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PEOPLE. CHANGE. RESULTS.

Best Practices In Change Management

Excerpt

Prosci Benchmarking Report

2,668 change leaders share lessons and best practices in change management

Best Practices in Change Management

Excerpt

2,668 participants share lessons and best practices in change management

This report is designed for accessibility and compliance with regulatory standards that promote equality for people with disabilities.

This edition of Best Practices in Change Management aggregates findings from the 2023 study and previous studies (1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2023) to create a compendium of benchmarking findings, and one of the most comprehensive bodies of knowledge on change management. Findings brought forward from the 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019 editions of the report are noted with the following text: “Source date: 20XX.”

The 2023 data results in rounding totals of 99 or 101. Rounding errors in statistics happen when we round or shorten numbers, which can cause small variations in the final results we report.


Success of Deployment Efforts
61%
14%
26%
2%
Unsuccessful
Moderately Successful
Successful
Extremely Successful
Contributors to successful Deployment:
- Sponsorship + leadership commitment
- Proof of success
- Implementation approach that included collaboration
- Clear and open communication
- Engagement of project teams

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Letter From Prosci

The imperative for organizations to realize results from change and engage a workforce in the process reverberates loudly across industry, organization size and geography. As a change leader, you play a crucial role in ensuring your organization realizes its unique vision of different and prosperous developments on the horizon. Prosci's mission, and the purpose of this study, is to enable organizations and individuals to build their own change management capabilities. We endeavor to uncover best practices that help you become better at leading change.

Best practices provide a starting point for understanding the fundamental concepts of leading people through change. The collective successes of other change efforts provide checkpoints to guide your planning. Lessons others have uncovered provide insights into tackling complex change scenarios and help to avoid common pitfalls. Data from 12 studies across 24 years encompassing over 10,000 change agents who have undertaken significant organizational changes demonstrate authoritatively the value of investing in the people side of change.

The *Best Practices in Change Management* represents the largest body of knowledge on managing the people side of change. Thank you to the 2,668 contributors who devoted time and energy to provide new valuable insights and data.

Whether you study specific topics as a learning exercise, use the book as a reference, or rely on the tools and processes derived from the results, I trust that you will find insights that will work to increase your change management efficiency, your project success rate through better adoption and usage, and your organization's ability to manage its portfolios of change.

Thank you,

Tim Creasey,
Chief Innovation Officer

Study Overview

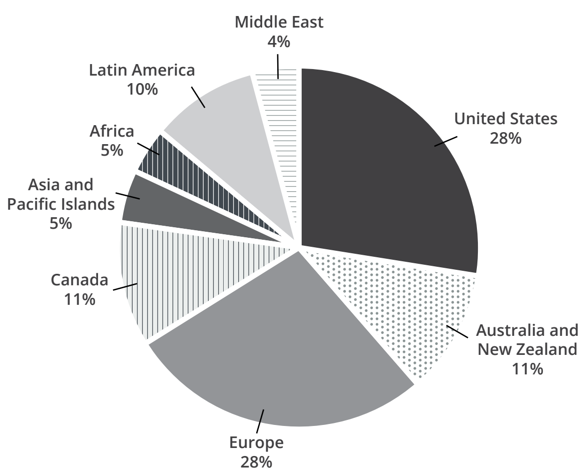
Participant Profile

Two thousand six hundred and sixty eight (2,668) participants from 101 countries took part in Prosci's most recent Best Practices in Change Management study. This report combines findings and data from the 2019 study with Prosci's previous ten studies to form the largest body of knowledge related to managing the people side of change and is based on insights and experiences from more than 10,000 participants.

2023 study – 2,668 participants
2019 study – 1,863 participants
2017 study – 1,778 participants
2015 study – 1,120 participants
2013 study – 822 participants
2011 study – 650 participants
2009 study – 575 participants
2007 study – 426 participants
2005 study – 411 participants
2003 study – 288 participants
2000 study – 152 participants
1998 study – 102 participants

Figure i.1 shows the geographic distribution of participants in the 2023 study. Participation dropped from Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Participation increased from Asia, Latin America and the United States. Participation from Canada, Europe and the Middle East stayed relatively unchanged.

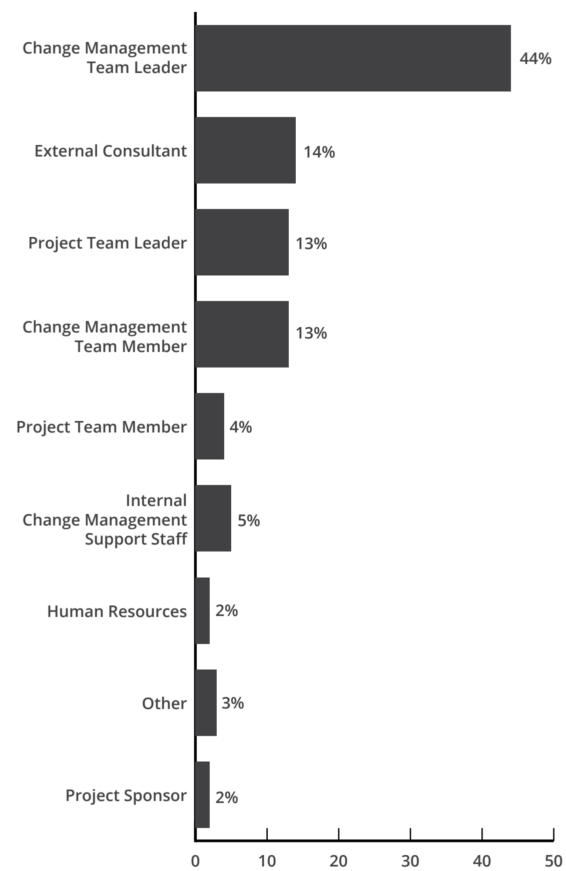
Figure i.1 – Geographic representation of participants



Participants represented a variety of roles in relation to the change on which they reported. Figure i.2 shows the role of participants in the 2023 study. As in the previous study, the top four job roles of participants were:

- Change management team leader
- External consultant
- Project team member
- Change management team member

Figure i.2 – Role of participants



Study Objective

The objective of this study was to uncover lessons learned from practitioners and consultants so current change management teams can benefit from these experiences. Emphasis was placed on what is working and what is not in key areas of the change management discipline. The 12th edition represents ongoing longitudinal data and emerging trends in change management.

This report explores four broad categories of change management: the current state of change management, change management applications, roles in change management, and adapting and aligning change management. The 2023 study included a new section on defining success and metrics for change management.

Chapter 1

Insights

Foundational Findings From Change Management Research on the Most Critical Steps to Drive Success

Summary

Greatest contributors to success and greatest change management obstacles provide a research foundation for your change management work. These core best practices continue to shape the practice and growth of the change management industry. Longitudinal data reveals how key findings have changed over time. Start here for advice and lessons learned from seasoned change leaders.

Highlight

For the twelfth consecutive study, active and visible executive sponsorship was identified as the greatest overall contributor to change success.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Greatest Contributors to Success

Greatest Contributors to Success

Participants identified the greatest contributors to success. Descriptions of the top seven are provided below, along with a list of the frequently mentioned "other" responses.

1. **Active and visible executive sponsorship**
   Ensure active and visible sponsorship at all levels of leadership. Co-create solutions with sponsors and their support. Involve sponsors and the executive team in iterative planning and deep engagement. Communicate key messages to the organization. Build a coalition with strong alignment. Gain support from senior management and other sponsors. Establish a robust communication plan and support structure to support sponsors in fulfillment of their role.

2. **Structured change management approach**
   Use a structured change management approach with a clear methodology and dedicated resources. Involve leadership and gain executive support for the approach and efforts. Start considering the people side of change early in the project. Assess change readiness and anticipate the need to build awareness of the need for change and change management in general. Align project and change management plans and integrate change management activities into project activities. Focus on articulating clear goals and objectives that align with the overall business strategy. Engage stakeholders and impacted teams through targeted and consistent communication and support.

3. **Employee engagement and participation**
   Engage stakeholders early and continuously, including employees, managers, and sponsors. Involve impacted teams and individuals in the change process. Communicate frequently and provide updates to build buy-in and support. Collaborate and co-create solutions with stakeholders. Demonstrate leadership support for involvement in the change effort. Focus on stakeholder needs and benefits to drive engagement. Use workshops, training, and other engagement activities to involve and empower stakeholders.

4. **Frequent and open communication**
   Prioritize frequent and open communication about the change and the need for change. Foster a culture of open communication, collaboration, and cooperation. Develop a comprehensive and timely communication plan. Ensure effective engagement with appropriately timed and paced communications. Involve stakeholders early on and focus on transparent communication of progress. Maintain consistent messaging and support from top leadership. Actively engage with key stakeholders to build trusting relationships.

5. **Dedicated change management resources**
   Allocate dedicated and sufficient change management resources (people, time, and budget) for the duration of the project, leveraging sponsorship support for change management. Invest in change management resources and budget across the organization appropriately. Establish a dedicated change management team with defined roles and responsibilities. Engage change management professionals with expertise and experience. Involve stakeholders and change agents in the change management process.

6. **Integration and engagement with project management**
   Foster strong integration and collaboration between project management and change management teams. Align project management and change management plans and activities to ensure success. Involve the project team early and secure sponsorship support for an integrated approach. Encourage cross-functional teamwork and collaboration with stakeholders. Utilize agile project management and change management methodologies to enable iteration. Seek external expertise and support from other functions to ensure success.

7. **Engagement with people managers**
   Actively engage people managers throughout the change process. Build strong support and capability in people managers to act as custodians of the change process. Involve people impacted by the change, specifically people managers, early and consistently. Secure support from executive sponsors and senior leaders to enlist people managers. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for people managers in relation to change management and project management activities.

Frequently Mentioned "Other" Contributors to Success Included:

1. Teamwork
2. External support
3. Persistence
4. Individual expertise
5. Leadership
6. Collaboration
7. Clarity of purpose
8. Financial and technical support
9. Engagement with stakeholders
10. Adaptability

Contributors to Success Over Time

The table below shows the ranking of contributors to success for all benchmarking studies. Active and visible executive sponsorship ranked number one in each of the eleven studies.

Table 1.1 – Contributors to success over time

Contributors to Success	2023	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011	2009	2007	2005	2003	2000	1998
Sponsorship	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Structured approach	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	5	–	–
Communication	4	3	5	6	4	2	2	3	3	4	2	–
Employee engagement	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	–	2*	2
Dedicated funding and resources	6	5	2	3	3	4	4	4	–	–	–	–
Project management integration	5	6	6	4	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Middle management	7	7	7	7	7	6	–	–	–	–	–	–

*This item was combined with *"Frequent and open communications around the need for change"* in the 2000 study.

Greatest Change Management Obstacles

Participants identified the most challenging obstacles they experienced during the change management process.

1. **Insufficient stakeholder engagement and management**
   Stakeholder engagement and alignment are critical for successful change management, but challenging for a number of reasons, especially for large-scale organizational transformation. Stakeholder engagement, mapping, commitment, alignment, and involvement take time and energy and are often overlooked. Resistance from stakeholders and lack of buy-in hinder change efforts. Leadership and sponsorship are essential for driving change and ensuring alignment, and in particular, resolving conflicting priorities. Effective communication and collaboration across all stakeholders contribute to successful change outcomes.
2. **Lack of leadership buy-in/support**
   Lack of leadership buy-in and support is a major obstacle to successful change management. Middle management and project teams also need to be engaged and committed to change. Misalignment and lack of communication among leadership, and between the team and the sponsor, stall progress and create risk. Strong sponsorship and active involvement from executives are crucial. Lack of leadership support can contribute to increased resistance to change.
3. **Misaligned organizational culture/attitudes/beliefs**
   Organizational culture is a major challenge in organizational change and can lead to resistance to change. Mindset and behavior change are necessary for successful cultural shifts, and often challenging aspects of change. Overcoming entrenched beliefs and fear of the unknown are common obstacles in cultural change efforts. Silos and competing cultures within organizations can impede change efforts. Leadership attitudes and behaviors play a crucial role in change impacting culture and belief, especially when in opposition or misaligned.
4. **Resistance to change**
   Resistance to change is a common challenge in organizations. Resistance can come from various sources in the organization, including employees, middle management, stakeholders, and leadership. Fear of the unknown and reluctance to let go of old ways of working are common reasons for resistance. Lack of buy-in, limited resources, and poor change support can contribute to resistance experienced during a change. Effective change management and leadership support are crucial in overcoming resistance and driving successful change.
5. **Lack of education/awareness of change management**
   Key stakeholders lack an understanding and knowledge of change management. A lack of awareness of the importance of the people side of change led to resistance, limited resources, and poor planning for change management. Some organizations experienced challenges related to low change management maturity and lack of structured change approach. Leadership buy-in and understanding of the value of change management are missing and built through effective education.
6. **Project management challenges**
   Project management challenges included issues like scope creep, delays, and poor project planning and execution. Change management was not prioritized or integrated into the project plan, leading to difficulties in managing expectations and integration. Lack of clear timelines, resources, and sponsorship contributed to project delays and confusion. Project teams struggled with communication, alignment, and competing priorities, leading to burnout and turnover. Successful project management requires a programmatic approach, clear goals and objectives, and effective leadership and communication.
7. **Limited resources and time constraints**
   Limited resources, including people, time, and budget, are a major obstacle to successful change management. Competing priorities and workload pressures make it difficult to allocate resources and commit time to change initiatives. Time constraints and tight timelines add to the challenge of implementing change effectively. Lack of buy-in and commitment from stakeholders, including leadership, can hinder the progress of change efforts and create resource challenges.

What to Do Differently on the Next Project

Participants reflected on their experiences while managing a change and identified what they would do differently during their next project.

1. **Involve key stakeholders and sponsors earlier**
   Involve stakeholders and sponsors earlier in the project to clarify expectations and roles. Increase communication and engagement initiatives to ensure understanding and support for the change. Build a change agent network early to provide connection to stakeholders. Seek support from sponsors to involve employees and managers earlier in the process. Ensure leadership commitment and accountability for the success of the change.
2. **Improve the communication plan**
   Start communication earlier in the project and involve all key stakeholders. Develop a more structured and innovative communication plan, leveraging virtual collaboration platforms and not just limited to email and meetings. Ensure clear, concise, and frequent communication across all levels of the organization. Involve people managers in the process as key senders of change messages. Plan and measure the success of communication and engagement initiatives throughout the project.
3. **Align change management and project management**
   Start change management planning and involvement earlier in the project. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for change management and create a structure for collaboration. Ensure alignment between technical milestones and change management milestones. Involve project and change teams in the planning phase to co-create an integrated approach.
4. **Conduct a thorough change impact analysis**
   Conduct thorough change impact assessments with a focus on people and all stakeholders involved. Involve change management early on in the project to prioritize readiness. Address behavior and process changes prior to launching new systems. Increase transparency and alignment between technical and internal teams responsible for user impacts. Allocate more time and resources for engagement, resistance management, and strategies to leverage technology in impact assessments.
5. **Educate and train leaders and managers**
   Educate and coach leaders, managers, and sponsors on their roles in change management. Provide clear communication and expectations for all stakeholders involved in the change. Focus on building desire and motivation for the change throughout the organization early in their engagement. Invest in training and upskilling leaders and managers before the project activities begin. Create a culture of ongoing performance, assessment, and improvement of effective change management role fulfillment.
6. **Start change management earlier**
   Start change management at the beginning of the project. Prioritize change management before the commencement of significant project activities. Create a structured change management plan sooner that allows for iteration and improvement. Build and engage a change champion network early in the project.

Chapter 8

Change Management Activities

The Specific Steps Effective Change Managers Take to Influence Project Success

Summary

Best practices in communications, training, resistance management and reinforcement define the concrete activities and actions at the core of your work as a change professional. This chapter outlines comprehensive guidance from seasoned practitioners to shape the planning and execution of change management. Learn how social media is being used during change, what steps to take to avoid resistance, and what attributes constitute exceptional training. Ensure your change management planning and implementations are aligned with best practices and drive results.

Highlight

Once again, senior leaders were the preferred senders of business messages (37%) and frontline supervisors were the preferred senders of personal messages (58%).


Change leadership is...
What does
Recruiting Rebels
ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING AGAINST THE PROJECT

Change Management Activities Grid

Source date: 2016

Participants described their change management approaches by listing actions and steps they completed. Data were divided into three major project phases: start-up (i.e., planning), design and implementation. The activities and steps were further categorized according to target audiences:

- Project team
- Managers (including business leaders)
- Employees

The activities and steps can be shown in a 3 x 3 matrix, with rows representing project timing (start-up, design and implementation) and columns representing the audience or group (Figure 8.1).

For each box in this grid, detailed lists of corresponding activities are provided. The labels for each box are general descriptions of the categories, and are not intended to stand alone from the activity lists in Tables 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4.

The lists (List A, List B, etc.) referred to in Tables 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 can be found in the section titled *"Supplemental change management activities lists"* following the tables.

Editor's note: The Change Management Activity Model shown in Figure 8.1 was developed in 2003 and now includes data from the 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015 studies to create a comprehensive view of change management activities across multiple studies.

Figure 8.1 – Change management activity model

	Project Team	**Managers**	**Employees**
Start-up	Select and prepare the team	Create sponsorship model	Create awareness
Design	Execute work plans	Involve sponsors	Engage employees
Implementation	Transfer ownership	Coach sponsors	Train employees

	Project Team	Managers	Employees
Start-up	Select and prepare the team	Create sponsorship model	Create awareness
Design	Execute work plans	Involve sponsors	Engage employees
Implementation	Transfer ownership	Coach sponsors	Train employees

Table 8.2 – Change management start-up activities

	With the Project Team: Select and Prepare the Team	**With Managers:** Create Sponsorship Model	**With Employees:** Create Awareness
Start-up	• Identify the right change management team members; consider representation by location or function; use outside expertise when necessary • Establish a team structure • Train the team on change management methods and develop team principles and rules; secure the needed resources and budget for change management • Understand the nature of the change and the future state (see List A); assess the timing of the change; ensure clarity concerning why the change is being made • Define the impact of the change on specific groups; conduct a gap analysis • Assess and analyze the current organization (see List B), climate and culture (readiness for change) • Create a sponsorship model (see adjacent column) • Complete change management readiness assessments (assess culture, barriers and risks) • Create change strategies and plans (see List C); develop a schedule and budget; review these plans and get approval from the steering committee • Develop change management training for managers and supervisors • Integrate change management plans into project management plans; be a part of the project team • Use a structured, proven change management methodology; customize or scale to fit the organization and the change • Identify critical success factors and potential obstacles	• Identify required primary sponsor (at the right level in the organization); directly engage his/her support • Identify key senior managers and stakeholders throughout the organization who are needed to sponsor the change; assess their support of the change and competency to manage change • With the direct involvement of the primary sponsor, begin building support among all key managers; engage them as active and visible sponsors of the change and ensure alignment with project objectives • Form a steering committee for the project (dependent on overall project size) • Show managers the current state versus the future state; create a common view of the nature of the change, why the change is being made, and the organization's readiness for change • Train senior and mid-level managers on change management and their roles as sponsors of change • Help create key messages for managers to communicate to the organization (presentations and elevator conversations) • Create identifiable actions that senior managers can do to begin supporting the change (see Sponsorship section of this report) • Customize the change management strategy to address potential resistance from managers • Train managers and supervisors on change management and their role as coaches, including how to use change management tools, manage resistance and support employees through the transition • Provide managers with the tools and information needed to manage change with their employees	• Begin initial communications with employees to create awareness of the need for change and to share the nature of the change (see List D)

	Project Team	Managers	Employees
Start-up	Select and prepare the team	Create sponsorship model	Create awareness
Design	Execute work plans	Involve sponsors	Engage employees
Implementation	Transfer ownership	Coach sponsors	Train employees

Table 8.3 – Change management design activities

	With the Project Team: Execute Work Plans	With Managers: Involve Sponsors	With Employees: Engage Employees
Design	• Implement change management strategies (from start-up phase) including plans for communications, sponsorship, coaching and training • Conduct regular workshops with change agents • Identify pockets of resistance and develop special tactics with groups to counter it • Identify job roles impacted; begin to define future skills and competencies for employees; use as input for training requirements and curriculum design • Develop coaching and mentoring strategies for frontline supervisors, including development of change management competencies • Train the trainers; begin developing internal competencies regarding managing change throughout the organization • Hire external resources if necessary to support the change • Collect input from customers on how this change will impact them • Define measurable objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs)	• Interview all critical senior managers to determine their expectations and desired outcomes; gather input on the change strategy and understand their concerns • Maintain regular contact with all senior managers; schedule and conduct frequent and regular meetings; seek their input on critical decisions • Conduct steering committee meetings regularly (dependent on project size) • Work to develop sponsor capabilities: What do they need to be doing to support the change? How can they best accomplish those goals? • Coach sponsors; provide sponsors with a roadmap of sponsor activities and help them prepare key messages; provide coaching on how to share the business vision and the change with employees • Identify resistant managers; engage the primary sponsor and other senior managers to address this resistance • Seek approval from senior managers at key milestones during the process • Engage managers in the design process; gather input from managers and understand their concerns; ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the solution design • Create a close relationship between the change team and sponsors • Collect feedback from managers about how employees are embracing the change, areas of resistance, and potential issues with the change	• Build awareness concerning the overall change and why the change is being made (see change messages in List D) • Engage employees during design; gather input from employees on the design and understand their concerns • Use pilots or models to test ideas with employees, and share the future state • Use face-to-face meetings to share the vision and strategy • Gather employee feedback on the vision and strategy using focus groups and interviews • Use Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions, interviews and memos to address employee concerns and share information regularly • Demonstrate successes and early wins to employees • Share ongoing progress of the design team, including updates to the schedule, so employees know what to expect and when • Continue to answer questions about the personal impact to employees: How will this impact me? How will this change my daily work? How will I benefit from this change?

	Project Team	Managers	Employees
Start-up	Select and prepare the team	Create sponsorship model	Create awareness
Design	Execute work plans	Involve sponsors	Engage employees
Implementation	Transfer ownership	Coach sponsors	Train employees

Table 8.4 – Change management implementation activities

	With the Project Team: Transfer Ownership	**With Managers:** Coach Sponsors	**With Employees:** Train Employees
Implementation	• Review project progress; monitor activities and measure performance (e.g., KPIs); identify successes and demonstrate short-term wins • Adapt change management plans as necessary to address gaps in performance • Develop ways to celebrate successes with both managers and employees • Create feedback mechanisms • Create coaching aids for supervisors to enable them to help employees through the transition (see List E for Coaching Aids) • Begin to migrate change leadership to operational managers • Extend team structure to involve local groups in change activities • Support local trainers within the organization to implement education and training about the new processes and systems • Identify lessons learned and update change management approach and tools	• Engage sponsors in managing resistance (encourage one-on-one intervention) • Continue regular and frequent meetings to review progress and performance; update business leaders and senior managers on the solution and implementation progress • Increase the level of senior manager communications with employees (e.g., leadership must stay active and visible throughout implementation) • Provide managers with concrete activities they can perform to support implementation (provide upward coaching) • Report roadblocks to senior managers promptly; resolve critical issues quickly through steering committee • Use senior managers to manage resistance • Maintain frequent and honest communications with managers • Provide opportunities to voice resistance • Collect data from employees about the change (issues, concerns, resistance areas), and share with managers • Evaluate manager effectiveness at managing the change; create corrective action plans where needed	• Implement training on the new processes, systems and job roles; align this training with gap analysis completed by frontline supervisors for their employees (include one-on-one training) • Listen to employees and value their feedback; move quickly to adjust the design or resolve issues that surface during implementation • Provide one-on-one follow-up and coaching • Share critical success factors with employees; audit compliance with the new processes and implement corrective action when needed • Assess employees (where are they in the change process?); measure effectiveness of the change management plans and adjust as necessary • Quickly identify and address pockets of resistance • Celebrate successes and achievement of milestones • Implement reward and incentive systems for employees • Continue ongoing communications about project outcomes and progress, including specifics about what will happen, when and why • When appropriate, tie compensation to performance

Supplemental Change Management Activities Lists

Source date: 2016

List A – Understanding the future state

- Nature and scope of the change
- Overall time frame
- Alignment with the business strategy
- Goals of the change
- Reasons for changing
- Risk assessment (risk of not changing)
- The gap between the future state and today
- Who is impacted and how? Who is impacted most adversely?
- Future state design (if available at this phase) including sample models or scenarios
- What will change? What will stay the same?

List B – Organizational assessment

- Change capacity (How much change has the organization made recently, and how much more change can the organization absorb?)
- Change history (What was the effectiveness of past changes, and what perceptions do employees have of past change projects?)
- Culture assessment (To what degree does the values and norms of the organization support or oppose change?)
- Change competency (What are the change management skills and abilities within the organization?)
- Authority and capability of primary sponsor (Does the primary sponsor have sufficient power to lead the change?)
- Strengths and weaknesses of the organization related to this change (What is working in favor of the change, and what is working against it?)

List C – Strategies and plans

- Change management plan (overall strategy)
- Communications plan
- Sponsor roadmap
- Training plan (including change management training)
- Coaching plan
- Resistance management plan

List D – Employee messages

- The current situation and the rationale for the change (why the change is needed)
- A vision of the organization after the change takes place (alignment with business strategy)
- The basics of what is changing, the nature of the change and when it will happen
- The goals or objectives for the change
- The expectation that change will happen and is not a choice (risk of not changing)
- The impact of change on daily activities of the employee; *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM)
- Implications of the change on job security (Will I have a job?)
- Behaviors and activities expected from the employee during the change
- Status updates on the performance of the change, including success stories
- Procedures for getting help and assistance during change

List E – Coaching aids

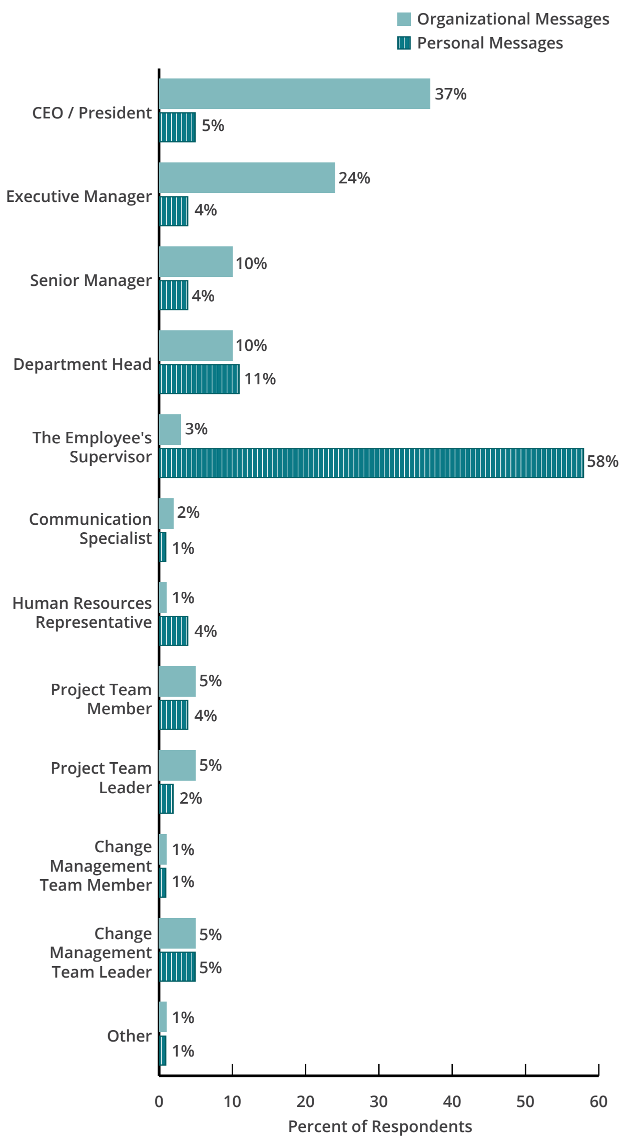
- Concrete activities frontline managers and supervisors can perform to support the change with their employees
- Tools to communicate new roles and responsibilities to employees
- Self-assessment guides for employees to assess skill and knowledge gaps
- Resistance assessments and mechanisms to collect feedback from employees during early implementation phases
- Tools to create individual development plans

Communications

Preferred Sender

Participants in the 2023 study reported on the preferred senders of organizational messages and of personal messages in times of change. Figure 8.5 shows preferred senders of change messages. While the most preferred senders in each category were the same as the previous year, there was more of a distribution of preference in 2023 than in 2019.

Figure 8.5 – Preferred sender for organizational and personal messages



Most Important Messages for Employees

Source date: 2011

Participants identified the most important messages to communicate to employees regarding the change. Although participants identified five important messages communicated to employees regarding the change, responses surrounding the business reasons for the change were stated twice as often as the next most frequent response.

1. **Business reasons for the change**
   Messages communicated to employees conveyed the reasons the organization was changing including:
   - The necessity of the change to ensure organizational success and sustainability in the future
   - The benefits of the change including strategic objectives, potential return on investment (ROI), improved performance and increase in business value
   - The risks of not changing and the negative consequences if the change was not pursued
   - The necessity of the change to remain competitive in the market
   - Improvements to processes, operations and design enhancements
   - The role of the change in support of business initiatives and business strategy
2. **Why the employees should want to participate**
   Messages communicated to employees built desire to participate in the change, or answered *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM), from the employee's perspective including:
   - Demonstrating how the change will make their jobs easier, more efficient, more productive, more rewarding and less redundant
   - Normalizing the change or the occurrence of change
   - Indicating potential opportunities for new jobs or advancements

 •

- Explaining how the change aligns with employee priorities
- Sharing how the change would increase the quality of their work lives and environment
- Transferring ownership of the change to employees with phrases such as *"this is your change"* or *"innovation is the right and fun thing to do"*
- Providing testimonials and examples of where the change was successful elsewhere

3. **Impact of the change on employees**
   These messages identified how the change would impact employees including:
   - Changes to the way employees did work or changes to their job roles
   - Behavior changes that would be required
   - Who specifically was impacted
   - The tradeoffs and downsides of the change
   - Employees' new roles and what needs to be done
   - What the change meant for the employees including what they could expect, what their new roles would entail, and how the change applied to them
   - How they were expected to perform
   - What was needed from employees in terms of involvement, commitment, support and contribution
   - Emphasis that the employees' support of change had a direct impact on the success of the project
   - Potential for job loss
4. **How the change was happening**
   These messages included information regarding the specifics of how the change was occurring within the organization including:
   - The dates of implementation, the rollout schedule or timeline, the time frame for adoption, and the go-live date
   - Project status including progress updates and milestones
   - The change plan or phases of the change
   - The next steps of the change
   - Who was leading or managing the change
   - Where the change was happening
   - Celebration of short-term successes
5. **Details about the change**
   These messages explained the specifics of the change including:
   - What the change was and the accompanying project objectives
   - The new processes, activities or procedures
   - What was not changing (e.g., ensuring job security)
   - Specifics about the difference between the future and current states (i.e., how tomorrow will be different from today)
   - Acknowledgment that not all the answers were available, *"what we don't know"*
   - The scope of the change
   - The challenges of the change
   - What the change meant for the organization

Additional key messages to employees included:

- How employees would be supported through the change
- To whom or where they could go for more information such as training resources, updates, job aids or requests for additional support
- Information pertaining to how and when employees would be trained and the necessity and importance of training
- For what they would need to be prepared and how they could best prepare
- The resources that would be made available to them to help with the transition
- Encouraging statements that emphasized the importance of the individual or reassurances that the transition would be made as a group such as *"the change is a journey we will accomplish as a team from the start to the end,"* or *"this will be tough but together we'll get through it"*

Most Important Messages for Managers and Supervisors

Source date: 2011

Participants identified six important messages to communicate to managers and supervisors regarding the change.

