



The 3 Costliest Merger Mistakes and 4 Ways to Avoid Them

by Patti Hathaway, Business Advisor & Author

Merger Mistakes:

1. Tell employees “change is good.” Employees don’t buy it and you will lose credibility. Change is painful.
2. Promise your employees that this will be a “merger of equals.” There are never two winners in a merger. Mergers tend to not be fair so be realistic with your employees. Honesty is always the best policy.
3. Ask for employee feedback on change implementation strategies and then don’t use the feedback. It’s the quickest way to alienate your employees. If you don’t want or need employee input into the change process, then don’t ask for it. Don’t pretend that you are open to suggestions when you are not. Lies at the beginning will cause people to not trust you later.

Merger Recommendations:

1. Don’t change things immediately. Find out the key components which must be merged. Not everything needs to be integrated. Talk with your front line employees in both organizations which are to be merged. Listen and learn. Build on the merged organization’s strengths. Recognize that one solution may not fit both organizations.
2. Determine what changes need to be made. Communicate and explain the changes to the entire organization. Announce what and when the changes will be implemented. Don’t make the announcement and implementation dates too far apart. Half the pain is in the anticipation of the change.
3. Educate people as to why change is painful and what they can do for themselves personally to deal with change.
4. Address rumors as they occur (i.e. have a “Rumor of the Week” section in your employee newsletter/communication pieces).

Excerpted from 93 Tips for Managing Change booklet. Patti Hathaway, CSP, The CHANGE AGENT, is one of fewer than 7% women worldwide to have earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation from the National Speakers Association for her proven presentation skills. She is a Business Advisor and the author of 6 books that have been translated into 5

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