appeared to be a highly resistant client was won over by a well-executed communication strategy. A cohesive project team was able to demonstrate an improved office environment to employees by convincing them to shed the status quo and embrace a radical accommodation change. The proposed project would have provided flexible work spaces, teaming, meeting and lounge areas by removing the organisation's enclosed offices. The opinions of the occupants were solidified through an employee vote. The client even had groups volunteering to become living laboratories to allow the other employees to see what the change could look like. Unfortunately, not establishing a clear vision at the beginning of the project resulted in a change of direction by senior management during the end of the planning stage of the project, putting the project in permanent hiatus. This has not only resulted in lower employee morale, but future accommodation changes will be even more difficult to sell.

**Importance of communication**

Two examples of successes can be found in both the Pacific and Atlantic regions. Both project teams incorporated all aspects of project management, sustained leadership and employee participation into the planning and development phases. The Atlantic project encouraged a high level of employee involvement through regular project updates, focus groups and town halls. A formal POE has yet to be conducted, but the initial reactions from the occupants indicate that the new environment is a welcome change. The Pacific project was delivered in a similar fashion and has experienced similar results. The success of both of these projects has been attributed to senior management's vision, leadership by the project manager, as well as an integrated and active project team. What is encouraging about both these projects is that the consistency of approach used to deliver these projects successfully worked for two different organisations in regions over 4,500 km apart.

The main lesson learned from all these projects is that a project team cannot simply pick and choose individual parts of the change process and expect successful results. Studies have shown that it is imperative to carry through with all the steps involved in the change process.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the change management process by way of the stages of discovery, denial, resistance and acceptance, although change management does not fall neatly into these categories. In reality, the change process during accommodation projects is plagued by a matrix of competing priorities, power struggles and personality differences requiring a great deal of negotiating and conflict resolution not addressed in this paper. The hope is that by presenting the change process in the fashion depicted in this paper and as summarised in the Project time line (Appendix 5), readers will be encouraged to see the benefit of taking the time and money to address the needs of those affected by accommodation change in a way which make employees feel valued and in control. Most importantly, in the end readers will know how to bring those like John (from the story) from the 'OH!' to the 'GO!' team and get them to provide the support that will improve the likelihood of the accommodation project being a success.

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## APPENDIX 1. THE ROLE OF THE PROJECT TEAM

The beginning of a successful change process starts with a cohesive and effective project team. It is the project team that will play an educational and strategic adviser role and will be accountable for the overall development, management and implementation of the change process. They will orchestrate all the communication activities for the various phases of the change. This will include assisting senior management in the development of a vision or *raison d'être* for the move, helping middle managers in their role, ensuring that employees' concerns are addressed and finally evaluating acceptance. Each of these areas must work in harmony in order to give effective project delivery and manage the resistance to change within the organisation.

Within office accommodation, the teams may include several experts on the primary and secondary teams. The primary team is aboard from the conception of the project to the end. The secondary team is brought on, as their expertise is needed. As a result, the composition of the secondary team is very much dependent on the objectives set out in the vision for the project.

### Project team

*Primary Team*

- Project manager
- Project analyst
- Finance officer
- Scheduler
- Client representative
- Communications/change adviser

*Secondary Team*

- Computing/telecommunications specialist
- Construction manager
- Engineering — system engineer
- Engineering — construction engineer
- Environmental, health and safety coordinators
- Operations and maintenance managers
- Procurement officer
- Quality assurance officer
- Security officer
- Architect/interior designer

## **APPENDIX 2. THE ROLE OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT VISION**

In order to begin preparation of the first communication vehicle, the project team needs to know the senior management vision for the change, the business objectives of the organisation and the accommodation objectives of the project. This will serve as the basis for informing employees of the upcoming change. In developing their vision, senior management should be asking themselves:

### **Senior management vision**

- What is the corporate culture of the organisation and how receptive is the organisation to change?
- What recent events within the organisation may affect people's perception of change?
- How do the employees view senior management and their ability to carry through?
- What issues are likely to affect employees on a personal level?

Senior management will be asked to deliver the initial change message to all staff. The team also needs to know the specifics of the project, such as how and when the changes will take place. The feedback gathered from senior management can be used as the content for a town hall meeting with employees.

Through leading by example, as well as taking the time to allow employees to voice concerns, senior management becomes a major source of information for determining the communication vehicles that need to be developed to reduce resistance.

**Costs**

**APPENDIX 3. THE COST OF NOT ADDRESSING EMPLOYEE RESISTANCE**

The relocation of employees is expensive in terms of both investment and operating costs. Studies at Cornell University International Workplace show ‘that employees in organizations spending more money per person on change management consistently evaluated both the change management process and the new workplace more positively. Cost per person for change management can vary from \$1000 to \$4,500.’ These amounts should be considered dollars well spent when compared with potential loss of productivity associated with resistance to change and the long-term effects of dissatisfied employees who no longer feel valued.<sup>2</sup> Although quantitative measurement of office-worker productivity remains illusive, one study from the BOSTI (Buffalo Organization for Social Technological Innovation) states that an employee with a workplace that meets their needs will increase solo productivity by 3 to 5 per cent, job satisfaction by 20 per cent and team performance by 11 per cent.

