Vision and Communication

“Where are we going, and why?”

Key factors
- Being able to set out a compelling vision of the future is crucial, but equally important is the ability to listen respectfully to feedback, and if necessary modify the vision. Communication is continual, and not one-way.
- The single most complained-about aspect of change management is communication, and much of that unhappiness is in response to change that is imposed through impersonal communication channels, rather than developed collaboratively.

Communicating for commitment

Faced with a change, people’s commitment changes over time as their understanding and acceptance develops. Communications have a key role in building commitment (or preventing it). The ultimate stage is internalisation (acceptance of the change without conscious thinking) through involvement, which does require substantial investment of managers’ time and effort.

Try the following ascending scale of communications to build commitment with key stakeholders:

You may not have the resources or need to do all of these, but note that “Dear colleague” emails don’t get you anywhere near engagement with most people, and that true internalisation only comes with involvement in the change process.
The Elevator Pitch
You and all members of your change team will need to be able to get across to stakeholders the rationale and purpose of your change in a succinct, compelling way. Prepare a one-minute “elevator pitch” that can express:

- Here’s what our change initiative is about...
- It’s important to do because....
- Here’s what success will look like, especially for you
- Here’s what we need from you
- Here’s what you can count on from me/us