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# 6 tried-and-true tips to successfully implement new workplace technology

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People are usually cooperative when they receive advance notice of upcoming changes at work and are given time to adapt. But, spring a big change on them without warning, and you're likely to face resistance, complaints and poor results.

That's why when you decide to upgrade your business's technology by adopting a new system or software, you shouldn't just install it and expect employees to "get on board." Often, this type of change makes employees uncomfortable because it disrupts their routines or it's unfamiliar. There may also be a learning curve, which can add to employees' frustration and lead to a drop in productivity throughout the organization.

You can minimize the level of difficulty that comes with the launch of new technology, and encourage everyone to embrace the change by practicing a few well-honed change management techniques. Here are six tried-and-true tips to help you lay the groundwork for success.

## 1. Communicate early and often

Even if you're only at the idea stage, it's important to prepare the road ahead by talking about the need for new technology. Communicate why the new software or platform is necessary, what its capabilities will be, and how it will benefit both the company and individual employees in their jobs.

[Asking yourself these critical questions](#) can help you look at the coming change from different perspectives ensuring the technology doesn't just meet your needs but those of your staff and ensures your messaging resonates with your workforce. If your staff understands the logic behind the



## 2. Cultivate champions

Before launching any new technology, it's wise to garner support at all levels. These early adopters, or champions, will prove invaluable in helping you convey a positive message about the new technology, while promoting transparency around the upcoming change. They can also help you bring others around.

Choose champions who are good listeners and likely to [get honest feedback](#) from their respective audiences. These champions should understand the advantages and intended outcomes of the technology so they can vocalize and demonstrate their support.

Before roll-out, you'll want to hear their suggestions and concerns regarding the new technology, as well as its perceived impact on business priorities and any potential gaps in service that may result during implementation and ramp-up. The earlier the input, the better you can accommodate various priorities and address worries or resistance.

## 3. Build in feedback mechanisms

It's important to build mechanisms for [employees to share feedback](#), concerns, frustrations and issues as the organization prepares before, during, and after the technology is implemented. While champions are one example to use to collect and respond to feedback; it's important to understand how and when you'll seek input from your staff.

Feedback is just as critical, if not more so, once the new platform or system is underway. Be open to how the technology is or is not supporting business objectives.

Positive feedback allows you to publicize quick wins to continue to build the case for change. It also allows you to pinpoint if the new technology is working as intended and enables the business to transition from the old way of working to a new one.

Depending on the size of your business, how you gather feedback will vary. You might pilot the new technology with a small group of people, gather their feedback, and make adjustments before a wider launch. You might also build in periodic touch-points before, during and after implementation.

Feedback may be gathered from informal office visits or through more formal means, such as setting up an email account for questions, concerns and problems. If your company has a help desk for technical support, you may want to enlist their services for identifying and resolving issues.

Keep in mind that seasonal fluctuations or busy cycles often generate more questions or challenges, so you may need to increase support during those times.

Don't forget: If you ask for feedback, be prepared and make time to respond to everyone who asks questions or offers input.

## 4. Set goals

Setting and communicating your goals for implementation is as important as creating mechanisms for feedback. It helps you to know how the organization is responding to the technology and even which employees are adopting the technology. It also helps users get more value out of the new system if these goals show users how the technology impacts their day-to-day work.

It's common for new technology to be phased into business operations, but it's vital you let employees know what will be expected of them at every stage. For example, if you want 50 percent of orders to be processed using the new software by March 1, say so. Employees can't help you measure success (or identify problems) if they don't know what the targets are.



Mitigate resistance by coaching employees who have concerns or seem to be struggling with understanding how to use the new technology. These employees may be using the new technology with some degree of proficiency, but that doesn't mean they necessarily feel confident or competent in using it. Training can also help.

## 5. Accommodate all learning styles

For the smoothest transition possible, you'll need to think about training well ahead of launch. Everyone learns differently, so your strategy should include all learning styles.

Visual learners need to see step-by-step instructions with in-depth examples. Auditory learners need to hear you describe the process and walk them through it. Kinesthetic learners need to physically move through each step until the process becomes engrained. And tactile learners commit the process to memory by actually doing it with you, from start to finish, over and over again.

Incorporating goals and benchmarks for success into your curriculum is essential. Plan to be available for one-on-one training for those who require an extra bit of personal help. Establish methods for measuring competence with the new technology. Depending on the technology in question, proficiency may be measured by processing errors or the time it takes to add a new customer to the system, or some other benchmark.

Other questions related to training include:

- Who will lead the training: the vendor or in-house experts, or a combination of both?
- Does training need to be different for managers and employees?
- Do you need a combination of online, self-paced learning or classroom training?
- How will you bridge learning gaps, such as when someone trains weeks before implementation but doesn't use the technology until later?
- What training materials need to be printed as handouts, displays or posters, and which ones can be stored on the company intranet for self-service access?

## 6. Be patient

It's not uncommon for some to become impatient with those who aren't so enthusiastic about the change or who aren't "getting" the technology. If you find you or your team getting testy with the time it is taking others to adopt the new state, remember that adapting to change takes time.

You may have been researching and planning for this new technology for a year, but that doesn't mean everyone else is on the same page. Others will likely be introduced to the idea after you've had time to get comfortable with it. They deserve adequate time to absorb details and think through how this upgraded system or platform will impact their department and individual jobs.

Plus, building new technology into the routines and rhythms of the workday is not a quick process.

It also helps to remember this rule of thumb: It takes 21 days to change a behavior when people are provided with positive reinforcement. If there is limited coaching, two-way feedback mechanisms, even technology "issues" that are not being addressed during and after implementation, then you should assume it will take longer than 21 days to change employee behavior.

## Keep your eye on the prize

Humans are creatures of habit, so change doesn't happen easily. It's not a one-time event – it's a process. So, plan for every stage of the process and don't lose sight of the reason you're making the change in the first place. Once your new technology is successfully implemented, it will [help your](#)



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