



# Guide to Managing Ongoing Change

Strategies for ensuring successful digital transformation by embracing a culture of continuous growth and supporting the human side of change.





# Transformation is the new constant

Whether driven by opportunity or disruption, digital transformation is the new reality for business.

Modern organisations face increasing demands to recognise and rapidly respond to both the needs of their customers and their workforce with new products, services and processes. Those that master these capabilities will gain the advantages of agility in an ever-evolving landscape, while those that remain stagnant will be left behind.

But becoming a change-capable organisation requires a significant shift in thinking about the nature of digital transformation, not as a singular initiative, but as an unending, people-driven infinity loop. Whether migrating to a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, supporting remote collaboration or adopting advanced capabilities such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation - every change in process and/or technology represents a need for new behaviors, skills, processes, roles and even culture change.

These organisational changes, in turn, require a structured approach to adoption and sustainment.

So how can your business support ongoing transformation by ensuring new technology and processes are put to effective use? How can you ensure the changes stick? And how should you measure success?

# The challenge of change

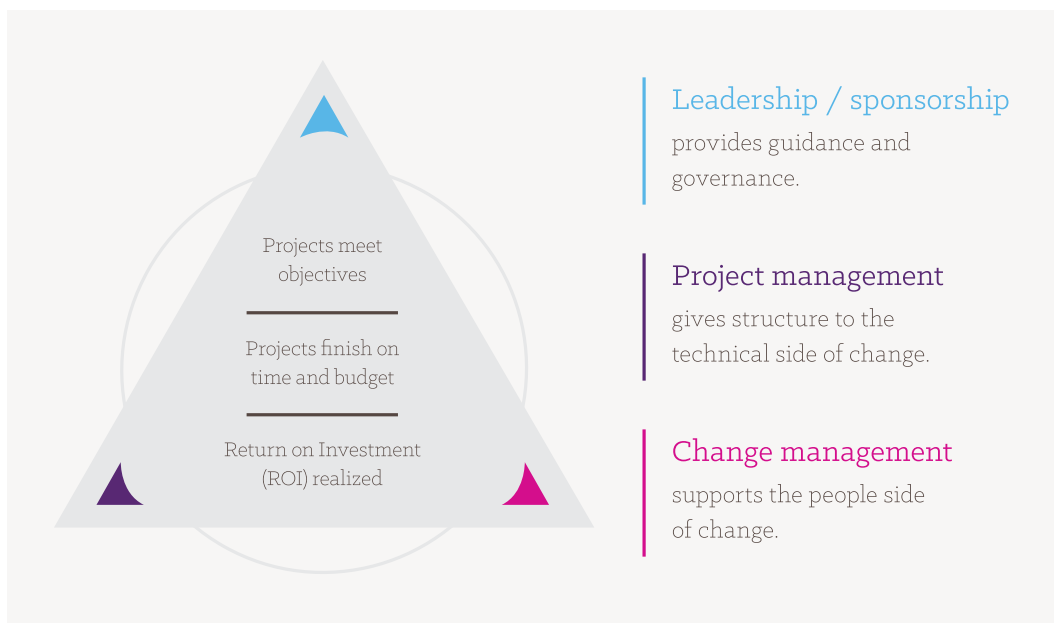
**Adoption and Change Management** (ACM) provides the framework for dealing with uncertainty throughout the digital transformation journey - offering proven tools and techniques to help manage the “people side” of change.

When organisations implement ACM, they’re six times more likely to meet their business objectives, five times more likely to stay on schedule and twice as likely to stay within their budget.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of ACM is to help build a culture of resilience and agility with the understanding that small recurring changes are part of the norm. This means embedding tools and techniques for understanding, prioritising, measuring and managing the impacts of change into the highest level of your business.

Change management is most effective when it encompasses **five key levers**, or tools, which work together holistically to drive adoption and usage. These include:

- Sponsorship and support from leadership
- An effective communications strategy
- A coaching plan for management and supervisors
- Training for employees and end users
- Proactive resistance management





# Assessing your readiness

Understanding the current state of your organisation is the first step toward any desired future state. Every iteration of your digital transformation will require new changes to people, process and technology. For each, you'll need to begin by evaluating the scope, degree and impact of the desired change. Which roles will be affected and to what degree? Identifying these areas and individuals is essential for effective planning - and for pinpointing potential challenges.

With a firm definition of the change, you can begin to assess your organisation's readiness in a few key areas, including company culture, leadership style and sponsorship, challenges with previous change initiatives, employee attitudes and more. These factors provide valuable insight to help identify risk, guide the planning process and refine your support tactics.

The **Prosci® Project Change Triangle** can be a beneficial tool for mapping and measuring the health of the transformation initiatives: project management, ACM, and sponsorship and leadership.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, an **ADKAR® scoring tool** can help your organisation visualise and outline the sequential building blocks required for successful change by measuring:

- Awareness of the business reason for the change
- Desire for the change
- Knowledge of what's required to make the change
- Ability to remove roadblocks inhibiting change
- Reinforcement of behaviors that support the change.



## Sponsorship: Starting at the top

When it comes to change initiatives, leadership is the number one factor impacting success or failure. Employees will look to senior leadership for guidance and understanding around the importance of technology and process changes.

Senior leaders must commit to collectively investing in and supporting ACM in order to see the benefits for transformation.

A **sponsor roadmap** provides the opportunity to outline the specific actions leaders need to take to support change at each step of the journey. This should include any and all commitments to projects teams, management and frontline employees, as well as key activities required at each phase of the transformation.

