



How easy is it for small charities to change?

All the evidence suggests that change generally, or in terms of a small charities mission and values is difficult and challenging to achieve, largely due to finite resources and capacity.

But what is Change and Change Management?

And why is it deemed so important?

What is it?

Change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and smoothly implemented, and that the lasting benefits of change are achieved.

Why is it so important?

The list is literally endless, but here are some of the more common elements:

For the organisation:

- Change is a planned and managed process. The benefits of the change are known before implementation and serve as motivators for people.
- The organization can respond faster to customer demands (as important for charities as it is for business).
- Change management helps to align resources (this is increasingly important in the voluntary sector).
- Employee performance can increase when staff are supported and understand the change process.
- Change management anticipates challenges and responds effectively.

For staff and volunteers:

- Effective change management supports a smooth transition from the old to the new while maintaining morale, productivity, and even image.
- Provides management and staff support for concerns regarding changes.
- An efficient change management process creates the correct perception of the change for staff and volunteers.
- Managed change can minimize resistance.
- Improves morale and productivity.
- Improves cooperation, collaboration and communication.

Change management is a very broad arena, but Volunteer Now has compiled a simple 5 step strategy to assist with any form of change management:

Acknowledge and understand the need for change:

We all know that smaller charities work in a very complex and ever more competitive landscape. External forces often necessitate change, but structured change can be difficult to obtain. Jumping to a one size fits all solution is probably not going to work, so take the time to think through all of the options for change you may have at your disposal. Involve as many people as you can in the process of change (trustees, members, service users, clients, stakeholders and funders). A shared understanding of the change is vital, and you can then ensure that your solution addresses the complexity of the problem.

Start by understanding why the change needs to happen: Consider how these drivers are going to affect the organisation. Take a look at tools and techniques (some are reflected at the rear of this Guidance Note).

Communicate the need for change and involve people in developing the change process:

This sounds very technical, but it really isn't. Once you have explored the situation and fully understand what needs to happen, you will then need to communicate this. When you communicate with people, make sure they are aware of the reasons for change and how this will affect them. It may be that there are different implications for different stakeholders, so make sure this is clear, and you have some resource for ensuring this communication is undertaken.

Volunteer Now state:

It is important to give communication and involvement the time it needs. Rush the communication aspect of managing change and people's commitment will be weakened.

Develop your change plans:

Having clearly communicated and developed a shared understanding of the change, you need to detail the change plans. This is all about examining where you want to be, once the change process has been undertaken.

- What will be different?
- What are the objectives you want to achieve?
- How will you measure performance?
- How will you specify the change you want to see?
- How will this affect people and structures?
- How will training issues be identified as a result of the change?

Implement your change plans:

This is the change itself. Make sure everyone knows what has to happen and what their role is. Provide the support and advice required. Maintain some routine as far as is possible. Take a look at team and individual change to understand how people react to change and how you can manage these reactions. Some of your staff or volunteers may not react well to change, so ensure you provide extra levels of support for those that need it.

Evaluate progress and celebrate success:

As soon as you can start identifying what is going well, make sure people are thanked appropriately, their hard work acknowledged and successes celebrated.

Further reading:

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/change/basics-on-managing-change/fivesteps>

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_87.htm

<https://change.walkme.com/5-change-management-tools-and-techniques-to-master-now/>

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/change/tools>

<http://www.change-management-coach.com/benefits-of-change-management.html>