



Responding to Organizational Changes

In a changing workplace, where mergers, acquisitions, downsizing and re-engineering are facts of life, it is important to hold yourself accountable for your own job performance, morale, attitude and behavior.

"You need to take initiative to ensure that you will prosper when changes come to your department and the expectations aren't as clear as they once were," says Rosemary T. Salmon, coauthor of *The Mid-Career Tune-Up*. "And instead of waiting for your boss or the company to issue new guidelines, take the opportunity to initiate some personal action plans, so you can actively respond to recent developments."

Strategies for Success

Keep these strategies in mind when your company changes directions, objectives or structure. They are proactive responses to managing your own performance and morale.

- **Do your best to meet cost, time, quality and quantity requirements.** "Even as things around you change, keep your work moving along at a steady, predictable pace," says Ms. Salmon. "You may need to interact more with others who can help you with the resources you need and you may need to keep others informed about new and unexpected obstacles or bottlenecks."
- **Adjust to changing priorities.** You should be able to shift from tasks that are comfortable, habitual and easy to new activities that will help you meet new priorities. "It may be difficult for you to let go of routine actions that you've been doing for a long time," says Ms. Salmon. "But the need to change your approach to accommodate new priorities is essential."
- **Take the initiative in developing creative solutions to problems, and do what's necessary to get the job done.** Decide which is the better option -- a thoughtful, analytical, data-based approach that leads to informed and tested conclusions; or an intuitive, creative, gut-feeling approach based on brainstorming and other imaginative techniques.
- **Accept responsibility for your work and for the consequences of your efforts.** Accountability is an

important concept for employers. Companies and their managers are looking for people willing to accept responsibility for whatever happens, even if the results aren't as positive as they may have been in the past. "In times of rapid, unpredictable change, doing the best you can is a fair expectation," says Ms. Salmon. "Plus, accepting responsibility when things fall short of your manager's expectations or your own personal standards is the first step in learning how to make things better."

- **Set high performance standards for yourself.** You know what you're capable of doing, and you know how much time and energy you're willing to invest in your changing job duties. Once you have defined your own performance expectations and made certain they meet at least the minimum required by your company at this time, you should be able to proceed with confidence.
- **Maintain a high level of enthusiasm and an optimistic perspective about changes in responsibilities and directions.** "Even if you feel that what your company has done or is doing isn't in your best interest, you need to keep your end of the bargain by working as conscientiously and efficiently as possible," says Ms. Salmon.
- **Do your best to foster cooperation and teamwork with others.** "Everyone is probably in the same situation, trying to figure out how things are going to develop and stabilize," she says. "Some of your colleagues may have figured out approaches that can help you, and some of them may be able to benefit from your ideas."

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- **And remember that if you need support with the changes ahead, call your EAP!** It's free and confidential.

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