

CORPORATE INSIGHTS - JANUARY 2012

**THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN' AND...
YOU BETTER BE DOING MORE THAN SINGIN' RIGHT NOW!**

How do you think your advisory teams are handling all the radical change our industry has experienced in the last four years? What leadership do you need to demonstrate during a time of transition?

First, you must understand the range of responses, often negative, that individuals can experience. When the change is sudden or unexpected, often people are in shock. They may feel negative emotions such as distress, disgust, surprise, or grief. Like a deer caught in headlights some may become paralyzed with fear. Change can often lead to a mental wrestling match of confusion. Questions arise and rumors circulate. Often people immediately respond by thinking only of themselves, fearing what will happen next, and sometimes resisting the inevitable. Even if the transition is seen as being a good move, stress can grow as individuals have to leave something familiar and well-defined and move to something new and unknown. Approximately 40% of our society vehemently resists change and uncertainty. Performance in organizations often declines rapidly as the staff come to grips with the new norm.

We provide the following tips to help leaders better navigate a change to positive results:

- Expect there to be multiple reactions to a situation and that not everyone will be as accepting to the new initiative or decision as you.
- Communicate directly, honestly, and calmly.
- Seek others' perspectives on how the change will impact staff, clients, and the organization's goals.
- Put yourself in their shoes to understand the impact the change may have.
- Provide as much information as often as possible. You may find yourself repeating yourself during this adjustment period.
- Give time and space so others can process the change.
- Provide many forums for questions. Private and group meetings may be needed over a period of time.
- If you don't know an answer, validate the person's need to know and ensure them you will seek out the information.
- Provide reassurance and take as much time as necessary to address issues and concerns.
- Stay close to the field so you can quickly address the spreading of false information or negative chit chat.
- Don't make rash promises that you cannot keep.
- Stay positive and help people visualize a bright future so that they have something to look forward to.
- Involve people as much as you possible so that they have a sense of control in implementing an established decision. The more we feel in control, the less resistance we usually have.
- Encourage downtime during a stressful change. A team lunch or fun outing may loosen up any tension and reenergize everyone to follow through on the change.