

## Managing the "Red Line" of Change

### Rationale

*If you don't know what the problem is, you won't know if you're successful.*

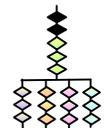
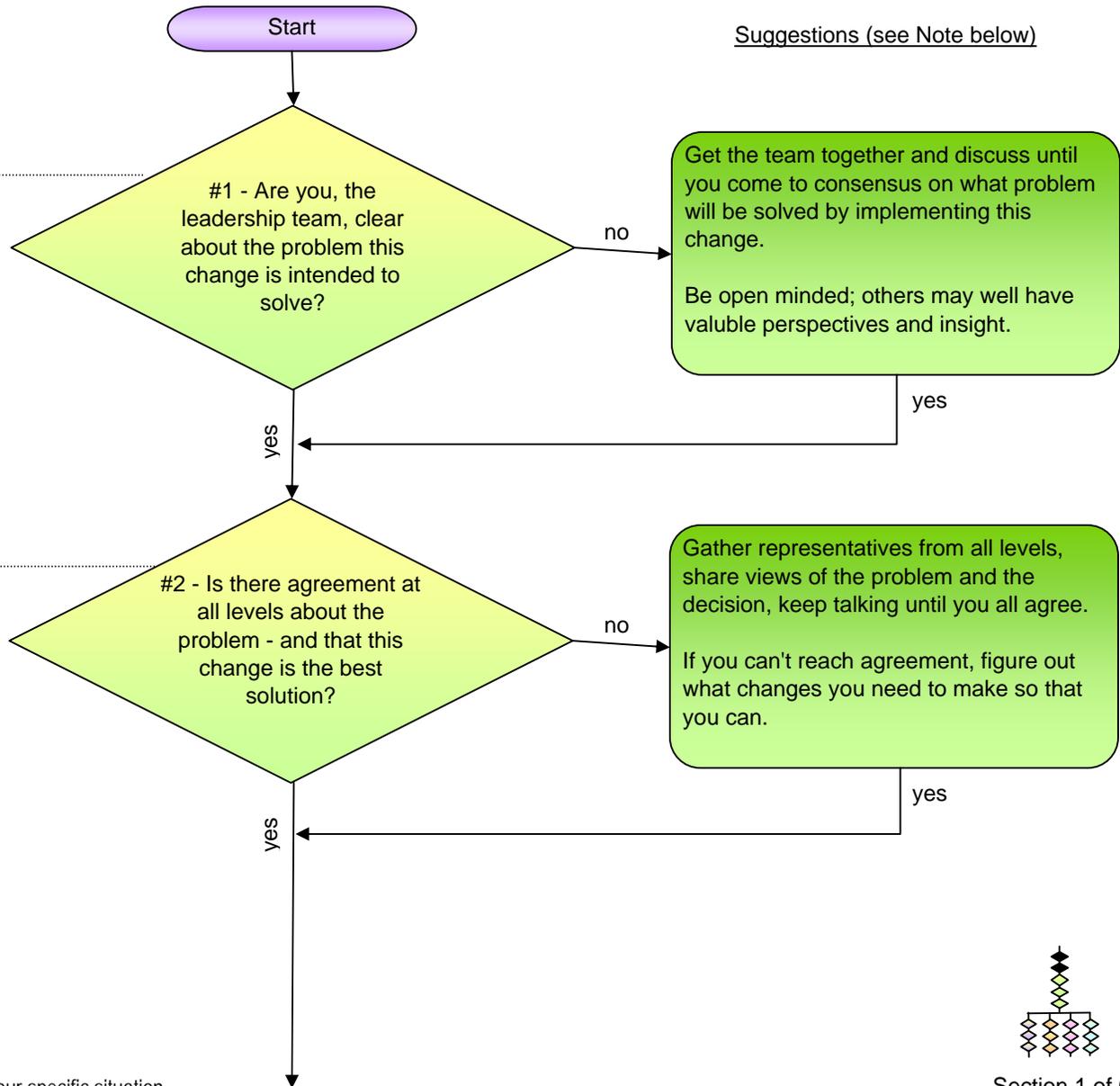
*If you aren't trying to solve the same problem, you won't want the same things.*

*The message to others needs to be consistent to eliminate confusion.*

*All levels of management need to be on the same page so they speak with one voice.*

*Everyone needs to be willing to support this solution to avoid sitting on the sidelines and/or sabotage.*

