



Change communication checklist

Before you communicate a change - check this first



Change creates uncertainty - and uncertainty fuels stress. Use this checklist before sending an email, holding a team meeting, or having a 1:1 about change, to build clarity, trust and psychological safety.

Have I clearly explained what is changing?

Best practice

- Be specific and concrete - avoid vague language.
- Focus on what will be *different* from today.
- If only part of the picture applies to this team, say so.

Helpful prompts

- What exactly will change in day-to-day work?
- What stays the same?

Example

“From next month, our reporting process will move to the new system. Team structure and roles will stay the same.”



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[Communicating with your team](#)

Have I explained why the change is happening?

Best practice

- Link the change to a clear reason (business need, customer impact, compliance, growth).
- Avoid over-justifying - clarity is better than defensiveness.
- Be honest, even if the reason is uncomfortable.

Helpful prompts

- What problem is this change trying to solve?
- Why now?

Example

“This change is happening because our current process isn’t scaling as we grow, and it’s creating delays for customers.”

Have I been honest about what’s still unknown?

Best practice

- It’s okay not to have all the answers.
- Being transparent about uncertainty builds more trust than pretending certainty.
- Share when updates are likely to come

Helpful prompts

- What do I genuinely know right now?
- What decisions are still being worked through?

Example

“We don’t yet know what the final timeline will look like, but we expect more detail in the next two weeks.”



Have I avoided speculation or false reassurance?

Best practice

- Don't guess, promise, or soften the message if you don't have facts.
- Avoid phrases like "Everything will be fine" or "Nothing will change for you" unless you're certain.
- Calm comes from clarity, not optimism.

Helpful prompts

- Am I sharing facts or assumptions?
- Could this statement backfire later?

Better alternative

 "I understand this may feel worrying. I'll share updates as soon as they're confirmed."

Have I planned where and how questions can be asked?

Best practice

- Make it clear when and where people can ask questions.
- Offer multiple options - some people won't speak up in groups.
- Encourage ongoing questions, not just one-off discussion.

Helpful prompts

- Will people feel safe asking questions here?
- Have I allowed time for follow-ups?

Examples

 "We'll leave time for questions at the end of this meeting."
"You can also book time with me 1:1 if you'd rather talk privately."



Am I using more than one communication channel?

Best practice

- Important messages shouldn't rely on one format.
- Different people absorb information differently.
- Reinforcement reduces misunderstanding.

Helpful prompts

- Have I followed up verbal messages in writing?
- Have I checked understanding in 1:1s?

Good practice mix

Team meeting → **shared context**

Email or written summary → **clarity**

1:1s → **emotional check-in**

Have I considered how this might feel for my team?

Best practice

- Change is emotional, not just operational.
- Different people will react differently - all reactions are valid.
- Acknowledge feelings without trying to fix them immediately.

Helpful prompts

- What might feel unsettling about this change?
- Who might need extra support or time?

Example

"I know this may feel unsettling, and it's okay if you need time to process it."



Quick reminder for managers

You don't need to have all the answers to lead change well.

Your role is to:

Communicate clearly

Listen actively

Provide stability...

...even when things are still evolving.

Quick win

Before you communicate any change, write down:

- 1. What's changing**
- 2. Why it's happening**
- 3. What's still unknown**

If you can explain those three things simply, you're ready.

Next steps

Log your 1:1s with your employees in Breathe.

Pick up where you left off and keep track of conversations, progress and next steps.



[See more on tracking 1:1s with Breathe](#)