

## THE PHASES OF TRANSITION<sup>1</sup>

### The Four Phases:

**Denial** – It is common to observe: withdrawal, “business as usual,” focus on the past. There is activity, but not much gets done. Actions to help move through this phase:

- Confront individuals with information. Let them know that the change will happen.
- Explain what to expect and suggest actions they can take to adjust to the change.
- Give them time to let things sink in, and then schedule a planning session to talk things over.

**Resistance** – You will see: anger, blame, anxiety, depression and even retirement on the job. “What’s the difference? This company doesn’t care anymore.” Action:

- Listen, acknowledge feelings, respond empathetically and encourage support.
- Don’t try to talk people out of their feelings or tell them to change or pull together.
- If you accept their response, they will continue to tell you how they are feeling. This will help you respond to some of their concerns.

**Exploration** – You will recognize: over preparation, confusion, chaos, energy. “Let’s try this and this and what about this...” Lots of energy and new ideas but a lack of focus. Actions:

- Focus on priorities and provide any needed training.
- Follow up on projects underway.
- Set short-term goals.
- Conduct brainstorming, visioning and planning sessions.

**Commitment** – Occurs when employees begin working together. There is cooperation and a better focus. “How can we work on this?” Those who are committed are looking for the next challenge. Actions:

- Look ahead. Set long-term goals.
- Concentrate on team building.
- Create a mission statement.
- Validate and reward those responding to change.

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<sup>1</sup> From *Managing Change at Work*, Cynthia D. Scott and Dennis T. Jaffe