

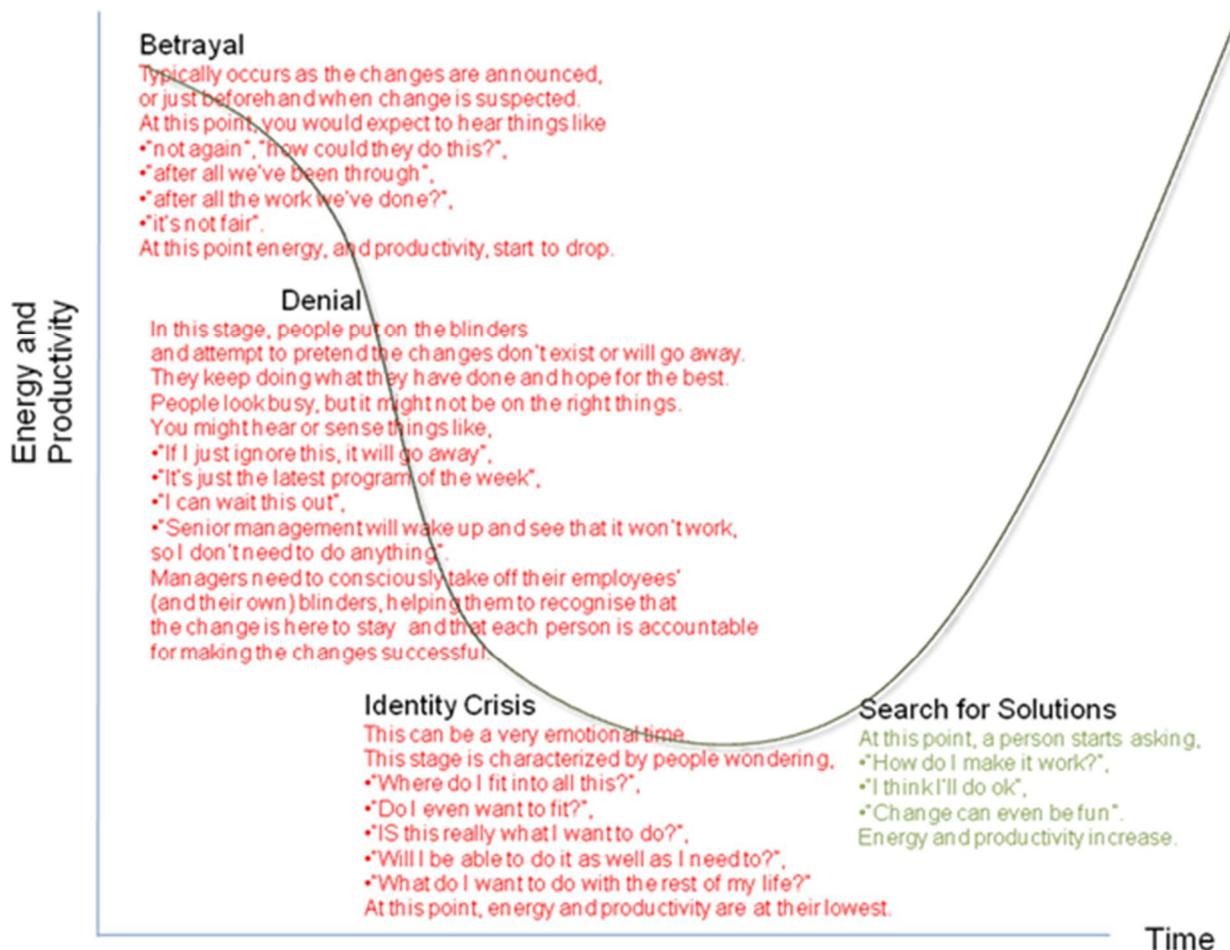


## Managing People Through Change

Change is inevitable in today's world. And whether a person chooses change or has it imposed on them, they are likely to still go through some turmoil about the change.

Our role as leaders is to manage our people, and that includes in times of change. Each individual will react differently, so the support you give them over the course of the change will also need to be unique.

Individuals will generally move through the following stages of resistance when faced with change:





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## Execution Steps

This handout will provide steps that managers can take to help their people to move through their very natural resistance to change, so that the individual can search for solutions as quickly as possible, for their own sake and for the sake of the business.

