



Outback

Team Building & Training

Strategies for
Companies to
Successfully
Overcome Major
Organizational
Changes

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Strategies for Companies to Successfully Overcome Major Organizational Changes



"Get comfortable being uncomfortable."

It's a Navy SEAL philosophy. But it's totally applicable to the business world, too – especially when big changes happen that can affect the whole organization.

According to research from McKinsey and Company, about 70% of large-scale changes in business fail, with common reasons including a lack of employee engagement, inadequate support from management, and poor cross-functional collaboration. McKinsey also noted that the most difficult part of a big transformation isn't determining what to do, but how to do it.



The reality is that change, in any context, can be uncomfortable. But in business, you often can't avoid it. As a leader, you must be able to effectively make decisions, set goals, and empower your team while navigating through the inevitable changes your business will face throughout its lifetime. And in order to do so, you've got to be open to reshaping your approach to change.

In this guide, we'll dive deep into the different types of large-scale changes that an organization can face and how you can effectively make it through challenges that arise in the wake.

In other words: we'll help you figure how to get comfortable being uncomfortable.



PART ONE:

What Constitutes
Massive Change in
Business? Factors
That Cause It and How
You Can Successfully
Manage It

6 Common Types of Major Changes That Businesses Can Face



The internal and external factors that can shake up your organization.

Ray Kurzweil, director of engineering at Google and respected futurist, once said, "We won't experience 100 years of progress in the 21st century. It will be more like 20,000 years." Kurzweil was specifically referring to technology in this instance - the rapid-fire progression of which is happening so fast it's hard to keep up with.

Technology has not only reshaped the modern workplace and how we work (including organizational software, video conferencing, remote employment options, and social media, just to name a few), but, in a much grander sense, everything from fields of science to the way we communicate.

Change is inevitable - it's a universal truth in almost any context. And businesses are no exception – no matter if they're small startups or international corporations. But what happens when an organization is confronted with a major change? That is, change that is so monumental that it rattles the organizational structure of your company, forces you to reassess your goals, and potentially even impacts the very work you do? The developments in technology are a perfect example of the type of massive change we're talking about. But there are many other things that create significant waves of change in today's workplace, too. Here are five more of them:

1. Economic and Political-Related Factors: External factors like politics and the economy can greatly affect a business in a number of ways, from the rise of inflation and environmental laws to tariffs and sanctions. As such, a company may need to restructure and reorganize their business strategy in accordance to new legislations.





2. Personnel Changes: Particularly at the management level, new leadership can often mean new ways of doing things. New employees can impact company culture, too, especially if they're not aligned with the organization's core values.

3. Mergers and Acquisitions: These events can happen for a number of reasons including wanting to eliminate competition, boosting productivity, or even saving a business from going under. And when two separate entities unite, integration is a common challenge.

4. Company Growth: Growth is another catalyst for change. If a small company gains more popularity and demand, for example, it might no longer meet the needs of its customers and will need to rethink their strategy in order to keep up and cater to their audience.

5. Changing Customer Preferences: Businesses must keep their ears to the ground to keep up with customer needs and wants. Dunkin' Donuts, for example, recognized a spike in consumer demand for coffee drinks and so they made their brews a focal point of new product development and promotional campaigns.

Given the gravity of these types of significant organizational changes, they often bring with them their fair share of challenges. And to succeed in the long run, organizations must become adept at navigating through change by fostering a culture of adaptability. How can this be done? The first step is adjusting your mindset. Read on to learn more about what that means and how you can effectively start the shift.

The Great Value of Shifting Your Mindset



Why you might need to change your thinking and how you can do it.

One of your most important assets in business your mindset. And that's because how you think has a direct impact on your behavior and, in turn, the way you approach situations, deal with change, and overcome challenges. In the words of Tony Robbins, "Nothing in life has any meaning except the meaning we give it."

