

Change Management: Frequently Asked Questions

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I. Why Questions (Questions and concerns that relate to seeing the big picture)

1. Why are the proposed changes needed?
2. Why are the proposed changes being considered now?
3. Why were the proposed changes not introduced before?
4. Why do you think the proposed changes are better than the status quo?
5. Why have more people not been involved in developing the proposed changes?
6. Why isn't more time being allowed for the proposed changes to be discussed?
7. Why have you selected these changes as opposed to other changes?
8. Why did we not receive prior notice that changes were being considered?
9. Why are the proposed changes targeted on me and my part of the organization?

II. Who Questions (Questions and concerns that relate to people and roles)

1. Who decided that change is needed?
2. Who decided that all the proposed changes will focus on my part of the organization?
3. Who developed the proposed changes?
4. Who approved the proposed changes?
5. Who agrees with you that the proposed changes are needed?
6. Who will be in charge of managing the proposed changes?
7. Who will implement the proposed changes?
8. Who will be in charge of monitoring the impacts of the proposed changes?
9. Who will decide if the proposed changes are working?
10. Who has the power and authority to reverse the proposed changes if they are not working?
11. Who will be affected by the proposed changes?
12. Who will be affected most by the proposed changes?
13. Who will benefit from the proposed changes?
14. Who will benefit most from the proposed changes?

15. Who will be adversely affected by the proposed changes?
16. Who will be most adversely affected by the proposed changes?
17. Who have you consulted on the proposed changes?
18. Who will be asked to comment on the proposed changes?
19. Who will review comments on the proposed changes?
20. Who has to agree before the proposed changes are implemented?
21. Who will pay for the proposed changes?
22. Whose program will be most impacted?
23. Who will be held responsible and accountable for ensuring the proposed changes are implemented?
24. Who will be held responsible and accountable if the proposed changes fail to achieve their goals and objectives?
25. Who do you think has enough time to devote to the proposed changes given all the other things they have to do?
26. Who else knows about the proposed changes?

III. What Questions (Challenges that relate to things, people, and roles)

1. What specific changes are being proposed?
2. What problems are the proposed changes meant to address?
3. What are the proposed changes intended to accomplish?
4. What options and alternatives, other than the proposed changes, have been considered?
5. What process did you use to decide which option or alternative would be best?
6. What persons will be affected by the proposed changes?
7. What departments or divisions will be affected by the proposed changes?
8. What processes or procedures will be affected by the proposed changes?
9. What will be the scope of the proposed changes?
10. What are the goals and objectives of the proposed changes?
11. What changes will be needed before the proposed changes can be installed?
12. What are the specifics of the implementation plan?
13. What are the specifics of the transition plan?
14. What is the schedule and timing for the proposed changes?
15. What do you expect will be the response to the proposed changes from within the organization?
16. What do you expect will be the response to the proposed changes from outside the organization?
17. What incentives, rewards, or compensation will you offer for those who are being asked to adopt the proposed changes?
18. What assistance are you offering to those adversely affected by the proposed changes?
19. What are the major uncertainties about the proposed changes?
20. What type of resistance are you expecting to the proposed changes?
21. What barriers do the proposed changes need to overcome?
22. What happens if the proposed changes do not have the intended benefits?

23. What evidence do you have that the proposed changes will be beneficial?
24. What is the most compelling argument for the need for proposed changes?
25. What is the most compelling argument for maintaining the status quo?
26. What change comes first?
27. What change comes next?
28. What things have to change?
29. What people have to change?
30. What roles have to change?
31. What direction will the proposed changes take us?
32. What permissions are needed before the proposed changes can be put into effect?

IV. Where Questions (Challenges that relate to direction and how things fit together)

1. Where in the organization will the proposed changes take place?
2. Where in the organization did the proposed changes originate?
3. Where can people get more information about the proposed changes?
4. Where can people send their comments on the proposed changes?
5. Where will comments on the proposed changes be posted?
6. Where does [person "x"; department "y"; organization "z"] fit into the proposed changes?
7. Where are you going to find the resources to implement and sustain the proposed changes?

V. When Questions (Challenges that relate to scheduling and timing)

1. When was the decision made that changes are needed?
2. When will the proposed changes take place?
3. When will people be notified about the proposed changes?
4. When will we have time to review the proposed changes?
5. When will the proposed changes become finalized?
6. When will the schedule for the proposed changes be announced?

VI. How Questions (Challenges that relate to how things influence one another and how to measure impacts)

1. How involved have you been in developing the proposed changes?
2. How will the proposed changes be implemented?
3. How will the proposed changes be communicated within the organization?
4. How much have others been involved in developing the proposed changes?
5. How ready are we to change?
6. How will the proposed changes be communicated externally?
7. How will the proposed changes be communicated internally?
8. How much time will we have to review the proposed changes?

