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Weathering day-to-day changes in the workplace can be stressful enough. But when a workplace goes through a dramatic change such as a merger, acquisition or restructure, other strategies may be necessary to cope. The list below covers 11 simple and effective strategies for dealing with and overcoming the stress of a changing workplace.

1. Understand Where You Stand -

When dealing with workplace change it is more important you understand your responses to stressful situations. Understanding the phases of accepting change can increase self-awareness and help you move smoothly through workplace transition:

- **Reluctance**—When a situation moves people out of their comfort zone, they sometimes resist the change through denial, non-compliance, open, or even subversive activities. Thoughts or statements like “This is not for me” or “Well, I’m not doing that” are telltale signs of this phase.
- **Uncertainty**—During this phase, workers often feel most vulnerable, both career-wise and personally. They may perceive threats to their jobs and have their sense of security shaken.
- **Assimilation**—At this phase, the change begins to be absorbed into the old structure. Though many still prefer the old way, the first intrepid few are experimenting with and adjusting to the new structure in order to succeed.
- **Transferral**—During transferral, employees begin to replace aspects of the pre-change environment with the new. Confidence is raised to levels comparable to before the change, and some become advocates for the new order.
- **Integration**—Integration is the final step in adapting to change. At this point, the workplace has successfully accepted the change into its routine and most are comfortable with it.

2. Be Prepared for Growing Pains -

Changes in the workplace oftentimes pushes people into new roles and departments. This leads to higher stress levels as workers attempt to adjust to the new setting and their new duties. This is all part of a company’s development and these reactions are to be expected. It is important to realize this awkwardness and uncertainty will pass and ultimately these changes could lead to new and greater chances for growth and advancement.

3. Keep a Good Attitude -

While you may not be able to affect the changes that are taking place, you are the master of your attitude. Your enthusiasm for work, even if you are not enthusiastic about the changes taking place, can serve to ease stress for both yourself and your co-workers. As the old adage goes, when the wind begins to blow, it is better to bend as the willow than be stiff as the oak. The same is true for the changing workplace. Your flexibility can make the difference between the change being a positive experience and one that could compromise your career.

4. Use the Change as a Chance to Grow -

While changes, especially sudden or drastic ones, can be very intimidating, they also provide a unique opportunity to grow. Perhaps you have been moved from your previous position, or are in a new department or under a different manager. Since you have to start fresh, you may have the opportunity to escape the aspects of your previous position or department you didn’t like. Capitalize on this chance to rebuild your image.

5. Question Your Fears -

It is perfectly natural to be a little scared during a big shake-up at work, and a good way to conquer fear is to examine why it is there. Ask yourself these questions:

- “What do I have to lose from this change? What can I gain?”
- “How will this change the way I work? For the better? For the worse?”
- “What past experiences might I have had that are making me nervous now?”

6. Make Lemonade -

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade” is a healthy perspective for looking at what change in the workplace may bring. Try looking at the changes occurring around you not as detrimental, but as opportunities for advancement. Some good approaches:

- Challenge—The change will increase your experience and provide a good learning opportunity.
- Rewards—While you may have been shuffled, you are gaining more skills. That can lead to tangible financial or career awards like raises and increased value to the company.
- Personal Satisfaction—The adversity presented to you is a chance for you to grow as a person in addition to learning new skills and trying new talents.

7. Do Your Homework -

Whether you are joining a new workplace or merging with another, it pays to study the company you are going to be joining. Go to your local library or the Internet and find an annual report or business journal articles on the new company. Show interest in new co-workers and their work. As you are building a relationship with the new company, so you should build relationships with new individuals.

8. Keep Your Sense of Humor -

Often with the changes in the workplace, not only do you find new faces and new responsibility, but increased tension. Retaining a good sense of humor can alleviate this stress. Humor relieves personal stress, keeps morale up and breaks the ice with new co-workers.

9. Remain Balanced -

We all deal with stress differently. Some of us thrust ourselves into the new situations. Others shy away.

Regardless of how you handle stress, it is important to remain balanced. Burying yourself in work or shying away from responsibility can be equally damaging to you during this period. In a stressful environment such as a transitioning workplace, stress management can be the key to success or failure.

10. It’s Nothing Personal -

One of the most common workplace changes is the shuffling of positions and duties. Unfortunately, you may be the one who has been moved. It is very important to remember the decision is not a personal attack or comment on your abilities, but purely a business decision on the company’s part.

11. Do Your Job— Well -

No matter what changes are happening in your place of work, there is one piece of advice you need to follow. In a crisis period, a lot can be determined about the loyalty and dedication of an employee. You can lend stability to the workplace by showing your co-workers that life—and work—go on. The fortitude to continue working to the best of your ability will no doubt leave a lasting impression, whether you have worked for someone for two days or two decades.

It is easy to be bowled over by workplace change. Sudden random changes, the loss of co-workers and the influx of new faces can be overwhelming. If you begin to face the new environment with awareness, however, you can help smooth the transition for everyone and look forward to a whole workplace again.