

## Managing Change in an Organization during a Transition in Leadership

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### Ensure stability

When the previous boss is departing and you have accepted the position of the acting replacement, there are steps you can take to ensure that the organization continues to function at an optimal level *throughout the transition*.

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### First things first

Consider sending two emails. The first is to the departing leader, on behalf of staff, expressing appreciation for their leadership and accomplishments, and wishing them well with their next endeavor. The second is to all of the employees who will be working for you reinforcing the importance of a continued focus on the mission and goals of the organization. Your note to staff should establish a sense of stability and confirm that the expectations for meeting established goals and timelines are still in place. Let them know that you are there to support them. If there are major projects or deadlines that you are facing it is a time to ask people to support you in these efforts and build a cohesive team.

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### Clarify expectations

It is important to have a conversation with the person to whom you will report during the time you are in the acting position to ensure that you understand the expectations the supervisor has for you during the transition. Request to meet with the supervisor on a routine basis to keep them informed about the progress the organization is making and any issues or challenges you are facing. It is also important to clarify specific expectations for the staff that are reporting to you. Let them know that you will be meeting with them on a routine basis to share information and to review progress, and that you are available at any time they have an issue they would like to discuss.

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### Establish routine communications with staff

Build trust and credibility by routinely sharing information the staff needs to know to perform their jobs, including information about the changes that are taking place. It is demoralizing for staff to first hear about something that impacts their work from a source outside of the organization. In addition, rumors often persist during times of change and the impact of such rumors can be minimized if staff has confidence that you will keep them informed and up to date with accurate information.

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### Lead by example

Staff will watch what you do as well as listen to what you say. Keep a level head and avoid showing signs of stress or frustration. Keep the attention of staff focused on implementation of the plans that are in place to carry out the work of the organization. Spend time walking around the organization to talk with staff about how they are doing and ask if there is anything they need from you. Listen carefully and follow up. If a request is made that you are unable to comply with, let them know why. Reinforce positive work. Celebrate successes.