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Why it's important to embrace change

Kathy Collins

3-4 minutes

MPW Insider is an online community where the biggest names in business and beyond answer timely career and leadership questions. Today's answer for: How do you lead a team during a time of transition? is written by Kathy Collins, CMO of H&R Block.

Change can be scary. It's usually associated with some level of risk, and there are no guarantees with risk. In some ways, we all love the stability associated with sameness, until that sameness takes us down a path of complacency, or even worse — lack of relevancy. But looking back on my 25-year career, I directly correlate the level of personal reward with the most chaos leading to the greatest change. Be it launching new brands, restructuring a team, building risky ad campaigns, or even starting over, these changes are among my fondest career memories. Implementing change is never easy, but here are a few lessons I've learned:

Help employees step outside their comfort zones

How do we, as leaders, sell change or transition to our teams? Can you imagine a world without streaming music, online shopping, or a network of available drivers to take you where you need to go? Obviously, technology has enabled rapid change across every business category, but even more powerful is that today's

consumer has complete control. Whereas some of us grew up with one or two options for making a purchase, there are dozens of choices today. Consumers are surrounded by options, which is why we must keep evolving and changing on our terms before a competitor forces us to do so on theirs.

Be open and honest

Change is a must. It's a business must, a brand must, and a consumer must. As leaders, the key is to bring the team along with you. Be transparent and speak with integrity. Be true to your word, and don't apologize for implementing change. I have learned that people *want* to follow an influential leader, and well-guided change is energizing and motivating.

Don't ever think professionals — regardless of level — can't handle the truth. The way to bring them along is to be honest, open, and clear with the desired outcomes. Never pretend to have all of the answers, but give your team the opportunity to weigh in. Share your concerns and show your vulnerabilities. Engage your team regularly and frequently. If your team trusts you, they will want to follow. If you pretend to have all the answers, they will disengage.

Keep smiling

Stay positive, stand shoulder to shoulder with your team, and lead. Knock down the obstacles together, stumble together, and succeed together. Then, celebrate together.

Read all answers to the MPW Insider question: How do you lead a team during a time of transition?

[*A good boss never leaves their employees in the dark*](#) by Sandi Peterson, group worldwide chairman of Johnson & Johnson.