Change management – WIIFM?

Yvette Lamidey, Managing director of **Paris and Parks Consulting**, discusses the implications, behaviour and the role of the manager in implementing and sustaining change

In many ways working in payroll means that we are very used to change and managing change. Just think of all the recent changes we have implemented which have changed the way we work, including changes to internal and external processes in order to incorporate and sustain them. And although at times it may not seem it, some of these changes have been real progress for payroll, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and our customers.

Most of us will have experienced at least one change in the payroll system we use and probably changes in other supporting systems. With luck, good business sense and practice, we will have been integral to the implementation of these systems and required changes to support them. Unfortunately experience shows that we have not always approached the change in the best way or necessarily undertaken the pre work needed.

All too often we will try to make new systems fit the existing processes and so do not fully embrace the change. In doing so we are giving to those with whom we work the wrong message and the wrong model for them to emulate.

What is required?
Managing change requires:
- common sense
- an understanding of self and how we are motivated
- an understanding of others and their motivation i.e. WIIFM (see next page)
- coaching skills, and

- a recognition that change has to be sustained and cannot be forgotten on go-live and that things may need to be further improved but all this can be achieved when working together.

> **...THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT THE CHANGE WAS AND IS INFLUENCED BY THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE PERSON**

Iniatives, initiatives, initiatives
All of us have been included in initiatives within the organisation in which we work (or worked). We may not have been integral in their design but we will have been expected, as managers and employees, to play our part. But how was the change communicated to us? What tools were we given to implement and sustain the change – particularly if the changes were necessary for efficiencies and so had wide-reaching impact in many different ways?

How many of these initiatives quietly died a death only for a new initiative to be introduced, often following a change in senior management? So you have to put aside the original/most recent initiative and start over with (another) new one. You, as the manager, have to lead the way and get everyone else on board.

By now I am sure that you will have briefly relived all sorts of different situations in your mind's eye. Some of them were things you had implemented and sustained very easily and you feel good

about; some where you know that you might, given the chance, would have done and would do things differently; and some where you recall that sense of 'here we go again' and 'how can I sell this latest initiative to the team' or, as I call it, 'change fatigue'.

So how should you approach change?
Before communicating the change to anyone you need to think about what it means for you as a person and your role and how you feel about it. If you have not completely bought into the change or fully understand and accepted the full impact then how can you communicate the change to others so that they will 'buy in' and at least accept and at best fully embrace them?

What motivates you? How are you motivated? How do you sustain that motivation? It is important you understand this so that you can then look objectively at the changes and know how you will be motivated to make and sustain them. This is so even for an initiative that you have instigated as you need to understand this and be very clear about it.

For an initiative you have been asked to introduce how were you given the message? What benefits were you told about? What tools were you given?

I am sure the way you feel about the change was and is influenced by the behaviour of the person who told or tells you about it (i.e. were they genuinely enthused and motivated?). No doubt you will have felt differently about the change

if the message was delivered by someone who clearly does not 'own' the change and was doing it because they had been told to. If that is how you feel then how will the same message be received by your team if you do not own the change?

Think about previous changes: what went well, what did not, what would you do the same and what would you do differently? But more importantly spend time understanding the impact the changes will have for you, how you are motivated. Think about the team.

WIIFM?

Initially we are always motivated by one thing and one thing only: WIIFM? (what's in it for me).

The first thing that people will be asking internally, and some will verbalise too, is how does it impact me? What is the benefit to me as a person, me in my role and, lastly, for the team? Will my role change significantly? Will there be job cuts in the short and long term? Is this going to be hard? Have we got to perm this in with already very busy jobs? All this equals WIIFM.

So no matter how you word the opening of your message and then build up to the changes, there will be this internal dialogue going on. And do not forget the change fatigue: is this just another management whim until the next one comes along?

It is imperative before you start to deliver the message about the impending change that you think this through using your knowledge of the team as individuals and as a group.

Selling the message

Metaphors are a great way to help sell messages.

Sometimes it helps to talk

about another scenario and compare this to where you are. When you have consensus about the similarities to the current situation and that there may be better ways to operate, you can then introduce the change – again making sure that you refer to WIIFM as a person, in my role and as a team.

Demonstrate that you do understand the impact for each and every person and the team as a whole.

Be honest about the impact in the short and long term including the effect it may have on your time e.g. you will need to spend x amount of time a week on this project and so will be asking for others to take on additional tasks as well as the work that the team needs to do for the project.

Open and honest communication is crucial, so that there are no surprises about the impact at a later date. This is of course unless something has changed for whatever reason.

Yes, it may take every ounce of tact, diplomacy and intuition that you possess, but do not attempt to deliver the message unless you are fully congruent with it. In other words, you fully understand and accept it and are motivated to deliver the change.

And if you need some help formulating the message then ask your line manager or a peer.

Sustaining the change

Although time and consideration will have been taken about how the initial message will be delivered and the change implemented, what about sustaining the change? What do you need to do to sustain the change yourself because, as a leader, you are the person the team will use as their model?

USE METAPHORS AGAIN AND ALSO REMIND PEOPLE ABOUT SERVICE DELIVERY I.E. YOUR RAISON D'ÊTRE

If new ways of working take a little longer or are more difficult or people cannot see why the change is better, they may slip back into old habits. This needs to be managed carefully, and comes back to WIIFM. Identify the benefit of the new ways for the person and the service as a whole – which may be a tad more difficult if it is a benefit to the service/customer. Use metaphors again and also remind people about service delivery i.e. your raison d'être.

If people have found risk free or low risk compliant workarounds then have them write up the process, test it with a couple of others and introduce the process as a further improvement. And give full credit as appropriate.

Talk to the team as individuals and as a group about attitudes and behaviour that will help continue the progress and sustain the change. Miranda Kennet, from FirstClassCoach suggests undertaking an exercise of "stop, start, and continue". Working in pairs capture the points on post-its and then debrief for each of the categories starting with 'continue' where previous ways of working can be maintained in the new situation. 'Stop' is often the hardest as it will include behavioural change, but frankly the team will be fed up with the perennial dissenters and nay sayers and the situation needs to be addressed. And 'start' may include the proven workarounds but will in part depend on the morale of the team.

You can always revisit these again later when a few more 'starts' may be raised. These may even include an extension to the changes already made where people recognise there are further opportunities.

Training

Consideration should also be given to training.

If employees' jobs are changing it is important they have the tools to do this. They may already have the skills, but they lack confidence and self-esteem or even self-worth – all or any of these can often manifest where there is significant change.

In addition to the support of direct training there should be regular meetings/coaching sessions and so on – and this is for you as well as the team! Remember that you are the person the team will model and so if you accept the training and support then they will be more likely to do so. ▪