Your foundational beliefs and attitudes affect the way you experience the world around you. This is often referred to as cognitive bias – a general term that many behavioral psychologists use to describe a systematic pattern in judgement. According to cognitive bias, individuals filter information based on their own past experiences. And, in a business setting, this will inevitably impact how we react and respond to challenges. Some common types of cognitive biases include:

- **Conservatism Bias:** This is where people emphasize pre-existing beliefs over new information. This can make decision-makers underreact to new information and place too much weight on the past. For example, say you spent months booking a tropical vacation that you're really looking forward to. Then, weather reports come in that there's going to be a massive hurricane near your destination. Conservatism will downplay the seriousness of the natural disaster as to not ruin the amazing trip you've already built up in your mind.
- **Confirmation Bias:** This term refers to a bias in which people seek information that affirms their existing beliefs while discounting information that might contradict them. For example, imagine that a person believes that left-handed individuals are more creative than right-handed ones. Whenever this person meets someone that's both right-handed and creative, they'll place greater importance on what they already believe - that left-handed folks are more creative - and brush off anything that says otherwise.
- **Availability Bias:** This view skews future perception based on memorable past events. For example, while shark attacks might be rare, if there have been recent reports of one, people with this bias will overestimate the probability of another one happening.

Cognitive bias, in turn, can affect decision-making and prevent people from thinking differently about finding a new solution to a challenge. For example, if a CEO has always done something one way with a mostly successful outcome, they may hesitate to try a different approach that, as they see it, could result in less favorable results. "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got," as Henry Ford suggested. A coaching and consulting solution such as [Unique Challenges Consulting](#) is a great counter to bias because it can help your team adopt a success-oriented mindset in order to approach and tackle challenges in a fresh way. Check it out to learn more.

But, like Dr. Wayne Dyer said: "When you change the way you see things, the things you see change."





And that's not to say that the change is better, necessarily – it just opens you up to the possibility of something different. And different allows you to see challenges from another perspective, which means new solutions are feasible. It's what psychological coach and writer (and [Outback's Mindset and Management Consultant](#)) Joe Britto calls having a permeable mindset. At work, a permeable mindset can help to foster a culture of adaptability when it comes to change because it's open to consider other perspectives and possibilities.

So, how can you shift your mindset when encountering big change in order to make it more permeable? Here are five tips on how to start:

1. Increase Your Self-Awareness: Take note of your reactions and responses to different situations and individuals. Pay attention to what comes up and ask yourself: "What am I feeling? Are my judgments warranted?" You can do daily touch-bases with yourself to keep any judgements you observe in yourself in check. You can also ask your team something like, "When was the last time something I did or said frustrated you?" That way, you'll get valuable feedback on behaviors or tendencies that you may need to change.

2. Make Your Own Professional Development a Priority: While you might prioritize your team's professional development, taking the time to work on your own, as a leader, can often be challenging. But it's important in order to be able to embrace, manage, and navigate through change. Whether you need to work on communication or collaboration, make the effort to improve what you need to. Check out our guide, [Actionable Habits and Tactics to Drive Leadership Success](#), for lots of great tips on how to manage yourself.



3. Focus on Your Long-Term Vision: Change can be difficult and uncomfortable, but it's necessary if you want your business to grow and succeed. Look beyond whatever your present conditions are and ahead to your long-term goals and vision. You can't reach a destination if you don't know where you're going. Creating something like a five-year plan to outline what you want to achieve can help keep you motivated, accountable, and your eye on the prize as you encounter any obstacles when working towards your goals.

4. Listen to the Perspectives of Trusted Colleagues: Build a high-level team. Meaning, make sure that your team is comprised of top talent. This goes back to the recruitment process (more on how to recruit amazing candidates in our [podcast interview](#) with LinkedIn), but being surrounded by inspiring coworkers who regularly produce innovative ideas and whose input you value and trust can help you be more open-minded to different solutions in the face of a challenge.

5. Reflect on the Past: Look back on your decision-making history. Have you ever been in a situation like this before? How was it similar to the current one? How was it different? What were the outcomes? How did you make that decision in the past and what influenced your choice? What worked and what didn't? Are there key learnings you can take from past experience to help make you make a better decision this time around? Once we have a better handle on our past, it can help give us perspective for our present.



PART TWO:

How to Navigate Through Big Change and Come Out on Top

So, You're Faced with Major Change. Here's How You Can Get Through It



6 ways you can overcome challenges that come with common changes in business.

You're in the midst of a massive change and now you need to face it head on. What are your next steps? The following five solutions can help you not only overcome some common challenges that can arise but thrive after you've made it through them.



