

Four steps for getting employees to buy-in for change

To successfully get employees to buy-in for change, you need to take them on a journey. These four steps create a path that draws employees in, and gets them to invest in change.

1 The universal what

A broad and informational view of the change. This is the vision. It could be a positive vision of glory, financial rewards, and world domination. Or it could be a negative vision—a hellish future that we must avoid at all costs.

2 The universal why

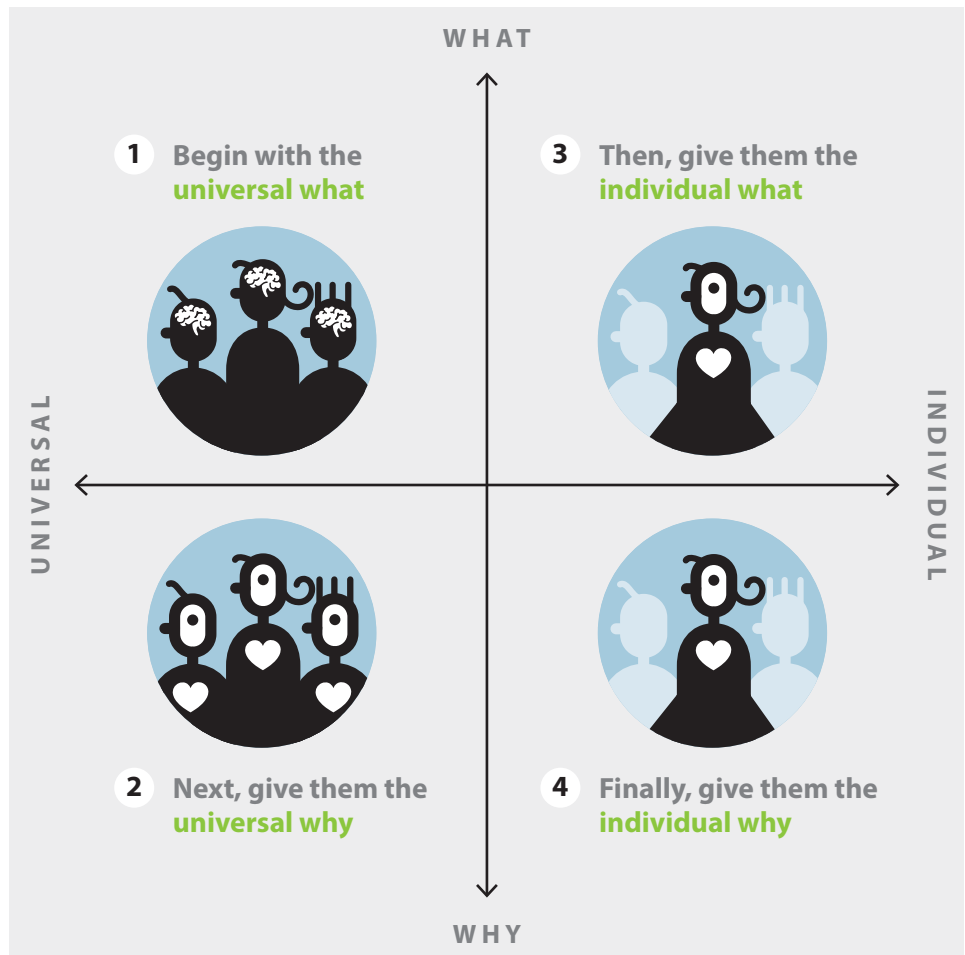
A broad and inspirational view. Once you've painted the picture of the future, now is the time to inspire the journey. Why now? Why us? Why this change? We're beginning that journey to the positive vision of the future, or away from the negative vision, but you need to convince the audience that you considered the other journeys available and this is the right one.

3 The individual what—

a specific and informational view. Once you've explained the vision and convinced me that this is the journey we need to go on—now tell me what my part to play is. Depending on role and culture will vary how strategic versus tactical this needs to be—but it shouldn't be directive instructions. Save that for the how nitty gritty—you're still recruiting me for the journey.

4 The individual why—

a specific and inspirational view of the change that shows the value to each employee. Because, honestly, even your most loyal and engaged employees probably need to hear some direct benefits from the change.



Success Tips

Here's where we're heading.



Follow the sequence.

You can do this all in one go, in four separate communications, or in 40 separate communications, but don't move on to a new step until you've covered the previous. It's OK—and even a good idea—to repeat steps, to reinforce messages and make sure everyone got it.

Make it visual.

Visual communication is the key to helping people understand and remember new ideas, especially ones that are abstract. Many ideas are difficult to convey with words alone, but everyone is able to translate symbols, icons, colors, lines, and shapes into meaning.

Repeat and reuse.

Don't assume everyone heard you or was paying attention the first time. Repeat your message frequently, highlighting different aspects and adjusting the level of detail based on the audience. To avoid creating a mountain of communication tools, create and distribute as few tools as possible and develop reusable elements that provide a strong identity for your change effort.

If you want to learn more about communicating change, get in touch at www.thoughtform.com or 412.488.8600.