### To move your people through betrayal:

1. The theme of your communications here should be information-oriented. What is going to happen, when, how and why.
2. Promise change and sell it. Change is here to stay. It will not go away, it will only go faster. Your role as a manager to ensure people understand this fact of business...and that you let them know what they can expect.
3. Give it to them straight. They deserve to know, they can handle it. Leveling with your employees protects your credibility and their trust in you too.
4. Be alert, as reactions are coming – overtly or covertly.
5. Be patient.
6. Be non-defensive.

### To move your people through denial

1. Apply the rule of 8 in all your communication – people need to hear things multiple times in order for them to hear them and understand them. Continue to focus on information-oriented communication.
2. Beef up your 2-way communications. Regularly invite questions, comments, reactions.
3. Check for understanding and challenge assumptions.
4. Be a change agent yourself, so that you can be a model for others who work with and for you. Be flexible, positive and empower yourself. Be supportive of higher management, report problems to them, and be big enough to ask for help.
5. Get resistance to change out in the open. Invite resistance, so that you can work toward overcoming it.
6. Delegate, to give people a sense of involvement and responsibility.
7. Give your troops clear-cut marching orders – minimize the ambiguity and clear up the unknown as much as possible. Consider whether you need to be more structured and hands-on during the change. Give them specifics about their duties and assignments, rather than leaving things vague. Assign deadlines, as slippage can be a bi-product of change. Focus your team.
8. Focus on short-term objectives. Long-term goal setting requires more time and effort and can be difficult when so many things are unknown, so keep momentum going and build confidence by communicating short-term goals. Give employees generous feedback about their progress towards these goals.
9. Establish clear priorities and re-establish them as the transition causes priorities to shift. Keep them clear in the minds of your people, as you delegate work to them, so they can see the connections and realize when one task is no longer a priority.

### To move your people through identity crisis

1. Communications in this phase are more “supportive” and caring; displaying that they are not going through this identity crisis alone.
2. Accept emotional display and provide opportunities for people to vent.
3. Spend more time 1-1.



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4. Take care of the “me” issues quickly. Each person wants to know:
  - a. Will I keep my job?
  - b. How will my pay and benefits be affected?
  - c. Will this affect my opportunities for advancement?
  - d. Will I have a new boss?
  - e. What will be expected of me now?
5. Pay attention to your people, to rebuild morale, and in turn productivity.
  - a. Make them feel valued, through words of encouragement and compliments, both in private and in public.
  - b. Give them a listening ear. Provide opportunities for people to vent.
  - c. Give them a sense of belonging.
  - d. Give them a cause that gives meaning to their day-to-day activities.
6. Ensure you understand what engages your people and what levers you can pull to keep them engaged.
7. Nail down each person’s job. Work roles need clarification, so that individuals know where and how to aim their efforts. Be specific about decision-making authority, personal accountability, and reporting requirements. Help employees see the critical few aspects of their job, so that they are focused. Give plenty of feedback about how they are focusing on the right things.
8. Raise the bar. It might seem counter-intuitive, but people want a stretch at this time, and it means that they won’t have the time to worry about a future which they cannot predict or romanticize about the past.
9. Encourage risk-taking and initiative. When people feel uncertain, they tend to be less willing to make decisions, and move into a holding pattern. But the work still needs to move forward, so you should ensure people know that you don’t expect perfection, but you do require everyone to be independent thinking, decisive and action-oriented.
10. Do not encourage helplessness, by trying to fix all the problems for them – encourage people to have a can-do attitude to fix things themselves.

### As they search for solutions:

1. Don’t rush people out of the emotional effects of identity crisis. It’s important they have time to come to terms with how they feel and what they want.
2. Communications should focus on being inspirational – about the vision for the future.
3. Reinforce hopefulness.
4. Enable your people to identify what they *can* control, rather than focusing on the things over which they have no control.
5. Create an environment where people can practice new skills and work approaches without feeling they are being critically evaluated. Make it easy for them to ask questions without feeling incompetent. Catch people doing something right, so that they can build their confidence and repeat the new behaviors.
6. Look for problems, as they are a normal part of change, and need to be dealt with. Reward people who identify problems and report organizational break-downs.
7. Celebrate success as a team along the way (rather than waiting until the change is complete, which could take a long time).
8. Focus on giving lots of continuous feedback.

### [Credit to Pritchett and Associates]