



Managing Change In Challenging Times

Preparing your organization to navigate change.



Beginning Your Organizational Change Journey

When seas are calm, it's understandable to enjoy the status quo, but like a shark, businesses must move forward or die. When change comes to your organization, change management can help to get the whole team on board, even those who would rather not rock the boat.

What Is Change Management?

Change management is a process designed to implement change within an organization while preparing, training, and supporting employees through that change. The goal of change management is to smooth the transition for employees, leaders, and the entire organization.

Start By Finding Your Early Adopters

Common wisdom says many fear change, while others seem to thrive in dynamic environments. Look for people at all levels of your organization who are proponents of thoughtful change. It's not that you need to capture the ones willing stand in line for the latest smartphone. You want those who gather data when a significant upgrade is released and waits watchfully while the bugs and kinks are straightened out then dive in. They are your key players in your change management team. Add them as leaders or liaisons, depending on their position, skills, and tenure.

Change management is a structured process for leading organizations and their people through change to achieve the desired outcome.



Why Is Change Management Vital To Any Company?

Change can be disruptive to employees, lowering confidence in the organization and reducing productivity on the job. Mishandled change can cause discontent and excess turnover.

Effective change management strategies and change leaders help companies easily adopt new practices, processes, and technology. Navigating these changes well can control costs, improve productivity, and increase ROI.

Organizations count on change management to:

- Minimize uncertainty and confusion that can lead to chaos.
- Give employees the knowledge and support they need to adjust to changes.
- Facilitate smooth transitions to keep plans and employees on track.
- Improve employee productivity, engagement, and morale.
- Increase retention by helping employees feel more optimistic about their future.

Why Is Change Needed?

Change management is advisable for common transitions that companies may encounter, including:

- Business consolidations, mergers, and acquisitions
- Changes to business processes
- New leadership or team structure
- Need to upgrade technology

Enlist the whole company to increase the likelihood of a smooth transition. Consider the time, cost, and training it will take to ensure success.



What Are The Three Legs of Change Management Success?

Successful change management depends on equal weight given to each of the three legs during the planning process.

1. Creating Content

Training the team is essential to smooth organizational transitions. The curriculum must be appropriate for each employee, focused on what they need to know, and delivered with methods that address a variety of learning styles.

Build learning management systems (LMS) that include the ability to track training progress. Systems with the capacity to assign, deliver, track, and report progress on educational materials ensure that everyone on the team is completing the training required as needed to smooth the transition.

2. Delivery Context

Change management leans heavily toward the people side of the equation. While managing that aspect is important, leaders must not lose sight of the true context driving the organization's need for change, including:

- Return on investment
- Desired results
- Outcomes achieved
- Organizational value

3. Plan To Implement Change And Measure Success

Ideally, the change management strategy will be designed to limit operational disruptions, anticipate challenges, and mitigate risks. Implement the strategy with a focus on ensuring employees, operations, and the organization are all prepared to move forward and embrace change.

Common change management performance measures include:

- Performance improvements
- Adherence to project plan
- Business and change readiness
- Project KPI measurements
- Benefit realization and ROI
- Adherence to timeline
- Speed of execution



Why Do Organizations Need Change Management?

While some change is gradual and blends seamlessly into your business, larger, more comprehensive organization-wide transition is often well-served by a change-management strategy.

Mission-critical outcomes. When a planned change is essential to the company's continued success, a dedicated internal or external change management team can show immense ROI.

Large or complex change. Change management can assign responsibilities to specific members of the team and prevent anything from falling through the cracks.

Prevent repeat of poorly managed change. If previous attempts at organizational change did not go well, stakeholders might be eager to find a better approach.

Future-proofing the organization. Forward-looking companies understand the importance of changing and adapting to remain competitive and successful.

Bring in expertise. While some companies can manage change with internal teams, typically, there is a lack of bandwidth or specific knowledge that dedicated change management teams can offer.

Most Popular Change Management Models

There are multiple ways to approach change management. The most suitable for your organization can vary depending on the urgency and size of the change and your company culture.

FIVE MODELS ORGANIZATIONS FREQUENTLY USE

Kotter's Change Management Model

This eight-stage model focuses on employee response to change. Because of its emphasis on ongoing communication, this option helps employees feel valued and involved, reducing the likelihood of resistance.

McKinsey 7s Model

This model, that originated in the 1980s examines seven key internal elements of an organization: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff, and skill to determine its effectiveness.

ADKAR Change Management Model

This model focuses on individual change before organizational change, identifying learning gaps and removing potential roadblocks. ADKAR stands for awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement.

Kübler-Ross Five Stage Change Management Model

This model is inspired by the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The primary emphasis is on employee feelings, concerns, and needs and leading them through change through communication – both listening and updating.

Lewin's Change Management Model

This model is popular because of its simplicity. It helps companies understand organizational and structured change through three main stages: unfreeze, change, and refreeze, encompassing the change management process organizations must undergo.

The Four Principles of Change Management

Change management is a structured approach to implementing change in an organization.

The ideal strategy takes into account the likelihood of resistance and roadblocks and plans to overcome them via planning, expertise, and communication.

1. Understand Change

Be sure you and all those involved understand the full extent of the anticipated change, the benefits, and any anticipated roadblocks.

- What is the change that's coming?
- Why does it need to happen?
- How will you measure success?
- What obstacles can you anticipate?

2. Plan Change

Choose a change strategy that matches your company culture. If your organization is highly structured, your plan should be as well. If it's a little more of a laid-back environment, a punch list of must-dos may suffice.

