

How to Craft a Strong Change Narrative for Your Company

When your company is undergoing major change, it can be a tough transition for everyone, especially your organization's employees. After all, they may be wondering how the company's transformations will affect them, their roles, responsibilities, co-workers, leadership and other aspects of their lives in the coming months.



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To help dispel any rumors and to ensure everyone is on the same page about your company's upcoming progress, it's crucial that you craft a compelling and honest narrative with your leadership team. As a result, you'll be in a strong position to address any employee issues or disagreements, while at the same time heightening your company's success for the upcoming months.

Marquis Parker, vice president of business services for MRINetwork, says it's important to always consider your employees first. "Change is never easy. Make sure you're making staff a top priority as you put together your change narrative," he says. "It's very likely their day-to-day work will be directly impacted by the business transformation, so you want to do everything possible to make the process as painless as possible."

What does a strong strategic narrative entail? According to Forbes contributor Chris Cancialosi, it involves several things. "A strategic narrative centers on a leader's ability

to articulate a clear and compelling vision and strategy for the future of the organization," he writes. One can also be useful because it:

1. Illustrates the change in a positive fashion
2. Creates an environment for employees to give feedback
3. Shows that a company values its key stakeholders

Here are three tips to guide you in crafting your own successful strategic narrative:

1. Gather input from the most important individuals at your company

To successfully craft a compelling and trustworthy change narrative for your company, the first thing you want to do is to collect as much information as possible, including input from "key stakeholders," according to Cancialosi. Patti Sanchez, who wrote an article for the Harvard Business Review and is the Chief Strategy Officer of Duarte, agrees. "A transformation won't succeed without broad involvement," she writes.

To do this effectively, you'll need to tap your trusted advisors and members of your company's leadership team, to discuss and weigh the story in a truthful and supportive manner. "Try and get as much feedback as you can during this pivotal step in the process," says Parker. "It will help you craft an even stronger transformation narrative."

The result of brainstorming the narrative with the individuals who know your business best is that you will be able to present something that will ultimately benefit the transformation you're aiming to enact over the coming year.

2. Work closely with your team to draft a narrative that exudes empathy

After gathering this crucial input from stakeholders, it's time to craft a narrative that speaks to the transformation your company is about to undergo and also illustrates empathy. In her HBR article, for example, Sanchez

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Frontline Analysis by the MRINetwork Team of Global Search Experts

showcases just how important this quality is when presenting organizational change. “If you want to lead a successful transformation, communicating empathetically is critical,” she writes.

However, this won't be easy. In fact, it's likely to be a time-intensive process because it also requires a strong vision of the different avenues through which you want to share your transformation. Some options include sending emails to employees, holding meetings to fill people in on the upcoming changes, working with public relations and media teams to share the information publicly, and other strategies.

Once you've figured out how to strategically share your change narrative in an empathetic way, you can meet with your leadership team (1) to discuss what must be included in the outline and (2) to ultimately agree upon what channels will serve as the foundation of your transformation communications.

3. Share the narrative with your employees in a confident, composed manner

You've spent weeks brainstorming and building out your strategic plan of action for sharing this change narrative, and now it's time to put the final touches on the communication plan. Once it's been edited and approved by key members of your team internally, it's finally time to share this information with your employees as well as any external partners.

During this period, it's important that those on your leadership team act confidently when discussing information with others. For instance, a recently published article on Fast Company's website states, “Change can breed unexpected developments, and leaders need to show composure to the team looking to them for guidance.” As a result, you'll help others feel more comfortable about the upcoming transformations.

Another key part of the process: make sure that you allow those affected by these changes and transformations to share their feedback at this juncture (whether it's positive or negative). Parker agrees that you should keep open lines of communication with

employees. “Always be accessible to your workers during these uncertain times,” he says. “They'll thank you for your honesty and will value transparency from the organization.” You'll help keep your employees motivated, happy and excited to continue working for you, while also investing in the continued success of your company.

Ultimately, gathering input, crafting a narrative that illustrates continued commitment to employees and sharing information in a thoughtful manner will help your transformation process attain its goals.