

8 Questions To Ask Before Asking Others To Change

Jones Loflin



Most people want to maintain the status quo and avoid stepping outside their comfort zone, making their desire for change minimal at best.

Connect what they value to what they will have if the change is successful.

After a recent training program I spent an hour with a guy in a fairly new leadership role in his company. His passion for excellence and desire to improve the results of his team was refreshing. He was visibly frustrated, however, by his current situation, literally to the point of wanting to find a new position. “I just can’t get them to see the need to change,” he kept saying over and over.

His pain is all too common among those who want to move their team, department or organization to a better place. Most people want to maintain the status quo and avoid stepping outside their comfort zone, making their desire for change minimal at best. Fortunately, there are some questions you can ask to better prepare yourself to lead a more successful change initiative *and not cause you to update your resume on Indeed.com*. They include:

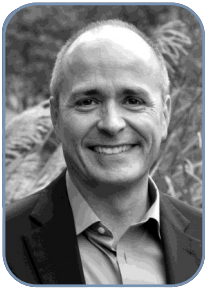
Do I have a clear picture of the outcome of the change? As elementary as it sounds, try drawing a picture of what the work environment, product, service or results will look like. Dr. Spencer Johnson, author of *Who Moved My Cheese?*, was passionate about people having a “sensible vision” of the change. The more real and inviting you make the outcome, the easier it will be for others to see the value of changing attitudes or behaviors.

What’s their currency? Determine what your team members value. Don’t allow yourself to generalize with thoughts like, “more money” or “success.” Be as specific as possible to each individual. Then, when you are discussing the change with your team, seek to connect success with the change to what is important to them.

Who will be the individual(s) most resistant to this change? Once you have an answer, insure that their concerns are reasonably addressed in your plan. If you can get them on board, others should follow more quickly.

What are the negotiable and non-negotiable items in the change? While these may change somewhat in the process, knowing what battles you are willing to lose to win the war are important.

What is their motivation to change? I can’t tell you how many coaching



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What will your people need to bridge the gap from where they are now to where you want them to be?

People are looking for one of two things in a time of change... comfort or security.

sessions I have where a leader's answer to this question is, "I'm not sure." Most employees aren't willing to change for the sake of change. Go back to my question about their currency. Find a motivator for each individual connected to the change.

Am I making the case for changing now? Facts, statistics, pictures, case studies and testimonials are all important elements to build a sense of urgency for a change. Determine some of the things your team members WON'T have if current processes, systems, attitudes and/or behaviors stay the same-and be prepared to share that information.

What resources will we give individuals to help them make the change?

Will lower productivity be tolerated while systems and processes are converted? Do people need time to digest what the change means before real action is taken? What training can we make available to equip employees with the new skills needed to achieve success with the change?

What progress will we celebrate as the change moves forward? You want your people to stay motivated to engage in new attitudes and actions throughout the change. Develop an initial plan to celebrate the smallest of progress toward success with the change. In a *Disney Institute* seminar a few years ago, a presenter said that researchers at Disney know how far visitors to the park will walk with trash in their hand before giving up on finding a trash can-and toss it on the ground. So the park staff make sure trash cans are spaced accordingly. You will want to develop the same type of plan for keeping people motivated toward achieving the change. Make the rewards or encouragement too scarce... and they may just give up.

What other questions about the change do you need to answer before asking others to change?

Jones Loflin helps individuals and organizations make the best choices with their time so they can thrive. He is the author of four books: *Always Growing*, *Juggling Elephants*, *Getting the Blue Ribbon*, and *Getting to It*. His humor, energy and audience engagement make an **impact** on every member of your group, not just an impression.