1. **Roles and expectations for managers and supervisors**
   Most messages regarding roles and expectations emphasized the importance of the roles, responsibilities, and the expectations of managers and supervisors during change. These messages conveyed how imperative their roles were as change advocates, ambassadors and role models of the change. For example, *"your participation in the change as an adopter/champion increases the likelihood of the change's success."* Expectations of managers also included:
   - How to communicate change to staff members
   - How to answer questions
   - Key messages to pass to employees
   - How often communication should take place and the importance of keeping employees informed about the change
   - Identifying and managing resistance including identifying areas of potential resistance
   - Helping staff members adapt to change through coaching, preparation and guidance
   - Managing questions and facilitating a smooth transition
2. **Business reasons for change**
   Similar to messages communicated to employees, participants listed the business reasons for the change as one of the most important messages communicated to managers and supervisors including:
   - The need for change
   - Alignment of the change with the direction of the organization
   - Risks of not changing
   - Benefits to the organization
3. **Impact of the change on managers and supervisors**
   Participants identified the importance of communicating the impacts of the change on managers and supervisors including:
   - Impacts to their job roles and behaviors in the work place
   - Impacts to employees in terms of the type of work employees were expected to perform, employee behaviors in the work place and new job roles for their employees
   - Impacts to their team or line of business
   - Potential or expected delays or disturbances to their work area
4. **Details about the change**
   These messages explained the change in terms of the change objectives and the specifics of the change. Other points included:
   - The change vision
   - What was not changing
   - Challenges of the change
   - Today versus tomorrow
5. **How the change was being implemented**
   Participants communicated how the change was happening within the organization to managers and supervisors including:
   - Timelines for change implementation
   - How employees were being trained and prepared for the change
   - Progress, status and updates
   - Project plans and next steps
   - What was being done to minimize risk
6. **How managers and supervisors would be prepared and supported**
   These messages included details pertaining to the ways the organization was supporting managers and supervisors and also how managers and supervisors were being prepared to support their employees. Main points included:
   - Where to go for support
   - How support would be provided
   - Who to contact with concerns
   - Where to get more information
   - Which managers and supervisors needed to be prepared
   - How to lead people through change; how to be *"the mirror of change"*
   - How to manage change

Most Important Messages for Senior Managers and Executives

Source date: 2011

Participants identified five messages to communicate to senior managers and executives regarding the change.

1. **Roles and responsibilities of senior managers and executives**
   The primary message communicated to senior managers and executives regarding the change emphasized their roles and responsibilities as sponsors of change such as:
   - The necessity of their help in preparing for, leading and supporting the change; *"your leadership, wisdom and active support are vital to success"*
   - The expectations of them in terms of what they need to do and their responsibilities such as staying up-to-date on the project and managing change with their direct reports
   - Their roles in communicating with staff members in an open and timely manner including messages that reflected the reasons for the change and messages that *"sell the vision"* of the change
   - The need for them to be active, visible and engaged in the change
2. **Business reasons for the change**
   The second most important message communicated to senior managers and executives included the reasons the change was occurring including:
   - The necessity of the change from the organization's perspective
   - The benefits to the organization on completion of a successful change such as increased competitiveness and proficiency
   - Alignment with other business objectives, priorities, organizational strategies or long-term goals
   - The change drivers
3. **How the change was happening and progressing**
   These messages included information regarding how the change was taking place and how well the change was being adopted within the organization including:
   - Status updates and milestones reached
   - Timelines of the project including project schedules and deadlines
   - The planned approach for the change, implementation and next steps
   - Challenges that arose during the change process such as unforeseen issues, problems, increased workloads and strain on resources
   - How change management was being used and applied during the change
   - Reactions from staff
4. **The impacts of the change**
   These messages identified the impacts of the change including:
   - Impacts to the organization in terms of who would be impacted, the costs of the change, performance dips and potential declines in productivity during change
   - Impacts to senior managers and executives specifically such as what they could expect from the change and its impacts to their area or group
   - Impacts to employees in terms of job role changes, required behavioral changes and new expectations
5. **Details about the change**
   These messages identified the specifics of the change by addressing what was changing such as:
   - The change objectives, expected results and scope of the change
   - The change vision and desired outcomes
   - What would not be changing, what would be new and what would be different

Attributes of a Successful Change Message

Source date: 2009

Participants in the 2009 study identified three attributes of a successful change message when communicating with employees.

1. **Shares what the change will mean to the employee**
   Employees want to hear about how the change will impact them personally including:
   - How will this change impact me?
   - What will I do differently?
   - What's in it for me? (WIIFM)

   Employees want to know how the change will affect their jobs including the impact on daily job duties, reporting responsibilities and changes in compensation.
2. **Explains business reasons for why the change is happening**
   Employees want to know why the change is important and necessary for the success of the business and the benefits to the business as a whole. Employees need to understand the business reasons for the change and how the change aligns with the organization's goals, vision and strategy. Employees also want to know what would happen to the business were the change not made, the consequences of inaction.
3. **Is honest and clear**
   Employees want to hear a message that is sincere, truthful and accurate. The message should include the good and bad, and honest answers about what the communicator does and does not know. *"Say what you know and admit what you don't know."*

Additional attributes of an effective change message from the 2007 study include:

- **Shares what is changing**
  The message should define the nature of the change and what specifically is changing in the organization. Information about the transition from the current to future state should be included along with what is expected of employees during this transition period.
- **Conveys the impact on the organization**
  Employees should know how the organization and departments will be affected by the change and benefits or negative impacts that might result.
- **Prepares employees for the change**
  Employees should be assured that they are not alone when moving into the future state. They should have a clear picture of the training and support they will receive to enable them to make the transition. This might include help desks, ongoing training or online resources.

Attributes of Successful Communicators

Source date: 2009

In addition to commenting on effective messages, participants in the 2009 study also shared feedback on effective communicators. The most successful and effective communicators demonstrated the following ten attributes in rank order:

1. **Committed, engaged and passionate about the change**
   Successful communicators were positive, enthusiastic and passionate about the change; they believed in it. They were committed to and engaged in the change, and showed their support visibly. They were champions of the change and led by example.
2. **Credible**
   Effective communicators were trusted and respected, and had the ability to influence all levels in the organization. They had experience and authority.
3. **Able to deliver a clear message**
   Clear messages were simple, focused and concise. Effective and successful communicators delivered clear messages in non-technical language that could be understood by all receivers.
4. **Knowledgeable about the change and its impact on the organization**
   Successful communicators understood why the change was needed, the purpose and benefits of the change, and its impacts on the people. They were also knowledgeable about the organization's internal processes and history. They connected this knowledge with their ability to see the big picture and future state. Their communications shared this perspective and context. *"Explained clearly the organizational reason for the change and the personal impact on the individual; did this in an informative and respectful way."*
5. **Consistent and timely in their messages**
   Communicators delivered frequent messages, which remained consistent and were repeated often.
6. **Open and honest**
   Communicators and their messages were genuine and delivered with truth and transparency.
7. **Two-way communicators**
   The most important element for communicators during two-way communication was the ability to listen. Two-way communicators were open to conversations and feedback.
8. **Fluent in the language of their audience**
   Effective communicators created a message that was tailored and relevant to their receivers. They always included the answer to *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) for the intended audience. *"Taking the broad message and making it meaningful for the group being communicated with."*
9. **Personable**
   Personable communicators were patient, confident and compassionate. They had excellent interpersonal skills, communicated with empathy, and were approachable.
10. **Choosing the right channel**
    Choosing the right channel meant the ability to offer communications in a variety of ways while ensuring that face-to-face communication was one of those channels.

Tactics for Correcting Misinformation and Misunderstanding

Source date: 2009

Participants in the 2009 study identified six tactics used for correcting misunderstandings resulting from background conversations or the rumor mill.

1. **Enabling open discussion time**
   Open discussion time included events that allowed people to exchange information freely, present questions and provide feedback. Open discussions happened in many formats including town halls, brownbag lunches, roadshow presentations, conference calls, site visits, forums, small group meetings and focus groups.
2. **Identifying current rumors and addressing them immediately**
   It was important that the identification of current rumors be conducted anonymously. Participants cited the following ways to collect rumors anonymously: telephone hotlines, designated email addresses, help desks and collection boxes. Participants also noted that it was best to address those rumors, when possible, in a face-to-face format.
3. **Engaging sponsors**
   Participants cited many methods of engaging leadership. No matter how sponsors were engaged, they were recognized as the most effective group to address and correct background conversations

resulting from misinformation. *"National leadership team traveled to each location and allowed an opportunity for Q&A."*

4. **Providing regular communications**
Regular communications were a source of consistency and provided updated information on the change. The most common interval of regular communications among participants was weekly followed by monthly.

5. **Updating Frequently Asked Questions**
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) answered common inquiries and addressed misinformation spreading through background conversations. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were updated regularly and circulated among employees in various ways including newsletters, electronic postings and written documents.

6. **Providing information electronically**
A source of information that could be accessed electronically at any time by employees and could be updated by the team was a useful tool for keeping employees updated. This source of information was available to everyone in the organization to provide transparency and openness. Participants also cited the value of interactions through an electronic source including blogs, discussion boards and postings. *"Set up a 'rumor busters' website and fed it with both real and manufactured rumors and corrections."*

What Would You Do Differently Regarding Communications?

Source date: 2011

Participants in the 2011 study provided five suggestions for what they would have done differently regarding communications. The most commonly cited response, more communication, was cited twice as often as the next response.

1. **More communication**
Participant responses indicated that they would communicate more, to more people, more often and to all levels within the organization. Responses also indicated that these communications should be more targeted, more face-to-face, more interactive and more relevant to the audience.

2. **Better communication strategy**
The second most common response reflected the need for a more detailed communication strategy including a succinct, consistent and accurate set of core messages. A strategy would also include a more robust implementation timeline for communication activities.

3. **Communicate earlier**
Participants indicated they would begin communication earlier. These efforts included syncing with other communication networks, connecting to the project sooner, and beginning in-person meetings earlier, even if only partial information was available.

4. **More attention to senior leadership**
The fourth recommendation from participants involved more attention, interaction and involvement with senior leadership. Participants reported they would evoke more support and ownership from senior leadership.

5. **More dedicated people working on communication**
Study results revealed that communication efforts needed to have more people dedicated to them, including having more dedicated and expert resources assigned to producing and implementing communications.

Communication Vehicles

Source date: 2011

Participants used a variety of communication methods during their change projects. Below is a comprehensive list of communication vehicles identified by participants in the 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2011 benchmarking studies.

Articles in industry journals
Banners
Billboards
Blogs
Booklets
Branded promotional materials
Briefings
Brochures
Brown bag meetings
Bulletin boards
Bulletins
Café meetings
Cafeteria postings
Calendar of events
Cascading communications
Celebration events
Change agent networks
Charts/graphs to show progress
Circulars
Coffee mornings
Communication toolkits
Conversations
Demonstrations
Department meetings
Desk drops
Documents
Electronic billboards/plasma screens
Email
Executive messages
Executive presentations
Face-to-face interactions
Fact sheets
Faxes
Fliers
Focus groups
Forums
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Gallery walks
Giveaways
Group meetings
Hallway conversations
Help desk
Industrial theater
Information fairs
Informational meetings
Internal messaging systems
Interviews
Intranet sites
Intranet pop-ups
Kickoff events
Leadership meetings
Leaflets
Lectures
Letters
Lunch and learns
Magazines
Mailers
Memos
Networks
Newsletters (corporate)
Newsletters (project)
One-on-one meetings
Online content management systems
Online training
Organizational meetings
Pamphlets
Pay stub inserts
Performance reviews
Physical mailings
Podcasts
Posters
Presentation aids and outlines
Presentations
Project fairs
Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions
Rallies
Reader boards
Recognition packages
Road shows
Roundtables
Site visits
Skits
Social media
Stakeholder meetings
Status reports
Storyboards
Success stories
Surveys
Targeted emails
Team meetings
Teleconferences
Testimonials
Text messages
Town hall meetings
Tradeshows
Training courses
TV displays
Video conferences
Videos
Virtual meetings
Voicemail messages
Walk-arounds
Webcasts
Webinars
Websites
Wikis
Word of mouth
Workshops

Training

Role of Change Management Team in Project-Specific Training

Source date: 2013

Participants in the 2013 study described the role of the change management resource or team regarding project-specific training.

1. **Design**
   The change management resource was either the chief designer or a member of the team that designed necessary training for the project. This role included everything from leading the team to advising training consultants brought in to deploy training.
2. **Training providers and support**
   As trainers and facilitators, the change management team was responsible for delivery of a training program. The team also served as post-training coaches and provided support.
3. **Start-to-end accountability**
   The change management resource was responsible for all aspects of design, development and deployment of project training, including identifying necessary audiences for training, doing training-needs analyses, delivering training and monitoring the effectiveness of a program.
4. **Needs analysis**
   Change management resources were responsible for identifying impacted groups and required skills that needed to be addressed. They were also responsible for identifying gaps in current employee skills in comparison to the skills that would be required during implementation.
5. **Logistics**
   Participants responded that the change management resource was responsible for the logistics of training sessions. Tasks included scheduling and organizing training sessions and locations.

Other roles included:

- **Communicating about the training session**
  The change management resource was responsible for crafting messages to build awareness and desire ahead of training. These messages were commonly handed to sponsors and managers who then delivered messages to impacted groups.
- **Developing training guides**
  Change management resources created training guides for the course and job aids as references for employees before and after training.

Attributes of Top Tier Project-Specific Training

Source date: 2016

Participants identified attributes of top-tier, project-specific training.

1. **Program design**
   Participants identified a variety of factors that should be addressed when designing training programs. The majority of responses cited role-specific training as the most important factor. Other factors included use of multiple training mediums, high-quality materials, clearly defined outcomes and approaches, a focus on process and measurable success.
2. **Program delivery**
   Participants also indicated that delivery of training programs contributed to the quality of programs. Timing of programs, both in terms of when programs were delivered and how long they lasted, was mentioned nearly twice as often as other elements of delivery. Additional elements included having quality instructors or facilitators, engaging delivery and use of adult learning methods.
3. **Accessibility**
   Participants specified the way programs were accessed. The majority of responses cited hands-on, practical applications as the most effective method of access to training. Managers and supervisors had to be supportive of training to be successful. Online, on-demand tools were also prominent among responses.

Primary Vehicles Used to Train Employees

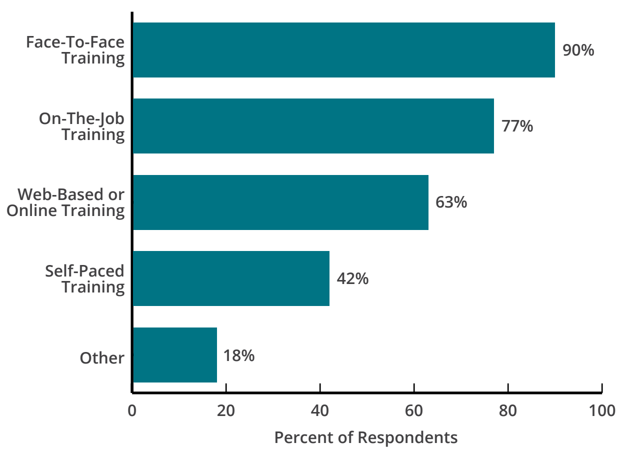
Source date: 2013

Participants in the 2013 study specified which of the following vehicles were used to deliver project-specific training:

- Face-to-face training
- Web-based or online training
- On-the-job training
- Self-paced training

Figure 8.10 shows the percentage of participants that reported on project-specific training that used each of the vehicles. Face-to-face training was the most prevalent, reported by more than 90% of participants.

Figure 8.10 – Training vehicles used



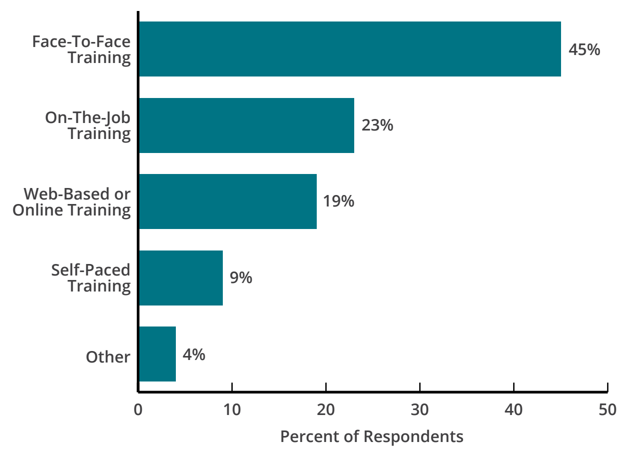
Editor's note: Participants were able to select multiple responses, resulting in a total of more than 100%.

Other vehicles for delivering project-specific training included:

- Handouts, reference materials, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheets and job aids
- Online support, videos, help screens and desktop tools
- Coaching, mentoring and super-user support
- Workshops, meetings and conferences
- Simulation

Participants estimated the percentage of total training that was delivered through each of the vehicles (Figure 8.11). On average, 45% of training was delivered face-to-face, and self-paced training comprised the smallest percentage at 9%.

Figure 8.11 – Average of total training delivered through each vehicle

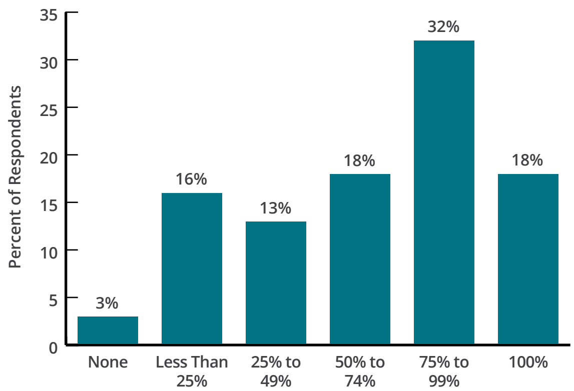


Percentage of Impacted Employees That Received Project-Specific Training

Source date: 2016

Participants reported on the percentage of impacted employees that received project-specific training. Half of participants said that 75% or more of impacted employees received training (Figure 8.12).

Figure 8.12 – Percentage of impacted employees that received training

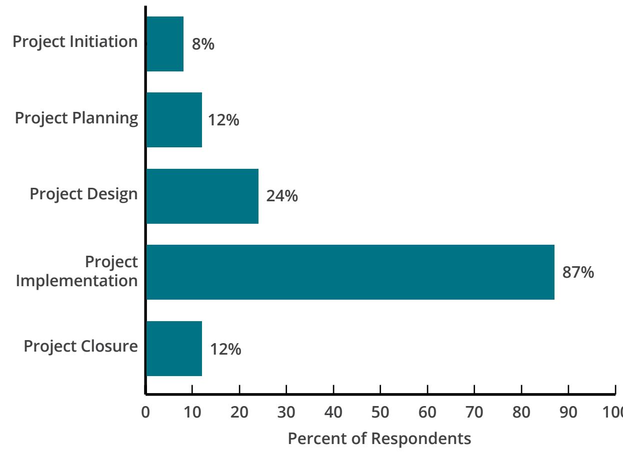


When Training Was Delivered

Source date: 2016

Participants identified the point during the project lifecycle at which training was delivered. Figure 8.13 shows the overall percentage of participants that reported delivering training at project initiation, planning, design, implementation and closure. Overwhelmingly, project implementation was the most common stage for delivering training.

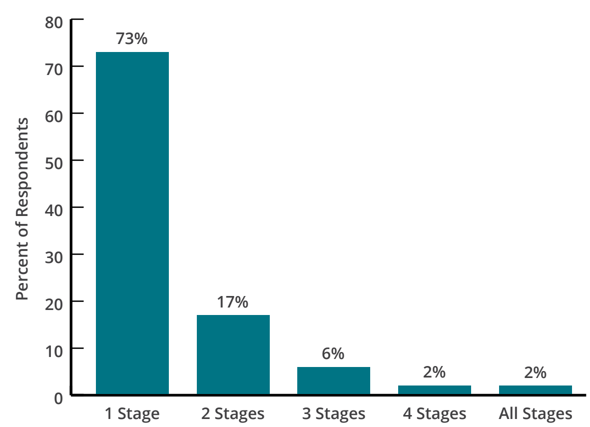
Figure 8.13 – Stages at which project training was delivered



Editor's note: Participants were able to select multiple responses, resulting in a total of more than 100%.

Figure 8.14 shows the number of stages during which participants reported delivering training. Seventy-three percent of participants reported delivering training during only one stage in the project lifecycle.

Figure 8.14 – Number of stages at which project training was delivered



For those who delivered training during only one stage, 83% delivered training during implementation, followed by 7% during design and 5% during planning.

The remaining 27% of participants reported delivering project-specific training at more than one point during a project's lifecycle.

Table 8.15 shows the most common stages at which training was delivered when it was delivered two, three and four times throughout a project's lifecycle. Fewer than 2% of participants reported that training was delivered during all five stages of the project lifecycle.

Table 8.15 – Project stage combinations when training was delivered at more than one stage

	Of the 17% that delivered training at two stages:		Of the 6% that delivered training at three stages:		Of the 2% that delivered training at four stages:
	50%	34%	46%	32%	76%
Initiation					●
Planning				●	●
Design	●		●	●	●
Implementation	●	●	●	●	●
Closure		●	●		

Critical Success Factors on Project-Specific Training

Source date: 2016

Participants identified critical success factors for project-specific training. Six factors were noted. The top factor was noted more than twice as often as the other five.

1. **Planning/design**
   Participants found that preparation and design was a primary contributor to successful training, including incorporation of training needs assessments, audience customization and proactive resistance management. Participants also identified that involvement of the impacted audience during development of training was an important success factor.
2. **Timing**
   The second most frequent factor was timing, timeliness or delivering training just-in-time as key contributors to the success of a training session. Adding the availability of training resources and flexibility into the training schedule had a direct impact on the effectiveness of project-specific training.
3. **Ability and measurement**
   Participants determined success by measuring the demonstration of adoption and usage. They cited management observation, post-training surveys, exams, monitoring support sites and team usage.
4. **Awareness and desire**
   Participants also identified the importance of pre-training approaches. Participants noted higher audience engagement when information was provided ahead of time regarding training requirements, how it related to a change, and what was expected of them during training. Additional information was mentioned concerning training schedules, locations and durations.
5. **Trainee support**
   Forms of support were noted at the leadership, management, peer and project team levels. Support was conducted through various modes such as intranet, peer-to-peer coaching, consistent leadership messaging, one-on-one discussions and Questions and Answer (Q&A) sessions.
6. **Training approach**
   Having an engaging or hands-on approach to training was an additional factor participants identified. Providing trainees an immediate opportunity to practice and apply what they learned aided in the success of training. Although a blended approach to training was mentioned, many emphasized incorporating hands-on activities for the immediate reinforcement of training.

Evaluating Effectiveness of Project-Specific Training

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study shared how they evaluated the effectiveness of project-specific training.

1. **Surveys**
   Participants cited giving surveys to employees and sponsors as a way to gauge training effectiveness. These surveys came in the form of training and competency questionnaires and end-user surveys.
2. **Level of adoption**
   Employees were monitored to assess whether new processes had been learned and implemented. The number of errors and help calls were recorded to check if metrics indicating lack of adoption or proficiency decreased after training.
3. **Assessments**
   Many participants reported giving their employees readiness assessments before and after training to gauge how effective project training had been and how prepared employees were for the change.
4. **Overall project feedback**
   Participants cited a need to gather feedback from employees, sponsors and end users on the project as a whole. Feedback was gathered using company forums, one-on-one meetings and group discussions.

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Resistance Management

Identifying Resistance

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study indicated how they identified change resistance.

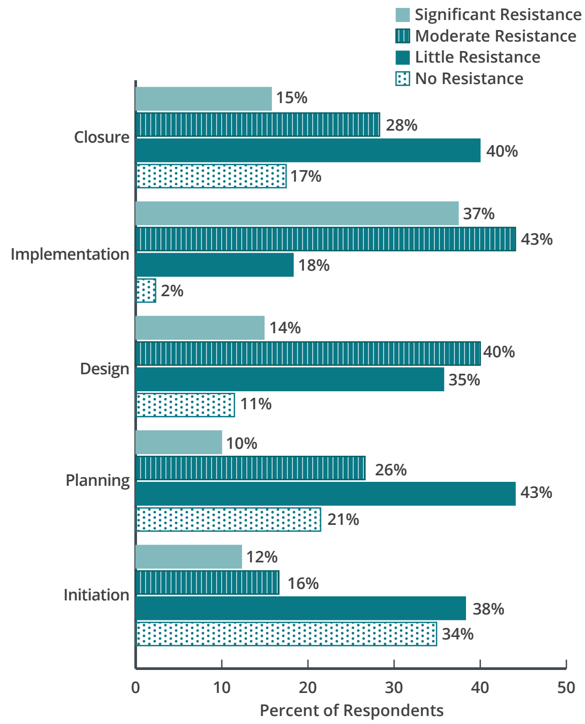
1. **Measurement tools**
   Participants used a number of measurement tools designed to identify resistance. These included surveys, assessments, impact indexes, impact maps, interviews and others. Participants employed these tools continuously throughout the change initiative.
2. **Soft measurement**
   Participants reported a number of soft skill measurements. These included face-to-face communication, feedback forums, asking questions and engaging in dialogue. Participants stressed the importance of speaking directly with impacted groups about their experience of the change, assumptions could be wrong.
3. **Building in resistance measures**
   Participants reported planning for times and methods of measuring resistance throughout the change project. Participants planned when they would employ their resistance measure and observe resistance throughout the project.
4. **Observation**
   Participants consistently reported the need to observe impacted groups throughout the process. Participants expected resistance to the change and were on the lookout for indicators in impacted groups.

When Resistance Was Encountered by Project Stage

Source date: 2019

Participants reported stages during which they experienced resistance. The most significant resistance arose during implementation, when nearly 80% of participants reported experiencing moderate or significant resistance.

Figure 8.16 – Resistance during each stage of the project lifecycle



Editor's note: Phase totals do not equal 100% because "N/A" responses were not included.

When Resistance Was Encountered by Project Event and Timing

Source date: 2013

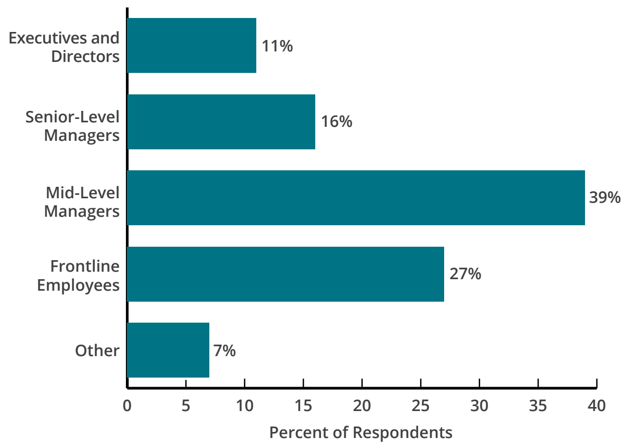
Participants identified events and times during the project that caused the most resistance. Participants who identified an event or instance that resulted in the most resistance commonly said it occurred after communicating about the change and delivering training sessions. Other events that caused resistance were:

- Project teams moving forward without input from impacted groups
- When impacted groups realized the degree of impact
- When restructuring of impacted groups was announced

Most Resistant Groups

Participants in the 2023 study identified groups from which they experienced the most resistance (Figure 8.17). As in previous studies, mid-level managers were identified as the most resistant group followed by frontline employees and senior-level managers.

Figure 8.17 – Most resistant groups



Primary Reasons Employees Resisted Change

Source date: 2019

Participants identified the primary reasons employees resisted the change. Five primary reasons were reported as the cause.

1. **Lack of awareness**
   The primary source of employee resistance was lack of awareness about the purpose and reason for the change. This arose from failure to communicate the details of the change, business reason for the change, and important roles employees had in making the change successful. Resistance occurred when employees could not or would not answer the questions, *"What's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) or *"Why is this change needed?"*

2. **Change in role**
   Resistance occurred when changes to job roles were required. Changes in job roles were viewed as increasing workloads, a change in job description or new behavioral requirements. Employees lacked desire to learn how to use the new system or technology the change required. Other common responses included concerns about the available time to complete new requirements, lack of incentives, decreased autonomy and control, and increased surveillance and regulation. Employees were also concerned about a shift in or loss of their power, status or identity. Participants found it common for employees to be unhappy with change or to disagree with the solutions deployed.

3. **Fear**
   Fear was a substantial cause of resistance among employees. Primary fears included potential of job loss or reduced compensation. Employees demonstrated fear from the uncertainty of their future and the future of the organization, which arose from prior experiences with failed changes. Other fears among employees included insecurities about performance ability with new technology, changes to the organization's culture, and a greater potential for evaluation and surveillance. In contrast to newer employees, those employed by the organization longer displayed fear of changes more often due to comfort with the *"old way"* of doing things.

4. **Lack of support from and trust in management or leadership**
   Direct supervisors and leadership influenced employee resistance. Often, managers displayed higher resistance and reduced support for change. This poor role modeling by leaders influenced employee behaviors and their support for the change. Previous negative experiences increased resistance among employees who lacked trust in the executive leadership and feared a disconnect with or inadequate support through the transition process.

5. **Lack of inclusion in the change**
   Employees who were excluded from the decision to undertake the change and designing solutions often resisted out of frustration. Commonly front-line employees felt threatened, betrayed, blind-sided or targeted by the change, and that their influence or voices were not heard in the process to design the change. Employees desired to be a part of the process to prepare, equip and support people, and contribute to when the sequencing of the change would begin. Employees indicated that transparency and communication in the planning process was important to counteracting their resistance.

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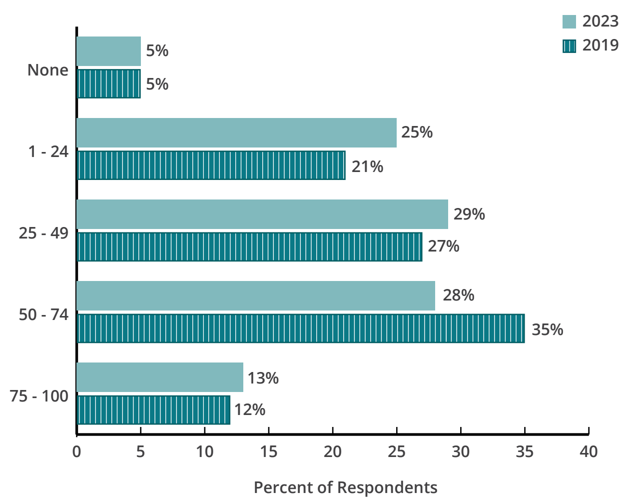
Other sources of resistance
Other sources of resistance identified by study participants included:

- Comfort with the status quo
- Insufficient training
- Change fatigue

Avoidable Employee Resistance

Participants in the 2023 study reported on the amount of employee resistance that could have been avoided with the implementation of effective change management. Forty-one percent of respondents indicated that more than half of employee resistance was seen as avoidable.

Figure 8.18 – Percentage of employee resistance seen as avoidable



Proactive Steps for Avoiding or Preventing Resistance From Employees

Source date: 2016

Participants provided the most effective steps for proactively avoiding or preventing employee resistance. Participants identified three courses of action as the most successful tactics for preventing resistance.

1. **Communications**
   Participants most frequently stated that communication was required to avoid or prevent employee resistance. Responses highlighted two key elements of communication:
   - **Content**
     Participants specified content areas including *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM), setting clear expectations, solicitation of feedback and consistent messaging. Participants also indicated communication should start early, be multi-directional, and come through a variety of media from appropriate senders.
   - **Honesty**
     Communication must be honest, genuine, transparent and trustworthy to be effective at avoiding or preventing resistance.
2. **Engagement**
   Participants reported that engaging employees in development of solutions and strategies was effective at avoiding resistance. Participants also identified sponsors, managers, change champions and key influencers as important audiences for engagement that should be leveraged to sponsor change initiatives or coach employees.
3. **Application of a methodology**
   Participants also stated that use of change management practices aided in avoiding or preventing employee resistance. These practices included anticipating resistance and planning accordingly, developing quality training programs, and use of formal change management strategies such as ADKAR®. Participants specified that these strategies are best executed face-to-face supported by reinforcement activities.

Advice for Dealing with Employee Resistance

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study shared the advice they would give to a new change management practitioner for dealing with employee resistance.

1. **Communicate**
   Communication was identified more than three times more frequently than other responses. Respondents emphasized the importance of listening, avoiding responding in an overly

defensive manner, personalizing both the content and style of communications, and communicating honestly and transparently.

2. **Develop a plan to address resistance**
   Expecting resistance and preparing for it by developing a well-thought out plan aids in dealing with resistance. Elements of an appropriate plan include early deployment, demonstrating the benefits of change, training and education plans and attention to technology issues associated with change.

3. **Understand both the change and the resistance fully**
   Respondents emphasized the importance of understanding the root cause of resistance; resistance frequently grew out of legitimate and important problems/concerns that were not necessarily visible from the perspective of a change management practitioner. Tactics for gaining understanding of change or resistance included conducting readiness or adoption assessments, creating the time and space necessary for change, and setting realistic expectations about change.

