

Organizational Change Management Steps (Even If You Don't Have a Change Manager)



Let's all gather around, PM's and Executives alike, because we are about to introduce a significant change to the way your employees do their jobs. When the development and testing are all completed, the first thought is "We're in the clear!" but that couldn't be further from the truth because the project is still at risk of failure.

How can that be so?

Software implementations are still subject to failure because of **failure to adopt** and embrace the change by the end users. This crowd is a fickle bunch, no matter what the industry, because they HATE change. Even a good change puts a wrinkle in their world, so expect resistance.

"Why?" you ask. Think of it this way. Many of the end users have their jobs under control. They know exactly what they are doing, and they know how to do it fast and efficiently – as much as they can with their available tools. Even if there are problems with software, they know the workarounds. Throw in a change (even a happy change) and their world gets bumpy. Productivity slows down and work piles up. An unsympathetic manager may not be understanding of their need to find a new rhythm.

What is Change Management?

You've probably heard the term knocked around before, and maybe if you're lucky you've even encountered a project utilizing this practice. Change Managers address the "*people side of change.*" Their primary responsibility is making sure that those users about to be affected by the change are ready, trained, prepared and supported through said change. While this may be overkill for some smaller scale projects, any implementation that is enterprise-wide would benefit from having a Change Manager on their project team. If a Change Manager is on staff with your business, it wouldn't hurt to

tap them on the shoulder for a few pointers even if you do not plan to engage their services on your smaller project.

The case for change management can certainly be made more analytical, more data-driven and more rigorous. However, the first step in building buy-in and commitment to change management is helping your project teams redefine how they view change - away from a strictly technical view of the initiative and toward a more complete view that includes the individuals who have to ultimately embrace and adopt the change.

What if you don't have a Change Manager?

Even if your project team does not include a Change Manager, the activities of the Change Manager remain. For instance, the employees still need to know what to expect and learn how to operate with the new change. They need to be convinced that change is good and someone needs to make sure they have the proper equipment, knowledge and ability to compensate for this new process, or sometimes even a new job description, all together.

These tasks often fall on the Project Manager to take on themselves or delegate. They don't sound very difficult, however when trying to keep the other moving parts of the project in motion, these are considered "minor details" and can easily slip through the cracks. Not to worry though, we have a few tips to get the right people engaged to ensure a successful transition.

It takes a village

The first important item of change management is communication, and there is a specific method or even an art to it. The right people communicating the appropriate information at the perfect times helps get the information flowing. A project manager can recruit Leadership to the team to help get the word out on cue. If anything, engage a trainer to help craft the messages. They are likely already involved if your project is a large one, so utilize their talents for communication at different levels.

Introducing ADKAR

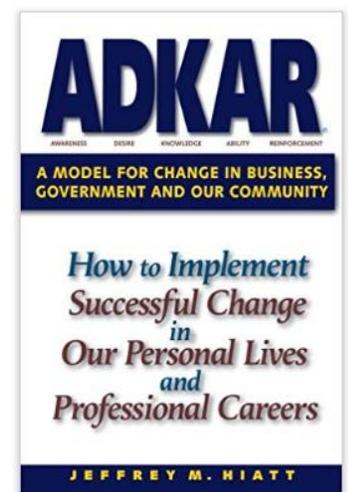
Without getting too technical or deep, this methodology (<https://www.prosci.com/>) can be adopted without too much difficulty at the surface level by understanding the basics of the model. The timing and delivery of the message fosters a feeling of trust and understanding. Once this is achieved, the angst of the change starts to soften.

A for Awareness

How a person understands the nature of the change, why a change is happening and the risk of not changing. Awareness also includes the information about the internal and external drivers that created the need for change, as well as "What's in it for me."

The credibility of the sender of awareness messages directly impacts how an individual will internalize that information. The level of trust and respect of the sender will determine them as either a credible source or someone not to be believed.

- **Why:** Messages about why the change is being made and how the change aligns with the business strategy are expected from the person near or at the top of the organization.



- **How:** Messages about how the change will impact the employees locally and how it will impact them personally are expected from their immediate supervisor.

D is for Desire

Desire represents the willingness to support and engage in a change. Desire is ultimately about personal choice, influenced by the nature of the change, by an individual's personal situation, as well as intrinsic motivators that are unique to each person.

Desire is best received by direct managers or supervisors, for they are most likely to understand the personal drivers of those on their team. They will adjust their message to appeal to their team. Sometimes, it's the manager that must be convinced prior to bringing this message to the team. For this reason, knowing the top reasons for resistance are most helpful:



Once these resisters are identified, they can be addressed appropriately.

K is for Knowledge

Employees cannot perform new processes on new tools without the knowledge of how to do so. This includes the training, education and documentation necessary to aid the team in knowing how to change. This would be information about behaviors, processes, tools, systems, skills, job roles and techniques in order to successfully transition.

A combination of a Trainer and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) would be participants in this phase, along with the input provided by the immediate supervisor to determine how the change applies to the team or individual. Make sure to include the Trainer in User Acceptance Testing (UAT) to get them acquainted with the system and the changes.

A is for Ability

Ability is turning knowledge into action. This is achieved when a person has demonstrated capability to implement the change at the required performance levels.

A trainer will provide exercises or scenarios for the employees to work through according to the new process and make sure that documentation is provided as a reminder for the new steps in a process. The manager can make additional assessments of the employees' ability to embrace the change.

R is for Reinforcement

Reinforcement builds momentum during the transition and sustains the change, preventing individuals from slipping back into old behaviors. It also creates a history that they will remember when the next change occurs.

Reinforcements may come from immediate management or from the Leadership level by way of rewards and/or consequences where appropriate.

Lighthouse Commitment to Quality

Just like a Change Manager, Lighthouse Technologies is a key resource on a software development project. Our team of professionals provide exceptional testing at the speed and capacity of an offshore company, but with the personal touch appreciated with domestic resources. Contact us and learn how we can keep your project on track and in budget.