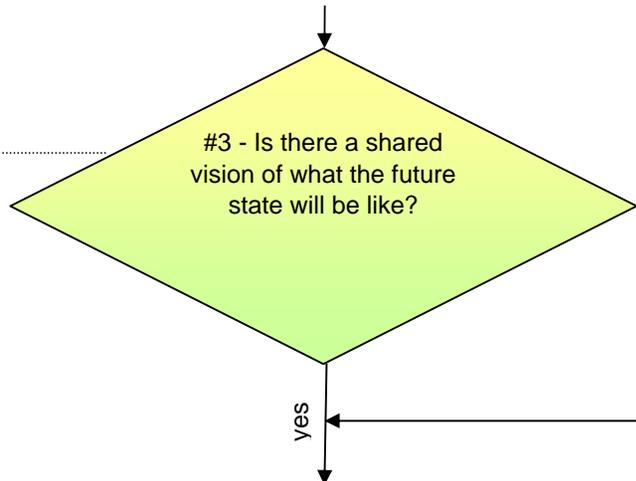
### Suggestions (see Note below)



All members of the team need to see the same picture so they're all working toward the same result

Everyone needs to be enrolling others in a common vision.

Remember that the intended future state may well change as the process moves forward.

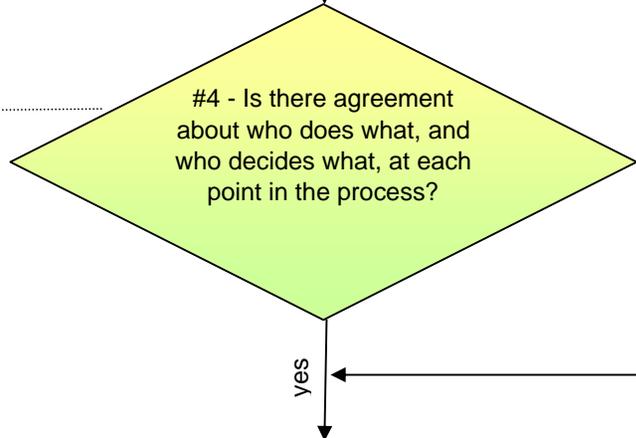


Get everybody together and share views of what it will be like when the change is up and running.

Create a shared compelling picture of the new future state - verbal, written, visual, whatever.

Before you get very far into the change, you need to ensure there won't be confusion about roles or decision-making authority.

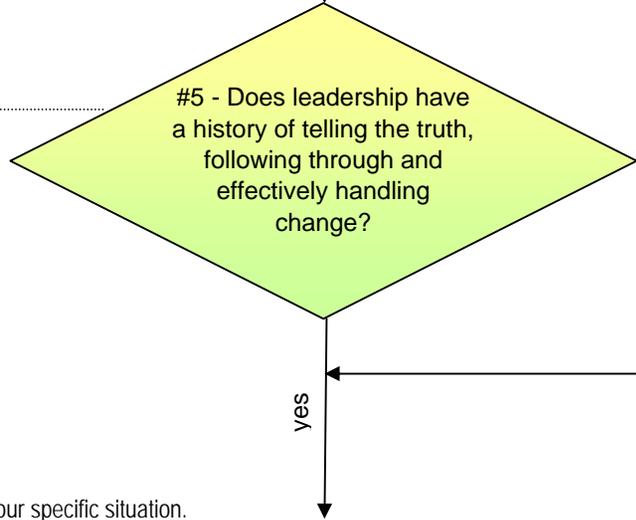
These may change as the process moves forward. Be open to what works best given what you know at that point.



Clarify and communicate the new roles and responsibilities as you see them.

Get the affected parties together to discuss and work out any overlaps, voids or concerns.

A change effort requires people to make a leap of faith, which is more difficult for people to do if they don't trust your character or your competence.



Do not commit to something you won't actually do.

Demonstrate trustworthiness and competence by committing publicly to one small part of the change, follow-through and make the results public. Choose something else. Repeat.

People will look to the leadership to see if they are really supportive of the change, especially as it hits the first few bumps (which it will).

Again, be aware that the future state may change for the better as you proceed.

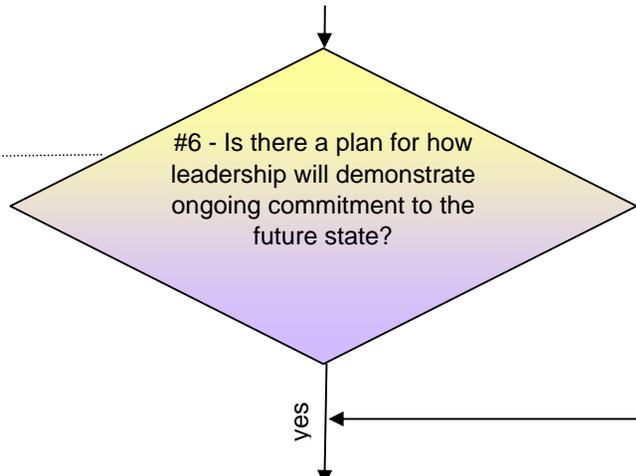
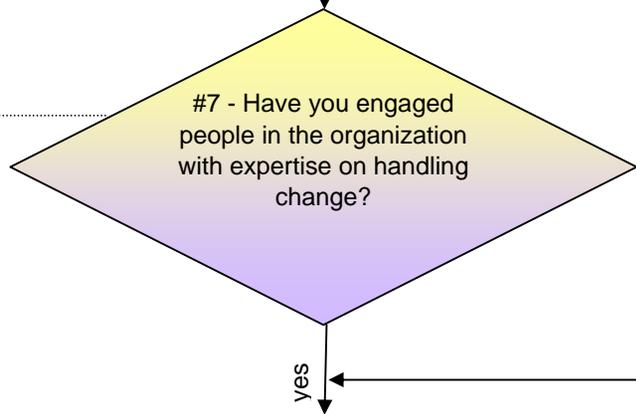