4. **Engage and support leadership**
   Participants frequently identified leadership as a key element and necessary resource during change; engaging and supporting leadership was important for dealing with employee resistance. Many participants felt it was the job of leadership, not change management practitioners, to set an example for employees and deal with resistance. Engaging managers, supervisors and executives in change accomplished this. These efforts were supplemented by providing support for leadership in the form of training and guidance regarding change management.

5. **Encourage individual stakeholder engagement**
   Techniques used to further this goal included studying stakeholder groups to understand them and selling individual benefits of change, particularly by emphasizing *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM). Encouraging stakeholder engagement at the individual level was a valuable tool for addressing resistance because engaging with change on a person-by-person basis allowed for direct input by employees and personalized approaches to change.

Several other important pieces of advice were:

1. **Be patient**
   Participants noted the importance of patience when dealing with resistance. Employees need an appropriate amount of time to adjust to changes, and initially giving them this time decreases resistance.

2. **Convert strongest resisters, make them leaders**
   Several participants explained that targeting the strongest resisters for conversion could be a valuable technique for addressing widespread resistance. Once converted, these former resistance leaders could be seen as change champions and an endorsement of a change by the rest of the organization.

3. **Focus on early adopters, not hardcore resisters**
   Conversely, other participants recommended concentrating on early adopters instead of the hardcore resisters. In some situations, strong and enthusiastic early adopters could be seen as a quick win and immediate proof of the viability of a change; focusing on hardcore resisters was a waste of time and energy when there were already people in a position to act as change champions within the organization.

Primary Reasons Managers Resisted Change

Source date: 2016

Participants identified five primary reasons managers resisted change.

1. **Organizational culture**
   Participants reported that organizational culture was a primary cause of resistance. Specifics included risk-averse cultures, past negative experience with change, groupism versus organizational dedication, and issues such as mistrust between departments and reporting levels. In cultures devoid of sponsorship in which leaders and direct supervisors failed to support them, managers felt undermined.

2. **Lack of awareness and knowledge about change**
   Lack of knowledge about what a change entailed, lack of information and understanding regarding return on investment (ROI) and reasons for change,

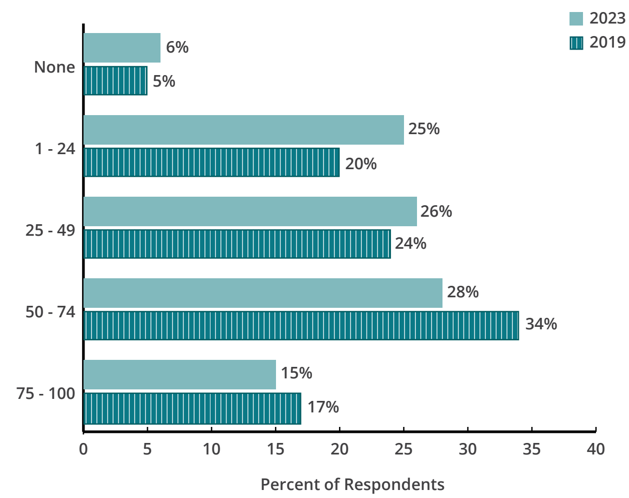
and lack of knowledge for personal reasons for a change (*"what's in it for me?"* or WIIFM) were cited as reasons managers resisted change. *"They didn't understand it and/or they didn't get the support they needed. Managers have the greatest challenge as they are in charge of translating the change message from the top to their employees. If they don't understand the change or don't have the support to do it, it makes them more resistant."*

3. **Lack of buy-in**
   There were multiple reasons participants felt that managers did not buy-in to change. Managers:
   - Believed the change would fail or was a bad solution
   - Were comfortable with the status quo
   - Believed it was out of line with company goals as they knew them
   - Did not like what the change entailed or required of them
   - Feared losing control, power or status
   - Did not want increased visibility or accountability
4. **Misalignment of project goals and personal incentives**
   Issues on the project management side were consistent reasons for manager resistance including pace of the change, lack of metrics, metrics that did not align with promotion parameters or pay/bonus scales and misaligned incentives. Participants acknowledged that these deterrents or lack of incentives made change unappealing to managers.
5. **Lack of confidence in their own ability to manage people side of change**
   A recurring reason cited for managers' resistance had to do with their inability to be a leader of change and facilitate its adoption. They lacked the skills to manage resistance and communicate difficult messages to direct reports.

Avoidable Manager Resistance

Participants in the 2023 study reported on the amount of resistance from managers that could have been avoided with the implementation of change management. Forty-three percent indicated that more than half of the resistance they experienced from managers could have been avoided, a slight decrease from 51% in the 2019 study.

Figure 8.19 – Percentage of manager resistance seen as avoidable



Effective Steps for Avoiding or Preventing Manager/Supervisor Resistance

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study identified the steps they took to avoid resistance from managers and supervisors. They specifically indicated which steps were the most effective in mitigating resistance before it surfaced. Participants overwhelmingly reported that communicating with employees was most effective.

1. **Communicate**
   Participants said that communicating with managers and supervisors was the most effective way to mitigate resistance before it surfaced. By more than a 2:1 margin, communicating openly, honestly and timely was the best way to avoid or prevent resistance. Participants stated it was important to ensure that communications were tailored to the audience and to set up feedback mechanisms for managers and supervisors to share their thoughts and feelings about change.
2. **Involve impacted groups**
   Engaging impacted groups early in the process helped create a sense of ownership in the project and thus lessened resistance.
3. **Address ADKAR barriers**
   Participants used the Prosci ADKAR® Model to focus on avoiding resistance. Specific actions for addressing ADKAR barriers included coaching and training managers and supervisors to use the new solution, having a highly credible sponsor, and setting up reinforcement methods throughout the project.
4. **Share the need for change**
   An executive sharing the need for change also addressed resistance. Recommendations from participants included explaining why the change was necessary, sharing a vision for the organization's future state, and informing people of business drivers.
5. **Engage senior leaders**
   Participants recommended engaging direct senior leaders and getting them on board early to advocate change with their direct reports and leveraging senior leaders to meet one-on-one with and influence their direct reports.

Participants also said that showing the benefits of change from the onset helped. They recommended identifying and planning for resistance rather than just letting it surface. In doing so, they had actions in place to address resistance quickly when it occurred. A critical success factor in their proactive resistance management approach was having an active and visible sponsor that employees trusted to lead change.

Ineffective Methods of Managing Resistance

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study identified the methods they used to manage resistance that they found to be ineffective.

1. **Ignoring resistance**
   Participants said that executives ignoring resistance or pretending it was not a real issue were the most ineffective methods. Participants reported that resistance had negative consequences and leaving any potential resistance unchecked compounded those consequences.
2. **Broadcasting one-way communications**
   Having executives send mass emails to the organization highlighting change had little effect on managing resistance. These messages included sending messages that did not target a group or individual but that blanketed the organization as one group. Newsletters, memos and speeches to large groups were also ineffective ways to manage resistance.
3. **Using threats, fear or coercion**
   Creating fear around consequences of not adopting the change, putting additional pressures on employees or outright threatening employees if they were resisting change caused resistance to go underground and did little to address it. Problems associated with resistance were still present, but the source of resistance was much harder to identify.
4. **Dictating, mandating or telling people to change**
   When executives assumed that telling people to change was sufficient, more resistance to change emerged.

Impacts of Using Pain And/Or Fear to Manage Change

Source date: 2016

Participants reported on the impact that using of pain and/or fear had on managing resistance. Although some participants reported that they had never used this method, the majority said that using pain and/or fear to manage resistance had an overall negative impact, though a small percentage said it served a valuable purpose during some scenarios.

1. **Negative impact**
   Participants identified four negative outcomes of using pain and/or fear to manage resistance. Firstly, using pain and/or fear masked resistance, forcing resistance to go underground where it went unaddressed. Secondly, using pain and/or fear led to an increase in absenteeism and lack of employee effectiveness. Thirdly, using pain and/or fear created distrust between employees and change leaders and often led to a decline in morale. Finally, participants cited that using pain and/or fear led to an increase in attrition among impacted groups. As one participant reported, *"The best and brightest are the first to go."*
2. **Short-term results**
   Participants felt that use of pain and/or fear to manage resistance often got short-term compliance but did not have positive, longterm effects on managing resistance. Pain and/or fear also reduced employee trust and made future projects much less likely to succeed.
3. **Increased resistance**
   The third most common response was that pain and/or fear increased resistance. Participants described lack of employee engagement and a culture of change resistance that stemmed from use of pain and/or fear as a tactic to manage initial resistance.

Participants cited some instances in which using pain and/or fear was useful or effective.

1. **If used to highlight deficiencies of the current state**
   Some participants felt that using pain and/or fear could be an effective technique when it was used to illustrate the pain caused by the current state which could be alleviated by undergoing and participating in change. One participant called it *"the pain or fear of not changing."*
2. **If applied in a conducive culture**
   Some participants felt that using pain and/or fear could be successful in the right organization and environment. If use of pain and/or fear is the norm for that organization or if that organization's culture embraces tactics of this nature, then the tactics can be effective.
3. **If used as a last resort**
   Participants who felt that using pain and/or fear did not aid with managing resistance in the long-term did not dismiss these tactics. Pain and/or fear could be used as a last resort, employed when the failure of change would bring about worse consequences.

Reinforcement and Feedback

Determining Whether Employees Are Engaging in Change

Source date: 2011

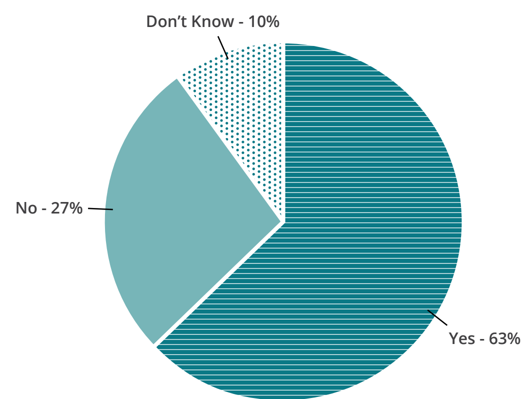
Participants in the 2011 study shared the most effective methods they used to determine whether employees were engaging in change. The top methods were:

1. **Using surveys, assessments and feedback systems to measure engagement**
   Participants used a number of vehicles to collect direct feedback from impacted employees to monitor engagement, including surveys, engagement assessments and formal feedback mechanisms such as dedicated email inboxes, comment drop-boxes and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) forums.
2. **Observing and interacting informally with change recipients**
   Participants suggested observing change recipients' reactions and responses to change through informal interaction to determine engagement. The informal nature of this method encourages an open, honest view of change engagement.
3. **Monitoring engagement through feedback channels and networks**
   Participants used communication networks and organizational channels including managers, change agents, trainers and Human Resources (HR) to determine overall employee engagement throughout the organization.
4. **Soliciting feedback by creating deliberate opportunities**
   Allotting dedicated opportunities for input and questions from change recipients during events and meetings related to change motivated open, continuous feedback on employee engagement.
5. **Tracking fluctuations in performance**
   Defining and tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) offered evidence of productive engagement regarding change and comparisons with benchmarks and projected outcomes.
6. **Tracking general use of and proficiency with implemented changes**
   Monitoring use of changes and associated procedures indicated engagement in a concrete, evident manner. Including metrics for proficient use of change systems in tracking and documentation clarified the extent of engagement.

Planning for Reinforcement and Sustainment Activities

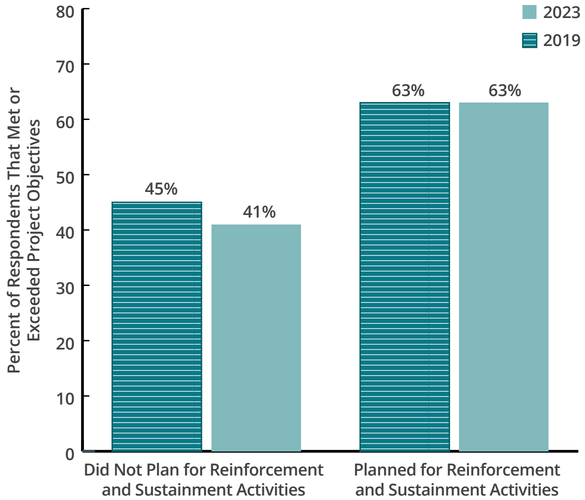
Sixty-three percent of participants reported planning for reinforcement and sustainment activities on their project (Figure 8.20).

Figure 8.20 – Planning for reinforcement on project success



Those who planned for reinforcement and sustainment reported greater success with projects. Figure 8.21 shows that 63% of participants who planned for reinforcement or sustainment met or exceeded project objectives. Participants who did not plan for reinforcement and sustainment activities met or exceeded project objectives less than half of the time.

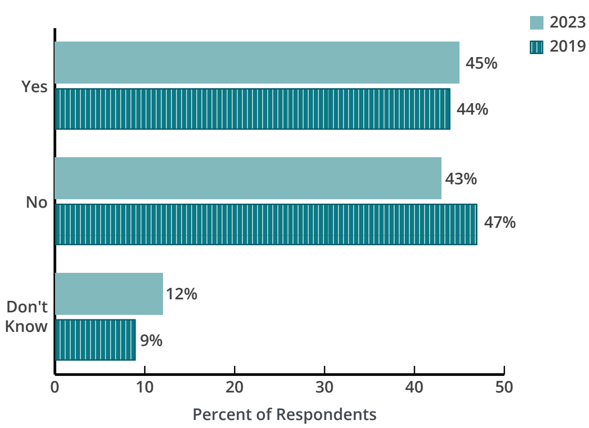
Figure 8.21 – Impact of planning for reinforcement on project success



Resourcing for Reinforcement and Sustainment

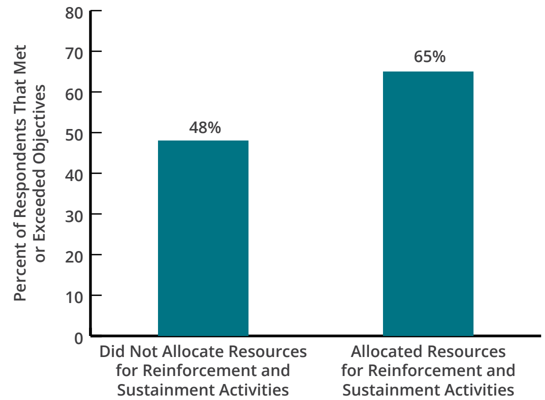
Participants indicated whether project resources were allocated to reinforcement and sustainment. Forty-five percent reported that resources were allocated for reinforcement and sustainment.

Figure 8.22 – Allocated resources to reinforcement and sustainment



Participants who allocated resources to reinforcement and sustainment reported greater success with projects. Figure 8.23 shows that 65% of participants who allocated resources to reinforcement and sustainment met or exceeded project objectives compared to the 48% of participants who did not allocate resources to reinforcement and sustainment.

Figure 8.23 – Impact of allocating resources to reinforcement on meeting objectives



Tactics to Reinforce and Sustain Change

Source date: 2013

Participants identified four tactics used to reinforce and sustain change.

1. **Ongoing and consistent communication**
   Participants highlighted the need for consistent and continuous communication. Communication included updates about project progress, employee follow-ups, benefit realization reports and other messages about change. Participants emphasized the importance of messages delivered by senior leaders.
2. **Support mechanisms**
   Participants identified use of support mechanisms to reinforce and sustain change. Support mechanisms included visible support from leaders, change champions and super users. Participants identified that support mechanisms contributed most to reinforcement when they were available during each stage of change. Participants underscored one-on-one coaching as a way to sustain engagement from impacted groups throughout the project. In some cases, a team created to sustain a project after the go-live date provided support.
3. **Tracking**
   Participants highlighted use of tracking to reinforce and sustain change. Tracking measures included surveys, assessments, progress reports and performance monitoring. Participants used key performance indicators (KPIs) and other performance measures to gauge use of new systems or processes.

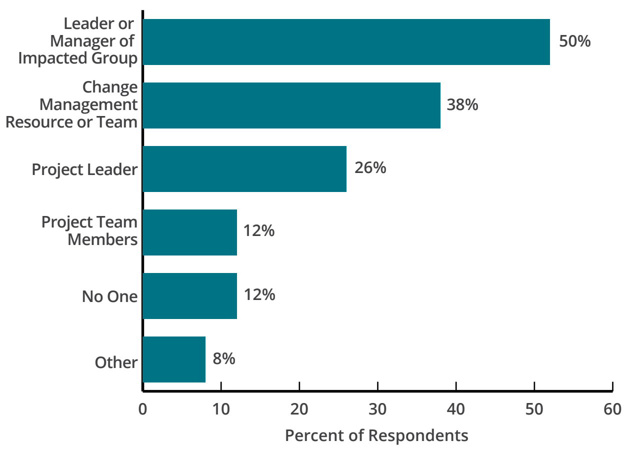
4. **Rewards and recognition**
Participants highlighted use of rewards and recognition as a tactic when reinforcing and sustaining change. Rewards and recognition included celebrating successes (both large and small), rewarding employee buy-in, and recognizing individuals impacted by or managing change. Participants underscored the importance of not only rewarding employees for success and project adoption but also showing appreciation for effort from individuals.

Roles in Reinforcement and Sustainment

Source date: 2013

Participants in the 2013 study identified who was responsible for reinforcement and sustainment activities on their change initiative (Figure 8.24). Half of participants said it was the leader or manager of an impacted group. Thirty-eight percent reported that the change management resource or team was responsible for this effort.

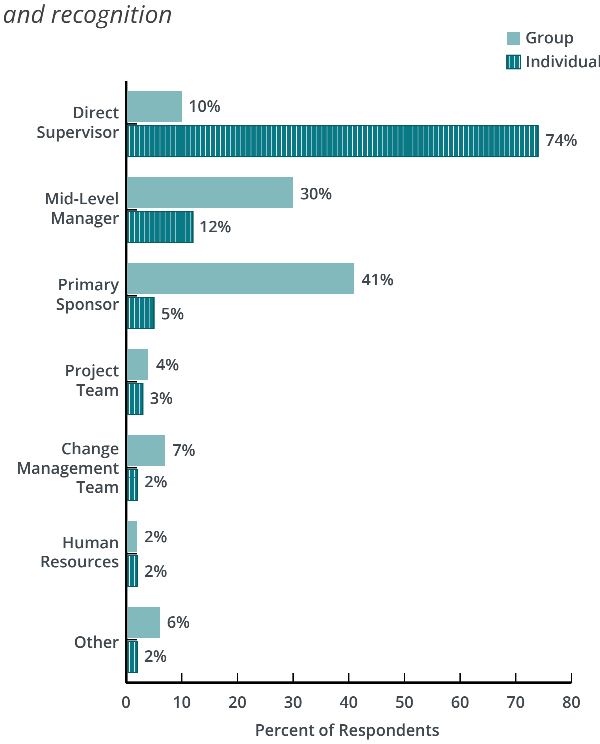
Figure 8.24 – Role responsible for reinforcement and sustainment



Editor's note: Participants were able to select multiple responses, resulting in a total of more than 100%.

In the 2011 study, participants identified who would be the best provider of reinforcement and recognition. Figure 8.25 shows the groups participants identified as the best providers at both the individual and group levels. Although participants leaned toward the direct supervisor for individual recognition, the primary sponsor or mid-level manager was identified as the best provider of group recognition.

Figure 8.25 – Best provider of reinforcement and recognition



Individual Reinforcement

Source date: 2013

2013 study participants identified the most effective ways to reinforce and sustain change at the individual level, citing four tactics.

1. **Communicating success**
Communicate consistently and continuously, including progress updates and short-term successes. Use positive and consistent communications in both one-on-one situations between a supervisor and direct report and with peers in informal settings. Communicate through post-implementation of the project to drive sustained change.

2. **Providing and collecting feedback**
Ensure that feedback is collected at all levels, and demonstrate that feedback was heard. Address both positive and negative feedback using one-on-one and team meeting settings. Provide honest and helpful feedback to end users during implementation and post-implementation.

3. **Recognizing and rewarding adoption**
Provide a variety of channels for recognition through both one-on-one and team meetings with direct reports. Acknowledge success of both short-term wins and long-term goal achievement.

 •

Show appreciation for effort made by individuals. Celebrate success and offer incentives throughout each phase of change.

4. **Providing on-the-job support**
   Make support mechanisms available during each phase of change. Provide technical and moral support from super users, change champions, leaders and early adopters. Allow for practicing and trial experiences with the future state. Provide job aids, help desks and updated process documentation.

Group Reinforcement

Source date: 2013

Participants identified the five most effective ways to reinforce and sustain change at the group level.

1. **Communication**
   Communicate key messages consistently with each group to share status updates and success stories. Share lessons learned, frequently asked questions and success within the team. Make multiple forms of communication available to each group or division.
2. **Recognition**
   Recognize wins at the group level in public, informally and face-to-face. Acknowledge the effort of each team and celebrate positive outcomes. Include recognition and acknowledgment from leadership.
3. **Workshops**
   Deliver workshops, training and group activities that provide a strong, fun learning environment in which individuals can learn from each other while supporting the team as a whole. Offer pre- and post-implementation workshops providing support and follow-ups. Allow groups to participate, share successes, voice opinions and improve collective efforts.
4. **Key performance indicators (KPIs)**
   Use key performance indicators (KPIs) to track and report progress. Record metrics and publish organizational results. Include accountability in job descriptions and create ownership.
5. **Sponsorship**
   Encourage sponsors to share the bigger picture and strategy of the company and to be visible at the group level. Get executive leaders and steering committees to share status updates and offer feedback.

Mistakes to Avoid When Reinforcing Change

Source date: 2016

When participants were asked to identify which mistakes should be avoided when reinforcing change, the four primary responses were:

1. **Do not forget to plan for reinforcement**
   The top mistake to avoid when reinforcing change was not planning for reinforcement at the beginning of a project. This can be done by ensuring there is a budget and time allotted for reinforcement activities. Do not ignore the importance of reinforcement for project success.
2. **Avoid making decisions based on assumptions**
   Participants also voiced that assumptions should be avoided, including that the work is completed when the project is launched, employees know their roles, and there is a reinforcement leader.
3. **Avoid unclear communication**
   Provide clear and consistent communication that encourages honest feedback. Take the time to listen to valid concerns from employees. Ensure project managers are on the same page before messages are sent.
4. **Do not forget to follow through**
   Participants reported that it was important to follow a clear plan that leaves no room for backsliding. Follow-through can occur by acknowledging milestones and rewarding demonstrated ability at the individual level.

How Reinforcement Was Handled After Project Closure

Source date: 2013

Participants reported on the challenge of reinforcing change after project closure. The following elements for reinforcing and sustaining change after project closure were identified.

1. **Ongoing communication**
   Continuous and ongoing communication was the top-cited tactic for reinforcing and sustaining change after a project closed. Participants stressed the importance of communicating through various avenues and highlighting the benefits

and positive effects of change to impacted employees. Encouraging and supporting two-way communication by gathering feedback and following up with employees was critical.

2. **Support systems**
Participants noted that creating an environment of support was instrumental to reinforcing and sustaining change after project closure. Support systems included help desks, management support systems and tailored support activities. Some tailored activities included post-implementation workshops and targeted events that encouraged impacted groups to participate, share success stories and voice opinions on how a project went. Management support systems involved one-on-one coaching from supervisors, help centers and super user communities.

3. **Transition plan**
Participants highlighted the importance of having a transition plan. For some projects, a team is established after a project closes to execute the transition plan. Key responsibilities of the team included following up with impacted groups, creating documentation processes for employees, and assigning clear and consistent staff responsibilities after a project closed.

Using Performance Appraisals and Measures to Encourage Adoption

Source date: 2013

Participants in the 2013 study shared how they used performance appraisals and measures to encourage change adoption. The top three methods were:

1. **Embedded new behaviors in performance appraisals**
Participants tied desired behaviors to employees' individual performance goals and evaluations. Integrating the two provided greater incentives for employees to carry out new behaviors required by change.

2. **Aligned to project goals**
Participants also embedded project goals into performance appraisals and measures. Goals specific to change were embedded in overarching annual goals and existing key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs specific to change were incorporated into performance plans for managers and supervisors.

3. **Established incentive programs**
Rewards and recognition were presented as possibilities if performance appraisals were positive allowing participants to incentivize employees to adopt change.

Participants in the 2007 study indicated that performance appraisals, which link business goals to individual performance, enhance change adoption by:

- **Clarifying roles and expectations for every employee**
Goals specific to and focused on individual contributions remove uncertainty and provide the necessary structure for employees to support new business objectives. *"Structure drives behavior, so make sure how people are measured and rewarded supports the strategy and expected behaviors of the company."*
- **Rewarding change adopters in an equitable manner**
Employees quickly recognize value placed on change when tied to pay. Incentives that go hand-in-hand with performance increase the likelihood of positive outcomes.
- **Creating an accountability model**
Goals tied to performance and business objectives allow managers to check, correct and celebrate wins along the way.
- **Identifying and managing resistance**
Performance appraisals address and offer consequences for non-compliance.

In addition to using performance appraisals to reinforce change, more than half of 2007 participants cited using new job descriptions as an additional mechanism to reinforce change.

Change Readiness

Defining Change Readiness

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study identified how they defined change readiness within their organization. The top five responses were:

1. **Organizational preparedness**
   Respondents identified various facets of organizational preparedness as criteria for defining change readiness. Examples included change infrastructure in place, training completed, resources for change readily available, sponsor committed to change and clear objectives/plans in place for the change.
2. **Open attitudes toward change from the organization**
   The definition of change readiness also included attitudes the organization held toward change. Change readiness was defined by an attitude of receptiveness toward change and willingness to change and successful management of employee resistance.
3. **Individual preparedness**
   Respondents identified individual preparedness as a factor used to define change readiness. Individual preparedness was frequently defined as individuals being ready, willing and able to implement change. A number of respondents noted that the Prosci ADKAR criteria were helpful tools to define and measure individual preparedness for change.
4. **Effective communication regarding the upcoming change**
   Effective communication regarding change was noted as an important factor to define change readiness. Communication ideally results in a high degree of understanding of both the nature of and the need for change and change management generally. One participant reported, *"Change readiness is the extent to which an individual is likely to understand, accept and implement a particular set of changes."*
5. **Smooth implementation of change**
   Some respondents identified success or ease of implementation as criteria for defining change readiness. This was characterized by adoption of change resulting in minimal business impacts, high competency when implementing change or the technical readiness of the system.

Assessing Change Readiness

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study described the primary methods used to assess their organization's change readiness. The top responses were similar to findings from the 2011 study.

1. **Written assessments and surveys**
   Participants favored using written assessments and surveys to identify change readiness. Participants used a variety of tools to gather information on the change readiness of their organization including readiness assessment, business impact assessment, change characteristics assessment, organizational attributes assessment, gap analysis, perception survey, stakeholder analysis and change portfolio assessment.
2. **Meetings and trainings**
   Participants cited meetings and trainings as means of identifying their organization's change readiness. At these events, key stakeholders were communicated with to ensure change goals were aligned and to address issues from different levels of the organization.
3. **Interviews**
   Participants reported that interviews with senior leaders, managers and end users were an effective way to gauge their organization's change readiness. Interviews also had the benefit of allowing one-on-one interactions with these groups. Informal, confidential discussions provided insights on the readiness of the change and surfaced potential obstacles or resistance.

Additional means of readiness identification included:

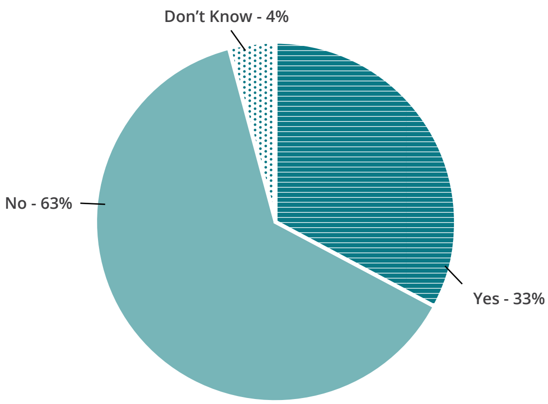
- Sponsor determination – Executives and senior leaders solely determined the change readiness in the organization
- Previous change experience – Participants identified change readiness based on previous change management experience
- Nothing – A few participants indicated that their organization did not perform any actions to identify the level of change readiness

Evaluating Readiness at Individual and Group Levels

Source date: 2013

In comparison to more than half of participants in the 2013 study who evaluated organizational readiness for their change initiatives, only one in three participants evaluated readiness at the individual level (Figure 8.28).

Figure 8.28 – Evaluated change readiness at the individual level



The 33% of participants who evaluated individual readiness explained their considerations and methods for evaluating an individual's readiness for change.

1. **Assessed individual drivers**
   Mentioned over three times more frequently than other factors, individual drivers of change included:
   - Individual awareness of the need for change
   - Individual understanding of what change was occurring and how the change was going to affect them and their role in the organization
   - Individual knowledge and skills required to operate in the new environment and the gap between skills and knowledge used in the current environment
   - Individual desire to participate in and embrace change
   - Personal circumstances that might influence change readiness
2. **Assessed the support network**
   Participants evaluated employees' support networks to ensure employees could approach their managers with questions and concerns regarding change. Participants evaluated sponsorship to ensure sponsors were prepared to help with questions and concerns.

Additional factors included:

- Communication effectiveness
- Personality of the individual
- Training needs
- Individual change history

Participants also shared methods used to evaluate individual readiness factors. The majority of participants identified the Prosci®ADKAR® Model as a foundation for evaluation. Participants employed a variety of general end-user readiness assessments.

Other methods included:

- Stakeholder analysis
- One-on-one meetings with managers
- Individual feedback
- A change agent network
- Surveys
- Personality assessments

Chapter 10

Sponsorship

Active and Visible Sponsorship Is the Single Greatest Contributor to the Success of a Change Initiative

Summary

Take leadership of change from a nebulous concept to a concrete set of actions and activities aligned with best practices. Decades of research have demonstrated the pivotal role leaders play in ensuring the successful outcomes of a change initiative. Leaders can consult this chapter to understand what it takes to be an effective sponsor of change, including traits of an effective sponsor, the most critical sponsorship activities and common mistakes to avoid. Change professionals can use this chapter to guide effective engagement of senior leaders and learn how to support leaders in their role.

Highlight

79% of respondents with extremely effective sponsors met or exceeded objectives compared to 27% with extremely ineffective sponsors.

Most Critical Activities

Source date: 2019

Participants identified the most critical primary sponsor roles required for the success of a change project, including activities that portray each role.

1. **Active and visible participation through the project** Sponsors who were involved throughout the entire project were considered transparent, present, engaged and committed as needed for change management success. Participant responses fell into two categories:

   Support the team

   - Liaise with the leadership team to ensure that the change management team is heard in the decision process
   - Make key decisions in a timely manner
   - Proactively remove barriers for the change management team, including managing resistance
   - Provide the necessary resources and control the budget
   - Understand what the change process is, its impact, and the desired goals
   - Coach and oversee team throughout the project
   - Respect and listen to impacted groups
   - Track success and give recognition
   - Seek reviews to assess change readiness

   Champion the change

   - Actively support and believe in the change management work, methodology and practices
   - Participate in change activities and messages
   - Own the change
   - Maintain and build positive and enthusiastic attitudes about the project
   - Be the first adopter and commit to the change

   "Doing the change in sight of impacted groups, including communicating if they are finding the change difficult and how they are overcoming that difficulty. Being there to tell employees … how they will be supported if they are struggling with the change."

2. **Communicate support and promote the change to impacted groups**
   - Set direction and focus by communicating the end vision
   - Create awareness about the need for change and the specifics of the change
   - Actively advocate for the change to impacted groups
   - Be a role model by vocally and visibly supporting the change
   - Clearly explain the *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) of the change to impacted groups
   - Be open and willing to answer questions from impacted groups that might show resistance

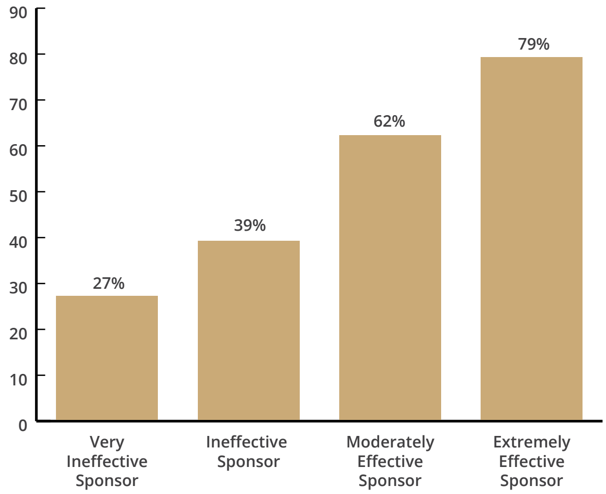
3. **Build a coalition of sponsorship**
   - Engage across the organization
   - Create, coach and maintain a network of active and committed change agents
   - Communicate the importance of role modeling the change, and encourage senior leaders to participate and support the change
   - Cultivate management support of the project
   - Ensure alignment of expectations among mid-level and front-line managers
   - Clarify roles
   - Solicit and openly receive management feedback

   "Working with other key figures in the organization to help them understand why they also need to 'role-model' this change for the employees."

