Toolkit Items for Change Management Communication

Communication Matters

- Crafting a Change Management plan requires careful attention also to a structured communication plan. Communication efforts are critical to a successful change outcome and must consider the mindset of the full team and individual members. Detailing effective communication planning requires attending to three important steps.

Understand the change and your stakeholders

- Create a motivating "WHY" regarding the needed change as you share the WHAT is the change and describe the future state.
- Consider all involved stakeholders to be affected by the change. They will be asking "What does this change mean to me and what must I do?" Anticipate what their concerns might be, how they will be impacted, and can you best communicate with them to address these concerns. Varying levels of detail will be needed by the diverse groups depending on their role in the organization and the scope of change to their division or job.
- Select defined communication leads to manage this work. Early in the process determine with leadership and the change management spokesperson (like the lead sponsor) and assess his or her communication abilities and needs.

Creating the plan

- Establish carefully the key core messages – which may be used at various stages of the project. Initial messages for stage 1 will incorporate the **Why** and **What** regarding change needed.
- Sharing the reasons for the change inspires a sense of urgency and commitment.
- Stage 1 requires laying out the future state – the vision and adding what is needed for success. Teams must clearly send the end state and desired outcomes of the change journey destination.
- Explain how teams and individuals—depending on the stakeholder audience—will be impacted, note the benefits for teams, individuals, and customers.
- Provide a timeline overview of the change project
- Share change management and project management leadership and support options with contact information.

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- As the timeline evolves, these core messages will require additional key messages to be conveyed at the various stages of change and as the requirements develop.
- Determine the best communication channels to be used for the various categories of stakeholders. Commit to a communication process and timeframes for expected updates and share.
- Be certain a process for feedback is established to be provided through the project, noting the way concerns and ideas can flow to leadership and how responses will be delivered. Utilize various channels but include two-way communication /face to face observation and dialogue to engage teams throughout the change process.
- Share the detailed communication strategy that includes:

    - ✔ Key messages for various stages of change
    - ✔ Project timeline and milestones
    - ✔ Timeframes for updates to be provided
    - ✔ Activities and checkpoints for beginning the change process, the Go Live period, and the post change environment.

Execution Requires:

- Continuous Communication, reinforcing the why message as well as transparent sharing of challenges along the way.
- Inspiring teams with stories of wins and successes as work progresses.
  Providing congratulations and celebrations as training and go live begins.
- Assuring communication strategies are delivered timely and consistently at times promised, always with authentic transparency about the good, the struggles or adaptations needed.
- Openly acknowledging challenges, resistance or barriers, gaining insights through feedback and shared information.
- Monitoring the value of the communication plan and the channels chosen and change as needed.