It's important for sponsors and leaders to employ the ABCs of leadership when managing change:

- A) Stay active and visible.
- B) Build a coalition of other leaders to who can help to support change.
- C) Communicate early and often.

In support of these efforts, and to help streamline decision-making throughout the transformation, many organisations also find it valuable to implement a **Change Management Officer (CMO)**.

A CMO supports standardisation of methodology and tools and empowers the right people to stay focused on the right change initiatives. CMOs are able take a portfolio view of the business to understand who is on the receiving end of multiple changes at once. This provides the information needed to prioritise initiatives, communicate more effectively, and make decisions to prevent change saturation and fatigue.

More than 20 years of benchmark data indicate companies with a CMO in place rank higher on the maturity curve, meaning they adapt more rapidly and readily to change than those lower on the curve.<sup>3</sup>





# Communication is key

Clarity and visibility are key to managing expectations, building confidence and promoting the adoption of new tools and processes. To support your ongoing transformation efforts and ensure continued sustainment, you'll need to develop a comprehensive communications plan backed by an effective reinforcement strategy.

**Collecting feedback early and often allows challenges with adoption to be identified and addressed.**

Rather than simply reporting on progress as it occurs, communications should focus on helping employees anticipate what changes are coming and why, how their roles will be impacted, as well as the direct benefit to them.

It should also include opportunities for **two-way communication**. Particularly when dealing with large numbers of remote or distributed employees, it can be difficult to pinpoint areas of resistance to change. Collecting feedback early and often allows challenges with adoption to be identified and addressed.

Leverage tools like monthly update emails, newsletters, townhalls and team calls to establish a regular cadence for communication and feedback. A CMO can also help improve communication efficiency and reduce the perception of change fatigue by bundling messaging when multiple change initiatives overlap the same groups.



# Coaching through change

Managers and supervisors will play a critical role in successful transformation, both by embracing change in their own roles and supporting change within their teams.

An effective **coaching plan** should focus on building commitment and equipping management with the knowledge and resources to embrace their role as change advocates. The goal is to empower these individuals to communicate the value of the coming changes to their direct reports, identify and manage areas of resistance, and provide recognition and reinforcement throughout the implementation.



Building on existing relationships and rapport is an essential part of this process which can't be replaced or replicated with other representatives or consultants. Management teams should be encouraged to leverage both group and individual coaching sessions to effectively connect with, assess and support their employees. Both settings provide distinct opportunities to build trust and gather feedback.

The ADKAR model can be an effective tool for evaluating individuals at each stage of the transformation, helping to ensure each employee's needs are being properly addressed as they move toward embracing change.



## Learning & Development (L&D)

With any change comes the need for new skills which must be effectively introduced and reinforced.

However, this isn't as simple as rolling out a few tutorials. A true, ACM-based training plan takes a holistic view of the workforce. It builds on the awareness and momentum created by communications and coaches to empower those impacted by the change to embrace and master new ways of thinking and working. This starts with identifying where gaps in knowledge or capabilities currently exist and leveraging best practices to design and deliver the right knowledge to the right people at the right time.

Over the past several years, Learning and Development (L&D) best practices have shifted significantly to better support the needs of employers, employees and customers. Increased mobility has led to a greater emphasis on blended and micro-learning, with a heavier focus on self-paced study. In place of long blocks of Instructor-Led Training (ILT), these digital training programs allow content to be consumed and exercises performed in manageable five-minute chunks. This better aligns to the natural human cognitive process.

Mastering these [best practices for training remote teams](#) will enable your organisation to more effectively coach and educate your workforce on new technologies and processes without having to rely on in-person training.

# Overcoming resistance

When rolling out a change initiative, organisations often make the mistake of implicitly assuming their workforce will instantly and collectively make the shift. But every individual adjusts and moves through the change curve at their own pace. While some embrace new ways of working right away, most will need support to enable adoption.

The goal of ACM is to anticipate these natural phases of adjustment and accelerate time to adoption and utilisation.

There are a number of factors which can lead to increased resistance to change. Today, most, if not all organisations are executing multiple change initiatives impacting the same people at the same time. This creates a significant risk of change saturation and fatigue, even among the most willing adopters.



**Change saturation** refers to a state when disruptive change exceeds an organisation's capacity to adopt. In this environment, chaos and turmoil become the norm and change initiatives can no longer be successfully accomplished.

**Change fatigue**, by comparison, refers to a sense of personal and professional exhaustion felt by an individual as a result of excessive change. Recognising and proactively managing these challenges will have a significant impact on how your workforce responds to and adopts your change initiative.

The other levers of ACM, including effective communications, demonstration of leadership alignment, and strategic training and support, will be your most powerful tools for overcoming resistance — and realising the true benefits of transformation.



# Maximising the value of change

According to Prosci's Best Practices in Change Management, organisations with excellent change management programs in place meet their objectives 93% of the time, complete projects on or ahead of schedule 69% of the time, and stay on or under budget 78% of the time.<sup>1</sup>

Considering both the high risk and rate of failure for digital transformation, ACM is essential not only to the success of any individual initiative, but also to the ongoing success of your organisation as a whole.

As you begin applying the principles of ACM to build a more resilient, change-ready culture, remember to take the time to assess effectiveness, acknowledge growth and celebrate successes. By focusing on progress toward measurable goals, your organisation will be able to build a steady capacity for change that enables better response to the challenges of the future, ensures ongoing sustainment and supports continuous improvement.





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1 Creasy, T. (2018). The Correlation Between Change Management and Project Success. Prosci.

2 Prosci. (n.d.). Project Change Triangle Overview.

3 Prosci. (2017). A Change Management Office Primer.