Sponsor Effectiveness and Meeting Objectives

Sponsor effectiveness had a direct impact on whether projects met objectives (Figure 10.1). Projects with an extremely effective sponsor met or exceeded objectives nearly three times as often as those with a very ineffective sponsor.

Figure 10.1 – Correlation of sponsor effectiveness with meeting objectives



Creating Active and Visible Sponsorship

Source date: 2016

In 2015, participants identified activities that created active and visible sponsorship.

1. **Presence at public events**
   Sponsor presence at large employee project events was identified as one of the easiest ways to create active and visible sponsorship. These meetings included town hall meetings, project kickoff meetings, roadshows, training session kickoffs and formal and informal Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions. The presence of the sponsor at these events was critical. In absentia, a video message from the sponsor provided an alternative way to demonstrate support.
2. **Actions with employees**
   Engaging employees outside of scheduled public forums was identified as an effective way to create sponsorship. Some actions included communicating the need for change across all levels of the organization, management by walking around or *"being on the shop floor where the change is happening,"* having personal discussions about the change with impacted employees, and sharing what the change meant from an organizational perspective.
3. **Communicating about the change**
   Important communication tactics included sending messages with clear and regular cadence, providing face-to-face messages that focused on progress, and giving employees the opportunity to provide feedback. Participants also identified sponsor presence on social media related to the change created visible sponsorship.
4. **Embracing the change**
   It was important for sponsors to embrace the change. Participants shared that the best way for this to happen was to support the change publicly by modeling change behaviors. Ensuring sponsors were doing what they say, or *"walking the walk,"* was a critical point regarding creating active and visible sponsorship.

Behaviors That Demonstrate That a Sponsor Is Active and Engaged

Source date: 2019

Participants in the 2019 study were asked to examine behaviors sponsors display to demonstrate they are active and engaged with a change. Participants noted that the best way to demonstrate engagement and remain active was to communicate consistently about the change, sometimes in scripted activities and sometimes in activities unprompted by the change management team.

1. **Communicate about the change**
   Communicating about the change was the top way sponsors demonstrate they are active and engaged throughout the change process. Various ways sponsors communicated include keeping a focus on the importance of the change and why it is happening, speaking positively about the change, asking questions and addressing concerns, and praising and celebrating success throughout the change process.
2. **Attend key meetings**
   Sponsors displayed engagement with the change by regularly attending key project meetings. Key project meetings included status meetings, roadshows, project kickoff announcements and town halls.
3. **Take ownership of the change**
   Sponsors displayed engagement by taking ownership of the change including making key decisions, setting priorities, providing guidance and removing roadblocks.
4. **Engage the change management team**
   Engaging the change management team involved being accessible and available to discuss issues, understanding and valuing change management, and providing resources for change management.

5. **Be accessible to impacted groups**
A sponsor who was available and accessible to impacted groups demonstrated engagement by taking time to walk the floor and engage directly with impacted employees and managers to ensure they understood the future state.
6. **Engage peers**
Participants noted that sponsors must engage their peers to build a coalition and coach managers and other leaders to lead change. They also made the change a priority during steering committee meetings and while building consensus among leaders.

Study participants noted several other ways sponsors could demonstrate engagement:

- Listening to concerns
- Leading by example
- Being the primary advocate for the change
- Demonstrating enthusiasm for the change

Biggest Mistakes

Source date: 2016

Participants identified the biggest mistakes top-level sponsors made during major changes.

1. **Failed to remain active and visible throughout the life of the project**
The disappearing sponsor was cited as the most common sponsor mistake. Participants felt that, too often, sponsors would attend the opening kickoff or send out the announcement email and then never be heard from or seen again. Participants called this *"launch and leave."* Sponsors would then move on to the next initiative without realizing the benefits of the original change.
2. **Underestimated or misunderstood the people side of change**
Participants stated that sponsors made incorrect assumptions about the degree of impact a change would have on employees. Sponsors underestimated the time and resources needed to conduct change management. Many sponsors believed that all that was required to get people to adopt the change was telling employees the change was going to happen.
3. **Failed to communicate messages about the need for change**
Lack of frequent communication from a sponsor concerning impacts of the change on employees was a common mistake. Sponsors did not provide consistent messaging on business drivers and did not communicate the value of change.
4. **Delegated the sponsorship role and responsibilities**
A major cause of sponsors not communicating and not being visible was that they had delegated that role to the project team or lower managers thus becoming sponsor in name only.
5. **Failed to demonstrate support for the project in words and actions**
Sponsors did not walk the talk when it came to supporting change. Sponsors failed to lead by example, or promote or champion the change. They instead viewed change as the *"flavor-of-the-month"* and did not hold people accountable for a project's success.

Ideal Sponsor Traits

Source date: 2016

Participants identified a variety of traits that made for an ideal sponsor, though six were cited more often than others.

1. **Strong communication skills**
Participants stated that sponsors should be vocal, articulate, comfortable communicating with all levels in the organization, and able to provide awareness by explaining the reasons behind change.
2. **Create engagement through passion and enthusiasm**
Energy, enthusiasm and a passion for change that created engagement were highlighted as necessary when sponsoring change.
3. **Engaged and involved**
Involvement and engagement throughout the project was highlighted, including engagement with change and project teams.
4. **Visible and supportive**
Participants stated that sponsors must be willing to be the visible face of change within the organization and support change through actions including providing necessary resources.

5. **Approachable and available**
   Participants revealed that the ideal sponsor is accessible and approachable regarding change, has the time to dedicate, attends meetings when needed, and allots time for sponsorship.

6. **Recognized leader with sponsorship experience**
   Ideal sponsors were credible and recognized leaders within the organization. They were experienced, capable and had a strong understanding of the sponsor role.

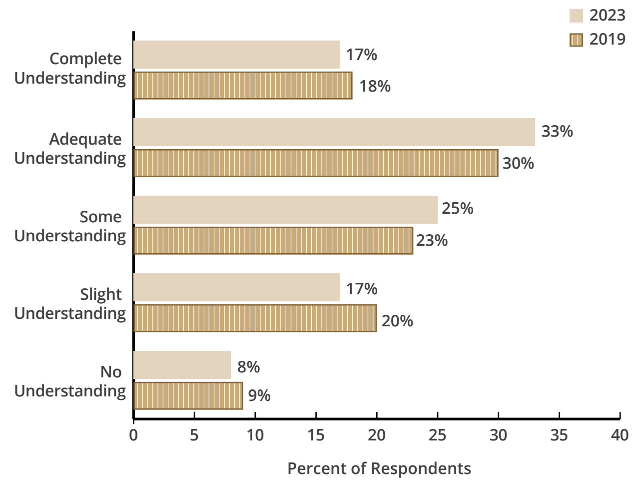
Additional traits included:

- Knowledgeable about and believes in change management
- Knowledgeable about the business and change
- Personable and people-focused
- Trustworthy and respected
- Sets a clear vision regarding change
- Committed to and advocates change
- Sincere and compassionate
- High level within the organization
- Proactive and decisive
- Excellent listener
- Honest and has integrity
- Removes barriers and manages resistance
- Builds a coalition of sponsors and has a strong organizational network
- Accountable and holds others accountable
- Self-aware and emotionally intelligent

Sponsor Role Understanding and Fulfillment

Figure 10.2 shows participants' evaluations of how well their sponsor understood the roles and responsibilities of sponsorship. Respondents in the 2023 study rated their sponsors as having a slightly higher level of understanding of their role than the previous study, with 50% rating their sponsors as having an adequate or complete understanding, as compared to 48% in 2019.

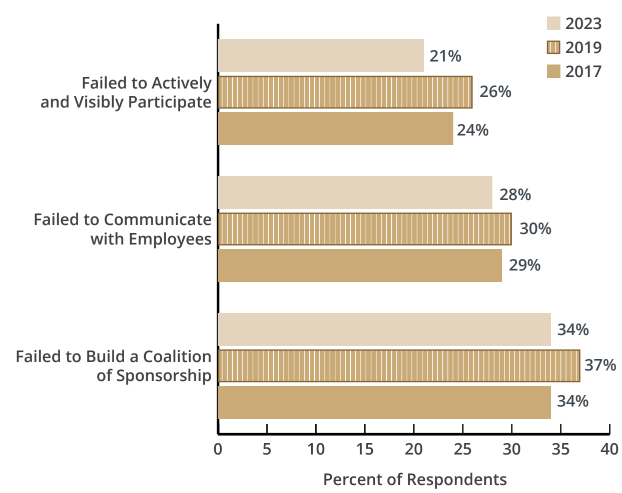
Figure 10.2 – Sponsor role understanding



Participants also evaluated how effectively their sponsors fulfilled each of the three primary roles. Figure 10.3 shows the percentage of participants that indicated that their sponsors were ineffective or extremely ineffective at fulfilling each role.

Twenty-one percent of participants reported that their sponsors were ineffective at being active and visible throughout the project, and nearly one-third indicated that their sponsors were not communicating effectively and directly with employees. Participants also reported that 34% of sponsors failed to build a coalition of sponsorship, an decrease from the previous study by 3%.

Figure 10.3 – Ineffective or extremely ineffective sponsor role fulfillment



Sponsor Effectiveness at Specific Activities

Participants in the 2023 study rated their sponsor's effectiveness at participating actively and visibly in the change, communicating directly with employees and building a coalition of sponsors on a Likert scale from extremely ineffective to extremely effective. Forty-eight percent of participants reported that their sponsors were effective or extremely effective at being active and visible throughout the change and 42% reported that their sponsor was effective or extremely effective at communicating with employees. Thirty-six percent of participants reported that their sponsors were effective at building a coalition of sponsors.

Table 10.4 – Sponsor effectiveness at specific activities

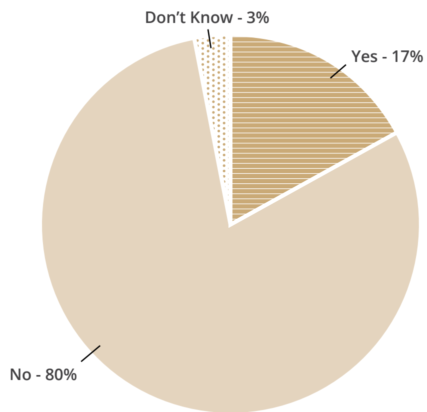
	Active and Visible	Communicated with Employees	Built a Coalition
Extremely Effective	16%	14%	12%
Effective	32%	28%	24%
Somewhat Effective	31%	30%	30%
Ineffective	14%	19%	23%
Extremely Ineffective	7%	9%	11%

Formal Evaluation of Sponsor Role Fulfillment

Source date: 2013

Seventeen percent of participants in the 2013 study formally evaluated the effectiveness of sponsors fulfilling their change management role (Figure 10.5).

Figure 10.5 – Formally evaluated sponsor role fulfillment



Participants noted three methods of evaluating the degree to which a project sponsor fulfilled the role.

1. **Clearly outlined objectives**
   Participants consistently noted outlining and defining activities and responsibilities expected of the sponsor early during the project. A roadmap or checklist was used to evaluate sponsor role fulfillment. Once a sponsor's role and activities were outlined, participants were able to measure and track the sponsor's adherence to defined activities. In some cases, project impact assessments completed by the project and/or change team assisted with outlining sponsor activities and responsibilities.

2. **Observation and feedback**
   Participants reported that informal and formal feedback loops and observation tactics were used to evaluate role fulfillment among sponsors. Methods for observing and gathering feedback included surveys, group discussions and one-on-one interviews. Feedback and observations were based on pre-defined role descriptions. *"Informally we evaluated effectiveness of our program sponsors. Evaluation was done secretly as this type of information is very sensitive for leaders. Several action points came out of these meetings to ensure a better understanding of change management with sponsors."* and *"We conducted interviews, collected survey feedback from employees, managers and customers. Also,* [we] *conducted some onsite observations."*

3. **Use of formal tools or methodologies**
   Participants also reported using a formal scorecard, assessment or methodology template to evaluate role fulfillment. Tools included sponsor assessments, project and role impact assessments, internal methodologies and engagement tracking methods. These tools and tracking measures were completed by the sponsors themselves, the change management team or project team members. *"Using the Prosci sponsor assessment tool, I completed the assessment and also had the sponsor perform a self-assessment."*

Engaging the Sponsor

Source date: 2013

Participants used several tactics to ensure project sponsors remained involved throughout the duration of a project.

1. **Deliver regular meetings and updates**
   Meeting with sponsors regularly to provide them with project updates and progress briefings was reported as the number-one tactic to maintain sponsor involvement throughout a project. Participants hosted regular meetings at varying intervals; some held daily or weekly meetings, and others held them quarterly. Meetings were conducted in both one-on-one and group settings. *"We continued engagement at regularly scheduled staff meetings—asking for 15 minutes of their agenda—to keep them all engaged. This did not add another meeting to their calendar and kept the project in the forefront of their brains."*

2. **Outline objectives**
   Participants reported outlining objectives early and continuing to focus on those objectives as the second most common tactic to ensure project sponsors remained involved. Tactics included inviting

sponsors to key events, highlighting the success and impact their participation was having on a project, creating a sponsor roadmap and tracking adherence, making them the project owner, and going to them for key decisions throughout the project lifecycle.

3. **Communicate directly with sponsor**
Participants noted that staying in constant communication with sponsors was a common tactic to maintain involvement. Communicating directly with sponsors helped keep them accountable for and excited about project progress. Communication should be two-way to ensure that the change manager was available and ready to provide project communication for the sponsor at all times.
"We were very flexible and approachable and developed a close trust-based relationship so that we could criticize without holding punches and our support was not patronizing."

4. **Provide sponsor with coaching and support**
The fourth most common tactic was to provide the sponsor with coaching and support in their role. Coaching provided focus on the sponsor's role and demonstrated how to execute responsibilities effectively. Steps for providing support included writing key communication messages, preparing them with messages prior to events, sharing success stories and providing tools.

A notable portion of participants also involved steering committees, when necessary, as a tactic to influence and ensure that sponsors remained engaged throughout change.

Sponsor Access

Source date: 2019

Participants who reported having adequate or more than adequate access to their sponsors experienced higher rates of their projects meeting organizational objectives than those who had inadequate or no access to their sponsor (Figure 10.6).

Figure 10.6 – Correlation of sponsor access with meeting/exceeding objectives

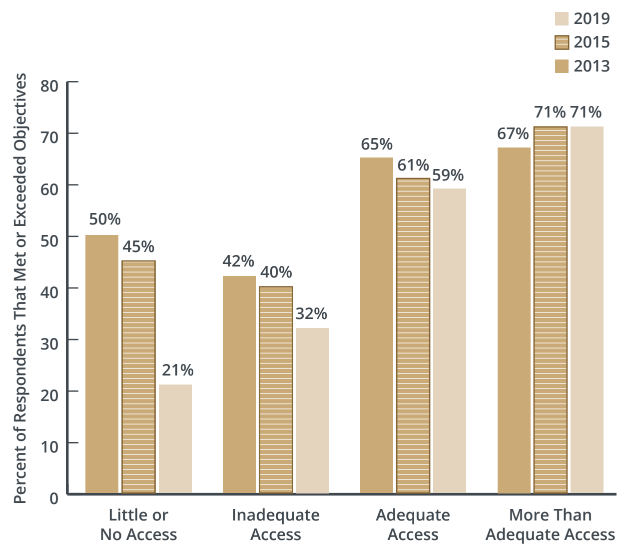
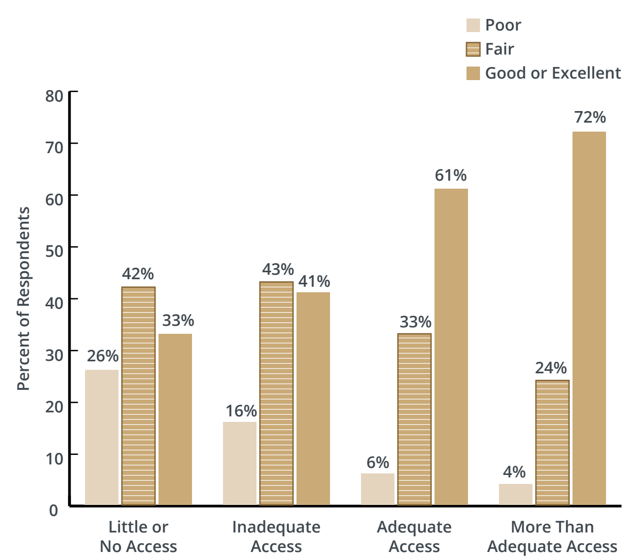


Figure 10.7 shows that nearly two-thirds of participants with adequate or more than adequate access to their sponsors reported good or excellent change management effectiveness. Six percent of participants who reported adequate access experienced poor change management effectiveness compared to the 26% of participants who had little or no access to sponsors.

Figure 10.7 – Correlation of sponsor access with change management effectiveness



Securing Sponsor Access

Source date: 2013

Participants reported tactics used to secure access to sponsors.

1. **Meet with the sponsor**
   Participants reported scheduling meetings prior to a project kickoff or at project initiation. Participants noted that scheduling meetings far in advance and during key points in the project ensured that sponsors were available and reduced the chances of schedule conflicts. Both informal and formal meetings were used. Participants also identified opportunistic and chance meetings to access project sponsors. *"We used informal channels such as scheduling breakfast or lunch rather than formal meetings with agendas."*
2. **Establish expectations**
   By establishing expectations of sponsors early, participants secured better access to sponsors. Participants outlined the positive project impact that continued access would have and requested that sponsors agree to be accessible. The project impact was illustrated by sharing best practices and highlighting the correlation between sponsor access and project success, which they also tied to sponsors' professional goals and expectations for a project.
3. **Leverage individuals with access to sponsors**
   Participants with little to no access to sponsors reported leveraging others within the organization who did have access. Participants were able to schedule appointments and be present at meetings they knew the sponsor would be attending. A common example was getting steering committees' agendas from an executive assistant.
4. **Communicate consistently with sponsor**
   Consistent communication at key points in the project was a tactic participants used to establish credibility and access sponsors. Participants also reported that communicating quick-wins and success stories to sponsors increased longer-term accessibility.
5. **Work through the project manager**
   Participants reported establishing a relationship with project managers and having them communicate key change management messages to sponsors at project meetings. By having an established relationship with the project manager, participants received more invitations to meetings with the project team and sponsor.
6. **Leverage the sponsor coalition**
   Participants leveraged other leaders within the organization who had business influence and worked closely with project sponsors. *"We accessed other executive level stakeholders who had a strong commitment to change management and showed their support and guidance to engage the sponsor."*

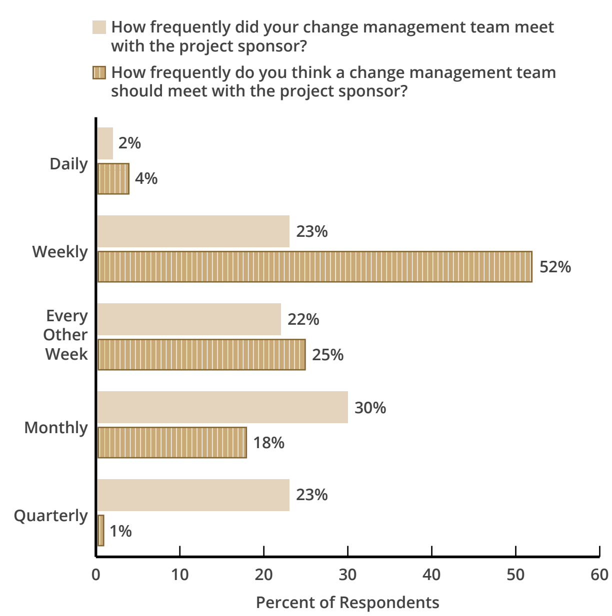
A notable number of participants reported relationship development as a way to gain and maintain access to sponsors. Relationship development included working with sponsors in a number of capacities to gain trust, networking with sponsors during informal events and directing conversations with sponsors to become a credible source of information on projects.

Frequency of Change Management Meetings With Sponsor

Source date: 2009

In the 2009 study, participants indicated how frequently they met with sponsors during a project (Figure 10.8). However, 52% of participants reported meeting only monthly or quarterly with sponsors. More than half recommended weekly meetings with sponsors.

Figure 10.8 – Frequency of meeting with sponsors



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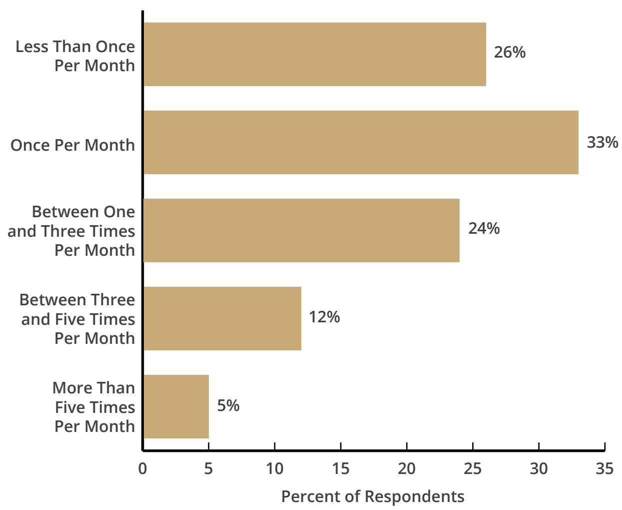
Sponsor Communication Frequency

Source date: 2009

Participants in the 2009 study identified how many times per month their sponsors communicated with employees regarding change. Figure 10.9 shows data for direct communication frequency. More than half of participants said that their sponsors communicated directly with employees only once per month or less.

Figure 10.9 – Sponsor communication frequency

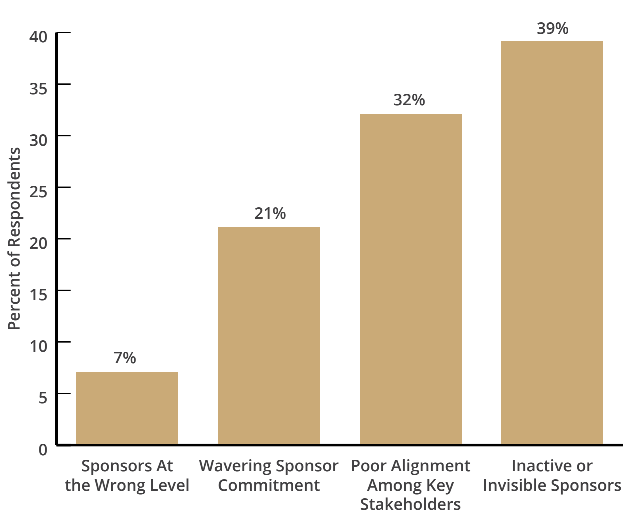


Symptoms of Ineffective Sponsorship

Source date: 2011

Participants indicated the symptoms of ineffective sponsorship they experienced (Figure 10.10). Inactive or invisible sponsorship was the most cited symptom followed by poor alignment among key stakeholders.

Figure 10.10 – Sponsor symptoms

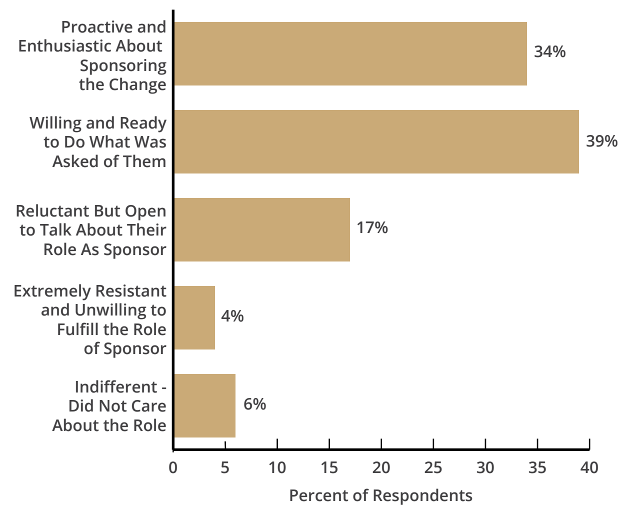


How Would You Characterize Your Sponsor at the Beginning of the Project?

Source date: 2009

Participants in the 2009 study characterized their sponsors at the beginning of the project (Figure 10.11).

Figure 10.11 – Sponsor characterization at beginning of the project



Nearly three quarters of participants in the 2009 study characterized sponsors positively at the beginning of a project, with 34% indicating that sponsors were proactive and enthusiastic, and 39% indicating sponsors were willing and ready to do what was asked of them. Only 4% reported that their sponsors were extremely resistant and unwilling to be a sponsor of change.

Engaging Reluctant Senior Leaders

Source date: 2016

Respondents in the 2015 study identified the most effective techniques they employed to engage resistant or reluctant senior leaders. Results indicate similar trends to research conducted in 2007 and 2009.

1. **Engage in one-on-one interactions**
   Participants cited face-to-face, one-on-one interactions with sponsors as the most effective technique when accompanied with honesty and openness. Participants recommended offline, interpersonal relationship-building meetings as the most impactful which included walking the halls, carparks, walkways between buildings and watercoolers. Two-way communication, genuinely listening to concerns, flattery and being perceived as a trusted advisor were characteristic of high-value interactions. *"Real empathy—actually 'hearing' their reluctance and then addressing this as far as possible."*
2. **Provide coaching on their role as a sponsor**
   Participants cited coaching as a highly successful method for engaging reluctant or resistant leaders. Types of coaching included informal and formal sponsor education on their roles, drafting their communications and emails and explaining the risk of ineffective sponsorship. Special tactics included use of a sponsor roadmap, building awareness, sharing tools and techniques, to-do lists, sharing best practices and modeling the outcomes of their decisions.
3. **Demonstrate the benefits of the change**
   Highlighting the business reason, objective and benefit of change was a frequently cited tactic. Often, this was accompanied with presenting personal benefit to the executive (*"what's in it for me?"* or WIIFM), the return on investment (ROI) of change management or a briefing of possible negative impacts were their roles unfulfilled. Participants reported sharing case studies of successful and failed past changes to support these conversations. Other strategies included aligning change with their strategies, appealing to their specific goals, and desires and contextualizing change.
4. **Use of peer pressure by leveraging other sponsors**
   Leveraging another peer sponsor or influencer to talk to a sponsor and demonstrate support for change was commonly cited to influence reluctant executives. If a peer leader was chosen to work with a resistant leader, participants recommended they be credible, authoritative colleagues. Participants reported focusing on creating buy-in from a larger sponsor coalition and encouraging friendly competition among teams and between peer sponsors from different departments.
5. **Increase involvement of resistant senior leaders**
   Participants suggested increasing the involvement and decision-making of resistant senior leaders. Scheduling regular meetings with sponsors to inform and gather input was a key success factor. Sponsors' involvement occurred in a variety of ways including invitations to initial project design sessions, invitations to change champion or change agent network meetings, and presentations in existing forums. Participants also experienced success by publicly recognizing their help, providing them with hands-on experience with change, early and regular involvement in the project, and sending follow-ups from meetings they did not attend.
6. **Provide regular communication**
   Participants associated regular communication with listening and understanding a sponsor's objections. Two-way communication, tailored messages and arranging small group meetings with sponsors were frequently cited.
7. **Arrange meetings and feedback loops**
   Participants recommended providing opportunities for interactions between impacted groups and sponsors. Engaging with direct reports and stakeholders to provide direct feedback was cited often. Establishing formal feedback loops, communicating observations from the field, and sharing survey results from impacted groups were also used.
8. **Apply special tactics**
   Many participants noted special tactics they used to engage resistant leaders, including requesting a liaison from change management and project management teams to meet with sponsors, encouraging or convincing to delegate,

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providing clear choices, creating urgency or *"a burning platform,"* storytelling, playing devil's advocate, allowing time to work through things, booking time on their schedules early or late in the day, obtaining sign-off documenting responsibility, using blogs or social media sites, treating leaders as stakeholders, and creating support structures for executive assistants.

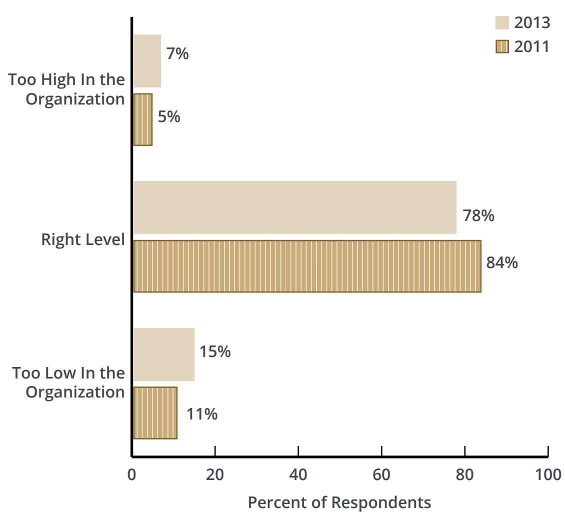
9. **Intervene with primary sponsor**
Occasionally, participants reported success appealing to a higher authority. Participants mentioned strategically using the CEO to outline expectations with a sponsor coalition or to tie individual compensation to realizing results from change. Participants also mentioned recommending sanctions on sponsors for non-compliance or having them pay for the cost of old equipment.

Correct Level of Sponsor

Source date: 2013

Participants identified whether the sponsor for their change was at the *right level, too high or too low* in the organization (Figure 10.12). Over three quarters of respondents indicated that their sponsor was at the right level.

Figure 10.12 – Sponsor at right level in the organization



Ideal Sponsor Level

Source date: 2016

For the first time in 2015, participants were asked about the ideal level for a sponsor. Responses were relative given the subjective and loosely-defined responsibilities and roles provided across organizations. The most common responses were:

- **Senior management:** The majority of participants identified the senior management level as a primary source for sponsorship. Titles for this parallel of sponsorship included vice president, director and general manager.
- **Executive management:** The second most common response was executive management. Examples were senior manager and senior vice president.
- **CEO and CIO:** Participants identified the CEO or CIO as the third most common sponsorship position within an organization.

Recommendations for Dealing With a Sponsor at the Wrong Level

Source date: 2011

Participants who provided recommendations for practitioners supporting change that had the wrong level of sponsor identified two primary tactics: work with the current sponsor or engage the correct level sponsor. Participants who either recommended or had to work with the current sponsor identified four tactics.

1. **Build and leverage the coalition**
Of the four tactics proposed by participants, building a coalition of change leaders throughout the organization was the most common. Participants recommended creating a layer of change leadership with multiple sponsors from various levels to support change.
2. **Enter open and honest dialogues with the current sponsor regarding his/her role**
Participants proposed having a candid conversation with the current sponsor to address questions and concerns regarding the level of sponsorship, including raising awareness about his/her responsibilities. This conversation should include

topics such as the impacts of change to the current sponsor, the impacts of proper sponsorship on project success, and how resistance will be managed and barriers removed.

3. **Offer coaching to the current sponsor**
   Participants recommended coaching the current sponsor on how to be effective. Topics for coaching included helping the sponsor network and build coalitions, offering training, providing recommendations on effective sponsorship and developing messages for the sponsor.
4. **Re-scope the project**
   If the level of sponsorship provided was inadequate, participants recommended restructuring or re-scoping the project to accommodate the level of the current sponsor.

Participants who recommended engaging the correct level of sponsor provided three tactics for implementing a change in sponsorship.

1. **Elevate the issue and engage senior leadership to initiate a change**
   Participants recommended escalating the issue to an executive steering committee, senior management or senior sponsor, or making the situation known and having a senior leader advocate for a change in sponsorship.
2. **Show the impacts of proper sponsorship on project success and how the current sponsor is inappropriate**
   Participants who proposed engaging a different level of sponsor suggested showing the impacts of appropriate sponsorship on project results and explaining criteria of effective sponsorship. Participants recommended including reasons the current sponsor was not a good fit for the role.
3. **Conduct a stakeholder analysis or sponsor assessment to indicate proper sponsor**
   Participants suggested using a sponsor assessment diagram or stakeholder analysis to explain the need for change in sponsorship or to show who is better suited for the role.

Traits for Sponsorship of Large-Scale Change

Source date: 2016

Participants identified traits necessary for a sponsor who leads large-scale change.