An upcoming change that is not managed effectively could go so far as to result in increased absenteeism as well as a substantial reduction in productivity. Not only does the down time associated with the actual physical move need to be factored in, but employees tend to work with a decreased level of energy when they are undergoing the effects of stress resulting from the move. There may be down time resulting from employees who feel a need to vent their feelings if they have not had the opportunity to do so throughout the change process. This may also lead to low morale and a poor attitude towards the organisation, which can last for months and be very counter-productive. An employee who does not feel valued will not ‘go the extra mile’ to ensure the success of the organisation. There may also be an increase in errors when resentment sets in as employees concentrate less on their tasks. Some employees may even demonstrate their resistance by trying to sabotage the move through disregarding deadlines for packing or, in rare cases, destroying valuable information.

**Loss of productivity**

Resistance to change could even result in losing experienced, hard-working, knowledgeable workers. In these times when retention of qualified personnel is of utmost importance, the impact is substantial. Statistics show that the cost of losing a trained employee is equal to 1.5 to three times his or her salary.

**Employee retention**

Clearly, the investment of time and money into managing the change process properly can result in substantial savings to the organisation over the long run.

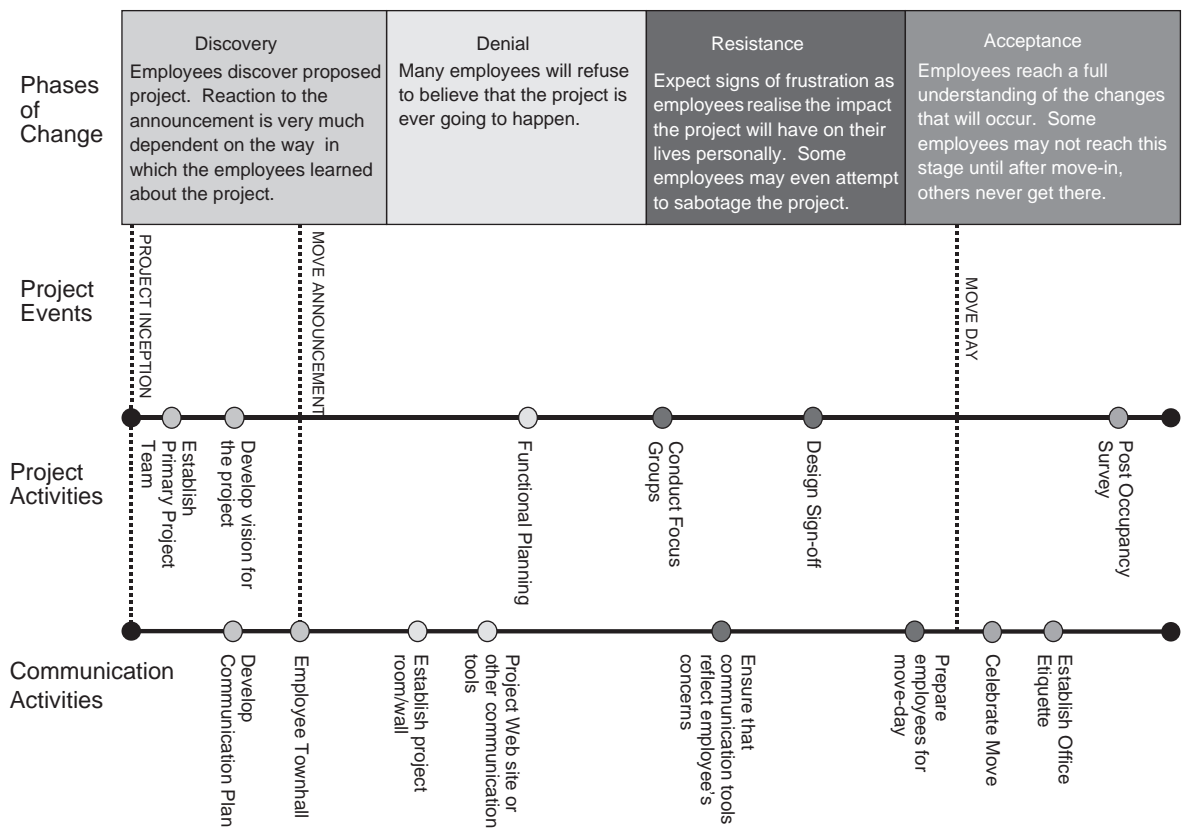
**Role of middle management**

**APPENDIX 4. RESISTANCE OF MIDDLE MANAGERS**

Throughout the change process, middle managers play a critical role in determining the success of any change project. Often, middle managers have the most to lose personally during an accommodation project, thus increasing their stake in the process.

As more and more organisations eliminate the perk of the private office as a means of improving the lines of communication and saving space, it is often at the expense of middle managers. As a result, they may not value the strategic importance of the project and may discourage their employees from supporting the change. Also, managers may be especially reluctant to embrace a process that involves some loss of managerial prerogatives and control. This is generally the case with a change process that involves employee participation. Managerial concerns may be especially prominent when the process begins to raise employee expectations.<sup>3</sup> As a result, it is critical throughout change process that middle managers are clearly informed of the benefits to the organisation and are provided with leadership opportunities throughout the project.

### APPENDIX 5. PROJECT TIME LINE: A FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING CHANGE



#### Notes to appendices

2. Becker, F., Tennesen, C. M. and Dahl, L. M. (1996) 'Lesson Learned', *Managing Workplace Change*, Cornell University International Workplace Studies Programme, p. 14.
3. Gunderson, ref. 1, p. 24.