

EMBRACING CHANGE



BLOG

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November 2022

If there is one thing we have learned over the last few years it is the value of embracing change. Nobody could have predicted the global disruptions but it is true to say that those whose businesses have survived, or even prospered, have been those who have been better at dealing with change.



There have been dramatic changes not just in the workplace and in ways of working, but also in the adoption of technology: how we work with clients in the cloud,

manage teams remotely and use AI-based data analytics software for improving efficiency and accuracy.

Rather than accept change, or rush headlong into it, many of us have had change thrust upon us. As a result, some businesses have pivoted entirely, organisational models have adapted and we have seen long-term thinking change drastically. The idea of the Great Resignation (the observed mass exodus of workers after/during the pandemic) tells us a lot about how we might need to approach work from now on.

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But what does *embracing* change really mean? It is about looking for opportunities and advantages, but it also means being optimistic if a perceived change does not at first look like one for the better. For us at UHY it also means being open to innovation and not necessarily accepting 'business as normal'.



But it is not always easy. Research published in the Harvard Business Review* asserts: "A root cause of resistance to change is that employees identify with and care for

their organisations. People fear that after the change, the organisation will no longer be the organisation they value and identify with."

Of course, change for some people is easier than for others. For those who find it more challenging, it is sometimes the case that being an employee of an established business means not having to deal with the disruptions and pivots usually associated, for example, with startups and entrepreneurial businesses. Some people thrive in an organisation with set processes and procedures, and so do their managers.

CULTURAL SOLUTIONS

However, when change is inevitable, how can you embrace it and encourage your employees to also do so without fear?



One way is to create a culture of dialogue and continuous improvement. Staff and management feedback is essential. By seeking input from your employees, by

showing that you are open to their ideas, and by demonstrating a willingness to embrace new things, you can encourage your people to do the same. Similarly, by setting expectations of continuous improvement, incremental change becomes the norm.

Leading by example and having a positive response to change at management level, whether technological or in terms of process, is also likely to foster a more open-minded approach across the rest of the workforce.

In order to help people cope with change, it is useful to understand how they might *react* to it. For example, some people will respond quickly while others may respond well but with a longer transition time.

Understanding this and adapting your expectations and processes will make embracing change easier.

Addressing reactions and dealing with them diplomatically and sensibly will help, so strong employee–employer relationships are important.

The UHY network has an ambitious, collaborative and innovative culture. We are open to embracing new methods of working when they yield positive outcomes and the same applies to more ‘traditional’ models. It is an approach to change that I hope has served our member firms and their clients well. While nobody would say that the events of the last few years have been anything but difficult, the transformations they have enabled for many of us have been phenomenal and this is something we should all embrace.

*Harvard business review research: *To Get People to Embrace Change, Emphasise What Will Stay the Same*

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