- Who are the stakeholders?
- How will you gain their support?
- Who can help you design the change?
- Will you need external expertise?

3. Implement Change

Set a start date and target end date. Create milestones to track progress and provide a sense of urgency. Gain buy-in by bringing those who need a little encouragement along gently. Don't steamroll their feelings.

- Who is on your change team?
- What training do they need?
- What support is needed company-wide?

4. Communicate Change

Communication is one of the most critical aspects of change management. Most resistance to change is based in fear. That fear escalates when people feel they are kept in the dark about what is going on and what happens next.

- Are you sharing regular updates?
- Have you provided a detailed timeline?
- Are the advantages of change clear?

What Obstacles can Interfere with Seamless Change?

Change leaders can run into people who are inflexible or have a tendency to focus on the negative (“We’ve always done it this way!”). Change can be difficult; resistance is generally emotional. Straightforward logic may not deliver the desired results.

CONSIDER THESE OBSTACLES AND THEIR SOLUTIONS.

Individual Resistance

Put yourself in the resister’s shoes and consider what they fear most. How do they experience change? Are they worried their jobs will become obsolete? Are they afraid it will be too hard to learn something new?

Find out what reassurance they need from you to make the transition successfully.

Lack Of Top-Level Buy-In

Leadership support is critical to successful organizational change. Frequently, executives will back the initiative on paper but have little day-to-day involvement. Seeing the CEO “get their hands dirty” can help get the entire organization on board.

Tactical rather than strategic approach

Create a roadmap that will keep the transition on track. Ideally, your change management strategy should include:

- The ultimate goal or intended outcome
- Clear, measurable objectives
- Projected timeline for project completion
- Regular check-ins to evaluate progress

Poor Communication

One of the biggest reasons for organizational change failure is the lack of clear, ongoing communication. It is essential to every phase of change management. Keeping everyone on the same page is critical.

Communication should:

- Begin before implementation
- Be intentional and proactive
- Set clear expectations
- Communicate potential timelines
- Report progress at regular intervals



What are Best Practices for Leading Through Change?

Leadership through change requires confidence, flexibility, and empathy. Be authentic to build trust and relieve employee anxiety. Welcome questions and feedback. Answer as honestly as you can.

Successful change leaders possess the following characteristics:

- Ability to see the big picture despite obstacles
- Commitment to regular two-way communication
- Empathy for employees who express fear or doubt
- Ability to identify allies and build coalitions

Good change management will help employees recognize their contributions, reduce resistance, improve workplace relationships, and increase retention.



Why Clarity for Change Management?

Clarity is a learning and development consulting firm serving some of the most discerning and successful organizations in the world. As a leading expert in organizational development, Clarity has the infrastructure and resources to scale up for any size change management project.

What makes Clarity the best strategic partner for change management projects?

Our team can help you manage all aspects of change including, strategy development, stakeholder engagement, organizational assessment, change readiness, and training. Our expertise includes learning design, performance, leadership development, and change strategy.

Domain specialists at Clarity include:

- Learning & Organizational Development Specialists
- Change Management Consultants
- Organizational Change Managers
- Instructional Design Consultants
- Trainers and Facilitators

Clarity's change management experts can help your organization implement change, improve performance, and ensure continued success.



Clarity Helps Retail Chain Manage Change

Read one of our change management success stories below. You can find additional case studies on our website.

Challenge

The client, a major retail drug store chain, needed to train all levels of management on new software. The new program would shift the emphasis from store-level to district-level control.

Opportunity

Managers were understandably resistant to the new technology and giving up store-level control. Clarity provided a classroom facilitator experienced with software training and change management initiatives.

Results

The consultant observed a week-long training event in one of the Los Angeles districts and was certified as a trainer. They prepared and delivered a series of three-day classes to the San Diego district, emphasizing the new software's benefits to store management and warehouse staff. Course evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, and the company requested the consultant's help on a subsequent project.

Clarity enabled the client to:

Minimize resistance to a new software roll-out. Get four levels of management up-to-speed quickly on new technology.

The Clarity Advantage

The presence of a neutral objective third party with expertise in training, technology and change management allayed doubts, facilitated adoption and improved outcomes.



About Clarity Consultants

Clarity over 30 years of expertise in placing elite learning and development professionals in high-demand positions in large, global organizations.

There is a reason why over eighty percent of Fortune 500 firms rely on Clarity to staff their projects. Our track record, skilled consultants, and broad range of experience across industries and sectors help set us apart from the competition.

Contact Us:

www.clarityconsultants.com

1-800-330-6558

Resources:

<https://www.kotterinc.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change/>

<https://strategicmanagementinsight.com/tools/mckinsey-7s-model-framework.html>

<https://www.prosci.com/methodology/adkar>

<https://www.cleverism.com/understanding-kubler-ross-change-curve/>

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<https://blog.prosci.com/how-to-provide-context-for-change-management>

<https://blog.smarp.com/5-change-management-models-to-take-a-look-at>

<https://ecornell.cornell.edu/courses/leadership-and-strategic-management/leading-organizational-change/>

<https://www.wearekadabra.com/2018/08/28/6-barriers-to-organizational-change-and-how-to-overcome-them/>

<https://clarityconsultants.com/what-we-do/organizational-development/>

<https://www.prosci.com/resources/articles/what-is-change-management#>

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<https://www.prosci.com/resources/articles/7-reasons-for-change-management-deployment#>