



QUICK READ

HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND RESILIENCE

The key ingredients behind
successful organisational change



In the hectic world of business, the old adage that ‘the only constant is change’ still rings true today. Everything in a growing business is in perpetual motion. There are no stationary parts. Today, ongoing organisational change is the new normal.

Change can take place at an employee level - there can be new projects, increased workloads and greater responsibility. Changes taking place at this micro level are fairly straightforward to manage with effective communication between employees and managers.

However, when change takes place at a wider departmental or organisational level, there are far more moving parts. It's important to have a firm grip on the wheel to steer the business in the right direction and to ensure the wellbeing of employees.

Dr David Batman, Consultant Occupational Health Physician and member of the Virgin Pulse Science Advisory Board, says “change can result in uncertainty, reducing employee trust in the organisation, and leading to stress and anxiety”. And as numerous studies have demonstrated, the health and wellbeing of employees has a direct impact on the health and success of an organisation.





Organisational change comes in many forms

The most common reasons include:



Scaling operations

Business success and growth, especially over a short period of time, might require employees to quickly scale their work load or work longer hours. Stress and fatigue are inevitable in that case and can take its toll on employee health and wellbeing.



Organisational restructuring

Employee motivation and confidence can deteriorate when an organization is going through restructuring. Job insecurity and high levels of uncertainty can cause employees to lose trust in their employer and affect employee morale, which can spread through the business.



Change of vision or strategy

New business strategies and a change of direction or focus will not only require employee buy-in but might also require the workforce to learn new skills and processes.



Mergers and acquisitions (M&A)

A merger or acquisition can be extremely disruptive to an organisation. Different practices and cultures coming together are going to create a large state of change. M&A activity can have a wide impact, from retaining talent or employee engagement and morale, to client / customer service and delivery.



Digital transformation

Changes to hardware, software or business processes also bring challenges. Whether it's a new HR or communications system that employees need to learn or new technology that requires implementation, training, upskilling and maintenance.

Manage organisational change by building a resilient workforce

A lot can be done at the senior level to manage change. However, underpinning how change is accepted (or rejected) comes down to employees and their resilience. Resilient employees can navigate change more easily – and even see it as an opportunity for growth.

What does resilience look like?

According to Dr David Batman, mentally resilient employees can cope with challenging situations and spring back from the challenges that organisational change brings.

Resilient employees display:

- A positive, optimistic attitude
- Expect difficulties and challenges but won't fear them
- See problems as opportunities and search for a solution
- Take a proactive approach to their physical and psychological health
- Exhibit significantly reduced risk of mental ill health

Wellbeing helps develop resilient employees who can cope with change:

▪ Social networks

Research has shown that having a strong network of social bonds can reduce stress and improve longevity. Challenge-based initiatives around building healthy habits can strengthen bonds between colleagues.

▪ Physical activity

Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive effect on depression, anxiety, and stress. It can also improve sleep and boost memory.

▪ Sleep

Disruptions in sleep can impair the brain's ability to function, and prolonged lack of sleep or interrupted sleep can increase the risk for mental illness.

▪ Nutrition

Although research in the field of nutritional psychology is still fairly new, more studies are starting to reveal how the things you eat impact your mental health. Recent research indicates that a diet high in fresh fruits, vegetables, and Omega 3 fatty acids may reduce the risk for depression.

▪ Mindfulness

Although there are many other benefits, mindful practices like meditation have been shown to reduce the effects of pain, stress, and anxiety.

Team-based wellbeing initiatives can help employees understand the informal elements of organisational change, such as unwritten rules, cultural norms and workplace social behaviour.

Employee health and wellbeing solutions can help build a more resilient workforce to deal with change. Happy, healthy employees are more likely to see change as an opportunity to shine.

If change is already taking place, the idea of adding new projects to the pile, such as a health and wellbeing platform, may seem daunting. However, arming employees with the right tools to embrace change can certainly help them deal with shifting targets and uncertainty. A positive attitude, good health, quality sleep, and teamwork can make a massive difference to how employees cope with change.

Virgin Pulse is the world's largest, most comprehensive digital health, wellbeing and engagement company. Founded as part of Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Group, our goal is to help clients build healthy workplace cultures that encourage all employees to be their best and most productive selves, at work and beyond.

68%

of members reported a decrease in stress at work or at home*

54%

of members reported an increase in productivity or concentration*

62%

of clients surveyed witnessed an improvement in engagement/morale^

75%

of organisations realised an improvement in their employees' productivity^

Ready to create a happier, healthier, more productive workforce? Talk to an expert at Virgin Pulse to get started.

Learn more at virginpulse.com

Find us on [facebook](#) | [twitter](#) | [linkedin](#)

Data source: *Results from 2018 Virgin Pulse Global Challenge Final Report. ^ 2017 client survey

