

A WORKING REFERENCE FOR LEADERS & TRAINERS

The 3 Phases of Change Communication

Every change initiative — a new SOP, a system rollout, a restructure, a leadership transition — succeeds or fails on what gets said in three discrete windows. Miss any one of them and the change either stalls, fragments, or quietly reverses. Adapted from *Failure to Communicate*.

PHASE 01

Before

Weeks 4–2 prior · the window most often skipped

OBJECTIVE

Build the explanation. Earn the right to lead the change by saying clearly: *why now, what is changing, what is not, and what we are protecting.*

CUES THAT WORK

- Name the problem in the team's own words
- Show the data the decision rests on
- Acknowledge what gets harder, not just better
- Invite questions before the rollout

PHASE 02

During

Go-live week through week 2 · daily presence required

OBJECTIVE

Hold the line on the change while absorbing reality. The plan meets the floor. The floor will tell you what the plan got wrong. Decide what you will adjust and what stays fixed.

CUES THAT WORK

- Daily stand-up at the affected area
- Visible decision-making, in public
- Distinguish "noise" from "signal" openly
- Update the rollout doc — same week

PHASE 03

After

Weeks 3–8 post · the window most often abandoned

OBJECTIVE

Close the loop. Return to the team with what changed, what didn't, what the data now says, and what the next decision will be. This is where trust is either banked or burned.

CUES THAT WORK

- Publish the before/after metrics
- Credit the names who carried it
- Name what the next problem is
- Ask "what would you change next time?"

READY-TO-USE OPENER SCRIPTS

BEFORE

"Here's what we're changing in two weeks, here's *why now*, and here's what I need to hear from you in the next ten days that would change our plan."

DURING

"Day three. Two things are working, one thing isn't. The thing that isn't — we're adjusting *by Friday*. Here's how."

AFTER

"Six weeks in. The metric moved from X to Y. Here's what we got wrong about the timeline. Here's the next decision we owe you."

THE RULE: Skipping the After phase is the single most common failure mode. *The change isn't done when the rollout ends — it's done when the loop closes.*