Figure out why you feel this is the right thing for the organization, and communicate it whenever there's an opportunity.

These can be different for each leader, but they must not contradict each other.

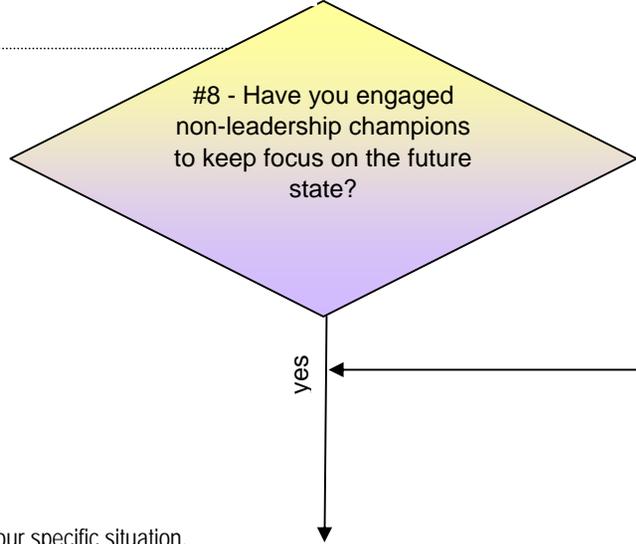
It's very helpful to have people on the inside who have successfully navigated change situations before to act as coaches, facilitators and to ensure the process stays on track.



Identify people who have successfully navigated changes, here or elsewhere. Ask them to help others navigate this change. Ask them to provide feedback to leadership to keep the process on track.

Support from all levels will keep the change from becoming something being "done to us" or "at our expense". It ensures those other levels are being included along the way.

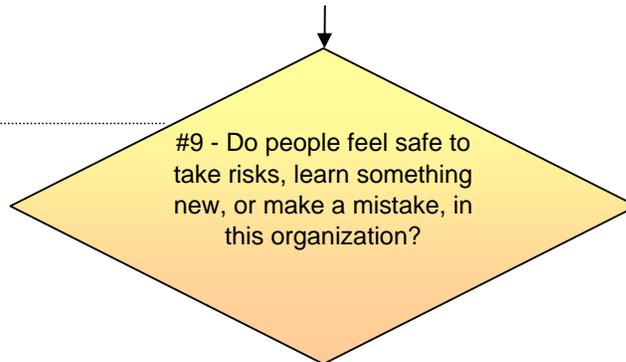
If there are any concerns, employees are more likely to believe a peer than a member of management.



Identify people who are excited about the change and will talk about the positive impacts with their peers. If you can enrol content experts, that will provide additional credibility and acceptance.

*Blame and punishment will stifle innovation and then many good ideas may never be expressed openly.*

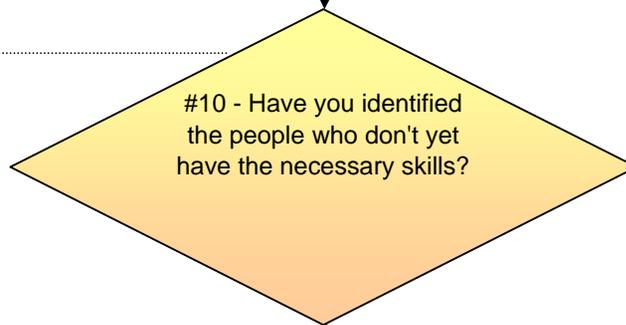
*Since things won't all go as planned, it's better to engage everyone in making things work than in hiding the problems.*



Help people see that it is safe. Share examples of risk-taking that were okay. Acknowledge effort when learning something new. Express the expectation that there will be a learning curve. Make sure you don't blame or punish.