1. **Excellent communication skills**
   Overwhelmingly, participants identified having excellent communication and rhetoric as crucial skills for a sponsor leading large-scale change. Participants felt that during large-scale changes, communicating with large groups of stakeholders and impacted employees was required. A sponsor should be comfortable speaking before large groups, able to persuade or sell change to others, and craft and tell the story of a change.
2. **Leadership capability**
   Participants reported that the sponsor must have above-average leadership ability. As a leader, sponsors must have a vision of what the goal of change will look like and be able to communicate that vision to others. A sponsor must be influential within the organization and peer groups. A sponsor must be a visible and present part of the change to respond to issues as they arise and available to change managers as a resource. A sponsor must be credible, either having experience with the specific change type or with leading change.
3. **Knowledgeable**
   Participants found that sponsors should be knowledgeable about several areas. They need to have an understanding of their organization and organization's culture to best maneuver and work within it. The sponsor should be knowledgeable about the change, its impact on employees and its desired deliverables. The sponsor should be fluent in both change and project management.
4. **Availability**
   A sponsor must devote and prioritize the time required to see change through to completion. This involves being present and accessible to the change management team, project management team, and employees impacted by change. Having a sponsor only physically present is insufficient; a sponsor must be engaged, energetic and active/interactive.

5. **Influential**
Participants stressed that a sponsor of a large change needed to wield influence within the organization. This included the ability to build a coalition of peers and executives to support change. He/she must have, build and maintain relationships with top-level executives, have an understanding of the political climate of the organization and be able to negotiate it with minimal backlash on the change team. The ideal sponsor is a skilled networker, well known throughout the organization and experienced in leading and sponsoring this type of change.

Ideal Traits for a Sponsor Managing a Small-Scale Change

Source date: 2016

Participants specified the ideal traits of a sponsor for a small scale change.

1. **Correct level within the organization**
Sponsor should be close to the change. When small-scale changes were being managed, high-level sponsors often had little involvement or knowledge about the change. Sponsors should be high enough in level to influence change but not so high that they are disconnected.

2. **Ability to prioritize**
Participants reported that small-scale change often occurred simultaneously with other change projects or daily work and required the ability to prioritize. Small-scale projects risked being placed on the back burner because of their size and required diligent care to ensure that timetables and deadlines were not missed.

3. **Leadership traits**
Participants reported numerous leadership qualities necessary for a sponsor including trustworthiness, passion, high emotional intelligence, influence and dedication.

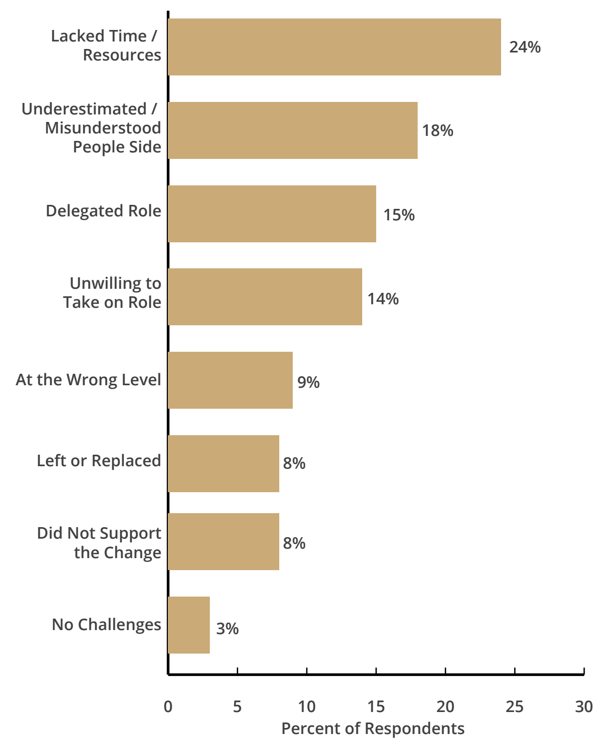
Sponsor Challenges

Participants were presented with a list of common challenges and were asked to select the challenges they most commonly faced with a sponsor. The options given were:

- Sponsor left or was replaced during the project
- Sponsor was at the wrong level (too high or too low) to be effective
- Sponsor lacked time/resources to effectively sponsor the change
- Sponsor delegated their role and responsibilities to someone else
- Sponsor did not support the change
- Sponsor underestimated or misunderstood the people side impact of the project
- Sponsor was unwilling to take on the role/activities required of them

Participants reported the top sponsor challenge as the sponsor lacked the time/resources to effectively sponsor the change. Followed by the sponsor underestimated or misunderstood the people side impact, and sponsor delegated their role and responsibilities to someone else (Figure 10.13).

Figure 10.13 – Sponsor challenges



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 as a result of rounding.

Table 10.14 and 10.15 show the percent of participants who reported experiencing specific challenges by industry and change maturity respectively.

Table 10.14 – Sponsor challenges by industry

	Lacked Time / Resources	Underestimated / Didn't Understand the People Side	Delegated Role	Unwilling to Take on Role	At the Wrong Level	Left or Replaced	Did Not Support the Change	No Challenges
Accommodations and Food Service	62%	15%	15%	8%	46%	23%	23%	15%
Administrative and Support Services	58%	42%	33%	17%	17%	42%	0%	8%
Aerospace	53%	38%	28%	13%	13%	3%	9%	22%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	44%	48%	33%	26%	19%	15%	7%	7%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	59%	6%	35%	12%	18%	24%	6%	35%
Banking	39%	23%	30%	19%	15%	5%	3%	33%
Construction	37%	35%	33%	4%	22%	13%	0%	24%
Consulting	39%	32%	32%	13%	14%	16%	8%	21%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	56%	47%	24%	24%	20%	20%	11%	16%
Development and Manufacturing	33%	33%	37%	11%	17%	7%	4%	31%
Education Services	46%	35%	24%	12%	16%	22%	4%	20%
Finance	42%	31%	34%	14%	15%	9%	6%	27%
Food/Beverage	37%	35%	29%	21%	15%	12%	10%	31%
Government - Federal	47%	32%	30%	16%	17%	22%	5%	27%
Government - Local & Municipal	39%	34%	19%	12%	10%	24%	4%	27%
Government - Military	58%	42%	33%	42%	25%	25%	8%	17%
Government - Other	37%	33%	21%	8%	17%	14%	3%	24%
Government - State	47%	35%	15%	8%	17%	19%	6%	22%
Health Care	43%	33%	22%	14%	18%	17%	6%	25%
Information Services	47%	32%	24%	20%	20%	16%	6%	24%
Insurance	31%	20%	28%	10%	18%	13%	3%	40%
Manufacturing	42%	33%	24%	16%	14%	11%	7%	33%
Mining	52%	44%	44%	28%	32%	24%	8%	8%
Non-profit	52%	34%	34%	22%	21%	5%	10%	19%
Oil and Gas	41%	31%	23%	10%	13%	14%	6%	30%
Other	37%	29%	19%	16%	16%	9%	4%	34%
Pharmaceutical	43%	23%	33%	14%	21%	19%	3%	31%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	40%	41%	25%	23%	13%	12%	9%	24%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	22%	50%	22%	17%	11%	11%	6%	44%
Retail Trade	46%	25%	16%	13%	14%	16%	4%	29%
Services - Other (except Public Administration)	40%	26%	20%	11%	17%	17%	11%	31%
Telecommunications	45%	41%	20%	18%	14%	10%	8%	14%
Transportation and Warehousing	39%	39%	20%	17%	19%	12%	2%	29%
Utilities	44%	28%	25%	19%	18%	18%	4%	30%
Wholesale Trade	57%	43%	14%	0%	14%	14%	14%	14%

Table 10.15 – Sponsor challenges by maturity level

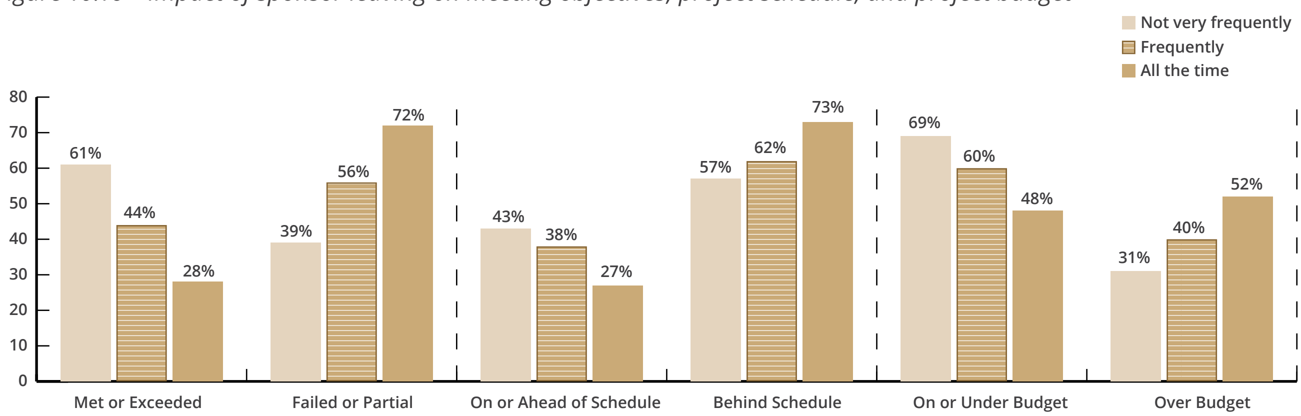
	Lacked Time / Resources	Underestimated / Didn't Understand the People Side	Delegated Role	Unwilling to Take on Roll	At the Wrong Level	Left or Replaced	Did Not Support the Change	No Challenges
Level 5 - Organizational Competency	25%	27%	18%	5%	9%	11%	4%	42%
Level 4 - Organizational Standards	34%	16%	22%	13%	14%	13%	2%	35%
Level 3 - Multiple Projects	38%	27%	24%	11%	13%	14%	5%	33%
Level 2 - Isolated Projects	48%	38%	28%	16%	19%	16%	6%	21%
Level 1 - Ad Hoc or Absent	43%	40%	28%	22%	23%	14%	7%	17%

The following sections continue the exploration of sponsor challenges. Each section presents three graphs that show the frequency in which the specific challenge was encountered by participants (All the time, Frequently and Not very frequently) and project success factors (Meeting objectives, On time and On budget). Each sponsor challenge section also contains a write up detailing the impact that the specific challenge has on projects and the adaptations that participants made to address those challenges.

Sponsor Challenge – Left or Was Replaced During the Project

Source date: 2019

Figure 10.16 – Impact of sponsor leaving on meeting objectives, project schedule, and project budget



Impact of a Sponsor Leaving or Being Replaced

Source date: 2019

Participants reported the impacts of a sponsor leaving or being replaced during the project. Most participants reported getting a new sponsor. The impacts stemmed from both losing the original sponsor and bringing on a new sponsor.

1. **The project must start over**
   When forced to bring on a new sponsor, participants had to restart their change management efforts. The new sponsor needed to be reintroduced to impacted groups, and impacted groups had to build awareness and trust in the new sponsor and rebuild their desire for the change. Participants also needed to readjust technical aspects of the project to shift more time to change management activities that suffered from the original sponsor's departure. Re-staffing and rebuilding change champions and change coalition members who left with the original sponsor also occurred.

2. **The project loses momentum and stalls**
   Two specific causes of stalls or lost momentum were increased resistance and loss of resources. Upon seeing a sponsor leave, impacted groups concluded that the change was not a priority for the organization and ignored or devalued it. Some impacted groups actively tried to sabotage the project because the lack of a sponsor meant lack of authority and the ability to hold people accountable. One participant reported his impacted groups telling him, *"Your team has no teeth."* Additionally, outside teams viewed the original sponsor loss as an opportunity to take, redirect or annex project resources and budget for their own projects.

3. **The project is delayed due to need to train and onboard new sponsor**
   Very few participants found their replacement sponsor to be skilled and trained. Therefore, participants were forced to onboard the new sponsor in project specifics, change management, and their role as a sponsor. This also meant that planned change management activities needed to be put on hold or postponed while they brought the new sponsor up to speed. This onboarding process also included creating buy-in from the sponsor because the new sponsor was reluctant to take on the role or did not view the project favorably.

4. **The project vision and direction were lost**
   Participants relied on their sponsor to set and communicate the vision and direction of the project in addition to fulfilling their other roles as a sponsor. When the original sponsor left, clear communication and articulation of the vision and direction of the project was lost. Change teams did their best to step in and communicate the vision and direction where they could, but any deviation from the original project vision created confusion and mistrust.

5. **The project was reprioritized**
   A new sponsor brought new areas of focus and new priorities to the project. Technical aspects of the change were adjusted or removed to meet the new sponsor's vision for the change. Previous decisions were revisited and reexamined. Sometimes the

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process was unconscious and viewed as the natural tendency of a new sponsor to bring their own unique focus to the project. Other times, participants viewed this as intentional, with the new sponsor redefining the project in a way to favor themselves or their agenda.*"I call it 'new sponsor syndrome' in which all decisions on the project are revisited. It's time consuming and can sometimes alter the course of the project."*

Adapting to a Sponsor Leaving or Being Replaced

Source date: 2019

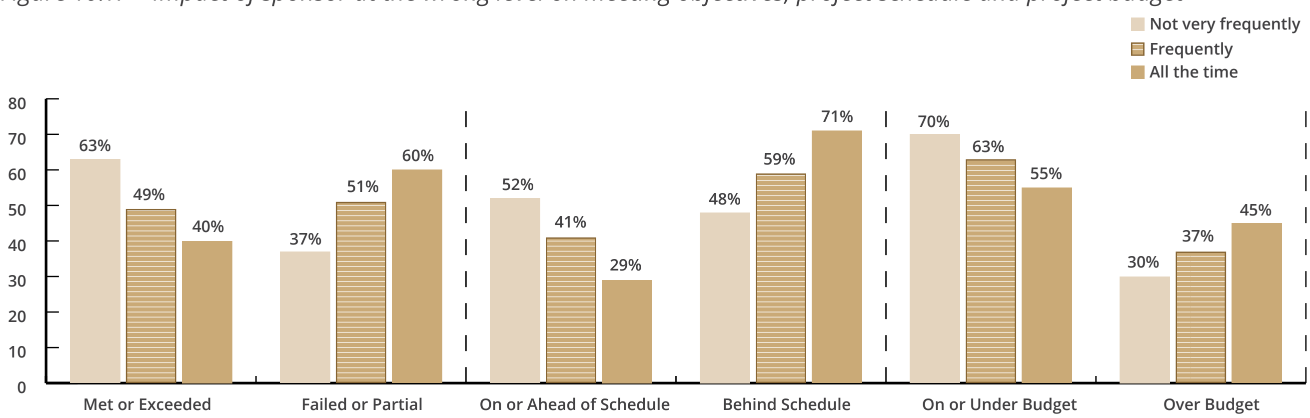
Participants provided insight into the adaptations they made to address and overcome the challenge of a sponsor leaving or being replaced during the project.

1. **Get a new sponsor**
   By a large margin, participants reported getting a new sponsor as quickly as they could. The type, position and traits of the new sponsor depended greatly on project specifics and organizational context; however, participants looked for a sponsor at the same or higher level than the original sponsor. Some were unable to find an experienced sponsor and were forced to make time to train and upskill the new sponsor. Finally, participants seemed to prefer a replacement sponsor with more soft skills (i.e., communication, interpersonal relationship building, etc.) than hard skills.
2. **Make time to train the new sponsor**
   Participants all reported the need to make time to train the new sponsor. This training took two forms. First, the sponsor needed to be trained in change management and their role as the sponsor. Second, the sponsor needed to be brought up to speed on the specifics of the project. Both trainings varied based on the specific sponsor and projects. Some participants designed *"triaged"* trainings to give the sponsors the minimum amount of knowledge necessary to sponsor the change. Other participants were willing to pause or *"restart"* projects to ensure the new sponsor was up to speed and could sponsor the project well.
3. **Create a robust documentation of the project**
   Participants took time to create robust and detailed documentation of the project for the new sponsor. The more time they spent on the documentation the less time it took to bring a sponsor up to speed on the project, which allowed the sponsor to *"get busy sponsoring."* Documentation also served as a persuasive tool to convince someone to take on the sponsor role for the project. Participants either laid out the project's complexities to demonstrate the need for a sponsor or provided a complete enough picture to help the potential sponsor feel comfortable taking on the role.
4. **Engage with the new sponsor regularly**
   Participants increased engagement with the sponsor via weekly or daily meetings, brief check-ins or robust digital communications. Some participants called this kind of engagement *"hand holding,"* while others viewed it as keeping the project *"top of mind."* The goal of this engagement was not to pass on knowledge or answer questions, but rather to ensure that the new sponsor was performing the role effectively. This seemed to be due to a lack of trust between the change manager and the new sponsor.
5. **Rely on other change management resources**
   Participants relied on other change management resources to fulfill some of the sponsor roles. Resources included managers and supervisors, change champions, members of the change team, and ancillary resources. Participants redistributed the sponsor's responsibilities among several different roles, never making one of these resources take on the full responsibilities of the sponsor. Viewed as a less-than-ideal solution, participants in this situation considered it a *"necessary evil"* or *"making the best"* of what they had.

Sponsor Challenge – At the Wrong Level (Too High or Too Low) to Be Effective

Source date: 2019

Figure 10.17 – Impact of sponsor at the wrong level on meeting objectives, project schedule and project budget



Impact of Having a Sponsor at the Wrong Level

Source date: 2019

Participants reported the impacts that having a sponsor at the wrong level (too high or too low) in the organization had on their projects. Participant responses fell into three distinct categories: 1) impacts of a sponsor being at too high a level, 2) impacts of sponsor being at too low a level 3) impact of having a sponsor at the wrong level in general.

Too High a Level

1. **Sponsor did not appreciate the project impacts**
   The sponsor often did not appreciate or care about the impacts of the project. Sometimes this meant the sponsor did not appreciate the people-side impact and the importance of change management in general, but more often this meant the sponsor did not see why the project required so much time and resources from them to sponsor the change.
   This underappreciation of the impact often resulted in impacted groups devaluing the project as a whole, which increased resistance and decreased buy-in.
2. **Sponsor did not have time to lead the change**
   Even with the best intentions, the sponsor did not have time to lead the change. Sponsors had too much on their plate and could not be as involved as needed to effectively sponsor the change. In some cases, the project sponsorship was disorganized, occurred at random times and was inconsistent.

   In other cases, sponsors jumped back into the project at random times and attempted to make up for their absence by being too involved and micromanaging tactical activities. Participants reported more burden on themselves and the change management team as they were forced to adapt to ad hoc sponsorship from a variety of different sources. *"My sponsor [was] the CEO. He has very limited knowledge to make decisions, so he continually deflected or prolonged making any decision. Empty promises during a project caused fall-out, turnover and bad culture. When he did engage, he would micromanage where he thought he could make an impact. By focusing on some of the most remedial of tasks, he caused misalignment of communication/purpose/mission of the project. He was ineffective as a sponsor and his position made him extremely difficult to work with."*

Too Low a Level

1. **Sponsor was not able to fulfill the requirements of their role**
   The sponsor was not able to fulfill their role due to a variety of factors that included lacking resources, lacking the ability to procure additional resources or budget, not being taken seriously by impacted groups, needing to have their decisions reviewed by other senior leaders, disagreements with peers, inability to address negative behavior, and not having access to the appropriate groups or individual to keep the change moving forward.

2. **Sponsor lacked the influence to create support for the change**
   Sponsors lacked the influence necessary to remove barriers, intervene with resistant groups, and advocate for and speak about the change effectively. Sponsors were not viewed as credible and were often ignored. Further, these sponsors were unable to persuade or convince others to buy in to the change because impacted groups did not know who the sponsor was or their role in the organization.

General Impact of Having a Sponsor at the Wrong Level (Too High or Too Low)

1. **Sponsor was unable to make decisions**
   A sponsor at too low a level needed decisions reviewed or had to seek permission from others in the organization to move ahead. If the sponsor was too high in the organization, they were either not engaged enough to take an active role in decisions or they delegated to others, which produced ineffective decision making. In both cases, this stalled or bled momentum from the project.

Adaptations Made When the Sponsor Is at the Wrong Level

Participants reported on the adaptations they made when their sponsor was at the wrong level (too high or too low) in the organization.

1. **Utilize senior leadership**
   Participants reached out to senior leaders above their sponsor to bypass the current sponsor when the sponsor was viewed as ineffective. Participants attempted to pull more appropriate leadership into the sponsor role or some of the sponsor activities. Participants also reached out to senior leadership to clarify the role for an unwilling sponsor or to support, motivate or force an unwilling sponsor to participate in the change management work.

2. **Coach the sponsor**
   Participants reported requiring significant amounts of time to coach and upskill the sponsor. This coaching focused more on getting the sponsor ready to be the voice and face of the change. While some participants coached on change management or specific aspects of the project, depending on the needs of the project, most focused on coaching the sponsor on how to communicate with and about the change. At times, participants scripted sponsor communications for them, which was a significant increase in work for the change management team.

3. **Get a new sponsor**
   Getting a new sponsor was considered the ideal scenario for participants but one that was not guaranteed to work. The negative impact of getting a new sponsor, including communicating to the current sponsor that they were ineffective, varied among respondents. For some, requesting a new sponsor was a simple matter that did not bruise egos or risk offending anyone. For others, simply voicing the possibility that the current sponsor was less than ideal yielded immediate and severe consequences. However, participants found it a risk worth taking because the wrong sponsor would yield significantly more negative results.

4. **Utilize or make a sponsor coalition**
   Participants either leaned on their sponsor coalition or created one in response to having a sponsor at the wrong level. If the sponsor was too high, the sponsor coalition influenced the sponsor to step into the role and see the value of change management. If the sponsor was at a lower level, the sponsor coalition stepped in to take over some of the roles and responsibilities of the sponsor.

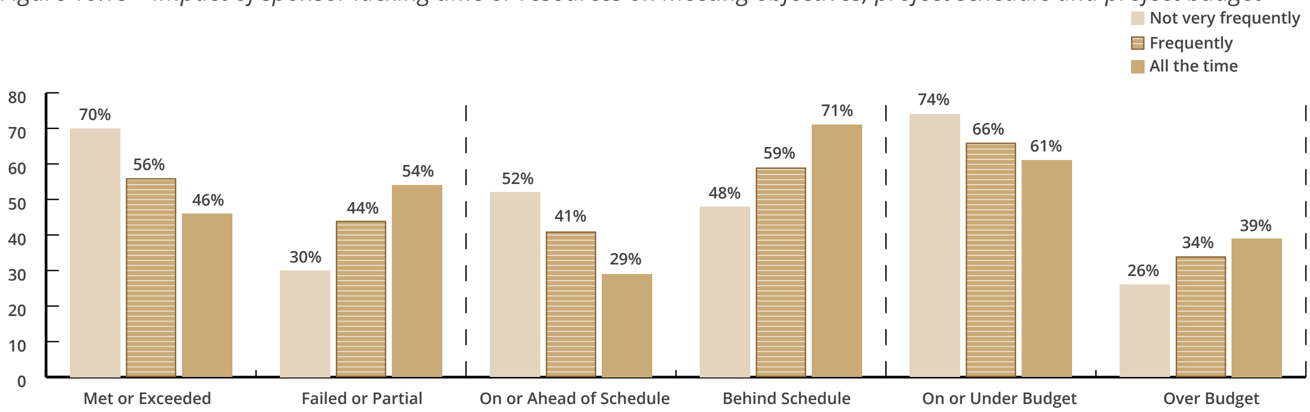
5. **Democratize the role of the sponsor**
   Participants equipped and enabled front-line managers to sponsor the change with their teams. They also actively sought out and created change influencers and change champions to unofficially sponsor the change. In some cases, participants enlisted the *"right hand"* of the original sponsor to become the unofficial sponsor of the change. In all these situations, no single person took on the role of primary sponsor. Instead there were many different *"micro"* and *"unofficial sponsors."* The original, wrong-level sponsor was either ignored or circumvented to make room for these sponsors.

While participants offered adaptions they were making or had made to overcome having a wrong-level sponsor, a significant number reported no available adaptations that could be made, and the best thing to do was endure the inevitable challenges that this kind of sponsor posed. While the project types and organizational cultures played a role in whether a participant could or could not adapt, this large number of respondents who were unable to adapt implies that having a sponsor at the wrong level can at times not be overcome. This highlights the importance of choosing the correct sponsor up front.

Sponsor Challenge – Lacked Time or Resources to Effectively Sponsor the Change

Source date: 2019

Figure 10.18 – Impact of sponsor lacking time or resources on meeting objectives, project schedule and project budget



Impact of Sponsor Lacking Time or Resources

Source date: 2019

Participants identified the impacts they encountered when their sponsor lacked time or resources to effectively sponsor the change.

1. **Project slows or stalls**
   Participants reported the project slowed or stalled completely. Sponsor time and willingness to attend meetings became the foundation that determined whether the project proceeded. The change manager lost the ability to set priorities and schedule communications or activities because each depended on input from the sponsor. The sponsor was not able to give timely input or consistently canceled meetings right before they were scheduled to begin. Further, sponsor inability or unwillingness to make time for the project was viewed as permission for their peers and direct reports to do the same.
   "If the sponsor cannot be involved due to time constraints then those below them will not make time."

2. **Project seen as unimportant by impacted groups**
   A sponsor's lack of time or resources led impacted groups to perceive the project as unimportant in two ways. First, the delays in deliverables due to sponsor inability to engage in a timely manner made change management activities seemed rushed and sloppy. Impacted groups were less willing to engage with these activities and began to view the change management effort as less valuable or inherently flawed. Conversely, if the sponsor was influential and well respected in the organization, their perceived lack of engagement in the project was viewed as tacit disapproval of the project and its importance to the organization.

3. **Project critical decisions and support was not made or given**
   When participant projects experienced problems that required timely and precise efforts from the sponsor to resolve them, the sponsor was unable to respond in a timely fashion. Sponsors who did not have time for the project did not go out of their way to make themselves available to the change manager, which meant these time-critical activities often went uncommunicated to the sponsor. In situations when the change manager was able to communicate the need for quick and decisive action, the sponsor downplayed the issue's impact to justify their lack of engagement in resolving it.

4. **Project communications became less impactful or failed**
   The sponsor did not provide the access necessary to ensure that communications went out in a timely manner or from the correct sender. Additionally, the sponsor was not able to personalize the communication enough to make a message drafted on their behalf seem like an authentic communication. Impacted groups saw such inauthentic communication as stale, and it lost impact. This often resulted in the need for more communication, the volume of which brought its own negative impacts.

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Adaptations Made When a Sponsor Lacks Time or Resources

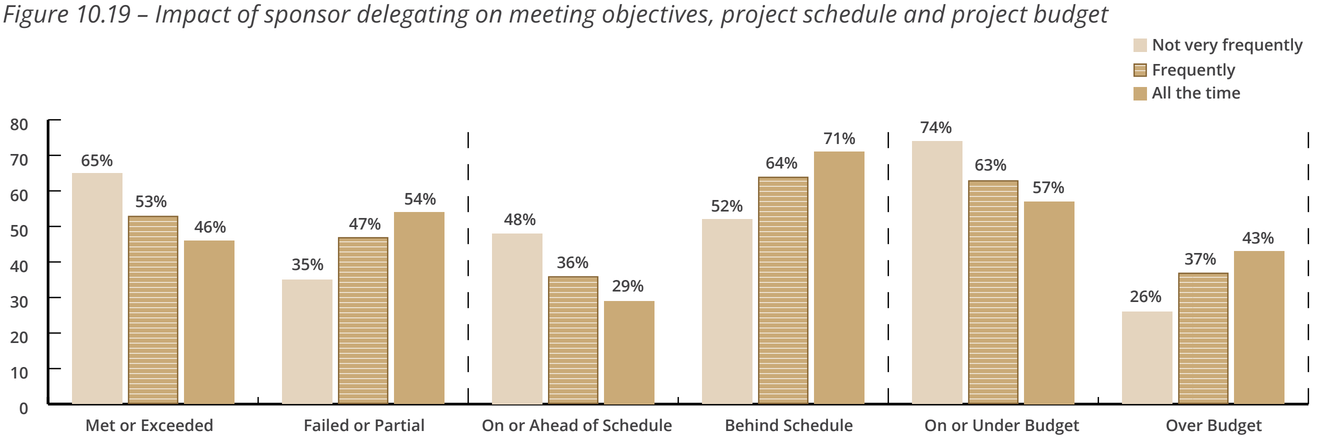
Participants reported on the adaptations that they made to overcome a sponsor who lacked time or resources to effectively sponsor the change.

1. **Create resources that make sponsoring the change easier**
   Resources included sponsor roadmaps, detailed project documentation, pre-crafted communications, *"decision trees"* and creating additional content for review or to communicate. The specific resources varied, but most were created for the sponsor and not at the sponsor's request, suggesting that participants also took a more active role in managing and directing their sponsor.
2. **Lean more on project resources**
   Project and change management teams took on more work to substitute for the sponsor lacking time to engage in their role effectively. Participants reported extending the time of the change management activities to make sure they *"stuck"* or were effective, which sometimes caused project delays. The sponsor was often still active in the project, with participants working to get as much value from the sponsor's time as possible and to use the sponsor on activities that were likely to have the most impact.
3. **Ensure the sponsor availability and commitment early**
   Once participants became aware of who would be sponsoring their project, they made a point to explicitly state the time and resource commitment required from the sponsor. By coordinating with the sponsor's limited schedule in advance, participants were able to organize and plan the most efficient use of sponsor time. The advanced preparation ensured availability and commitment from the sponsor to participate at the designated times. This early commitment was also useful for holding the sponsor accountable to the commitments made because they could not claim ignorance of what was required of them.
4. **Reserve the sponsors involvement for only project critical activities**
   Participants reported reserving the sponsor role on the project for high-level impacts or critical decisions only. Sponsors took on the role of a project *"fire-fighter,"* stepping in only at high-impact or project-critical moments. This severely diminished the impact the sponsor had throughout the project and often created more work for the change team; however, by reserving sponsor involvement, participants were able to keep projects moving forward and on track.

Sponsor Challenge – Delegated Their Role and Responsibilities to Someone Else

Source date: 2019

Figure 10.19 – Impact of sponsor delegating on meeting objectives, project schedule and project budget



Impact of Sponsor Delegating Their Role and Responsibilities

Source date: 2019

Participants identified impacts they encountered when their sponsor delegated their role and responsibilities to someone else (i.e., the delegate).

1. **Insufficient power and authority**
   The delegate did not have power or authority to impact the project in a meaningful way. This created more work for participants who could not rely on the sponsor's authority to keep the project moving, remove barrier points, or deal with resistant individuals. Lack of authority also caused others to see the change manager and change team as lacking authority, which increased the overall level of resistance to change.
2. **Imperfect Sponsorship**
   A nonideal delegate project sponsor was better for participants than having no sponsor. Acknowledging the challenges of delegate sponsorship, participants preferred the arrangement to working with a bad, ineffective, resistant or absent sponsor. Imperfect sponsorship was better than no or negative sponsorship in general.
3. **Decrease in commitment**
   When a sponsor delegated the role to someone else, a decreased commitment to the change resulted. In cases where delegating the sponsor role was a public occurrence, impacted groups that witnessed the sponsor effectively exiting the change also considered it an opportunity to disengage from the change. The change became unimportant and unworthy of the time and resources requested by the change manager to execute the change.
4. **Insufficient time dedicated to the project**
   Often the delegate did not have adequate time or capacity to sponsor the change effectively. The delegate was not available to participate in the change as robustly as needed and frequently favored other projects and priorities when deciding how much time and energy to give the change.
   "Unless the sponsor is actively following up on [the project] progress [the delegate] has other priorities and therefore the project doesn't get the attention it needs."

Adaptations Made When the Sponsor Delegated Their Role and Responsibilities

Source date: 2019

Participants reported adaptations they made when the sponsor delegated their role and responsibilities to someone else (i.e., the delegate). Some participants made no adaptations. Some adaptations did not work, and in some cases, no adaptations worked. The implication is that negative impacts of delegating cannot always be overcome.

