



## Stay HR Savvy with HR Elements®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter delivering insights about timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

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*Dear HR Manager,*

Our team recently reorganized into a matrix reporting structure. I now have two managers from two different departments and two “to-do” lists. This works well most of the time, but I run into trouble when both managers have pressing concerns with similar deadlines. I want to meet expectations but know that competing deadlines will cause me to fall behind. How can I handle this without causing them to doubt my ability to manage my time?

*– Pulled in Two Many Directions*

*Dear Pulled in Two Many Directions,*

Time management and prioritization are skills that take time to develop, especially with new managers. Juggling multiple stakeholders with different agendas is part art, part science. Try these ideas to get both managers on the same page as you continue to learn about their priorities.

### 1. Ask for feedback.

As a new direct report, it makes sense that you will need to find out where priorities fit in with each other. Identify a structure where you can ask for feedback from both managers on your running “to-do” list. For

example, send an end-of-day summary to outline priorities to allow either manager to speak up if they feel differently AND encourage them to communicate with each other.

## 2. Set up a regular planning meeting.

Reserve one of your weekly meetings a month for a group meeting with both managers. This time can be set aside to look at the big picture of priorities on your plate. Managers can share upcoming projects and timelines that are imperative to their workflow allowing you to block out your schedule ahead of time.

## 3. Ask for patience.

Adjustments take time to work out. Acknowledge that you are in a learning stage with this new structure. Ask your managers to allow some wiggle room as you observe their work patterns and refine your prioritization skills.

Remember that communication is key when faced with multiple priorities.

*- HR Manager*

## Workplace Culture | Communicating Change: A Way of Life

Change and transformations are more successful when approached as an [ongoing process](#) versus a moment in time.

Communication is central to supporting change of any kind, big or small.

Whether swapping the regular coffee stocked in the kitchen or reorganizing a department, developing the right messaging is important.

Use these four communication practices to lead change management efforts:

### 1. Explain the “why.”

Adults are experiential learners who want to make sense of new information. Use adult learning theory principles to explain the reasoning behind recent changes. Include background on what led to this decision and prompts on what they can expect moving forward.

### 2. Allow communicators time to process information.

Leaders are often tapped to communicate new changes and encourage buy-in from their direct reports. This method of communication can be effective if you allow leaders time to process and question the message prior to sharing. Your communicators need to poke holes in the idea to anticipate questions and understand the answers.

### 3. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

It is normal for employees to focus initially on what they lose in a new situation. Their minds may spin as they feel a loss of control in their surroundings and may go through a grief cycle. Support their processing by introducing the information to employees multiple times in different formats. Use email, one-on-one conversations, newsletters, and town hall meetings to reiterate key points.

#### 4. Ask employees about their emotional responses.

It is standard practice to ask for feedback or encourage suggestions on a new idea. Take this practice one step further by asking employees how they feel about the change. The terminology you use is vital and fosters a different response than merely asking about the business change. It encourages employees to acknowledge their thoughts and allows your team to address these responses.

HR practitioners and leaders play a prominent role in sharing information across the company. Preparing communications with your audience in mind encourages employee buy-in and provides additional information to consider as initiatives evolve.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | The Power and Purpose of Interest Groups

Employee Resource Groups, otherwise known as ERGs, are voluntary interest groups led by employees.

ERGs are organized around a common theme and support a more inclusive workplace.

HR practitioners often play a crucial role in working with employees to get ERGs off the ground. Your company may be considering expanding your ERG offerings, or you may be at the idea stage of launching your first ERG. HR professionals in either position will want to keep these practical tips in mind as they [promote new ERGs](#).

### Start with a pilot group.

It is okay to start small. In fact, this is a smart way to gain employee interest and garner senior leadership support. In essence, a pilot group is a small-scale sample to test the idea's viability. Use employee feedback and data from your employee engagement surveys to identify one interest group to start. Are you looking to support expectant mothers? Try a working mother ERG. Are your remote employees craving a network? Try a remote employee ERG.

### Identify a leadership sponsor.

Although ERGs are employee grassroots programs, they need the leadership backing to thrive. A best practice is to have one executive sponsor for each interest group. A sponsor can help communicate initiatives and programs and help the Employee Resource Group get visibility (and funding).

### Recognize employee contributions.

Acknowledge employees who put effort into managing an ERG. These colleagues are juggling their day jobs and additional duties for the ERG. Companies that recognize individual ERG contributions will see a marked difference from those that do not. Can employee contributions be addressed in check-in feedback or accounted for on performance reviews? What other ways can these ERG culture builders be rewarded?

Employee Resource Groups can help provide identity for employees with a common interest. HR practitioners can support ERG rollout by launching a pilot, identifying a leadership sponsor, and recognizing employee contributions.

## Leadership Tip

Track your energy peaks to identify your biological *prime time*. Then, match your body's energy to make the most of your day. Finally, try scheduling activities and meetings that require you to be "on" during your prime time.