*People who don't feel prepared to handle what will be required are likely to resist or sabotage.*

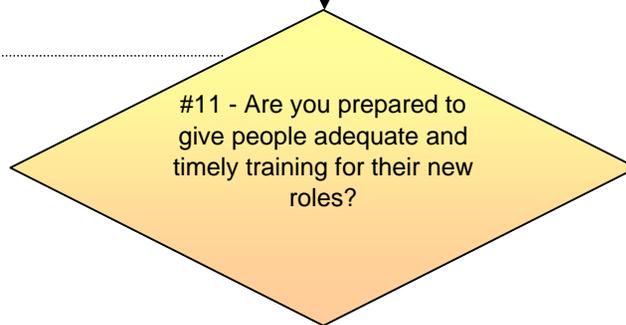
*The earlier you can communicate what new skills will be necessary, and provide appropriate training opportunities, the smoother things will go.*



Clearly communicate what will be expected with the new system. Find out who needs to learn or improve skills and provide training. Be sensitive to anyone who may be embarrassed and provide off-line training options.

*One of the biggest concerns is whether I'll be able to perform as required in my new role.*

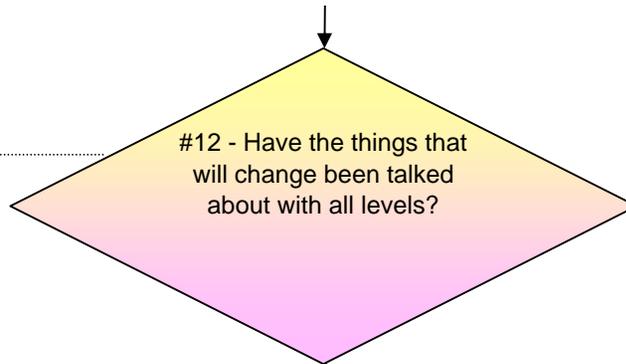
*Making sure employees know you want them to succeed, and will provide the resources to help them, will ease that fear.*



Identify who might need what training, be generous in offering it, and schedule timelines so it can be completed comfortably in advance of the skill being needed. Be sure to address the challenge of finding time while still getting the work done.

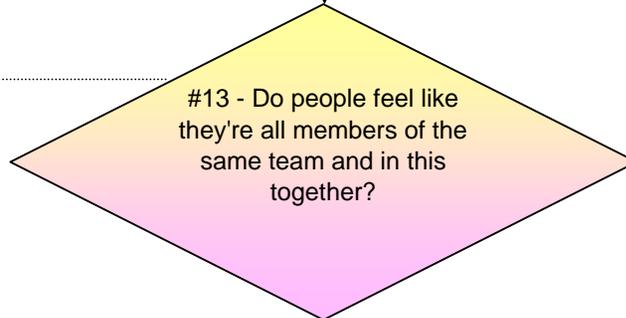
*Openly sharing what will end with the change, and what will be different, allows people to prepare themselves and be ready to move on.*

*Keep doing this again as things change along the way.*



Identify those things that you know for certain will end or change, and then communicate that, verbally and in writing, to everyone. Don't withhold anything just because you think people won't like it. Give them as much time as possible to adjust.

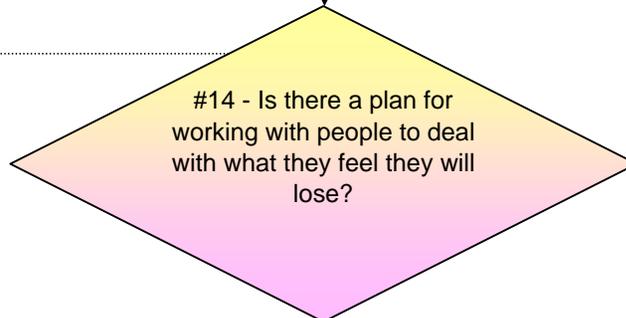
*When people feel included, cared about and part of the process, they will more readily support the change and look for ways to support their fellow employees.*



Find out who feels left out, why they feel that way, and then make the necessary adjustments for them to feel included in the team. Be careful to not blame those who feel left out.

*There are both real and perceived losses in any change, and they need to be acknowledged and supported.*

*Everyone also needs to move on. That can be encouraged by finding ways to bridge the losses.*



Normalize the feelings of loss, and don't judge them. Explore with the individual what's real and what may be perceived. Be honest about real losses. Be supportive of what they're experiencing. Look for ways to compensate (not with money) for their loss in the future state.

People will want to be kept informed at all stages of the change process, even if it's going smoothly, or all according to the initial plan.  
Over-communication can't hurt.

People will have their opinions - creating a way for them to be shared, and responded to, will keep them engaged. If you don't provide a way, they'll still talk, just not to you.  
Employees have a different view of how things are going - their feedback can be critical.

Asking for input without responding will seem like giving lip-service at best, and at worst will fuel rumors that leadership will only listen to input that is positive and supportive.  
It's easy enough to keep the communication channels open and build good will in the process.