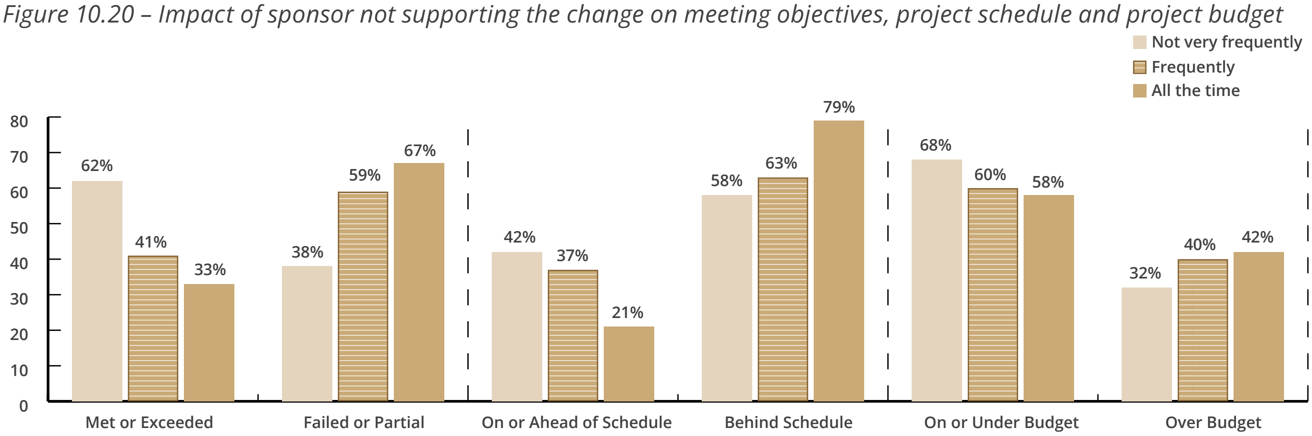
1. **Orchestrate handoff with previous sponsor**
   Participants spent time managing the handoff between the sponsor and delegate. When possible, participants used this opportunity to influence the delegate. If they were not able to influence the delegate, they generally focused on a few things. Ensuring that the sponsor empowered the delegate to make decisions, helped ensure that impacted groups were not getting mixed messages and the sponsor would not show up later to micromanage the project. A public handoff was used as a way of building support for the delegate by ensuring that the original sponsors communicated the importance of the project throughout the hand off.
2. **Prepare and support the delegate**
   Participants reported spending a good amount of time educating the delegate before they took over and supporting the delegate throughout the project. Education before the project focused on specifics that make the delegate feel more comfortable in the role and reinforce the project's importance. Support throughout the project comprised greatly of increased check-ins with the delegate, reinforcing the importance of the project, and documenting all aspects of the project.
3. **Take on more of the work**
   Either the participant or project management team had to take on more work in the project. Those who reported the need to take on more work viewed the delegate as ineffective or inefficient. Participants rarely took on sponsor-specific work and instead focused on greater reinforcement and efficient communication about the change. Bypassing the sponsor work, they tried to manage the change by emphasizing project importance, and the risks and consequences of failure.

4. **Increase communication at all levels**
Participants increased the amount and frequency of communications about the project. This reassured those involved that the effort to manage change was continuing and the change was still a priority for the original sponsor and the organization. These communications also increased project visibility with organizational leaders and executives. Visibility protected the change management team if the negative effects of delegation impacted the project and helped keep the original sponsor aware of and current with project progress in case they needed to step in again.

Sponsor Challenge – Did Not Support the Change

Source date: 2019

Figure 10.20 – Impact of sponsor not supporting the change on meeting objectives, project schedule and project budget



Impact of the Sponsor Not Supporting the Change

Source date: 2019

Participants reported on the impacts of the sponsor not supporting the change.

1. **No adoption and usage**
Having a sponsor who did not support the change resulted in low or no adoption and usage. Change management was ineffective without the sponsor's support, the initiative lacked budget and resources to effectively drive adoption and usage, the sponsor actively opposed and sabotaged the change, or the sponsor was unable to enroll other leaders to support the change.

2. **Change fails**
The project failed and was abandoned before the technical requirements were complete. The sponsor's lack of support for the change drained motivation and morale from working teams to the point where impacted groups start to exit, avoid meetings and ignore communications about the change. Some participants anticipated the project failure and exited or removed change management from the project ahead of the failure.

3. **Change not taken seriously**
The organization did not take the change seriously because the sponsor did not support it or actively undermined the change. Impacted groups did not feel they needed to engage with the project, thinking they could *"wait out the change"* and revert to previous approaches later. Leaders and executives who had originally supported the change became convinced that the change was not necessary or did not allocate the budget or resources originally assigned to it. *"[Impacted groups thought], 'If we wait this effort out, it will go back to the way things were before'… How can we create a believable [return on investment] on change management when our sponsors won't engage?"*

4. **No commitment**
Participants were unable to gain commitment from impacted groups for the change. Without a credible sponsor supporting the change, employees were not willing or convinced to participate in the project or change management activities. Other groups in the organization—those not directly impacted by the change but necessary for project success—were not committed to the change or willing to provide resources, budget, personnel or *"calendar space"* for the project to succeed.

Adaptations Made When the Sponsor Did Not Support the Change

Source date: 2019

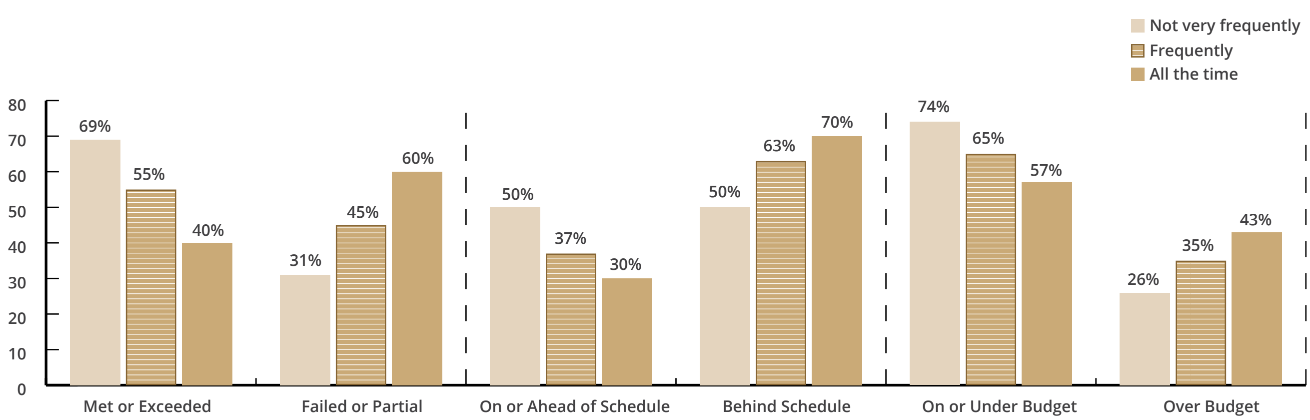
Participants identified adaptations they made when their sponsor did not support the change.

1. **Engage managers and supervisors**
   Participants made large and concerted efforts to engage managers and supervisors of impacted groups. Participants tasked managers and supervisors to take on some of the sponsorship role, such as communicating about the change, supporting the change, and addressing feedback about the change. Working to deploy the change within individual teams via managers and supervisors, instead of all impacted groups as they would have with a supportive sponsor, which reduced the change's scope to meet the adjusted level of sponsorship.
2. **Identify the risks of failed sponsorship**
   Participants worked to demonstrate the risks that poor or unsupportive sponsorship would have on the project to both the unsupportive sponsor and other senior leaders. The potential risks to the project, schedule or budget, was a persuasive tool used to convince the sponsor to actively support the change. If unsuccessful, the tactic was used with senior leaders in an attempt to get a replacement sponsor or additional change management project support. Participants reported mixed success.
3. **Educate, coach and persuade the sponsor**
   Participants stopped, stalled or delayed the project to work with the non-supportive sponsor. They coached the sponsor on the importance of the change, importance of their role as a sponsor in the change's success, and value and principles of change management. Believing they could educate or coach a sponsor into complete commitment for the change or at least an agreement to not actively oppose the change or offer "lip service" when speaking about it.
4. **Adjust various aspects of the project**
   In response to having an unsupportive sponsor, participants adjusted various aspects of their projects. Adjustments included: cutting back on project deliverables, extending the project timeline, adding or requesting more budget for additional *"what's in it for me"* (WIIFM) communications, and increasing the number of change champions or influencers on the project. In some cases, they completely removed change management and themselves from the project.

Sponsor Challenge – Underestimated or Misunderstood the People Side Impact of the Project

Source date: 2019

Figure 10.21 – Impact of sponsor underestimating the people side impact on meeting objectives, project schedule and project budget



Impact of Sponsor Underestimating or Misunderstanding the People Side Impacts

Source date: 2019

When the sponsor underestimated or misunderstood the people side impact of the project, project impacts varied.

1. **Undervaluing change management activities**
These sponsors were unwilling to step into their role as sponsors of the change. They had to be convinced that change management activities or communications were important, and they often pushed back, ignored, or worked around input from the change management team. Even sponsors who could be convinced of the value of change management underestimated the difficulty or amount of work required to manage change effectively. *"They oversimplify the change process – 'Let's just hit the easy button'."*

2. **Overly focused on technical aspects**
Sponsors focused too much on the technical implementation of the change. Sponsors tried to pull change management activities or meetings towards the technical execution of the change, or they spent most of their time working with the project team on technical issues. The change management team was rushed, forced to react to decisions made without their input, or saw their time and resources for change management activities diverted to the technical side of the project.

3. **Unable to secure necessary change management resources**
Sponsors were significantly less able to provide or secure access to the appropriate resources and budget for which participants relied on them. When their sponsor did not understand the value or impact of the people side of change, they were unwilling to provide this access, which kept projects from getting off the ground. Participants depended on sponsors to provide resources when unexpected events necessitated them. Sponsors that did not value the impact of the people side of change did not understand why more resources were required and would not intervene, forcing the change management team to execute the plan without the necessary resources or budget.

4. **Decreased adoption and return on investment for the project**
Upon project completion, lower levels of adoption and usage of the new solutions dramatically decreased the project's expected return on investment. Sponsors who underestimated or did not understand the impact that the people side of change can have on a project did not enable, or in some cases actively hindered, effective change management. This meant that projects requiring high levels of adoption or usage had no means to ensure that impacted groups adopted or used the change. This led to projects well-executed from a technical perspective, but which ultimately failed because impacted groups did not use the new solution or reverted to the old way of doing things.

Adaptations to Sponsor Underestimating or Misunderstanding the People Side Impacts

Source date: 2019

Participants reported on the adaptations they made when their sponsor underestimated or misunderstood the people side impact of the project. While several large adaptation themes arose from analysis, a significant portion of respondents did not make any adaptations to this sponsor challenge.

1. **Educate and coach sponsors on their role in change management**
Participants made intensive efforts to coach and educate the sponsor on their change management role. Participants created several resources, met with the sponsor as often as they could, ran extensive training and coaching sessions on sponsor roles and responsibilities, and attempted to get other leaders or executives to coach the sponsor in change management.

2. **Demonstrate the importance of the people side impact**
Active effort to demonstrate to the sponsor the importance of people side impacts on the project included highlighting the value of change management through examples of past failed changes due to ignoring the people side impact. Participants also gave sponsors insights about specific impacts employees experienced and attempted to provide visibility and transparency to the project to help the sponsor see the effect their sponsorship is having on the project.

3. **Demonstrate the importance with data and numbers**
Participants needed to speak to sponsors *"in a language they could understand."* This meant

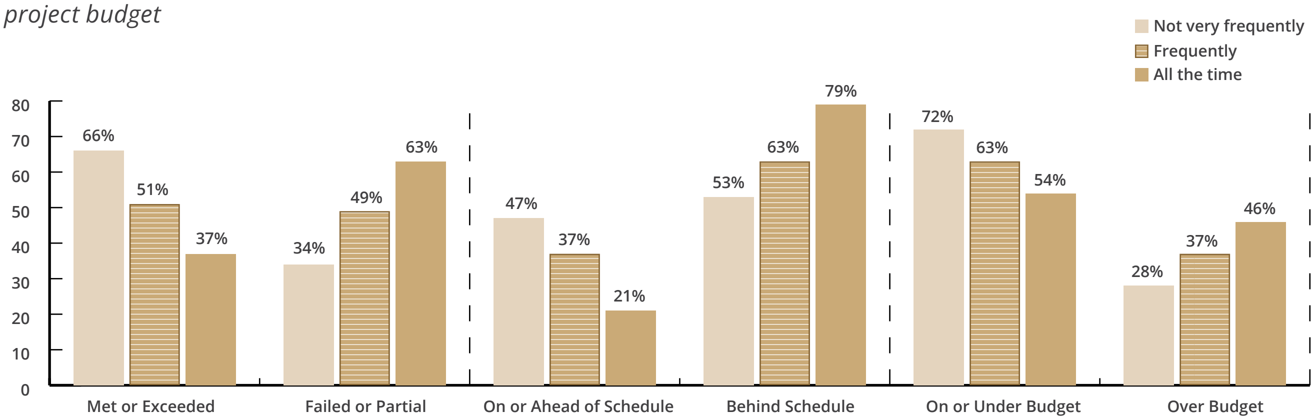
providing hard facts, quantitative data and case studies. All of this was done to get the sponsor to commit to the change. Participants explicitly called out Prosci tools and Prosci ADKAR® Model surveys or provided monetary data and projects as well as industry specific benchmarking reports to help the sponsor understand the importance of the people side impact on a project.

4. **Educate the sponsor on risks of project failure**
   Participants reported educating their sponsor on the risks of project failure and tended to focus on the organizational impacts of project failure. Some participants needed to demonstrate how low or no adoption and usage limits or prevents a return on project investments to the organization. They also attempted to show how project failure would reflect negatively on the sponsor.

Sponsor Challenge – Unwilling to Take on the Role and Activities Required of Them

Source date: 2019

Figure 10.22 – Impact of sponsor unwilling to take on the role and activities on meeting objectives, project schedule and project budget



Impact of a Sponsor Unwilling to Take on the Role and Activities

Source date: 2019

Participants identified the impacts of having a sponsor that was unwilling to take on the role and activities required of them.

1. **Project failed**
   The project failed because the sponsor did not drive adoption and usage. Impacted groups viewed the sponsor's unwillingness to take on the role of sponsor and engage with the project as a sign that the initiative was not valuable or necessary, which caused impacted groups to resist the project and its demands on them. In some cases, the resistance caused the project to lose momentum and stall permanently. In other cases, the solution was installed, but people did not utilize it, resulting in a lack of benefit realization by the organization.

2. **Project was slowed or delayed**
   The sponsor's unwillingness to take on the role made every aspect of the change management initiative take longer. With no clear sponsor, no one could effectively provide organizational direction, set clear expectations, articulate a *"why"* message for the change, or hold impacted groups accountable. Additionally, the sponsor did not provide or seek access to budget and resources when the project required them to do so. This also contributed to delays. *"The project was implemented almost 2 years later than it should have been, with little to no improvement in the business process."*

3. **Change management was less effective**
   The lack of sponsor support made change management activities and communications less effective. Change management was taken less seriously because there was no credible, influential sponsor promoting it to impacted groups, so it was frequently ignored or deprioritized. Ineffectiveness of change management contributed to lower adoption and usage.

 •

4. **Employees did not understand why the change was happening**
   Without a sponsor clearly articulating the business case for the change, impacted groups did not understand why the change was necessary and why it was happening to them. Participants attempted to provide answers and clarifications to the impacted groups, but they lacked the authority and credibility necessary. The inability to provide a convincing *"why"* left impacted groups feeling directionless or *"rudderless."* This created delays, a general slowdown of the project and increased attrition.
5. **Change and project management teams had to do more work**
   Having an unwilling sponsor required the change management team and project management team to absorb sponsor responsibilities. The change management team was forced to extend, double up on or redo change activities. The project team had to take on many sponsorship activities and communicate about the change to impacted groups. At times, this drove a wedge between the project team and the change management team because they had less time to work with and communicate with each other, which decreased project and change management team integration.

Adaptations Made When a Sponsor Was Unwilling to Take on the Role and Activities

Source date: 2019

Participants reported on the adaptations they made when their sponsor was unwilling to take on the role and activities required of them. A significant portion of participants reported being unable to make adaptations or that their adaptations failed, each leading to project failure.

1. **Engage, coach and educate the sponsor**
   Participants made concerted efforts to engage, educate and coach their sponsor to change their minds about sponsorship. These participants considered their sponsor's unwillingness to be a byproduct of misunderstanding what would be asked of them and the important role they played in project success. Participants believed that constantly meeting with and engaging the sponsor would make the sponsor more willing. However, few participants reported success with the approach.
2. **Rely on a robust network of change agents, champions and influencers**
   As with adaptations made with other sponsor challenges, participants leaned heavily on change networks when they had an unwilling sponsor. They convinced the network to do some of the heavy lifting of sponsorship, asking them to influence impacted groups and promote the change with them. Participants who utilized these networks tended to redistribute the sponsor role among many different groups of people rather than assign it to a single person or small group. Participants reported success in sponsoring the change this way but increased the burden on the change management team to provide and adapt necessary materials to a diverse group of pseudo-sponsors.
3. **Get a new sponsor**
   Participants replaced an unwilling sponsor with a new one. Some participants removed the sponsor from the project by documenting the issue and creating visibility for upper leadership into the sponsors unwillingness. Alternatively, participants worked with the unwilling sponsor to either exit the project quietly or appoint and empower a delegate in their place. Some participants acknowledged the difficulties of working with a delegate but preferred the challenges to working with an unwilling sponsor.
4. **Escalate to the sponsor's superior**
   Participants escalated to get the executive team to force the unwilling sponsor to take on the roles and activities of the project, remove the sponsor from the project, or find people above the sponsor who could influence them to take on some of the roles and activities.

Sponsor Activity Model

Source date: 2016

Participants described the most important sponsor activities for managing change. Data were broken into three major project phases: start-up (planning), design and implementation. Activities and steps were further categorized by target audiences:

- Project team
- Managers (including business leaders)
- Employees

Figure 10.23 is a 3 x 3 diagram that illustrates responsibilities of the sponsor during each project phase (start-up, design and implementation). Activities required for each box are described on the following pages.

Note: The labels for each box in Figure 10.23 are intended to be general descriptions for the category and are not intended to stand alone from the activity lists in Tables 10.24, 10.25 and 10.26.

Editor's note: The Sponsor Activity Model shown in Figure 10.23 was developed in 2003 and now includes data from the 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011 reports to create a comprehensive view of sponsor activities across multiple studies.

Figure 10.23 – Sponsor activity model

	Project Team	**Managers**	**Employees**
Start-up	Acquire project resources	Build management support	Create awareness
Design	Provide direct support	Develop sponsorship	Educate
Implementation	Maintain momentum	Align leadership and manage resistance	Reinforce and reward

	Project Team	Managers	Employees
Start-up	Acquire project resources	Build management support	Create awareness
Design	Provide direct support	Develop sponsorship	Educate
Implementation	Maintain momentum	Align leadership and manage resistance	Reinforce and reward

Table 10.24 – Sponsor start-up activities

	With the Project Team: Acquire Project Resources	**With Managers:** Build Management Support	**With Employees:** Create Awareness
Start-up	• Select the best project leader and team members; include resources with change management expertise • Provide necessary funding for the team, including training for all team members on change management • Set priorities related to daily work versus project work to allow adequate team member participation • Help the team understand critical business issues or opportunities that must be addressed • Provide clear direction and objectives for the project; describe what success will look like • Jointly develop a high-level view of the future and link change to the business strategy • Be directly involved with the project team; set expectations; review key deliverables and remove obstacles • Take ownership for success of the project and hold the team accountable for results • Establish a commitment to change management; talk about change management and ensure required roles are filled	• Enlist the support of executive managers and create a support network (coalition of managers needed to support change) • Create a steering committee of key managers to monitor progress (depends on project size) • Educate senior managers about the business drivers of change and the risks of not changing • Work directly with managers who show early signs of resistance • Create change advocates within the leadership team; build support and enthusiasm for change • Provide training on change management for senior managers • Establish change activities that the leadership group is responsible for completing • Define accountabilities for mid-level managers • Determine and communicate priorities between this change and other change initiatives • Resolve conflicting operational objectives with other senior leaders • Solicit and listen to management feedback • Connect project to the organization's strategy and goals	• Describe the current state of the business and share business issues or opportunities • Explain why a change is needed now; share the risks of not changing • Share a vision for the future; explain the nature of the change and show how change will address business problems or opportunities • Answer *"How will this change affect me?"* and *"What's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) • Be proactive, vocal and visible; communicate frequently, including face-to-face conversations • Listen and be open to dialogue and resistance • Tell employees what they can expect to happen and when • Understand the organizational culture and beliefs • Repeat key messages • Share plans with customers and suppliers • Show project milestones and provide progress updates • Communicate clearly and honestly about aspects of the project that are still unknown

	Project Team	Managers	Employees
Start-up	Acquire project resources	Build management support	Create awareness
Design	Provide direct support	Develop sponsorship	Educate
Implementation	Maintain momentum	Align leadership and manage resistance	Reinforce and reward

Table 10.25 – Sponsor design activities

	With the Project Team: Provide Direct Support	**With Managers:** Develop Sponsorship	**With Employees:** Educate
Design	• Stay involved: attend key project meetings, review project status and hold the team accountable for results • Provide necessary resources and funding, including ensuring that the right people are made available to support the design work • Be accessible to the team; be a sounding board; provide ideas and constructive criticism to the team; ask *"What if?"* • Remove roadblocks; make timely decisions on project issues and help manage conflicts and political issues • Communicate expectations and feedback from other managers • Keep the team on track and manage *"scope creep"* • Reward success and achievements • Take the time to understand the solution • Identify conflicts with other projects that might impact this team • Make sure the project team knows that your door is open and you are available to support their work • Play a role in all critical decisions	• Continue to build support and sponsorship among senior managers; reinforce key messages; resolve differences in perception; address areas of resistance • Let senior managers know how they can support change; provide them with a clear roadmap for sponsoring change with their direct reports • Conduct steering committee meetings; keep managers informed; use this forum to resolve critical issues • Use public and private conversations to reinforce leadership support; recognize outstanding managers • Communicate project progress to all executive managers • Hold mid-level managers accountable • Do not tolerate resistance from mid-level managers or allow managers to opt out of change; be clear on expectations • Ensure that a consistent message is being sent by managers to impacted employees	• Communicate frequently with employees; make your personal commitment visible, including face-to-face conversations • Reinforce the reason for change, the risk of not changing and evolving details about the future state • Show employees how the change aligns with the direction and strategy of the business • Answer *"What will this change mean to me?"* • Listen to what employees have to say; take the pulse of the organization and collect feedback • Share project progress and provide updates regularly; update employees on *"what you can expect to happen and when"* • Enable employee participation and involvement • Recognize good work employees have done • Involve customers and suppliers • Ensure adequate time is allocated for training and skill-building prior to implementation

	Project Team	Managers	Employees
Start-up	Acquire project resources	Build management support	Create awareness
Design	Provide direct support	Develop sponsorship	Educate
Implementation	Maintain momentum	Align leadership and manage resistance	Reinforce and reward

Table 10.26 – Sponsor implementation activities

	With the Project Team: Maintain Momentum	**With Managers:** Align Leadership and Manage Resistance	**With Employees:** Reinforce and Reward
Implementation	• Secure resources necessary for implementation • Stay engaged with the team: attend meetings, reward successes, hold them accountable for results and build enthusiasm • Remove roadblocks and help the team overcome obstacles • Stay on course; avoid shifting priorities too early • Attend frequent project status meetings and track progress • Resolve issues and conflicts; respond to escalation	• Continue to meet in public and private with business leaders and senior managers; align sponsorship; provide progress updates; resolve issues • Communicate expectations to senior managers for their support of change; provide activities they can do and messages they can communicate to the organization • Manage resistance from middle managers; correct or remove managers who will not support change • Model change through personal examples and hands-on involvement • Stay involved throughout the entire project; stay visible • Hold managers accountable for support	• Reinforce key messages; align business strategy with project objectives; increase personal communications • Reinforce why change is being made and the risk of not changing (some employees might be ready to hear this message only when change is near implementation) • Listen to employees and encourage feedback; be willing to answer tough questions • Set expectations for employees; clearly communicate consequences of not changing • Identify with the additional work and difficulties that might be experienced during implementation • Enforce application of new processes and behaviors • Look for quick wins; share successes and build enthusiasm for change • Celebrate success stories in person; be present and visible • Acknowledge challenges and obstacles honestly

3

Chapter 11

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors Legitimize Changes Impacting Teams They Lead

Summary

Managers and supervisors play a key role in producing change outcomes. Employees look to their manager for overt instructions and subtle cues about how a coming change will impact them. Leveraging the power and influence of managers to support team members through their individual change will ultimately increase adoption and improve the outcomes of your change project. Best practices data in this chapter defines what people managers must do to effectively lead their team during times of change. Learn tactics for engaging and enabling managers to be successful leaders of change.

Highlight

Only 35% of participants indicated that they adequately prepared managers and supervisors for their role in change.

Most Critical Roles for Managers and Supervisors During Change

Source date: 2019

Participants identified the most critical roles for managers and supervisors during change.

1. **Advocate and champion for change**
   Active, visible advocacy and adoption greatly impacted change success. Managers needed to understand the reasons for change and their role as influencer, which meant creating a supportive environment that is accepting of change. Managers needed to lead by example by attending training and project events and speaking positively about change to encourage engagement. *"They need to be siding with the sponsor's vision and support the change process. They are [on the] front line and should show by example."*

2. **Communicate actively and openly**
   Managers needed to understand and openly communicate the change's purpose, expectations and goals, and the anticipated impact at both the organizational and individual levels. For efficient change management, employees required a consistent line of communication from leadership and direct managers, as well as updates on when and how the change was expected to occur. Prior to the change, managers needed to answer, *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) and explain organizational benefits. Participants indicated the importance of open, honest and two-way communication as critical success factors in executing the change.

3. **Coach and support employees through change**
   Managers needed to be available for coaching and answering questions throughout the change process. Listening to employee concerns and being empathetic to those affected by the change was highly important to supporting employees and encouraging acceptance of change. Managers needed to educate employees on appropriate behaviors during the change. Managers also needed to be prepared and able to remove barriers and handle conflicts while identifying corrective actions. Recognizing and rewarding success was also important to maintaining a positive and supportive environment in which employees could engage with change.

4. **Engage and liaise with the project team**
   Proactive manager engagement and input to the research and planning phases of change were critical to incorporating employee needs and feedback in the solution. Developing a transparent relationship with the project team enabled trust and support from employees. It was critical to positioning managers as a direct point of contact between leadership and employees. Doing so enabled leaders to communicate key project team milestones to employees and notice areas where employees need additional support during the change process.

5. **Identify and manage resistance**
   Manager roles involved leveraging their position to identify, report and manage resistance. This included anticipating and removing barriers, understanding the cause of resistance, and having honest conversations with employees to demonstrate transparency and encourage participation in the change.

Most Common Mistakes for Managers and Supervisors

Source date: 2016

Participants identified some of the biggest mistakes managers and supervisors make when managing change.

1. **Role abdication**
   Either intentionally or as a result of a lack of understanding, managers abdicated their roles during change or did not take responsibility for change.

   - **Not accepting responsibility**
     The largest factor was supervisors not understanding their role as change champions. They often saw change management duties as extra work and not a normal function of their role, but rather the role of a change manager or project team.

   - **Ignoring change**
     Managers felt they could ignore or hide from change and focus on business as usual, adopting the mindset that the change would either go away or happen on its own regardless of their efforts.

- **Not seeking better understanding**
  One of the most common mistakes participants pointed out was managers not seeking to understand the change and its impact – operating in ignorance. They struggled to ask for support during change management and did not acknowledge their personal journeys through change.

2. **Communication mistakes**
   Many participants stated that managers felt that a single communication was sufficient and communicated to rather than with employees. Instead of admitting their own knowledge gaps, managers would communicate what they knew at the time causing communications to be late or inaccurate. Supervisors often did not understand how to filter messages appropriately, or what messages to filter, often oversharing or adding personal bias.

3. **Failing to support staff**
   Many managers felt that employees would change if told to do so and did not need additional support. This led to unrealistic expectations because supervisors did not acknowledge that individuals accept change at different paces. Supervisors also struggled to manage resistance appropriately due to fear, empathy or a general misunderstanding of the root cause of resistance. Supervisors got caught up in their own journeys and how the change impacted them, keeping them from addressing their teams' needs.

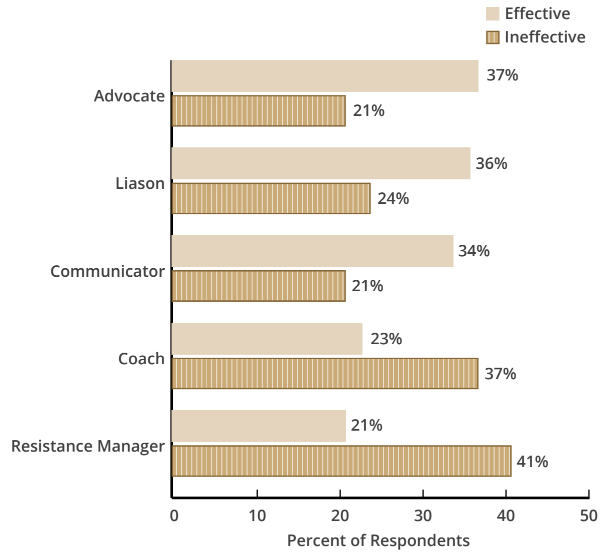
4. **Ill prepared**
   Managers underestimated the impact change had on their teams or overestimated their teams' ability to handle change. Either due to false assumptions about change or not knowing how to prioritize change among daily operations, supervisors were ill prepared when it was time for change.

5. **Resisting the change**
   Participants reported that supervisors often would talk the talk but not walk the walk. Managers would take sides, usually with their direct reports, causing us-versus-them mentalities.

Role Fulfillment by Managers and Supervisors

Participants rated the effectiveness of their organization's managers and supervisors in the five change management roles of a manager identified in previous studies: communicator, advocate, coach, resistance manager and liaison (Figure 11.1). Managers and supervisors were more effective than ineffective at being communicators, advocates and liaisons.

Figure 11.1 – Effectiveness of managers and supervisors in roles



Editor's note: 'Somewhat effective' responses are not represented in the graph.

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Table 11.2 shows that participants most commonly viewed managers and supervisors as somewhat effective with communicating, advocating and liaising.

Table 11.2 – Manager role fulfillment

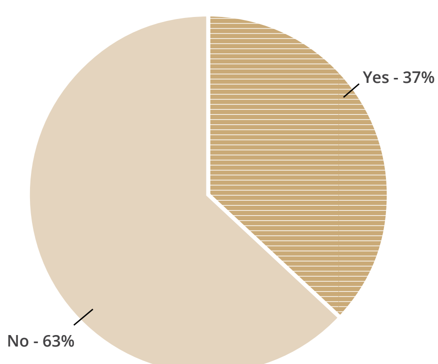
	Communicator	Advocate	Coach	Resistance Manager	Liaison
Extremely Effective	5%	7%	4%	3%	7%
Effective	29%	30%	19%	18%	29%
Somewhat Effective	45%	42%	39%	38%	41%
Ineffective	17%	17%	30%	32%	19%
Extremely Ineffective	4%	4%	7%	9%	5%

Evaluating Manager and Supervisor Change Management Role Fulfillment

Source date: 2019

Thirty-seven percent of participants in the 2019 study reported formally evaluating manager and supervisor effectiveness (Figure 11.3).

Figure 11.3 – Formally evaluated manager and supervisor role effectiveness

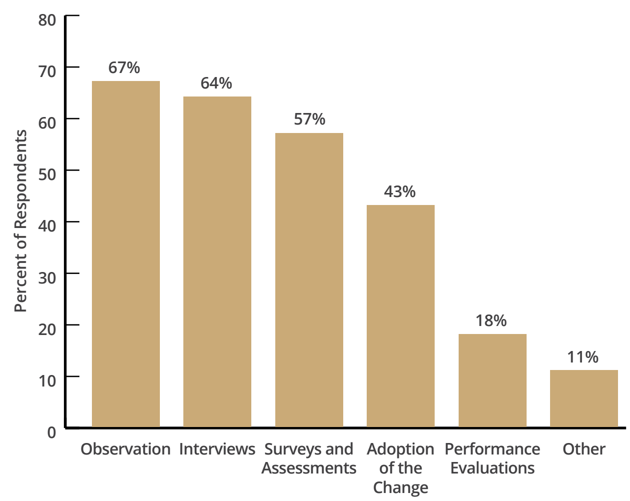


Methods to Evaluate Manager and Supervisor Change Management Role Fulfillment

Source date: 2016

Participants who measured manager and supervisor role effectiveness identified the methods they used. Observation (67%), interviews (64%), and surveys and assessments (57%) were the most common responses (Figure 11.4).

