

## Sound Convincing When Talking About Change

We may need to make changes in a company if something is not working. Also, due to the rapid pace of technology, we may also need to make significant changes in order to digitalize our processes or keep up with the latest best practices. If you want to completely change a whole system or process, you may need to **overhaul** it so that it will work more effectively. If you want to change how something is arranged, such as your management structure, you can **revamp** it.

Sometimes, we don't have significant problems, but we might want to **hone** or **refine** our processes. In this case, we might only need to make small changes, so it would be sufficient just to **alter** a process.

In order to make the change, it is first necessary to suggest the change and pitch it to the team or to the board. At first, you might **get some pushback** from certain people in the company who maybe don't want to change the way things are done. Some people in the company may want to **cling to** the old way of doing things, because they are comfortable with them. Others may not be comfortable in allocating resources to the change. If you do not present the advantages convincingly enough, people may simply be **indifferent** towards the change at first, meaning that they are not particularly for or against.



In all of these cases you will have to **win over** board members or team members, so that they become more positive and **receptive** to the change.

Once the change has been agreed, you may need to **test the waters** with a small sample of colleagues before implementing the change across the whole company. Again, some people in the company may **give some pushback** and start complaining about the change. More experienced members of the company may want to **cling to** old methods. After the testing period, you need to **gauge** the response from the company members, judging whether it is beneficial for them. Hopefully, if the change is implemented sensibly, members of the company will **embrace** the change and the new working style.

### A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

To hone/refine	to alter	to revamp	to overhaul
To get some pushback	to cling to	to be indifferent towards	to gauge
To win over	to be receptive to	to test the waters	to embrace

1. To have no particular interest in something, to neither be for or against something:

\_\_\_\_\_

*"Data shows that consumers are fairly \_\_\_\_\_ the improvements that we have made to our product."*

2. To accept and welcome something: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We need to \_\_\_\_\_ the changes in the market and use them to our advantage."*

3. To change a whole system or process completely: \_\_\_\_\_

*"The government have decided to \_\_\_\_\_ the whole election process, which has caused mass protests across the country."*

4. To persuade someone to support something after they initially did not support it:

\_\_\_\_\_

*"The presentation started off pretty badly, but in the end I managed to \_\_\_\_\_ the board members, and they accepted my proposal."*

5. To make small changes in order to perfect a process or a skill over a period of time:

\_\_\_\_\_

*"I want to \_\_\_\_\_ my English accent over the next year."*

6. To remain emotionally faithful to someone or something: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We can't keep \_\_\_\_\_ old, comfortable methods, otherwise we will fall behind our competition."*

7. To get a negative reaction to something new that has either been proposed or introduced: \_\_\_\_\_

*"It is a great idea, but we must be aware that we will probably \_\_\_\_\_ from some members of the team."*

8. To test something with a small sample size before introducing it to a bigger group:

\_\_\_\_\_

*"We need to determine if the new method is going to work. Let's \_\_\_\_\_ with just 1 department for now, and then we can implement it across the whole company".*

9. To change the arrangement or form of something completely: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We have decided to \_\_\_\_\_ the whole department. We're going to replace up to 50% of the staff."*

10. To estimate the level or volume of something: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Let's \_\_\_\_\_ the reaction of the consumers before we decide what to do next."*

11. To be open to something new: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Eventually, the board were \_\_\_\_\_ to my idea after I outlined how much profit the company can expect to make."*

12. To change something in a small yet significant way: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We should \_\_\_\_\_ the colour of the logo, because it looks slightly too bright."*

### B) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

to hone/refine	to cling to	to revamp	to overhaul
to get some pushback	to be indifferent towards	to gauge	
to win over	to be receptive to	to test the waters	to embrace

## The Dreaded Rebrand

Tech Innovations Inc. had noticed its profits dwindling over the previous 2 years, so something drastic needed to be done in order to stay competitive in the super fast-paced tech market.

The first step was to pinpoint the specific areas where they needed to transform. The first shortcoming was blatantly obvious. The brand image, including the logo, slogan and colour scheme hadn't changed since the 1990s, so it needed to be completely \_\_\_\_\_ with a modern logo and complete new look.

Secondly, the website also looked a little dated, and it needed to be \_\_\_\_\_ slightly and optimized for mobile devices. They also needed \_\_\_\_\_ their digital marketing strategy completely, by establishing Instagram and TikTok accounts and ditching their Facebook campaigns.