1. How to Keep Up with Ever-Changing Technological Innovations

No matter what your industry is, it's very likely that you are being affected in some way by the continuous improvements and innovations in technology. Software, security systems, computers and networks, phone systems - you name it - are all impacted by it. A study by Accenture Interactive found that the key drivers of digital transformations are profitability, customer satisfaction, and increased speed-to-market - and so, if your business wants to maintain a competitive edge, it needs to keep up with technological innovations.

But how can you stay up-to-date with relevant technology when it's moving so fast? Here are three ways:

- **Determine Your Needs:** Take some time to think about what's relevant to your work. For example, if the primary function of your business is sales, you probably have a sales team that spends a lot of time connecting with clients. That means effective tools for communication will be one of your biggest needs. Maybe the ability to participate in conference calls is important. Maybe everyone needs access to the same spreadsheet to input or update data. Knowing what you need is the first step to being able to identify and implement the most appropriate technology.
- **Automate Software Updates:** Many programs will update automatically or will send you a reminder that it is time to update your software. Others, though, might not notify you even when upgrades are available. Figure out the best way for your business to automate these updates to ensure you're not falling behind and using dated versions of your existing software.
- **Plan Ahead:** Don't be the last to know when it comes to technology trends. Often when a new technology is unveiled, there is a buzz around it long before it is released. Remain current with major advancements and on the lookout for new capabilities that may improve to serve efficiencies, both internally and externally for clients. Stay updated by reading magazines that focus on tech innovations. You can also tap into your team and ask them if they've heard about anything new coming down the wire.

2. Struggling in the Wake of Economic or Political Change? Try Reassessing and Restructuring Your Organizational Strategy

When factors like economic change, tariffs, and sanctions greatly impact your business, sometimes you need to restructure and re-strategize in order to survive. Starbucks, for example, was hit hard by 2008's economic recession. The coffee powerhouse - which had been the recipient of awards like "Most Admired Company" and "100 Best Corporate Citizens" - had their profits fall to 28% compared to the same time the previous year. By 2009, they shut down 900 stores and laid off almost 7,000 employees.

So, the CEO decided to bring it back to basics and reconnect with their customers. They embarked on a new social media strategy called "My Starbucks Idea" where patrons were invited to share opinions on everything from products to advertising. More than 90,000 ideas were shared and page views per month grew to 5.5 million. Their brand was reignited, and they built a loyal community in the process.

In this instance, Starbucks had to look at their existing organizational strategy - that is, their long-term strategic plan - and restructure it to meet their new needs.



If you're stuck on where to begin, these tips can help provide some general guidance, no matter what your industry is:

- **Define the Change:** Ask yourself two questions: What do we need to change? And why is this change required? Once you clearly define the change, you'll need to align it to your goals in order to carry your business in the right direction.
- **Determine the Impact:** How will the changes you make impact your organization? Consider what might happen at various organizational levels. This will help you to start forming a plan and figuring out where support might be needed the most.
- **Provide Effective Training:** What skills are needed in order to achieve the results you want? Provide your people with the training they'll need - if that's the case - to operate efficiently as changes happen. A solution such as [Change Management Consulting](#) can help your team figure out how to execute a successful plan in an uncertain and changing business landscape. It can equip you with the kind of permeable perspective that you'll need to think about your next steps and create a self-sustaining, strategic solution to current and future challenges.
- **Give Support to Employees:** Proving support is essential in helping employees adjust to change and to adequately build the skills to achieve the desired results. Gauge where support is most needed and encourage feedback and communication.
- **Measure the Process:** Throughout the whole process of implementing organizational change, continue to measure the impact, evaluate its effectiveness, and document lessons learned. Did the change achieve the business goal? If not, what can be done differently?

3. How to Keep Your Team Intact Through Leadership Changes

Big changes at the leadership level can be significant source of stress for employees, leaving them feeling uncertain and sometimes fearful for their jobs. Aside from events like mergers and acquisitions (more on that up next), changes in personnel can also come in the form of new additions or significant departures, whether temporary or permanent. Here are a few ways you can help keep your team aligned, motivated, and productive during this time:

- **Communicate Changes Openly and Honestly:** Communication is the best way to fight against lost productivity during transition. Keeping your team up-to-date about what's happening and why can help them stay focused and ease concerns about an uncertain future. Provide as much concrete information as possible, explain, and give context. Our article, [3 Effective Strategies for Reducing Negativity in the Workplace](#), has some great tips on how to communicate constructively with your colleagues.





