3 Tips to Help Business Leaders Combat Change Fatigue

Up to 70% of organizational change efforts fail (*Source*). Ignoring change fatigue is a key contributor to failure.

Often, business leaders don't account for various changes occurring simultaneously within their organization (e.g., new leadership, updating processes or protocols, using a new tool, shifting strategy, moving facilities, reorganizing departments, adding new members to a team).

In the face of multiple changes, employees can quickly become overwhelmed. This creates change fatigue, resulting in a loss of productivity, increased errors, burnout, and even turnover.

These three tips can help you combat change fatigue and increase the likelihood of change success.

1. Don't underestimate the bandwidth required for change

Problem	Solution
No time to master new skills	**Aggressive prioritization**
Layering change efforts on top of "business as usual" tasks, and expecting employees to work at their regular pace while also learning new procedures.	There is no "extra" bandwidth. Create the bandwidth required to take on change by offloading work from employees.
"Dealing with change consumes the already finite bandwidth people have available to devote to their work…When the limit is reached, the result is change fatigue." - Elise Olding, research VP at Gartner. (*Source*—Report available to Gartner clients)	An initial dip in productivity is normal as employees get up to speed with new procedures and incorporate them into their workflows. This should take around 60 days (i.e., how long it takes to instill a new habit).

2. Remember that communication involves 'listening,' not just 'telling'

Problem	Solution
Ineffective communication	**Careful messaging**
Many business leaders dictate how and when employees should change, viewing communication as a one-way, one-time event. **Note**: Just 13% of employees strongly agree that leadership communicates effectively with the rest of their organization (*Source*).	• **Share** multiple times through multiple methods. Convey the "what," "why," and "how" in your message. • **Listen**. Check for understanding by asking for feedback. Use peer advocacy, 1on1s, and surveys to gather feedback. • **Adapt** the plan as needed based on the feedback received. This will help build commitment.

3. Recognize that change won't happen at the same speed for everyone

Problem	Solution
Support peters out	**Peer accountability**
Spending the majority of time and energy planning a change initiative and preparing for the rollout, rather than supporting employees during execution. This leads to a lot of time spent getting reluctant employees on board with the initiative, at the expense of supporting and championing early adopters.	Flip where you're focusing your time and attention, from the resistors to the early adopters, and leverage the adopters' behavior and attitude to get more employees on board with the change. Sustain that momentum through peer accountability, which increases the probability of completing a goal by up to 95% (*Source*).