9. How long will it take for the proposed changes to be implemented?
10. How much time from other work will be needed to implement the proposed changes take?
11. How do you expect those implementing the proposed changes to fulfill their other work responsibilities?
12. How will you deal with those who resist or don't want to change?
13. How will you integrate the proposed changes with activities in other parts of the organization?
14. How many people will be affected by the proposed changes?
15. How will people function during the transition period as the proposed changes are being made?
16. How will you monitor and adjust the effectiveness of the proposed changes?
17. How will you measure the outcomes and benefits of the proposed changes?
18. How will you sustain any benefits that will be derived from the proposed changes?
19. How much will the proposed changes cost?
20. How will we pay for the proposed changes?
21. How many resources will need to be diverted to achieve the proposed changes?
22. How many resources will need to be diverted to sustain the proposed changes?
23. How will the costs for the proposed changes affect the budgets of other programs or projects?
24. How much will the benefits of the proposed changes outweigh the costs?
25. How will people who have comments on the proposed changes be informed about the response to their comments?
26. How will you address rumors, misperceptions, and misinformation about the proposed changes?
27. How will you prevent the dissemination of rumors and false information about the proposed changes?
28. How will those making decisions about the proposed changes be impacted themselves by the consequences?
29. How prepared are you to address and mitigate any resistance that will develop in response to the proposed changes?"
30. How will the proposed changes affect me, my work, my part of the organization?

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77 Questions Commonly Asked by Journalists during a Crisis

(Reprinted from: Covello, V.T., Keeping Your Head In A Crisis: Responding To Communication Challenges Posed By Bio-terrorism And Emerging Infectious Diseases. Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO), 2003)

Journalists are likely to ask six questions in a crisis (who, what, where, when, why, how) that relate to three broad topics: (1) what happened; (2) What caused it to happen; (3) What does it mean.

Specific questions include:

- 1) What is your name and title?
- 2) What are your job responsibilities?
- 3) What are your qualifications?
- 4) Can you tell us what happened?
- 5) When did it happen?
- 6) Where did it happen?
- 7) Who was harmed?
- 8) How many people were harmed?
- 9) Are those that were harmed getting help?
- 10) How certain are you about this information?
- 11) How are those who were harmed getting help?
- 12) Is the situation under control?
- 13) How certain are you that the situation is under control?
- 14) Is there any immediate danger?
- 15) What is being done in response to what happened?
- 16) Who is in charge?
- 17) What can we expect next?
- 18) What are you advising people to do?
- 19) How long will it be before the situation returns to normal?
- 20) What help has been requested or offered from others?
- 21) What responses have you received?
- 22) Can you be specific about the types of harm that occurred?
- 23) What are the names of those that were harmed?
- 24) Can we talk to them?
- 25) How much damage occurred?
- 26) What other damage may have occurred?
- 27) How certain are you about damages?
- 28) How much damage do you expect?
- 29) What are you doing now?
- 30) Who else is involved in the response?
- 31) Why did this happen?
- 32) What was the cause?

- 33) Did you have any forewarning that this might happen?
- 34) Why wasn't this prevented from happening?
- 35) What else can go wrong?
- 36) If you are not sure of the cause, what is your best guess?
- 37) Who caused this to happen?
- 38) Who is to blame?
- 39) Could this have been avoided?
- 40) Do you think those involved handled the situation well enough?
- 41) When did your response to this begin?
- 42) When were you notified that something had happened?
- 43) Who is conducting the investigation?
- 44) What are you going to do after the investigation?
- 45) What have you found out so far?
- 46) Why was more not done to prevent this from happening?
- 47) What is your personal opinion?
- 48) What are you telling your own family?
- 49) Are all those involved in agreement?
- 50) Are people over reacting?
- 51) Which laws are applicable?
- 52) Has anyone broken the law?
- 53) How certain are you about whether laws have been broken?
- 54) Has anyone made mistakes?
- 55) How certain are you that mistakes have not been made?
- 56) Have you told us everything you know?
- 57) What are you not telling us?
- 58) What effects will this have on the people involved?
- 59) What precautionary measures were taken?
- 60) Do you accept responsibility for what happened?
- 61) Has this ever happened before?
- 62) Can this happen elsewhere?
- 63) What is the worst case scenario?
- 64) What lessons were learned?
- 65) Were those lessons implemented? Are they being implemented now?
- 66) What can be done to prevent this from happening again?
- 67) What would you like to say to those who have been harmed and to their families?
- 68) Is there any continuing danger?
- 69) Are people out of danger? Are people safe? Will there be inconvenience to employees or to the public?
- 70) How much will all this cost?
- 71) Are you able and willing to pay the costs?
- 72) Who else will pay the costs?
- 73) When will we find out more?
- 74) What steps need to be taken to avoid a similar event?
- 75) Have these steps already been taken? If not, why not?
- 76) Why should we trust you?
- 77) What does this all mean?