- **Encourage and Answer Questions:** Provide an open forum for employees to ask questions about the changes that are happening, whether that be in a company-wide townhall meeting or over email, so that everyone is on the same page. Deliver new information when it becomes available and then follow through by consistently updating your team in a timely manner.
- **Recognize Employee Successes:** Use regularly-scheduled reports to measure and demonstrate how your employees' contributions are helping the company reach their goals - or simply give shout-outs when they're due. Highlighting how an employee's contributions add value to the team can help maintain their motivation.

Another way you can keep your team in tact during changes like these is by participating in something such as [Leadership Team Cohesion Consulting](#). This solution helps your leadership team drive successful results by equipping them with the skills and mindset necessary to work together in unison - and achieve a common goal.

4. Tips on Managing Company Culture in Mergers and Acquisitions

According to Gartner Symposium, 46% of Chief Information Officers (CIOs) report culture as their biggest barrier in change.

Your culture is the point of reference of your organization: its values, behaviors, and unwritten rules. And the changes happening to your company culture, especially when two different cultures are uniting in an event like a merger, requires much more than creating a new mission statement. It requires an approach that addresses the human elements of the integration - the people.



In order for change to take place successfully, being mindful of how company culture is impacted is imperative. Putting employees first makes a big difference and shifting the way people think about change requires the ability to inspire action.

People need to be able to see a clear vision of the future and where their role fits in. Letting your employees know exactly why changes are happening is fundamental. You can transform change from something intimidating and uncertain into something positive and exciting by emphasizing your employees' connection to your company's purpose. Here are a few ways you can help make your culture as unified as possible for your team, both before and after the merge:



Before:

- **Define the Changes:** Clearly define the changes in terms of how it's going to impact people. What we are doing, why are we doing it, and what are the consequences if we don't succeed? Proactively and widely acknowledge cultural differences and intentionally establish new expected norms for the combined organization.
- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate:** Keep everyone in the loop and encourage their feedback. Use a variety of channels for communication including email and apps like Slack, and particularly encourage face-to-face meetings with individual employees if there are any concerns. This fosters relationships and ensures that staff members feel they have a voice.

After:

- **Participate in a Team Building Activity:** [Team building](#) is a great way to help build morale and have new colleagues get to know each other. Check out our [free online guide](#) to find an activity that's the perfect fit for your new group dynamic.
- **Reinforce Your New Core Values by Living Them:** The only way to implement actual culture change is to integrate the behavioral elements of the new culture into the daily business activities. If you've made changes to your collective set of core values and you've established them, live them and set an example. Read our blog post, [How to Launch Your Core Values and Make Them Stick](#), for more.
- **Keep the Lines of Communication Open:** It's important to continue talking about the changes as they are happening. Do regular check-ins, whether it be in-person during your weekly pulse or monthly via email and encourage feedback. Your colleagues will feel like they have a voice and, if any roadblocks come up, you can proactively address them.

Read our blog post, [3 Tips to Successfully Overcome Culture Challenges During Mergers and Acquisitions](#), for more.





5. How to Develop a Growth Strategy That Works

Congratulations - your business is growing! But this also means you need to have an effective plan in place so that your cup doesn't overflow, things become too overwhelming to manage, and you end up falling victim to your own success. Whether you anticipate steady growth or rapid expansion, getting too big for your britches puts you at risk of:

- Your mission statement becoming no longer truly accurate - and your intentions getting scattered
- The main function of your business fading
- Company culture becoming muddled and undefined
- Your employees suffering - low wages, too much stress, no team morale

Developing a growth strategy isn't a one-size-fits-all process. It involves more than envisioning long-term success. To grow means to change, which, while exciting, can be a daunting process. A solution like [Strategic Focus Consulting](#) can help your group identify and implement an effective business strategy in the face of current and future challenges by adopting a strategic mindset.

