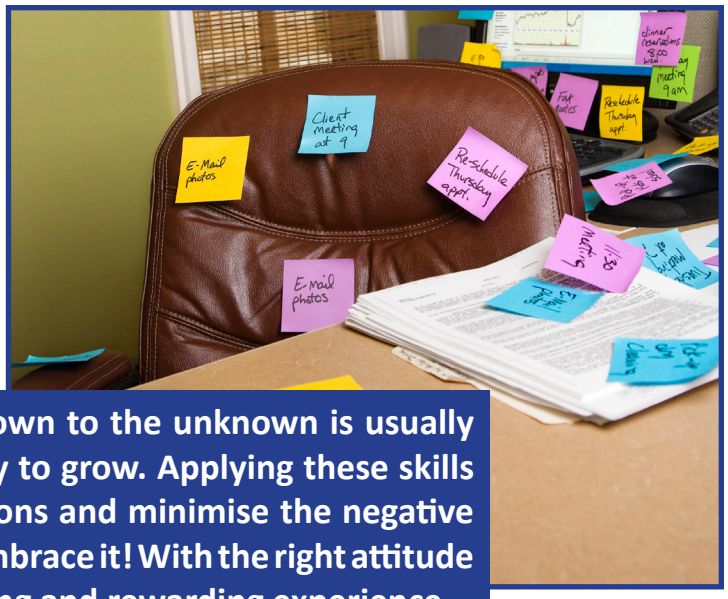
Coping with organisational change



Although the transition from the known to the unknown is usually stressful, it gives you the opportunity to grow. Applying these skills will help you face challenging situations and minimise the negative effects thereof. Don't resist change, embrace it! With the right attitude and skills, it could be a very stimulating and rewarding experience.

The adjustment period is usually uncomfortable, but there are things you can do to make it easier for yourself:

- Expect change. The only constant in life is change. Expect it and prepare for it during stable periods. This can help you develop your own personal tool kit of coping strategies when change ensues.
- Anticipate disruption. It's unrealistic to expect yourself to go on as if nothing's changed. Allow yourself to feel a little off-centre or angry, sad, anxious or confused about the change.
- Focus on the known. We tend to over-focus on the unknown because that's where our anxiety lies. To avoid unnecessary worry, focus on the known elements in the new situation.
- Look for meaning. Change disrupts the continuity of life, but even the most difficult and traumatic changes can be useful. You can increase your sense of personal control and power by finding the meaning or valuable outcome behind it.
- Build a support network. It's better to have a support system in place before change occurs than to try to establish one when it does. People who have strong support systems normally come through stressful situations far better than those who don't.
- Take care of yourself. Change produces stress, which can have very real and serious health consequences. Get enough rest, eat well, and take time every day to get some exercise.

Are you handling change well?

If you are beginning to feel overwhelmed it may be time to turn to a professional counsellor for help. Some signs that may indicate you need to see an expert include:

- Your emotions are getting out of control: You may start crying for no clear reason, fly into a fit of rage, or you may feel depressed, lonely or despair.
- Your everyday routine may be affected: You may be eating more or less than usual, perhaps you have difficulty concentrating during the day or you may even experience memory loss.
- Your relationships may be suffering or falling apart: You may have withdrawn from life or don't feel like being with anyone else, or perhaps you are taking your frustrations out on those around you.
- Your sleeping patterns have changed: You may find it hard to sleep, or you might sleep more than usual, or even try to stay in bed to avoid the rigors of everyday life.

It's unlikely that you'll go through your entire career without facing change of some sort, so there's no running away from it. Don't resist change, embrace it. With the right attitude and skills, it could be a very stimulating and rewarding experience.

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