Message Map

Stakeholder Question or Concern:

Key Message

Key Message

Key Message

Support-
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1.1

Support-
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Info. 2.1

Support-
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3.1

Support-
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1.2

Support-
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2.2

Support-
ing Info.
3.2

Support-
ing Info.
1.3

Support-
ing Info.
2.3

Support-
ing Info.
3.3

PERIODIC TABLE FOR HIGH CONCERN COMMUNICATION

Use these templates for high concern, risk, crisis, and change management situations

Basic Templates		Key Templates	Advanced Templates	
R3 (Rule of 3)	IDK (I Don't Know)	CCO (Compassion, Conviction, Optimism)	ALE (Authority, Logic, Emotion)	KDG (Know, Do, Go)
<p>Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question.</p> <p>Recommendation: Provide no more than three messages, ideas, or points at a time.</p>	<p>Use when you don't know, can't answer, or aren't the best source.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat the question (without negatives) Say "My ability to answer is limited by...;" or "I don't know" Say why you can't answer Provide a follow up with a deadline Bridge to what you can say 	<p>Use when asked a question with high emotion.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compassion (Caring, Empathy, Listening) Conviction Optimism <p>Example: (1) "I am very sorry to hear about...;" (2) I'm confident that...; (3) In the future, I believe that..."</p>	<p>Use to encourage appropriate attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A)uthority Message: Appeal to authority—those perceived as high in credibility (L)ogic Message: Appeal to logic (if x, then y). (E)motion Message: Appeal to an emotion (anger, fear, joy, empathy, surprise, grief, hope, etc). 	<p>Use to give upset people a greater sense of control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (K)now Message: Share what is most important for people to know. (D)o Message: Share what is most important for people to do. (G)o Message: Share where people should go for credible information.
P/R (Primacy/Recency)	FA (False Allegation)	27/9/3 (27 Words, 9 Seconds, 3 Messages)	TBC (Trust, Benefit, Control)	KDD (Know, Do, Do)
<p>Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question.</p> <p>Recommendation: Provide the most important items or points first and last.</p>	<p>Use when responding to a hostile question, false allegation, or criticism.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat/paraphrase question without repeating the negative; repeat underlying value or concern, or use more neutral language Indicate the issue is important Indicate what you have done, are doing, or will do to address the issue 	<p>Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question.</p> <p>Recommendation: Be brief and concise in your first response; no more than 27 words, 9 seconds, 3 messages.</p>	<p>Use when responding to questions or concerns indicating high perceived risks or outrage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (T)rust Message: Listening to messages communicating listening, caring, or transparency. (B)enefit Message: Messages communicating benefits to the individual, org, or society. (C)ontrol Message: Messages that give people things to do or give them a sense of control. 	<p>Use to give upset people a greater sense of control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (K)now Message: Share what is most important for people to know. (D)o Message: Share what you are doing to address the concern. (D)o Message: Share what people can do to address the concern.
G/WI (Guarantee/What If)	AGL-4 (Average Grade Level Minus Four)	IN=3P (One Negative Equals Three Positives)	CAP (Caring, Action, Perspective)	VCD (Voice, Choice, Do)
<p>Used when asked a "what if" question or to guarantee an event or outcome.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicate that the question is about the future Indicate that the past and the present help predict the future Bridge to "what is": known facts, processes or actions 	<p>Use when responding to any high stress or emotionally charged question.</p> <p>Steps: Provide information at four or more grade levels below the average grade level of the audience.</p>	<p>Use when breaking bad news or stating a negative.</p> <p>Recommendation: Balance one bad news or negative message with at least three or more positive, constructive, or solution-oriented messages.</p>	<p>Use to give upset people a greater sense of control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (C)aring Message: Communicates listening, caring, empathy, and compassion. (A)ction Message: Actions you are taking to address the concern. (P)erspective Message: Helps put the concern in perspective. 	<p>Use to give upset people a greater sense of control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (V)oice Message: Messages communicating listening, dialogue, or participation. (C)hoice Message: Messages communicating options, alternatives, or available choices. (D)o Message: Messages that give people things to do, increase feelings of hope, etc.
AAF (Acknowledge, Action, Follow-up)	Y/N (Yes/No Template)	KDK (Know/Don't Know)	C/S (Caring/Sharing)	Reference
<p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A)cknowledge Uncertainty: Identify knowledge gaps and challenges (A)ction: State actions you have taken, are taking or will take to address the issue (F)ollow-up: Provide information on where people can obtain timely and credible information 	<p>Use when asked a yes/no question that cannot be answered yes or no.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicate you have been asked yes/no question Indicate it would be difficult to answer the question yes or no Indicate why it would be difficult to answer the question yes or no Respond to the underlying concern 	<p>Use when there is high uncertainty.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State what you know State what you don't know State what you are doing to achieve greater certainty or knowledge 	<p>Use when responding to a question or statement containing incorrect information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (C)aring Message: State what you and the person holding incorrect information have in common. (S)haring Message (1): Invite person holding incorrect information to share their information w/ you. (S)haring Message (2): Share the correct information again. 	<div>  <p>Dr. Vincent Covello, Director www.centerforriskcommunication.com</p> </div> <div>  <p>Maga Design, Visual Strategists www.magadesign.com</p> </div>