The following steps can also be a great guide in creating a growth strategy:

- **First, Prepare Your Team:** Whether your team consists of 5 or 500 employees, gather them all together regularly for company-wide updates to keep them informed. Address the opportunities that will accompany the growth, as well as the challenges that may come with them.
- **Identify Your Customer:** You got into business to solve a problem for a certain consumer. Who are they? Don't forget about them. Keep your customer in mind as adjust your strategy.
- **Scope Out the Competition:** Keep an eye on likeminded companies that are also growing to help inspire your strategy. Take note of any instances where they've outperformed you or have been successful in an area you haven't. Have they made different choices than you have? What are they? What's similar about your companies? What separates you?



- **Focus on Your Strengths, Not Weaknesses:** While it's valuable to acknowledge your weaknesses, building upon your strengths as you grow your business can help you achieve the most success. Further develop your strong points with more specific training or develop a related skill - for example, if you are a terrible public speaker but great at writing, then focus on getting even better at communicating through writing.
- **Invest in Your Team:** Hire people who are motivated and inspired by your company's value proposition, are aligned with your core values, and overall fit well into your culture. [The HR Guide to Recruitment](#) is a great resource with insight on everything from how to weed out unfavorable candidates early on to interview questions to ask to determine suitability.



6. The Keys to Adapting to Changing Customer Preferences

According to a PWC Global Operations Survey, 61% of business leaders say it's a challenge for operations to change direction when customer needs change.

But a company can't gain the trust, confidence, or even business of their customers without understanding the changing preferences of their patrons. After all, we're living in the age of customer experience. Consumers know what they want, they have greater access to information and the ability to research than ever before through social media and the internet, and if you're not giving your customers exactly what they want, they'll find somebody else who will. And, when the needs of today's customer might not suit those of tomorrow's, a successful business needs to be flexible enough to be able to make tweaks. You need to adapt your strategy to smooth out your inefficiencies, refine your strengths, and better suit your customers.

The following points can help you figure out how to successfully adapt to the changing needs of your customer:

- **Do Some Research and Identify Your Customers' Needs:** What makes your clients happy? What compels them to buy one product instead of another? Listen to your customers and regularly get feedback from them. You can do this through a simple survey or by interacting over social media. In fact, social media is among a brand's most direct means of communication with their customers. According to Smart Insights, 90% of social media users have used a platform to communicate with a brand or business. Your sales representatives, if you have them, also might be able to give insight on changes that customers want.

- **Don't Forget to Look at Your Competitors:** If competitors introduce new products that outperform your current ones, they may take that market placement from you. Along with listening to what your customers want, make sure that you research what likeminded companies are doing right now, too. Then, you can identify what aspects you can improve on from looking at your industry across the board.
- **Analyze Your Intel and Act on It:** Once you've identified what changes you need to make, use your research to inform your next three steps:
 1. **Create a Mock Business Model:** Based on your findings, generate a few ideas about how you might change your existing strategy. Don't be afraid to get creative!
 2. **Get Feedback from Your Peers:** Test out the top three ideas you come up with your coworkers, preferably ones who aren't working directly with you on the project, and see what kind of feedback you get from the rest of your team.
 3. **Made Changes as Needed:** Listen to the feedback you receive on your hypothetical business models and then refine them until you find the one that works best.



- **Commit for the Long Haul:** McDonald's has over 36,000 locations in more than 100 countries around the world, maintaining a consistent experience and marketing approach while also incorporating products that are relevant to their audience in each location. For example, in India, where the cow is regarded as holy, the restaurant chain customized their menu to include items like the Chicken Kebab Burger and Green Chili Aloo Naan. This takes a big commitment in terms of taking time to learn and understand what their customers' expectations and preferences are. McDonald's are in it for the long haul – and have made themselves flexible enough to be able to cater to a very diverse and changing range of customer preferences.



3 Tips to Successfully Overcome Culture Challenges During Mergers and Acquisitions



3 common pain points that can arise internally and impact culture in these events - and how to make it through.

There are many reasons why business owners decide to merge their companies or have them acquired. Sometimes it's a way to eliminate competition. Other times, it may be to boost productivity, enter a new market, or even save their business from going under.

