Building a Change Management Plan

Start with These 5 Building Blocks

1. Stakeholder Map

Goal: Identify who's impacted and how deeply.

How-To:

- List all key roles and groups

- Note what's changing for each group

- Rank impact level (Low / Medium / High)

Why It Matters: You can't plan communication or training without knowing who you're talking to and what they need.

2. Communication Plan

Goal: Keep the right people in the loop at the right time.

How-To:

- Define your audiences

- Identify key messages (What? Why? What now?)

- Choose your channels (email, meetings, video, etc.)

- Build a schedule that aligns with the project plan

Why It Matters: People tune out when they feel out of the loop. Timely, relevant messaging builds trust and engagement.

3. Training & Support Plan

Goal: Equip people to succeed in the new way of working.

How-To:

- Define what new skills or tools are needed

- Create training by audience (users, managers, etc.)

- Offer different formats (live, recorded, quick guides)

- Plan for support after go-live (help desk, office hours)

Why It Matters: Adoption doesn't happen without confidence. And confidence comes from preparation.

4. Resistance & Feedback Plan

Goal: Understand where people are struggling and respond.

How-To:

- Set up ways to hear concerns (surveys, manager feedback, live sessions)

- Identify who will collect and respond to feedback

- Track themes over time

- Loop insights into project adjustments

Why It Matters: Resistance isn't failure, it's information. The sooner you hear it, the sooner you can work with it.

5. Sustainment Plan

Goal: Make sure the change sticks beyond go-live.

How-To:

- Identify what ongoing support is needed (refreshers, reinforcement messages)

- Build recognition into the calendar

- Align the change with performance goals or KPIs

- Assign a long-term owner to keep things moving

Why It Matters: Change fades fast without follow-through. Plan for the long haul while you're still in delivery mode.

Pro Tips

Start small. Even one or two of these actions can make a big impact.

Borrow from existing plans. You don't need a blank page, use your project plan as a base.

Talk to your users. They'll tell you what's missing, what's working, and what you forgot to think about.