Figure 11.4 – Techniques to evaluate manager and supervisor role effectiveness



Editor's note: Participants were able to select multiple responses, resulting in a total of more than 100%.

Largest Skill, Competency or Tool Gap

Source date: 2016

Participants identified the largest gaps in skill, competency or use of tools that prevented managers from being great leaders of change with direct reports. Five prominent gaps were identified.

1. **Communication skills**
   Effective communication was cited as the top shortcoming at the manager level. Managers struggled with knowing when, how and what to communicate. Identifying appropriate communication channels, having the ability to speak face-to-face confidently, and tailoring messages for audiences were notable responses.
2. **Lack of change management training**
   Lack of training in change management was the second most frequently identified gap. Training ideally includes focus on theory, principles, supporting tools, models and application. Managers were described as unaware of the nature of change management and its applications. Participants also recommended consistency in the selected methodology, stating that managers should be trained in the framework being applied on a project to allow effective collaboration between roles.
3. **Time management and saturation**
   Participants identified challenges with competing priorities and change saturation. Time management skills and the ability to prioritize change management were key skills, a lack of which inhibited a manager's ability to lead change. Participants reported that managers frequently claimed to be too busy or overworked and often underestimated the time needed by employees during rollout.
4. **Understanding the role of a manager during change**
   Managers frequently viewed change management as an activity performed by others and did not understand its impact on their role with direct reports. Managers struggled to engage with change management practices and did not take responsibility for their role in leading change.
5. **Buy-in for change**
   Participants identified a lack of buy-in and commitment for change and a lack of information as gaps for managers when leading change with direct reports. Managers were unaware of the business reasons for change and lacked understanding of the nature of the change, the impact to their team and the definition of success.

Other gaps included:

- **Resistance management**
  Managers lacked the ability to identify and manage resistance to change and often avoided conflict.
- **Coaching skills**
  Managers lacked the ability to recognize individual barriers or observe actions and to deliver constructive coaching.
- **Leadership skills**
  Participants identified lack of leadership, strategy, vision and influence as skill gaps at the manager level.
- **Change management buy-in**
  Participants identified managers as lacking buy-in for the discipline of change management.
- **Lack of sponsorship from senior leaders**
  Executive sponsorship for change management was missing, and senior leaders often did not account for the time and effort required to get managers on board and able to fulfill their roles.

Managing Resistance

Source date: 2011

Eighty-nine percent of participants in the 2015 study were ineffective or somewhat effective at managing employee resistance.

Participants from the 2011 study identified steps taken to help managers and supervisors become better at managing resistance. The top six steps were:

1. **Training on resistance management**
   Training that focused on managing resistance was provided to managers and supervisors. Training included targeted tactics in resistance management, identifying resistance, and overcoming individual resistance. Additional training topics included human reactions and behavioral aspects of change.

2. **Change management training that included resistance management**
   Change management training was provided to managers and supervisors that included components on resistance management. Change management training varied in focus, including comprehensive change management courses, lessons targeted at leading personal change and sessions educating participants about roles and expectations during change.
3. **Provide toolkits and templates focused on resistance management**
   Participants provided managers with tools and templates to assist with resistance management. Commonly noted tools included best practices, case studies, shared success stories, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and toolkits for managing resistance.
4. **Solicit feedback to understand resistance further**
   Soliciting feedback from employees to identify and understand resistance helped managers and supervisors become more effective at managing resistance. Multiple feedback channels were identified including forums, focus groups, surveys, involvement in design phases, direct feedback from prime resisters, and historical reactions to change.
5. **Providing information, briefings and messaging about change**
   Providing information, briefings and messaging about change to managers and supervisors helped them preemptively identify possible resistance and answer resisters' queries in a prepared, coherent and consistent manner.
6. **Increased communication**
   Participants modified communication plans to increase communication. Proactive communication tailored to stakeholder groups and addressing possible objections was emphasized. Several participants noted training for managers and supervisors on communication.

Coaching

Source date: 2011

Eighty-eight percent of participants in the 2015 study indicated that managers and supervisors were not effective or only somewhat effective at coaching employees through personal transitions.

Participants in the 2011 study identified specific steps taken to help managers and supervisors become more effective at coaching employees through the personal transitions associated with change. The top five activities identified were:

1. **Training on coaching**
   Participants provided managers and supervisors with training specifically focused on coaching employees through the change process. Training programs varied from group workshops to individual training.
2. **General training in various competencies that included coaching**
   Managers and supervisors received some instruction on coaching during workshops and training for other competencies.
3. **Coaching tools and templates**
   Participants provided managers and supervisors with tools and templates specific to coaching for reference. Common tools cited included toolkits, best practices, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), shared successes and experiences with coaching.
4. **Feedback to target coaching activities**
   Participants utilized feedback collected from surveys, forums, performance reviews and informal channels to identify where coaching efforts were needed. This focused support and aided managers and supervisors in coaching their direct reports.
5. **Complete and timely information**
   To enable effective coaching, participants presented managers and supervisors with comprehensive information about the change. Information addressed why the change was needed, descriptions of the change, impact on employees, expectations of employees, goals, schedule, benefits and possible challenges. Talking point documents and communication aids ensured consistent messaging.

Tactics for Ensuring Managers Spent Adequate Time Managing Change

Source date: 2015

Managers and supervisors are often already busy with daily responsibilities. Participants identified tactics employed to ensure managers and supervisors dedicated adequate time to managing change with employees.

1. **Support structured communications**
   Structured communications was reported two times more frequently than the other tactics listed below. Participants identified structured communications to include multiple communication avenues with high frequency, facilitating open discussions and one-on-one contact. Additionally, participants reported creating communication plans for managers that allowed for two-way feedback.
2. **Integrate change management into existing activities**
   Change management was built into the project plan and project management reporting structures. Change management messages were added to daily briefings. Existing lunch-and-learns and meetings were used to address change topics. Change managers acted as liaisons at meetings and events that focused on a variety of topics not specific to change management.
3. **Schedule meetings**
   Participants held change management-specific meetings or briefings to keep managers and supervisors updated and informed about change. Participants used various channels to report the progress of a change initiative and address change management concepts, including webinars, focus groups, town halls and teleconferences.
4. **Provide training**
   Training was provided and workshops were delivered that focused on specific changes, change management concepts, and the roles of managers and supervisors during change. Engagement sessions built awareness of change and got managers and supervisors involved.
5. **Involve other roles to champion change**
   Participants used sponsors to communicate the importance of change to managers and supervisors and advocate actively and visibly. The organization's change agents and change champions were leveraged, and a change leader was assigned to lead managers and supervisors.
6. **Administer tools**
   Managers and supervisors were provided tools to use with employees including talking points about change, toolkits, checklists, research findings and resistance management plans.
7. **Provide coaching**
   Coaching sessions, monitoring, mentoring, continued support and encouragement were provided to managers and supervisors throughout change.

Participants also emphasized building awareness of the need for change and the importance of managers' roles during change. Other tactics included clearly defining roles, getting early and active engagement, measuring performance and tying change management to managers' objectives.

Steps to Get Managers and Supervisors on Board With Change

Source date: 2013

Participants identified the following steps that were taken to get managers and supervisors on board with change so they could engage their direct reports.

1. **Emphasize communications**
   The most common step was creating structured, targeted and frequent communications about change and managers' roles during change. Participants engaged in face-to-face communications and reinforced messages with managers. Participants also created opportunities for managers and supervisors to give feedback.
2. **Hold meetings**
   Participants involved managers and supervisors in one-on-one meetings, team meetings, alignment sessions, briefings, town halls and web meetings. Participants also noted the value of having a project or change management leader attend regularly scheduled meetings for managers and supervisors.

3. **Focus on awareness**
Information was provided to managers and supervisors to address how change would affect them and the business reasons for the change including risks of not changing. Awareness of the importance of change management and the manager's roles were also addressed.

4. **Provide materials, tools and support**
Managers and supervisors were provided with adequate tools to understand and navigate change including talking points, toolkits, action plans and key message outlines. Continued support was also provided to managers and supervisors.

5. **Engage managers**
Engaging managers during early phases of a project got managers on board with change. Holding engagement sessions was one tactic for doing so.

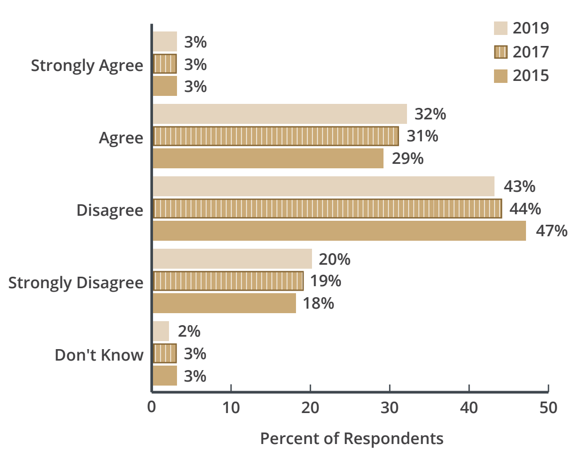
Other steps participants identified included delivering training and workshops, providing coaching, sharing project updates, leveraging sponsorship, clearly defining roles, using surveys and assessments, and leveraging change agents and change champions.

Preparation

Source date: 2019

Participants evaluated the following statement on a strongly agree to strongly disagree scale: *"My organization adequately prepares managers/supervisors with the skills, training and tools they need to lead during change."* In 2019, 63% of participants either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (Figure 11.5).

Figure 11.5 – Adequately prepared managers and supervisors



Editor's note: in 2019 the "Unsure" option was changed to *"Don't Know"*.

How to Support Managers and Supervisors During Change

Source date: 2009

Participants from the 2009 study offered a variety of suggestions on how to support managers and supervisors during change.

1. **Designate coaches, mentors and experts**
Designate a change champion or change team to coach and mentor managers. These subject matter experts provide expertise and moral support while working through issues with managers. Some organizations established a help desk to put managers in touch with resources quickly.

2. **Schedule communication**
Engage in constant dialogue and daily face-to-face communications with managers.

3. **Provide tools**
Provide tools for managers and supervisors to use while rolling out change including media kits, job aids, talking points, communication scripts, change management articles, case studies, reference materials and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

4. **Share employee feedback**
Collect information related to change from employees through electronic or paper surveys, and share feedback with managers and supervisors.

5. **Provide continuous updates**
Share progress updates. Keep managers and supervisors updated and recognize when milestones have been achieved.

Other tactics to support managers and supervisors included:

- Offering formal change management training
- Creating awareness for change among all departments
- Conducting process/technology training
- Setting goals

Additional Learning Opportunities

Source date: 2009

In addition to formal classroom training, participants offered the following approaches for building change management skills and knowledge with managers and supervisors:

1. **One-on-one discussions and coaching**
   These sessions provided safe interactions to help managers and supervisors lead change with direct reports. Participants mentioned peer coaching, mentoring by senior leaders, and support from change management specialists as useful skill-building methods.
2. **Formal and regular communications**
   One-to-many communications included emails, pamphlets, newsletters, bulletin boards and electronic forum messages.
3. **Meetings**
   In some cases, change management was added as an agenda item to normal meetings. Meetings focusing on change management included short presentations, road shows, lunch-and-learn opportunities, and forums covering a change management issue.
4. **Workshops and seminars**
   The most effective sessions were interactive, and included problem solving, Question and Answer (Q&A) facilitation and role playing.
5. **Tools**
   Managers and supervisors were provided tip sheets, quick reference guides, workbooks and toolkits to support change management.
6. **Articles and books**
   Managers and supervisors were provided additional literature on leading change.

Content addressed in these additional training methods included:

- Roles and responsibilities of a manager or supervisor to support change management
- Project-related information including details of the project plan, business case, key messages for communications and progress updates
- Stories and experiences including success stories from previous changes and examples of issues or concerns from the current change.

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Chapter 12

Change Agent Network

Extend Project Support and Build Credibility Through an Engaged Group of Advocates

Summary

Change Agent Networks are becoming an increasingly used mechanism for building momentum and broad support for change. This chapter builds structure behind the concept by asking change professionals how they define Change Agent Networks and are leveraging these advocates across their organizations. Increase your change success by applying best practices for building a Change Agent Network and enable it to effectively support your project.

Highlight

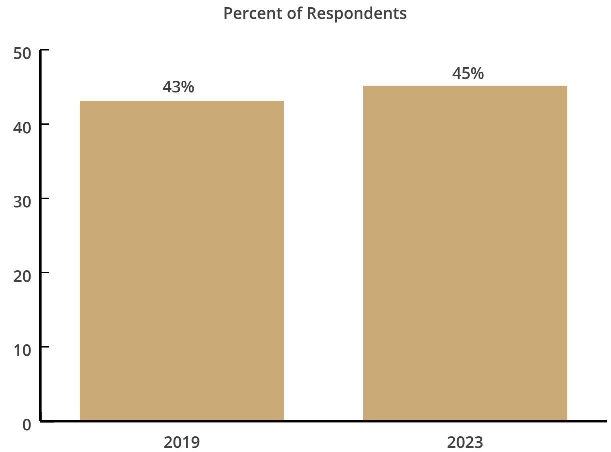
45% of participants leveraged a Change Agent Network and provided insights on the definition, construction, rationale and expectations of these networks.


Visible Sponsor
- MBWA
- Host Meetings
- Videos on Portal
- Open Office Hours
- Project Meetings
- Spirit Week
NOTEBOOK

Change Agent Network

Participants in the 2023 study indicated whether they leveraged formal change agent networks to support change implementation in their organizations (Figure 12.1).

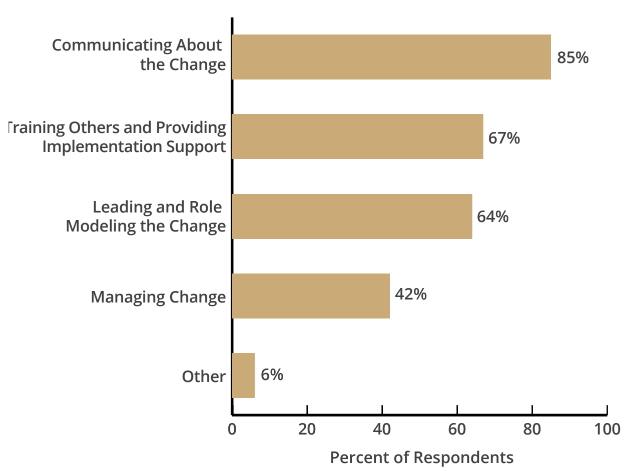
Figure 12.1 – Leveraged a change agent network



Change Agent Network Roles

Participants in the 2023 study indicated the roles and responsibilities of the change agent network (Figure 12.2). More than half of participants reported that their change agent networks were responsible for communicating about the change, training others, and leading and role modeling the change.

Figure 12.2 – Change agent network roles and responsibilities



Editor's note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because participants were able to select multiple options when answering this question in the survey.

Definition

Source date: 2016

For the first time, participants described how they define a change agent network. The top four responses were:

1. **Body of change champions**
   Participants defined change agent networks as a body of change champions who are formally trained in change management methodologies. These people acted as liaisons between the project and business. These individuals were placed locally on the project team or in strategic positions within the organization to provide support and awareness of change.
2. **Impacted individuals**
   Participants defined change agent networks as comprised of individuals who were impacted first by the change. These individuals usually held positions as either managers or local agents and were impacted directly by change.
3. **Hierarchy structure**
   A hierarchy structure of individuals across multiple levels of the organization made up change agent networks. This system ensured alignment and consistency of change objectives.
4. **Influential leaders**
   A number of participants expressed that their change agent networks constituted groups of leaders who influenced and drove change. By providing guidance and direction, leaders with influence set an example of the importance of change.

Less frequent responses included:

- Change agent networks were defined by the project and changed for each project
- Respondents used a virtual platform that members accessed as a more literal change agent network
- Users stated they took advantage of and built off existing networks

Reasons to Use a Change Agent Network

Source date: 2016

Participants identified the reasons for using a change agent network. The most frequent responses were:

1. **Extend project support**
   The primary response was to provide additional support to the project, often from peers, which expedited change with fewer obstacles and greater focus.
2. **Use resources efficiently**
   By using change agent networks, participants readily allocated resources to necessary points of need. A large portion of participants indicated that they were also able to extend the scope and reach of change to geographical regions across organizations.
3. **Enhance communication**
   Change agent networks allowed participants to increase the flow of information across the organization. Barriers to communication were reduced because leaders and impacted employees had a more direct line to one another.
4. **Align consistent objectives**
   A number of participants expressed that the purpose of their change agent network was to align change objectives with various levels of the organization and ensure consistency among impacted individuals.
5. **Increase knowledge**
   Individuals expanded their skills and tools with a change agent network. Participants stated that they could exchange ideas and experiences which allowed increased growth of change abilities.
6. **Build credibility**
   Credibility of the project was enhanced through change agent networks because impacted employees trusted their peers.
7. **Boost ownership**
   Participants also used a change agent network to increase ownership because impacted individuals felt more connected with and united to the change.

Building a Change Agent Network

Source date: 2016

The majority of participants indicated that they strategically selected impacted and influential individuals for change agent network positions when asked how they constructed their change agent networks. The top responses were:

1. **Strategic selection**
   Over half of respondents stated that they formed change agent networks by leveraging individuals within impacted business areas using a formal approach. Leaders commonly nominated influential individuals as ideal change agents.
2. **Change management activities and exercises**
   Change activities, such as education, training and constant communication, were common responses for how to build change agent networks. Participants emphasized the usefulness of frequent meetings to ensure alignment with change practices.
3. **Organic growth**
   Change agent networks were created through natural business growth. Themes in this category included growing the network with preexisting networks, personal networking and ordinary business operations.
4. **Individual self-selection**
   Participants built change agent networks by using informal strategies to identify influential individuals. Volunteers and communities of employees who shared an interest in change objectives constituted informal change agent structures.
5. **Virtual platforms**
   Participants built change agent networks through virtual platforms which included training, content sharing and community building.

Criteria for Selecting Members of a Change Agent Network

Source date: 2016

Participants provided the criteria they used to select members for change agent networks.

1. **Willingness**
   Willingness to participate in and to promote change through the change agent network was a common theme. Participants identified the need to find those who wanted to be part of the change on a change-agent level, because change agents have a lot of potential impact on change and could cause damage through lack of support if they did not.
2. **Credibility**
   Members of a change agent network should be credible, respected and influential within the organization. Participants felt that change agents should be limited to those who could positively impact the outcome of the change and not those who were simply passionate about change.
3. **Knowledgeable**
   Participants reported that change was complex enough to require a leader familiar with the inner workings of the organization. Agents needed to be experienced in change. Participants recommended certification in change management for change agents.
4. **Nominated**
   Participants reported that they often did not know who in the organization met their criteria to become members of a change agent network. Therefore, participants asked for and took nominations from impacted groups on who would be a good member of the change agent network; they provided criteria for selection but left it up to stakeholders to identify the individuals.

Change Agent Network Roles

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study identified the roles played by a change agent network. Analysis revealed four primary roles.

1. **Communication role**
   The role most commonly identified by respondents was communication liaison. Members of the change agent network were used to disseminate communications to their respective departments, sites or regions to share information about the change project with a greater audience and provide various forms of feedback to the change project team, such as employee concerns.
2. **Leadership role**
   Respondents frequently identified various leadership roles for the change agent network. Examples included acting as the change leader for their department or region, coordinating regular meetings, leading events, acting as a role model for change in terms of adoption and use, and promoting change internally by acting as change champions and selling the change.
3. **Training and support roles**
   Participants identified training and support roles as important for the change agent network. These were similar to leadership roles in that members of the change agent network guided others through the change, but these roles dealt with training others and providing support for implementing change. Examples included piloting training programs and techniques, coaching other change leaders or supervisors, managing change from the business side, and deciding on strategies appropriate for the organization.
4. **Managing change internally**
   Participants identified roles change agent networks played to assist the change management team with managing change internally. Examples included conducting impact and change readiness assessments, identifying and managing resistance, and tracking and reinforcing adoption. Respondents reported that members of the change agent network were held *"accountable for adoption within their organization."*

Expectations of the Change Agent Network

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study identified expectations they held for change agent networks. Participants highlighted the following five expectations most frequently.

1. **Advocate for and represent the change**
   Participants stated that change agent network members were informal representatives for the change in their areas. The network was intended to champion change, increase buy-in and adoption, and be a positive force regarding change to influence peers.
2. **Knowledgeable engagement and participation**
   Participants highlighted that members of change agent networks were expected to have a strong knowledge base of the change project, be early adopters, demonstrate a commitment to change, and serve as subject experts.
3. **Identify resistance and report issues**
   Change agent networks were expected to assist in identification of resistance by serving as the eyes and ears of change. Participants expected members of the change agent network to report issues they encountered.
4. **Communicate messages regarding change**
   Participants said that change agents were leveraged to assist in the delivery of communication messages concerning change.
5. **Provide training and coaching on change**
   Participants stated that the change agent network was expected to provide coaching and training to employees on change and change management elements.

Additional expectations of change agent networks included:

- Develop a community of practice to share best practices
- Liaise between impacted teams
- Conduct change management on projects
- Serve as honest feedback channels
- Assist project teams

Chapter 15

Culture, Employee and Stakeholder Engagement

Navigate the Complexity of Managing Change Within the Context of Culture, Employee and Stakeholder Engagement

Summary

The body of research on the interaction of change, culture, and employee and stakeholder engagement is growing. Change management is most effective when the cultural context and impacted employee and stakeholder groups are considered and influence your approach. Building upon established and validated research in the field of intercultural communication, this chapter allows you to benchmark unique challenges and specific adaptations made to change management deployment based on your organization's specific cultural factors. You can also explore how change management is related to and impacts employee and stakeholder engagement.

Highlight

69% of participants reported that applying change management had a positive or very positive impact on employee engagement.

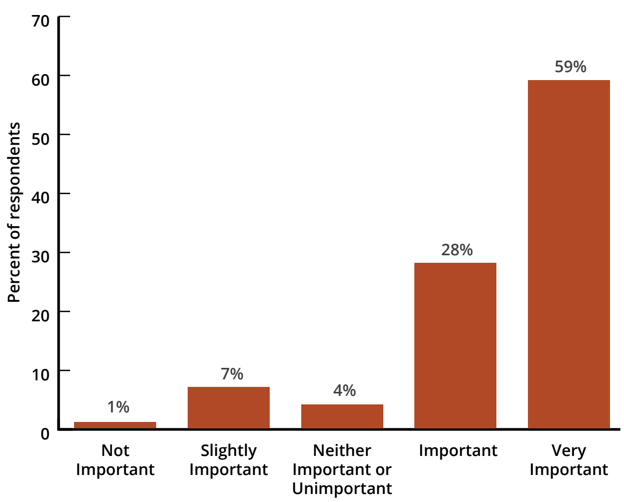

Engagement Activiti
• Lunch and
• Games
• AD campaign
• Roadshow /Games
• Fair (Knowledge)

Cultural Awareness—Regional Considerations

Impact of Cultural Awareness on Change Management

Participants in the 2023 study identified the impact of cultural awareness on employing change management. Similar to the previous year, 87% of participants rated cultural awareness as either important or very important, with nearly two-thirds saying very important.

Figure 15.1 – Impact of cultural awareness on change management



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 as a result of rounding.

How Cultural Awareness Influenced Change Management

Source date: 2016

Participants shared how cultural awareness influenced change management. Participants identified four areas in which cultural awareness impacted change management.

1. **Opportunities for customization**
   Participants felt that change management needed to be customized for the culture in which it was implemented. Change management activities and training needed to be adapted to culture-specific standards and norms.
2. **Culture-specific adaptations**
   Being culturally aware helped identify areas in which a change management approach needed to be adapted to the culture in order to make it effective. Participants felt that different cultures would view and interact with work relationships differently, and it was important to adapt change management approaches to consider these differences. An understanding of cultural norms allowed change managers to integrate change activities more fully thereby increasing credibility.
3. **Avoid culture-specific obstacles**
   Participants felt that every culture had obstacles and challenges that could be circumvented or addressed with appropriate cultural insight. These obstacles included culture-specific norms and taboos that posed challenges for a change manager and change itself, culture-specific resistance areas that might be unfamiliar to change managers, cross-cultural resentment or bias from either a change manager or organization, and culturally disparate ways of experiencing and processing change.
4. **Communication needs to be thought through**
   Participants overwhelmingly identified a need to customize communications for a cultural setting. This included the mode of communication, the sender of messages, and the structure and content of a message. Change managers should have a basic understanding of the language of the culture in which they are working. Communication improved through culturally-aware translators.

Global Literacy

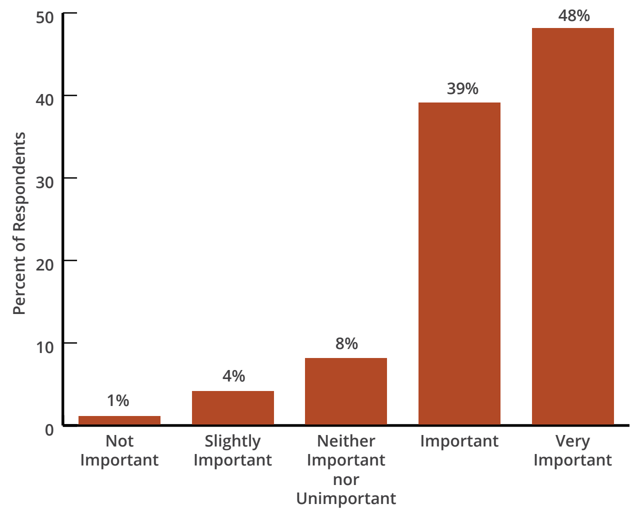
Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study were asked to define what it meant to be globally literate.

1. **Awareness**
   Participants reported that awareness of the fact that there were cultural differences and norms was an important aspect of being globally literate. Knowing that other cultures had different modes, methods and beliefs than one's own was a first step in operating within that culture.
2. **Knowledge**
   Participants reported that a spectrum of knowledge about different cultures was needed to be globally literate. This knowledge could take the form of specific cultural knowledge or broad-spectrum, regional knowledge.
3. **Appreciation of cultural differences**
   Participants reported a need for appreciation of culture. Understanding cultural differences was a necessary first step, but participants found that without a degree of appreciation for those differences, understanding alone was not enough to be globally literate.

Participants rated the importance of having globally literate leaders. Nearly half of participants said it was very important and 87% reported it was either important or very important to have globally literate leaders (Figure 15.2).

Figure 15.2 – Importance of globally literate leaders



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Perception of Change Management Across Regional Cultures

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study identified perceptions of change management within the culture of their geographic region. The descriptions below present unique challenges and perceptions of change management by geographic region followed by several universal perceptions.

1. **Africa**
   Participants in Africa identified that there is emerging awareness of the need for change management. They also stated that there is still a variance in perceptions and understanding of change management, and it is not yet widespread. Other challenges included change management being perceived as optional or insignificant.
2. **Asia and the Pacific Islands**
   Participants in Asia and the Pacific Islands stated that change management is not appreciated or well understood outside of task-level activities such as communications and training. Although awareness for change management is emerging, some respondents reported challenges with autocratic management styles, and the downplaying of the role of change management.
3. **Australia and New Zealand**
   Participants from Australia and New Zealand noted there is emerging awareness for change management. Current challenges to change management in this region include being viewed as useful only for communications and training, or as insignificant or optional. Although change management appears to have some visibility, it is applied inconsistently.
4. **Canada**
   Participants from Canada stated that change management was perceived as accepted and understood. There is also emerging awareness for change management in this region. Challenges to change management include it being used only during communication and training, and being viewed as optional. There are still varied perceptions and understanding of change management even in organizations that use it.
5. **Europe**
   Participants from Europe identified that there is emerging awareness of change management. Although some participants cited that change management is accepted and understood, the region faces challenges regarding perceptions that it is seen as insignificant, optional or for only communications and training.
6. **Latin America**
   Participants from Latin America reported that the region does not yet possess broad awareness of change management, and applications of change management are met with challenges such as tenuous funding or being viewed as optional or *"fluffy."*
7. **United States**
   The United States contained the largest group of participants. The perception of change management in this region is that it has a positive impact and is an emerging discipline. However, it also faces similar challenges seen in other regions, namely being undervalued, being simply a communication or training task or being viewed as optional or insignificant.

While patterns and trends emerged across individual regions, a range of perceptions from positive to negative were found throughout the data. Below the perceptions are presented from positive to negative.

1. **Favorable, positive impression**
   Participants stated that change management is currently appreciated and accepted in their cultures.
2. **Awareness and acceptance is emerging**
   Participants indicated that there is an upward trend in awareness, acceptance and demand for change management.
3. **Varying perceptions**
   Participants indicated that there was great variance in how change management is viewed. This variance in perception ranges from individual to individual within an organization to localized pockets where change management is considered important.
4. **Undervalued**
   Participants indicated that change management was undervalued, either not fully understood or not fully executed to its potential. Examples of this category span views such as being seen as *"soft and fluffy,"* optional or only filling the role of communication and training.

5. **Lack of value added**
   Participants noted that change management is not currently viewed favorably. Responses included being resistant and cynical and being downplayed due to more authoritarian or autocratic management styles.

Editor's note: Participants from the Middle East contributed survey data. However, there were not a sufficient number of responses to constitute a viable sample for this question, so they are not included here.

Parts of Change Management That Did Not Fit With Various Cultures

Source date: 2016

2015 study participants identified which parts of a change management approach did not fit well within the culture. The two themes that emerged across multiple regions are presented first followed by a breakdown of themes for the specific geographic regions.

Overall Themes

1. **Lack of time for necessary activities**
   All cultural regions stressed a lack of time to complete assessments and activities that change management requires. Project teams moved quickly onto other projects, and every level of staff experienced time and energy constraints that prevented them from fully participating in change management.
2. **Current description of change management and its value**
   Participants in the United States, Australia and Canada described a lack of clarity regarding what change management is and the value it brings to a project or organization. U.S. participants cited lack of hard numbers on the return on investment (ROI) of change management, and Australian participants described change management as too theoretical. In Canada, employees preferred more details up front and wanted concrete steps concerning how to succeed with change management.

Africa

1. **Sponsorship coaching**
   Cultural emphasis on reputation made sponsor coaching difficult to implement because the need for coaching was seen as a negative reflection on an executive.
2. **Employee engagement**
   Employee engagement experienced low traction because employees felt that the change would impact them negatively. Employees also felt they could not voice their opinions of the change because it could harm their standing in the organization.

Asia

1. **Disruptive**
   Change management activities were interpreted as disruptive especially, as one participant described, if the change affected an *"existing established belief, culture, or social harmony."*
2. **Open engagement**
   An organization's collectivist culture hindered the effectiveness of employee engagement. Open forum engagement, in particular, was a poor fit because employees would not speak openly or voice disagreement with the change in such a setting.
3. **Distance between executives and employees**
   There was little interaction between executives/supervisors and frontline staff members, so change management geared toward sponsors and managers could fail to gain traction.

Australia

1. **Resistance and reinforcement**
   Change leaders struggled to address resistance and to reinforce adoption of change. Negative enforcement created coercive resistance, and reinforcement was seen as *"spin."* This was especially true if resistance management or reinforcement was initiated by an outside change management team or leader instead of by a staff member native to a department.
2. **Frequent and credible communication**
   Australian participants highlighted difficulties with communication about a change because

leaders were reluctant to share details about change and employees could be distrustful of information when offered.

3. **Executive sponsorship and credibility**
Executives lacked the same level of authority seen in other regional cultures due to more democratic structures, which was especially true in government organizations. High turnover of executives negatively impacted credibility.

Canada

1. **Executive communication**
Due to a culture of self-management and individual responsibility, executive communication and engagement were viewed as less valuable.
2. **Employee or manager coaching**
Employees and managers were accustomed to functioning without involvement from executives or teams outside of their departments. They often viewed a change team's coaching or accountability as an insult or slight.
3. **Independent departments**
Many participants described their organization as siloed, with departments or divisions working independently. This conflicted with organizational change competencies if a change methodology was not flexible enough to be tailored to each unique business group.

Europe

1. **Focus on individual transitions**
European participants reported little recognition of the need for individual transitions during change especially when discussing the emotional component of individual transitions. Changes were seen as absolute, requiring adoption without further convincing.
2. **Assessments and feedback**
Receiving completed assessments for early planning or post-change measurements was ineffective because employees were reluctant to criticize their peers or superiors.
3. **Personal and interpersonal communication**
Face-to-face employee engagement was challenging because interpersonal communications about an employee's emotional responses to change were not cultural norms.