Whatever the reason, one thing is certain: things are going to change. So, then, when two separate entities unite, how do you get two different teams, departments, cultures, and corporate styles to not only work together, but work well together?

Research collected by Forbes found that mergers and acquisitions have an overall success rate of about 50%. Compatibility and integration issues are statistically likely to occur, especially if not enough attention is being paid to the integration process and how things will work internally once the ink has dried on the deal.

In fact, according to the Institute for Mergers, Acquisitions and Alliances, 66% of corporate executives try to begin strategizing far in advance because of the risk of failure if integration issues are not considered. For a smooth transition, CEOs and leaders need to be able to honestly answer questions like:

- Have you assessed the company culture of your acquisition and is it compatible with yours?
- Can you put adequate resources into the integration?
- Is the acquisition a better choice than all the other alternatives you may have?





Ultimately, it's integral to understand the specific factors that commonly contribute to these types of issues so that you can develop a strategy to proactively mitigate them as you move forward with the merging or acquisition process.

Keep reading to learn about three common pain points of mergers and acquisitions for both employees and leaders - and how to successfully alleviate them.

Problem #1: Lack of Communication

PWC conducted a survey on companies that had completed mergers and acquisitions. Its findings showed that challenges related to communication were one of the top reasons that they had failed. When there's no proper communication between managers and employees on what's going on - or a lack of communication between colleagues who are newly working together - employees can be left asking questions like:

- “Why is the organization merging?”
- “How will the merger affect my job?”
- “What support will I receive during the merging process?”

This kind of lack of communication can create uncertainty in the workplace, which leads to lower employee engagement levels and even distrust.

In a big event such as a merger or acquisition, it's important to keep all parties informed. Let employees know the updates on the integration process. These best practices can help provide some clear insight on what's happening and changing:

- **Give Context by Telling the Story** - Make sure everyone understands why this is all happening - and as soon as possible. Give some background to provide context and what the hopes are for the future. It'll prevent rumors from spreading, help explain how the company will benefit, and why it makes sense.
- **Make a Timeline of What's Happening** - Create a timeline of the merger and acquisition process to share with your team. Be sure to include assigned roles and responsibilities, as well as various milestone dates and deadlines promised to key stakeholders. This way, everyone will have an understanding on what to expect and when.
- **Create a FAQ Document** - Undoubtedly, lots of questions will arise from across your organization. So, create a document that addresses various concerns. You can even send out an internal poll to your colleagues to get some of these questions firsthand. Ultimately, it'll help reduce uncertainty and confusion.



After the merger or acquisition happens, you need to maintain momentum on communication. Here are three easy ways to do that:

1. Schedule regular meetings within your own department to touch base directly with your team
2. Set company-wide “town hall” meetings, so employees are given the opportunity to ask questions to members of the senior leadership team
3. Send regular email updates whenever something new happens or a change occurs

Whether it be individual, departmental, or discussion with the whole company, having open communication before, during, and after a merger can make all the difference in helping employees feel secure and informed. Being aware of the questions, concerns, and fears that employees have, and, proactively giving them answers will help to build transparency and trust, and lead to an overall successful merger.

Training programs, such as our own [Clear Communication](#), can also help you and your team work on their communication skills both before and after a merger. Learning different techniques, how pick up on non-verbal cues, and how to productively work through conflict are all extremely valuable skills to develop through the merger and acquisition process - and beyond.

Problem #2: Losing Your Company Culture

How can you merge two separate company cultures? Alarmingly, an AON/Hewett study found that there is a 23% increase in disengaged employees after a merger or acquisition – even if no one's job is affected. These changes have an undoubted impact on employee engagement, which goes hand-in-hand with culture. In a merger or acquisition, cultural differences can arise and even become an "us versus them" dynamic as different approaches conflict.

Company culture is something that requires an investment from everybody on the team. And retaining a healthy company culture will give you your best chances of fostering high employee engagement, better productivity, and even lower turnover. Here are three ways you can help to preserve your culture after a merger or acquisition:

1. Redefine or Reintroduce Your Company's Core Values

A company's culture is based on its core values - and trying to merge two different sets core values can cause a clash. Leaders have three options here:

- Keep one organization's core values and share them with the other team
- Find the best fundamental elements from both sets of principles and work together to bridge them
- Create a new set of core values that speaks to the company's new direction

Either way, you must be absolutely clear on what matters and why. Then, you can build your new culture together from the ground up. Read more about how to define and effectively live out your core values in our article, [How to Launch Your Core Values and Make Them Stick](#).