As with any major change, the management \_\_\_\_\_, mainly from more established employees in the company. Some employees wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ the old ways, which was understandable because it was what they had been used to for

so long. As an employee, you get comfortable with the way things work, and you can become a little \_\_\_\_\_ towards the overall success of the company, especially if you feel it doesn't affect you personally. Employees really need to buy into the values of a company in order to strive for the company's success as opposed to just working for a paycheck. In order to \_\_\_\_\_ the more sceptical employees, the company offered bonuses and put on events in order to make their workforce feel more invested in the success of the company.

With the new branding, management knew they had to firstly \_\_\_\_\_ the reactions of their customers before moving forward with a complete rebrand. They \_\_\_\_\_ by conducting surveys and focus groups.

The feedback was clear. Customers were more \_\_\_\_\_ one particular design, so it was a no-brainer that this is how they should proceed, and so the long transformation process began.

It wasn't an easy process, but the newly enthusiastic and highly engaged team at Tech Innovations Inc. were committed to seeing it through. They were motivated and excited by the potential for growth that lay ahead.

Today we can see how all the hard work and sacrifice eventually paid off. Both staff and customers have really \_\_\_\_\_ the new branding and changes to the site. Sales are now soaring, and the company's brand is stronger than ever, with a modern feel appropriate for an innovative tech company.

### C) Comprehension Questions

1. Paragraph 1 explains how Tech Innovations Inc.'s profits were dwindling. Based on the context of the paragraph and article in general, what do you think is meant by the verb 'dwindling'?

---



---



---

2. The main area of change discussed in the article is the brand image. In the second paragraph, we see the phrase "the first shortcoming was blatantly obvious". Could you re-phrase this in simpler English using synonyms?

---



---



---

3. What was the main problem with the social media campaigns?

---



---



---

4. For employees to embrace new changes and fully support a change process, what do the employees need to do, and how did Tech Innovations Inc. deal with this?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. In paragraph 7, what do you think the phrasal verb 'to see something through' means?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. In the final paragraph, it is mentioned that sales are 'soaring'. What do you think this means based on the context of the sentence?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you ever been part of a major change process? Did the process pay off in the end?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

#### **D) More Uses of Selected Key Words**

##### **To get some pushback**

We can get or receive some pushback on or regarding something:

*"We've been getting a lot of pushback on our plans to expand abroad."*

*"We're getting too much pushback regarding the proposed merger, so we're considering abandoning the idea."*

##### **To gauge**

To gauge something means to estimate the level or amount of something. This word is great for business because it suggests that you are measuring something

according to knowledge, data or your own strong judgement. There are some things which we can't measure exactly, and for these we can use the word 'gauge':

To gauge the interest in something / to gauge the attitude of / to gauge the response / to gauge the risk / to gauge the mood / to gauge depth of / to gauge the seriousness of / to gauge demand

**We can 'gauge the level of' anything, which is also very useful for business:**

*"We need to gauge the level of risk before we come to any decision."*

*"We will be able to gauge the level of enthusiasm from our clients by the comments that we receive on social media."*

*"It is hard to gauge the level of performance over the past few years due to difficulties caused by the pandemic."*

**We can also use gauge with 'how + adjective' or 'how much/many..'**

*"We can't really gauge how risky the situation could be."*

*"We will be able to gauge how enthusiastic the board our with our proposal by the number of questions that they ask during the presentation."*

*"We are trying to gauge how many more staff we will need for the upcoming summer season."*

### **To win over**

We can either 'win over someone' or 'win someone over'. However, when we use a pronoun (him / her / them), we must put the pronoun in the middle of the phrasal verb, it cannot go on the end:

*"Thankfully, I managed to win them over."* ~~*"Thankfully, I managed to win over them."*~~

To win someone over means to succeed in getting someone's support or enthusiasm after they initially did not support something. This is usually through persuading people that something is a good idea, as we saw in the examples in the exercises. However, it does not always involve directly persuading someone to support something. Here are some other scenarios below:

Consumers not liking the product and then liking it:

*"Consumers didn't seem to keen on the product when we first launched it, but eventually we managed to win them over with some small alterations."*

People not liking someone and then liking them:

*"The team weren't too sure about me when I first joined the company, but since then I have managed to win them over with my friendly but effective management style."*

An audience not liking a presentation or presenter and then changing their minds:

*"If the audience are not very responsive to the presentation, it is important to win them over with a few jokes."*

### **To test the waters**

We use the preposition 'with' after this idiom:

*"We tested the waters with a sample size of 1000 customers."*

**E) Glossary of words for sounding convincing when talking about change**

to hone  
to refine  
to alter  
to revamp  
to overhaul  
to get some pushback  
to give some pushback  
to see something through

to cling to  
to be indifferent towards  
to gauge  
to win over  
to be receptive to  
to test the waters  
to embrace