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Career Exploration: Change Management Specialist

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In a world where change is often the only constant in a company, a growing number of businesses are turning to change management specialists for their expertise.

“A change management specialist is someone who comes in and helps an organization think through the change process,” explains Jennifer Scott, president of Touch Points Public Relations.

When a company is experiencing a huge change they look to a change management specialist to take the company through the process with as little impact as possible. Because companies go through the process differently, a specialist must learn all that he or she can about the company’s culture. Projects can last months or even years, depending on the scope of the change. “You have to set up a structure for the change so people know the key points of what’s happening, how it’s happening and when it’s happening,” Scott explains.

As part of their job, change management specialists conduct a cultural assessment of the company.

“We talk with leaders and employees about the change and we look for gaps to be filled,” Scott says. “We work with clients to develop a program to make this happen. We look at training and education programs and also set up a measurement program so we can measure from the beginning to the end of the change to see if anything else needs to be done.”

The field is best suited to someone who enjoys change and working through a process.

“They should enjoy puzzles and thinking about how to help people get through the change,” Scott says. “You have to like deadlines and be very organized. You also have to like stress because you are dealing with everyone from executives to staff members who are taking on other tasks. You have to be able to talk to anyone at any level and not be intimidated.”

A change management specialist is a good listener.

“You have to be able to hear people’s fears and concerns and then turn them into a positive outcome,” Scott says.

Anyone who wants to become a change management specialist should have a human resources background or experience in the communications field.

“Most folks have a bachelor’s degree in communications or human resources,” Scott says.

The work can be professionally rewarding and challenging at the same time.

“I enjoy turning something that could be a negative into a positive,” Scott says. “A lot of times you have control over what’s happening with the change and how it’s being communicated but you don’t have control over how the project is implemented. It can be a bumpy road.”

The need for change management specialists is growing.

“We’ve had a huge surge in requests for our help,” Scott says.



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