2. Invest in Your Culture with Team Building and Training

Mergers and acquisitions can be stressful on both the leadership team working behind the scenes, as well as the overall staff. Increased periods of stress and uncertainty can often lead to a decrease in engagement. Participating in [team building activities](#) is a great way to get to know new colleagues and encourage collaboration. Also, you can partake in some skill development training, such as [Active Employee Engagement](#) - exactly what Vision Credit Union did when they merged two separate credit unions to form the company. Read our [case study](#) to find out how the session helped them build a more connected and unified culture.

3. Frequent Check-ins with Employees

Want to know where everyone is at? Ask them.

Regularly send out formal employee engagement surveys to check in on how everyone is feeling. You can create your own surveys through a free service like [SurveyMonkey](#) or use an automated software solution like [OfficeVibe](#) to automatically collect feedback.

Monthly performance reviews are also a way to focus on how each individual contributes to company objectives, to keep people feeling connected to the company.



Problem #3: A Low Employee Retention Rate

Mergers and acquisitions are a time of major transition - and often, a difficult one, especially for employees. They will be faced with some, if not all, of the following fears:

- Justifying their jobs or value to the company
- Getting laid off
- Being asked to re-apply competitively for their current role
- Drastic company culture changes

The loss of employees during this process will inevitably affect daily business as usual and further demoralize an already compromised workforce. So, what to do? How can you maintain your employees' trust during this period?

Keep them engaged. Employee engagement is key when it comes to retention. Businesses with highly engaged teams have 59% less turnover, according to Gallup's State of the American Workplace Report. In a [recent episode](#) of Outback Talks: The Employee Engagement Podcast, we sat down with Tracey Topping, the Employee Experience Manager at Left - a multinational technology company with an impressive 97% retention rate. According to Tracey, core values, company culture, and communication are crucial in encouraging engagement and retention.

And it's no coincidence they are all elements that are part of the previous two tips: they're all inherently connected.

- **Culture** drives employee satisfaction and is defined by core values
- When employees aren't aligned to **core values**, they are disengaged
- **Open communication** fosters a positive work environment and helps employees feel connected to their organization

Without one, you can't really have the other. And they all come together to impact employee engagement and, in turn, retention.





PART THREE:

The 6 Attributes of a Leadership Mindset

The 6 Attributes of a Leadership Mindset and How They Apply to Business

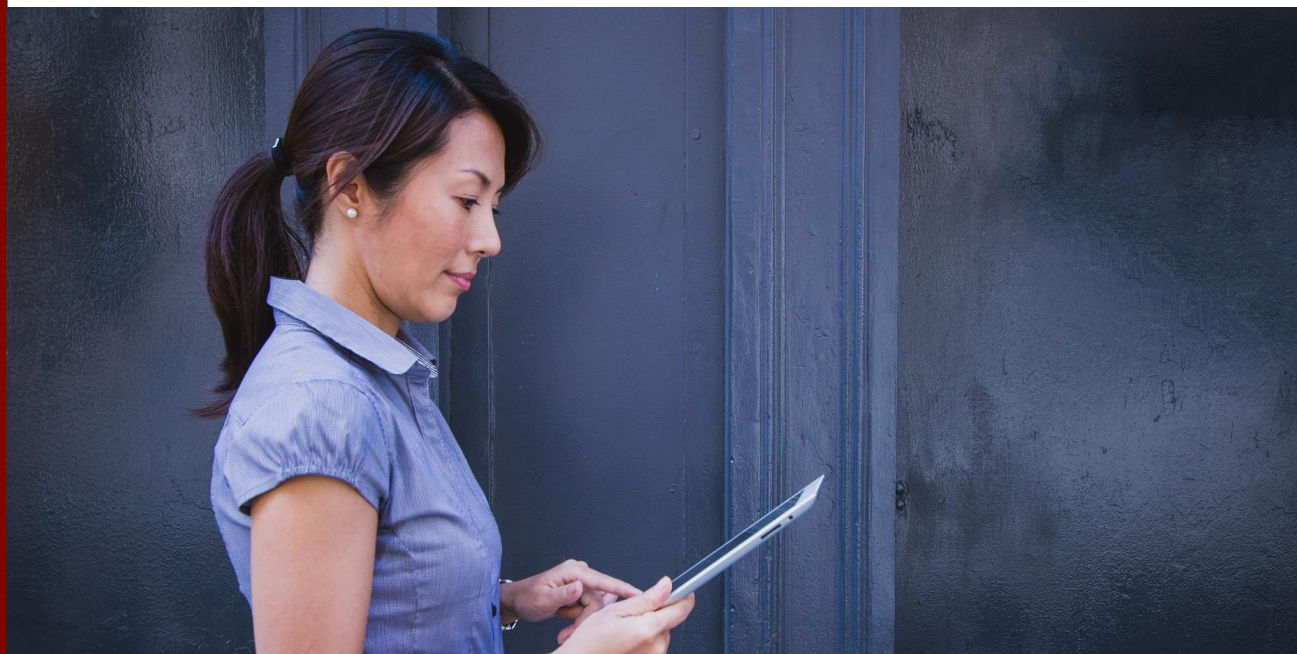


These attributes can help you think like an effective leader.

Joe Britto, Outback's Mindset and Management Consultant, utilizes a unique combination of psychological coaching and leadership consulting in his approach to business solutions. It's all rooted in developing what he calls a "leadership mindset," which, in turn, leads to thoughtful behaviors and the ability to tackle issues - including ones that are related to large-scale organizational change - in a sustainable way.

So, what constitutes a leadership mindset, according to Joe? These six specific attributes. And once you've developed them, the permeable outlook that follows can help you apply a fresh perspective to your challenges:

- 1. Mindfulness:** Being mindful means being free from the thoughts in our heads: concerns about what we should or shouldn't say, a preoccupation with how we might look if we spoke up, or any number of other unhelpful thoughts. Mindfulness gives us space. Being mindful liberates us from the small and mundane and lets us elevate our perceptions and our conversations – and see what's happening beneath the surface.
- 2. Genuine Curiosity:** This is a way of looking at the world with fresh eyes and a mind that wants to learn, wants to be challenged, and wants to know something new. Curiosity wants to know why something is the way it is.
- 3. Flexibility of Mind:** At its core, flexibility of mind is the ability to pivot our thinking quickly. Flexibility of mind flexes to accommodate barriers and challenges. It can be operationalized in a three-step process that begins with recognizing that we could be wrong. From that foundation bigger ideas can appear as we let go of a set way of thinking. Finally, flexibility of mind can easily combine bigger ideas to develop a revolutionary idea.



4. Resilience: Without putting too fine a point on it, anyone can keep marching forward when everything's going their way. To keep going when the outcome is in doubt, when we keep getting turned down, when our last chance has passed us by again; that's the definition of resilience and it's what makes the difference.

5. Creating Leaders: A leader who creates leaders of others understands that though getting the task done is important, it's not the biggest opportunity. That leader understands that they can use their experience and skill to not just teach someone something, but to help other leaders too. Those "enlightened leaders" operate that way because they see every interaction with a direct report as a chance to grow as a leader.

6. Enterprise Thinking: This is a way of working where we work not in the best interests of ourselves or our teams, but to actively pursue coordinated efforts across business areas and functions to act in the best interests of a business' customers and strategic goals.

Of course, you don't need to develop these attributes all at once to be able to adopt a leadership mindset. Mainly, you just need to consider what's needed regarding the current challenge that you're facing. And that can provide you with a different perspective on how to effectively and insightfully tackle your problem.

For more from Joe, be sure to check out his book, [The Six Attributes of a Leadership Mindset](#). You can purchase it on Amazon.



Get in Touch

For more expert advice on how your business can successfully make it through massive change and find effective solutions to challenges, just get in touch with our knowledgeable Employee Engagement Consultants.



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The well-designed and facilitated session produced some the best dialogue we've ever had as a leadership team.



The team from **Coca-Cola** participated in a Leadership Team Cohesion Consulting solution.