

## Reading: Calculating the Impact on Employees

### Identifying What's Changing

Once people learn of the change, they turn inward to try and determine how the change will affect them (i.e., they focus on what they will gain or lose as a result of the change). They will seek answers to two questions:

- 1) How will the change affect me and my job?
- 2) How can I get back what I am losing?

When evaluating design options, identify who might lose what. By doing so, you can both select the option that least impacts on employees and mitigate the losses that are inevitable in any change. Common losses expected by people at all levels of the organization during a change can include loss of:

- Job, status or position
- Co-workers, affiliations, or other attachments (formal or informal)
- Familiar methods and procedures for doing things
- Job skills and confidence
- Comfortable organizational environment
- Power or control
- Job security or compensation
- Sense of contribution.

To truly assess the impact of a loss, it is important to get to the underlying values associated with the loss. For example, moving into open space from a private office not only means losing the privacy of a separate work space but the status associated with having one.

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### Strategies for Responding

In considering how to build into the design ways of responding to employees' sense of loss, think about the following strategies.

1. **Reinventing:** Reinventing means finding other ways to fulfill the underlying values affected by the loss.

For example, for the employee losing a management position, the value may be more one of loss of status rather than title (especially if salary and grade are not affected). By creating new non-management jobs with high status, visibility, and importance in the design of the future organization, you may be able to mitigate this sense of loss.

2. **Reframing:** Reframing involves focusing on what is positive about the change and building in ways to support other values the employee holds dear.

For example, not having to be a manager gives the employee more time to develop and use his/her technical expertise, and the design could include opportunities for new technical or professional training to reinforce this value.

3. **Replacing:** Replacing involves looking for ways to help employees get back what they have lost.

In the example above, it would mean offering the employee a management position elsewhere in the company (or providing outsourcing help to get them a management position outside the immediate organization).

Often these techniques overlap. Reframing can lead to reinventing or replacing to reframing. It is helpful to use all three techniques when brainstorming strategies for dealing with losses. The more the recommended design can incorporate ways to mitigate the (real or perceived) negative impacts of the change on people, the more likely it is to succeed.