

Insights

How to Cope with Change Fatigue



Here at NICHQ, we're in the improvement business. That means we help a lot of people handle the uncertainty and challenges that come with managing change. Whether imposed or chosen, however, frequent change efforts can sometimes lead to change fatigue.

Leadership expert Gwen Webber-McLeod, president and CEO of Gwen Inc., describes change fatigue as a loss of focus, energy and willingness in leaders and employees constantly impacted by organizational change. Change fatigue symptoms include stress and high levels of fear, people not working to capacity and distracted leadership. Without intervention, change fatigue can cause initiatives to stall and fail.

To keep your change initiative moving forward on the right path it's important to know the symptoms of fatigue and the right strategies for addressing them. To help, we've paired the common causes of change fatigue with proven strategies to keep your change efforts on track.

Poor planning and roll out of initiatives

Properly introduce change initiatives. There must be a specific process for announcing change, obtaining buy-in and positioning people to thrive throughout the process. Having a process for constantly communicating the successes resulting from the strategic rollout of change in an organization is also imperative.

Lack of communication about change initiatives

Communicate early and often. Keep those who will be affected by change aware of what is being planned, when it will happen and what they can expect. This can help to squash the fear of the unknown—what things will be like once a change is implemented.

Improper engagement of employees

Engage key stakeholders in planning change. Change is most effective when those being affected by the change have been engaged in planning the change from the beginning. Create a change management task force to work with top leaders; this sends a signal across the organization that the ideas and concerns of employees, including lack of resources to effectively implement change, are being considered as change is planned.

Too much change all at once

Manage the pace of change. Change and the pace of change in organizations are at an all-time high. Many organizations have multiple change initiatives happening at the same time. It is important for leaders to pace the amount and frequency of change in their organization. Businesses should ask: Does everything really have to happen all at once? Can the pace and quantity of change be managed over time? Change is exhausting. It is important to acknowledge this and create opportunities for employees to rest, relax and rejuvenate. Allow people to take time off. Organize a committee that creates internal activities to give people a break from change.

Leaving little room for error

Change initiatives must be flexible and agile. It is a traditional paradigm in organizations that once change is rolled out it should happen as it was originally planned. But this is counterproductive to the effective management of change. It is helpful to monitor change initiatives and, if something is not working, be willing to stop and hit the reset button. It is okay to have do-overs. Establish feedback loops as change is implemented so there is information flowing regarding the effectiveness of the plans.

Interested in learning more? Explore NICHQ's unique [approach to change management](#) or [reach out to one of our experts](#).