

Tell employees truthfully how they're valued

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Q: "I own a company on Vancouver Island and employ 55 people. We're lucky because the business is doing well in this economy. The one downside is I've had to make a lot of changes to manage the increased business activity. That's meant some have had to learn new skills and most have had increased workloads. I've provided some training and am aware of the negative impacts. What more can I do?"

A: You obviously have your finger on the pulse of your business and understand your people are the foundation of your success. Make sure they know how much you value their contributions.

You also need to understand what motivates and keeps them interested in their work. Most people want to do a good job and will put out a little extra if they know it's going to serve them well in the long run. Any change -- good or bad -- causes one to ask, "What's in it for me?" Helping your employees to help themselves is the best support you can provide. Encourage their acceptance of change as a constant element not always in their control; recognizing what's in their control and what's not is key.

The choices your employees make about how they personally handle change is within their control. Change can either happen to them or with them.

Here are three questions you can ask to provoke some thought to help put them in the driver's seat:

1. What does this change mean for you personally?
2. How does what you do connect to what we're trying to achieve with this change as a company?
3. What is one thing you can start, stop or shift in order to take more control of your new responsibilities?

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