United States

1. **In-depth training**
As more autonomous workers, employees preferred training that took up a minimal amount of time or templates they could follow and implement on their own.
2. **Employee coaching**
Participants identified self-reliance as problematic for coaching because employees did not like to be told what to do. Accepting coaching could be perceived as losing independence.
3. **Coaching up**
The hierarchical and siloed structure of organizations limited the influence a change management team could have. Leaders disliked taking advice from those at a lower tier in the organization's hierarchy. Managers and those at or below a change manager's level could be equally resistant to coaching because they considered themselves accountable only to their superiors within their departments or teams.
4. **Rigid change management structure**
Participants highlighted the complexity and rigid structure of organizational change methodologies as hurdles for many parts of their organizations. This was due to their failure to account for influential and vocal minorities, as well as autonomous groups that disliked a mandated methodology not tailored to their needs.

Note on stakeholder inclusion:
European, Canadian and Australian participants mentioned the importance of incorporating leaders of all stakeholders into a change management plan. In Europe, unions could have more influence than an organization's executives or change management team. Australian and Canadian participants cited the need to engage indigenous leaders in public or government initiatives because these leaders held more authority than outside officials.

Editor's note: Participants from Latin American and Middle Eastern countries contributed survey data, but there was not a sufficient number of responses to constitute a viable sample for this question. Therefore, those regions are not represented here.

Cultural Reasons for Resisting Change Management

Source date: 2016

Participants identified primary reasons people in their region resisted implementation of change management practices.

Across all cultures

1. **Lack of understanding**
   Across all countries surveyed, lack of understanding of what change management entails was cited as a main cause of resistance to its practice. Frequently, change management was viewed as project management or only communication and training.
2. **Lack of perceived value**
   In addition to a lack of understanding of what change management is, participants from across all cultures noted that change management is not seen as valuable or essential to project success. This included difficultly in measuring the return on investment (ROI) and proving change management's contribution to the success of projects.

Regional-Specific Causes for Resistance

Responses were analyzed separately for the global regions. Although there were similarities across some regions regarding causes of resistance, there were unique reasons and variance in the importance of those reasons. The regional-specific reasons for resisting change management are in rank order for each region.

Africa

1. Lack of time and resources to implement change management
2. A top-down approach that forces change and does not involve those impacted
3. Lack of leadership buy-in and involvement
4. Fear of the unknown
5. Lack of credibility for change management and change managers
6. Resistance to a new way of working
7. Fear of losing job security or authority

Asia

1. Lack of time to take on additional work driven by change management
2. Fear of losing job security and authority in role
3. General resistance to a new way of working

Australia

1. A top-down approach that forces change and does not involve those impacted
2. Change saturates organizations that are then unable to adopt change management
3. Negative change management experiences that caused lack of credibility
4. Lack of sponsor involvement and trust in leadership

Canada

1. Daily workloads do not allow for change management practices
2. Change management is too costly or complicated, and resources are not dedicated to it
3. Lack of leadership and management support and involvement
4. Change management takes too much time and effort and delays project timelines
5. Individualistic or top-down approach

Europe

1. Change management is seen as too costly, complicated or difficult; therefore, resources are not dedicated to its application
2. A top-down approach that forces change and does not involve those impacted
3. Change management and its value are not communicated in ways that resonate with the audience
4. Lack of leadership and management support and involvement

United States

1. General resistance to new ways of working
2. Change management is seen as too costly or complicated, and resources are not dedicated to it
3. Daily workloads do not allow change management
4. Lack of leadership and management support and involvement
5. A top-down approach that forces change and does not involve those impacted
6. Belief that change management will slow progress and delay project timelines

Editor's note: Participants from Latin American and Middle Eastern countries contributed survey data, but there was not a sufficient number of responses to constitute a viable sample for this question. Therefore, those regions are not represented here.

Factors That Aid Adoption

Source date: 2016

Participants identified with a variety of factors that motivated the use of change management within their culture. The top factors were consistent across various regions.

1. **Motivation**
   The respondents consistently reported that a top reason for applying change management was to motivate employees to adopt the change by helping them understand the impact to them or *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM). A second related reason was to encourage people to be involved by ensuring they had a solid understanding of what the change is and why it is being implemented.
2. **Proven approach**
   A persistent theme reported by the participants was that change management is a proven approach that brings value to the project or organization. Change management is viewed as providing not only direct financial value but also a framework and methodology for implementation and a way to demonstrate consideration for how people will be impacted.
3. **Negative experiences with changes that did not employ change management**
   Participants stated that negative experiences and results from change initiatives that did not use change management were large factors in their decisions to utilize it now. Additionally, personal testimonials about the positive experiences others had using change management, combined with the failed implementations and painful experiences, often supported the decisions to employ change management.
4. **Preparedness for the future**
   Participants stated that they applied change management to remain competitive in their industry or market. They reported a sense of urgency and an awareness of upcoming changes as factors that made them feel that change management was necessary.
5. **Professional growth**
   A number of participants reported change management as a next step in their professional growth.

Cultural Dimensions and Change Management

Source date: 2016

Gaining insight into the cultural context of an organization enables understanding and better application of change management practices.

Due to the broad and complex nature of culture, Prosci analysts consulted several independent studies to identify the cultural dimensions that have the greatest impact on change management work. Of the large body of research that exists on cultural dimensions, the following references were leveraged to select the cultural dimensions for the benchmarking study:

- GLOBE (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004)
- Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede, 1980)
- Trompenaar's Seven Dimensions of Culture (Trompenaar & Turner 1997)

Upon reviewing the numerous cultural dimensions presented in these works, Prosci analysts identified six cultural dimensions with the greatest impact on change management.

1. Assertiveness
2. Individualism versus Collectivism
3. Emotional Expressiveness
4. Power Distance
5. Performance Orientation
6. Uncertainty Avoidance

In the 2015 study, respondents indicated where their organization fell on a spectrum for each of the six dimensions. Respondents then identified the unique challenges they faced due to this cultural dimension and specific adaptations to their change management work based on this cultural dimension.

Table 15.3 shows the study population distribution across the six cultural dimensions. Participants' scores on the cultural dimension spectrums were segmented on a scale from extremely low to extremely high. Analysis on the specific challenges and adaptations for each cultural dimension is presented in this section.

Table 15.3 – Respondent distribution across six cultural dimensions

	Extremely Low	Low	Moderately Low	Moderately High	High	Extremely High
Assertiveness	8%	19%	17%	14%	33%	9%
Individualism (Low) Collectivism (High)	12%	24%	20%	13%	25%	6%
Emotional Expressiveness	14%	27%	20%	15%	18%	6%
Performance Orientation	10%	16%	20%	15%	25%	14%
Power Distance	7%	14%	17%	16%	26%	20%
Uncertainty Avoidance	4%	13%	20%	16%	32%	15%

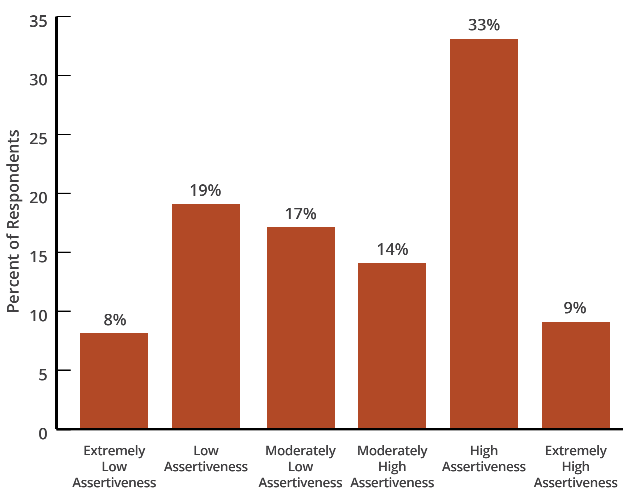
Assertiveness

Source date: 2016

Assertiveness is a cultural dimension that describes the degree to which a person is able and expected to advocate his/her personal wellbeing and goals in their relationships with others. Organizations with low assertiveness communicate in indirect and subtle ways; face-saving is both expected and practiced. Subordinates are expected to be loyal and follow executives' leads. Organizations with high assertiveness communicate in an unambiguous and blunt way, and subordinates are expected to take the initiative during interactions with executives.

Participants indicated their location along the assertiveness spectrum (using a scale from zero to 100) and identified challenges and adaptations for implementing change given their location on the spectrum. Data were analyzed to identify challenges and adaptations for low (spectrum scores of zero to 33), moderate (34 to 67) and high (68 to 100) assertiveness cultures (Figure 15.4).

Figure 15.4 – Average scores for assertiveness across the study



Participants identified challenges they encountered in their change management work and provided adaptations they would make to their change management strategy based on their cultures' assertiveness scores.

Low Assertiveness Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Feedback**
   When provided, feedback was an unreliable measure due to low honesty. Many participants stated that receiving feedback was infeasible, and they were forced to make educated guesses when adjusting or customizing change strategies.
2. **Resistance**
   There was lack of direct accountability at every level and in impacted groups. Participants found this lack of accountability to be prohibitive when managing resistance because there was no one person who could take charge or work with the change team to manage resistance.
3. **Communication**
   Communication was often sanitized to a point at which it lost impact and clarity. Difficult messages were often not sent for fear of upsetting recipients or groups. Participants felt communication was ambiguous or overly complicated and often slowed change.

Adaptations

1. **Communication**
   Respondents reported communicating more frequently and sooner about a change or project. Communication was direct, providing important information about change. Participants collected direct feedback from impacted groups regarding change.
2. **Approach**
   Participants created focus groups or teams for specific projects. These groups worked to customize change management for projects to ensure that the needs of impacted groups were addressed.

Moderate Assertiveness Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Communication**
   Impacted groups preferred face-to-face communication, and in larger organizations this posed logistical problems. Since communication was often more general, participants felt it lost the intended impact with audiences. Impacted groups often dismissed or ignored communication that was not delivered face-to-face.
2. **Resistance**
   Respondents had to address both active, vocal resistance and passive, unspoken resistance. Participants had to employ multiple tactics to combat resistance, increasing the amount of work, time and resources spent on resistance management.
3. **Feedback**
   Impacted groups were hesitant to give feedback due to a fear of retaliation from management and other executive groups. Participants spent additional time and resources customizing feedback requests for each impacted group to ensure they did not feel threatened.
4. **Sponsorship**
   Sponsors struggled with appropriate and effective communication. They would either be too direct, appearing aggressive or angry, or too vague, so impacted groups would receive only small portions of necessary information.

Adaptations

1. **Approach**
   The most common execution adaptation was increased time spent during the planning phases of a project. This included the creation of deliverables and the forecasting of potential resistance. This allowed the creation of concrete standards that provided consistency among projects.
2. **Communication**
   Participants indicated that effective two-way communication, especially listening, was key. Participants viewed communication as a process of awareness building. Although communication often dealt with impacts to specific groups, it also included more general information about change.
3. **Sponsorship**
   Participants felt that the use of sponsors during change led to more effective change management. Participants reported that it was important to first coach a sponsor on how he/she could fulfill the roll effectively, and second to ensure that all sponsors maintained an active and visible presence throughout change.

High Assertiveness Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Communication**
   Participants reported assertiveness stifled effective communication efforts. Communication tended to be aggressive or attacking, which resulted in messages being filtered for some groups and not others. This led to some impacted groups being informed differently about the initiative. An atmosphere of doubt then surrounded the project.
2. **Resistance**
   Resistance was often loudly voiced and came from charismatic sources. Resistance was often extreme and seen as the result of the high degree of the assertiveness of the people within the organization. Impacted groups that did not like the change initiative would not adopt the changes and would actively encourage others to do the same.
3. **Feedback**
   Due to the filtering of messages to employees, challenges arose when attempting to gather comparable, meaningful feedback. In some cases, too much feedback contributed to a reduced speed of project execution. Respondents cited potential for retaliation due to the content of the feedback provided, specifically from senior level management. At times there was also a disconnect between the feedback that was being given and the actions that were taken to address the identified problems.

Adaptations

1. **Communication**
   Communication was designed to ensure that members of the organization remained engaged during a project. Communication was informational and dealt with the impact of change over the organization as a whole.

2. **Approach**
   Participants spent more time planning for resistance management and identifying potential sources of resistance. Resistance was viewed as subtle and not outspoken, making it important to predict where resistance spots would appear.

Table 15.5 shows the distribution of assertiveness scores by region, and Table 15.6 shows the distribution of scores by industry.

Table 15.5 – Assertiveness scores for each region

Region	Low	Medium	High
Africa	36%	30%	34%
Asia and Pacific Islands	35%	27%	38%
Australia and New Zealand	24%	28%	48%
Canada	30%	37%	33%
Europe	26%	27%	47%
Latin America	62%	24%	14%
Middle East	23%	31%	46%
United States	26%	31%	43%

Table 15.6 – Assertiveness scores for each industry that made up more than 1.5% of the study

Industry	Low	Medium	High
Health Care	31%	27%	42%
Government - State	37%	22%	41%
Banking	25%	30%	45%
Finance	31%	29%	40%
Consulting	21%	25%	54%
Oil & Gas	30%	32%	38%
Government – Federal	25%	38%	37%
Education Services	33%	29%	38%
Insurance	31%	20%	49%
Manufacturing	30%	26%	44%
Utilities	32%	27%	41%
Other	20%	38%	42%
Government - Local & Municipal	32%	37%	31%
Information Services	9%	25%	66%
Retail Trade	24%	21%	55%
Telecommunications	8%	38%	54%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	29%	29%	42%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	30%	30%	40%

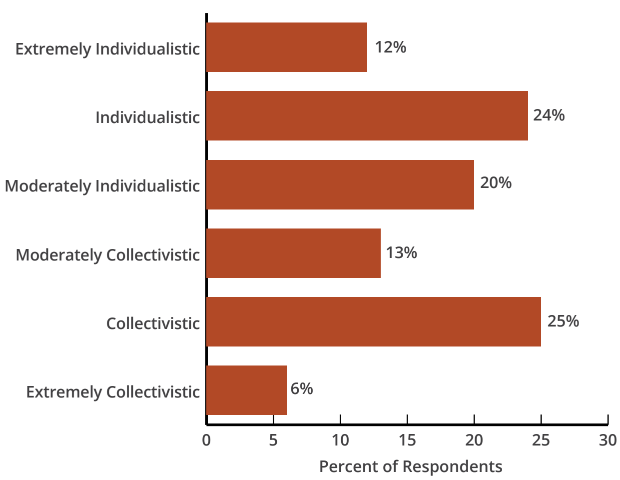
Individualism/Collectivism

Source date: 2016

Individualism/collectivism is a cultural spectrum that describes the degree to which people function more as individuals or a collective community. Employees in an organization that is more culturally collective are expected to act in a way that benefits the organization, and in turn, employees expect and trust the organization to meet their needs. Employees in an organization that is more culturally individualistic are expected to take the initiative to ensure their needs and goals are met and to prioritize their own happiness, welfare and fulfillment over those of the organization.

Participants indicated their location along the individualism/collectivism spectrum (using a scale from zero to 100) and identified challenges and adaptations for implementing change given their location on the spectrum. Data were analyzed to identify challenges and adaptations for low (spectrum scores of zero to 33), moderate (34 to 67) and high (68 to 100) individualist/collectivist cultures (Figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7 – Average scores for individualism/collectivism across the study



Individualistic Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Gaining buy-in for initiatives without direct impact**
   Participants felt it was harder to gain buy-in for projects that benefited other groups or the collective good as a whole. Individuals resented giving up their privileges or adjusting their work habits to benefit their colleagues and resisted company-wide initiatives that did not directly impact them in a positive way.
2. **Emphasis on personal satisfaction**
   Participants reported difficulty in identifying and communicating the *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) for individual employees. The desire for leadership to make a change was not enough to bring employees on board; they needed to understand and believe that a change would personally benefit them to support it. Many participants called attention to the fact that when employees have a decision in how they will participate in the change they often opted out of the change if they did not see any personal benefit in it for them.
3. **Teamwork and collaboration**
   A lack of teamwork was identified as a significant challenge. Employees did not have the desire to collaborate and share ideas because they preferred to do work on their own and in their own way. In highly individualistic cultures, employees often lacked the ability to work effectively as a team toward a common goal. Participants felt this was due in equal parts to employees thinking they could do better on their own and a dislike of having to work on projects that did not affect them.

Adaptations

1. **Understand and target the individual**
   Participants identified the need for the change management team to be cognizant of the motives and views of individuals and to ensure they are taken into consideration throughout the project. Participants adapted their change management work to focus on the individual impact and contribution, reducing emphasis on what is best for the organization. Participants also felt that it was important to conduct impact analyses at the individual level and communicate the *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM). Additional adaptations included targeting individual engagement in the project and providing rewards and recognition at the individual level as part of reinforcement efforts.
2. **Establish small group collaboration and a team focus**
   Participants reported change management efforts required a significant focus on building collective engagement and demonstrating the benefits of working as a team. The frequency of team meetings and development of cross-functional groups was increased, generating representation from diverse audiences and allowing individuals to express their own needs and to be exposed to the needs of others. The influential nature of group dynamics and driving toward consensus were key benefits of working in groups.
3. **Structured communication channels**
   Communication channels needed to be identified up front, providing a consistent approach for tailoring messages and opening structured feedback mechanisms for individuals to be heard. Communication plans required consistency, yet frequency and content was adjusted to incorporate the topics identified in the feedback.

Displaying Both Collectivist and Individualistic Tendencies

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Reduced focus on long-term benefits for the organization**
   Participants felt that employees often would not take into account or be influenced by the changes that solely benefited the long-term success of the organization. Participants felt this often resulted in additional challenges and effort required when the reasons for a change were driven by the potential organizational benefits, and those benefits were communicated at the beginning of the initiative.
2. **Working across business units**
   Participants in a moderate-ranked culture felt there was a lack of information sharing and collaboration across business units. Participants identified a variety of departmental silos resulting from this lack of cross-departmental collaboration. Participants felt this lack of cross-department teamwork made it more difficult for employee and organization-wide change management initiatives, as informal employee groups were formed and created their own unique way of working and were unwilling to adapt their methods to those of other departments resulting in an "us versus them" culture.
3. **Importance of WIIFM**
   Participants in the moderate culture felt that employees focused on *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) which impacted the degree to which they were willing to participate in the change. Participants felt that employees were more likely not to be engaged and supportive of the change. This resulted in additional work for the change manager to identify the value for each employee and to be prepared to answer their questions when this topic presented ongoing challenges.

Adaptations

1. **Team building and group support**
Participants identified the need to organize teams at the project initiation phase. Participants identified that individuals needed an opportunity to speak up and have a say in the change, while allowing the organization to share project support resources, resulting in a team setting that allowed for collaboration and collective goals with greater buy-in. Additionally, many participants noted the need to communicate the benefits of working together and the specific benefits the change would bring for each group.
2. **Communicate to individuals**
The need to cater to the individual as the recipient of the change management activities was the second most recommended adaptation. The activities described included communicating *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM) for each individual, structuring project updates to target individuals, inviting individuals to participate and have their feedback heard, and scheduling one-on-one meetings for consultation.
3. **Emphasize the greater good of the organization**
Participants reported the need to highlight the greater good of the organization. Participants recommended focusing on the benefit to the organization as a whole and how individual contributions created something larger than any one person or group could do on their own. Recognizing and celebrating *"one company"* was a common response, as organizations looked to globally standardize a collectivist culture, to reduce the perception of only one department and to emphasize *"we're all in it together"* messaging.

Collectivist Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Group decision making**
Participants reported a cultural drive to arrive at a group consensus whenever a decision needed to be made, resulting in slower time frames for decision making and the need to campaign for specific desired outcomes. Additionally, employees desired and expected to be involved in making decisions and having the opportunity to contribute their own view. Participants also reported challenges with accountability as decisions often fell on a group and not an individual person.
2. **Loss of individual input**
Participants felt that the focus on group decision making and reaching consensus often resulted in a loss of individual input, especially dissenting input. Participants reported that employees often resisted speaking up when their input went against the consensus and would often keep quiet and follow the group rather than speak up, even when their insight could have prevented later problems or project failure. Participants also felt that this loss of individual input resulted in a lack or stifling of creativity due to the group's need for a simple solution.
3. **Group influence on decision making**
Group solidarity can lead to implicit support. Participants identified the influence that the collective group could wield over its individual members made it difficult to *"turn the ship,"* as participants reported employees' tendency to rely on the collective voice rather than their own personal beliefs or opinions regarding the change. Participants felt that this reliance on the group voice led to challenges with managing resistance because employees expected to be treated and interacted with as a group rather than on an individual level.

Adaptations

1. **Group representation and deliverables**
   Participants identified an emphasis on group strategy and implementation as the primary adaptions of their change management work. Leveraging organizational value of groups, participants encouraged employees to help their colleagues and looked for volunteers to be champions within the various groups; these actions provided an intra-group dynamic that fostered natural conversion and desire to participate in the change. Creating deliverables for each divisional group and using group facilitation to create a common understanding of the vision of the future state resulted in a rich, collaborative solution.
2. **Request and encourage feedback**
   The collectivist cultural emphasis created a need for a vehicle that allowed feedback to be shared in a structured and safe environment. Impact analysis should be conducted up front. Employees should know how to raise concerns throughout the project, and the change management team should check in more often to identify resistance. Many participants reported that more input provides a more enriched program with unique perspectives and greater organizational buy-in.
3. **Leverage influential advocates**
   Participants provided additional support for key influencers who had potential to impact the group and positioned them as credible local experts to help lead the change effort. Identifying change champions positively affected group adoption and provided additional reinforcement for the message of the sponsor.

Table 15.8 shows the distribution of individualism/collectivism scores by region, and Table 15.9 shows the distribution of scores by industry.

Table 15.8 – Individualism/collectivism scores for each region

Region	Low	Medium	High
Africa	16%	32%	52%
Asia and Pacific Islands	14%	24%	62%
Australia and New Zealand	36%	35%	29%
Canada	31%	40%	29%
Europe	36%	38%	26%
Latin America	38%	43%	19%
Middle East	33%	34%	33%
United States	42%	26%	32%

Table 15.9 – Individualism/collectivism scores for each industry that made up more than 1.5% of the study

Industry	Low	Medium	High
Health Care	39%	32%	29%
Government - State	33%	35%	32%
Banking	29%	36%	35%
Finance	32%	43%	25%
Consulting	45%	23%	32%
Oil & Gas	36%	26%	38%
Government – Federal	35%	43%	22%
Education Services	45%	33%	22%
Insurance	30%	40%	30%
Manufacturing	30%	35%	35%
Utilities	34%	27%	39%
Other	27%	27%	46%
Government - Local & Municipal	37%	25%	38%
Information Services	50%	23%	27%
Retail Trade	31%	38%	31%
Telecommunications	35%	35%	30%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	59%	18%	23%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	26%	48%	26%

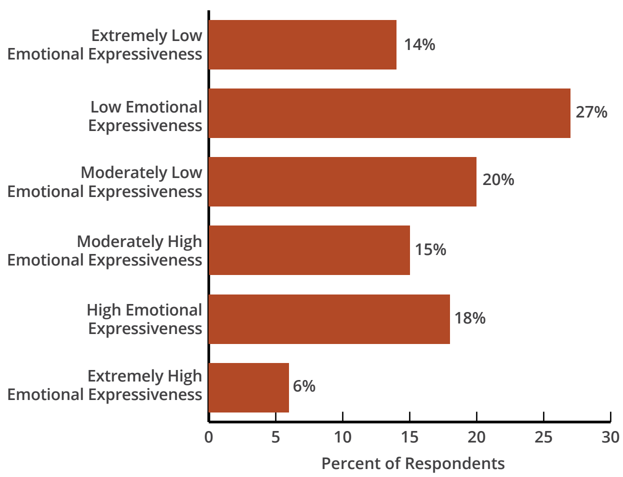
Emotional Expressiveness

Source date: 2016

Emotional expressiveness is a cultural dimension that describes the degree to which people are allowed, expected and encouraged to display emotions and emotional states to others. Employees in a low emotionally expressive organization are expected not to display emotions. Although emotions are felt, a person is expected to keep them tightly controlled. Emotional displays in public are seen as awkward and unnecessary. Employees in organizations that are highly emotionally expressive feel able and are encouraged to display their emotional states to others openly and without reservation. Emotional displays are not considered awkward or uncomfortable in the workplace.

Participants indicated their locations along the emotional expressiveness spectrum (using a scale from zero to 100) and identified challenges and adaptations for implementing change given their location on the spectrum. Data were analyzed to identify challenges and adaptations for low (spectrum scores of zero to 33), moderate (34 to 67) and high (68 to 100) emotional expressiveness cultures (Figure 15.10).

Figure 15.10 – Average scores for emotional expressiveness across the study



Low Emotional Expressiveness Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Fear and avoidance behavior**
   Participants reported that fear of conflict or upsetting anyone often derailed plans and masked resistance to the change. Participants also reported that impacted groups often struggled to express their concerns around the change.
2. **Passive-aggressive behaviors**
   Due to a lack of desire to express their feelings, impacted groups often resorted to passive-aggressive behaviors during the change. This caused a buildup of resentment whenever anyone had to work with the change.

Adaptations

1. **Create an open communication/feedback channel**
   Creating an open communication and feedback channel and encouraging employees to provide feedback without fear of consequences allowed trust building and a feeling of participation rather than merely being subject to change.
2. **Use one-on-one communications**
   Participants reported using one-on-one sessions to gather concerns and input from employees. With groups that are less prone to emotional expressiveness, reading secondary signals like body language and *"reading between the lines"* to get to the true feelings of an employee during feedback was important.
3. **Engage with managers/supervisors**
   Participants engaged managers and supervisors of employees to gather observed feedback and responses from teams. A more accurate account of perceptions from the *"ground level"* was gained by leveraging the proximity of managers and supervisors. Engaging managers and supervisors served the dual purpose of expanding their role as change agents.

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Moderate Emotional Expressiveness Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Bottling up emotions**
   Emotional displays tended to occur only in their extremes. Impacted groups bottled up their negative feelings about the change and would unleash them at a later point when any chance for a change of course had passed.
2. **Identifying resistance**
   Participants reported they had a difficult time identifying resistance because resistant groups were adept at hiding their feelings regarding the change. Participants reported identifying resistance to the change much later than would be ideal during the change initiative.

Adaptations

1. **Create an open, safe environment**
   Participants created an open channel and encouraged employees to provide feedback. By creating this open, safe environment, participants paved the way for smoother change management with a foundation of mutual respect and integrity.
2. **Use one-on-one communication**
   Participants engaged with impacted employees individually. Although drawing emotional responses was not the goal, participants felt that emotional responses during meetings were indicative of honest feedback about change. One-on-one communications also served as opportunities to assist individuals through change and to address personal concerns or fears.

High Emotional Expressiveness Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Difficulty communicating about change**
   A high degree of emotional expressiveness meant that every communication regarding the change would potentially have a large emotional response. Participants reported that attempting to customize communication not to elicit an emotional response was very difficult.
2. **Cross-cultural communication**
   Participants reported that communication across cultural lines was very difficult, especially when one group was highly emotionally expressive and the other was not. Participants reported both sides in the interaction would think the other side was being offensive.

Adaptations

1. **Create opportunities for feelings to be heard**
   Participants reported that it was critical to build time into a project to interact with impacted groups and employees at multiple points to allow feelings and feedback to be heard. Limits and a common language were created to communicate feedback clearly and constructively.
2. **Tailor communication to be clear and focused on business objectives**
   Communication should strive to be concise and informative while not evoking emotional responses. Providing information in a clear, neutral manner allowed employees to quickly understand why, how and what a change was, reducing misunderstandings and information distortion.
3. **Address concerns and questions promptly**
   Participants identified a need to quickly and appropriately address concerns, questions or fears that surfaced to reduce both personally and publicly voiced anxieties. Listening to and addressing questions quickly from employees supported them through change and reduced resistance.

Table 15.11 shows the distribution of emotional expressiveness scores by region, and Table 15.12 shows the distribution of scores by industry.

Table 15.11 – Emotional expressiveness scores for each region

Region	Low	Medium	High
Africa	42%	45%	13%
Asia and Pacific Islands	34%	29%	37%
Australia and New Zealand	42%	34%	24%
Canada	40%	36%	24%
Europe	38%	36%	26%
Latin America	33%	34%	33%
Middle East	27%	18%	55%
United States	43%	35%	22%

Table 15.12 – Emotional expressiveness scores for each industry that made up more than 1.5% of the study

Industry	Low	Medium	High
Health Care	44%	27%	29%
Government - State	51%	27%	22%
Banking	35%	42%	23%
Finance	39%	44%	17%
Consulting	47%	29%	24%
Oil & Gas	44%	33%	23%
Government – Federal	49%	30%	21%
Education Services	40%	33%	26%
Insurance	42%	36%	22%
Manufacturing	33%	31%	36%
Utilities	46%	32%	22%
Other	28%	49%	23%
Government - Local & Municipal	43%	38%	19%
Information Services	39%	32%	29%
Retail Trade	31%	35%	34%
Telecommunications	14%	53%	33%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	45%	40%	15%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	26%	32%	42%

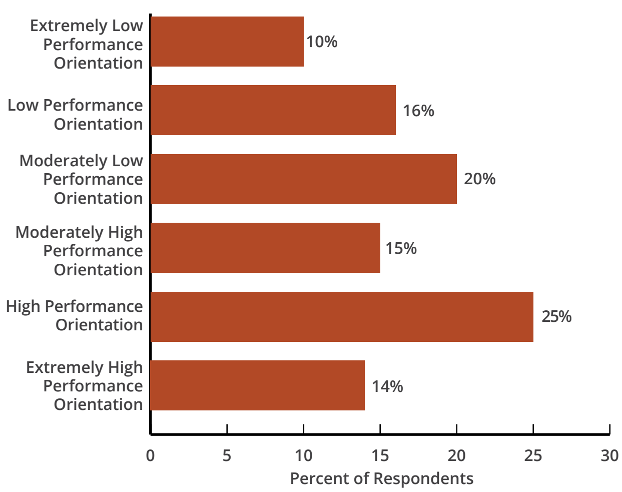
Performance Orientation

Source date: 2016

Performance orientation is a cultural dimension that describes the degree to which a person is rewarded for and expected to be innovative and the level of performance and continuous improvement expected from that individual. In a low performance-orientation organization, societal and family relationships are more important than improving performance. Formal feedback is viewed as judgmental and discomforting. Communication is subtle and indirect. In high performance-orientation organizations, training, personal development, competitiveness and formal feedback are seen as necessary for improving performance. Communication is direct and unambiguous, and employees are expected to strive for and demonstrate improvements in their work.

Participants indicated their location along the performance orientation spectrum (using a scale from zero to 100) and identified challenges and adaptations for implementing change given their location on the spectrum. Data were analyzed to identify challenges and adaptations for low (spectrum scores of zero to 33), moderate (34 to 67) and high (68 to 100) performance oriented cultures (Figure 15.13).

Figure 15.13 – Average scores for performance orientation across the study



Participants identified challenges they encountered in their change management work, and provided adaptations they would make to their change management strategies based on their cultures' performance orientation scores.

Low Performance Orientation Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Lack of effective communication**
   Gaps in communication between upper management and frontline employees were reported. Employees did not like hearing negative feedback about their job performance nor did they have a desire to increase performance, and the lines of communication were effectively closed.
2. **Lack of accountability**
   No one was willing to take responsibility for stages of the project. There was no clear goal-setting or team responsible to ensure goals were met. Low performance-orientated employees saw no repercussions for staying with the old systems and choosing not to change.
3. **Lack of performance metrics**
   Many teams did not have formal metrics in place to evaluate performance. This lack of measurement resulted in challenges to positive and negative reinforcement.

Adaptations

1. **Let impacted groups choose their incentives**
   Participants let impacted groups pick and design their own incentives during the change intuitive. Participants reported that these incentives were often not business related and were more enjoyment oriented, such as trips to theme parks and other recreational activities.
2. **Desire building focused on individual impact**
   Participants focused their desire and awareness messages on how the change would improve their day-to-day work. Participant messages were customized for individuals or small impacted groups.

Moderate Performance Orientation Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Lack of accountability**
   A large number of projects were left without someone taking responsibility for successes and failures. No one wanted to own the change in case anything went wrong. This left team members uncertain of whom to ask when they had questions about a change or process.
2. **Lack of adoption metrics**
   Without the ability to measure adoption and usage among impacted groups, there was no way to adapt or adjust course once a project began. Adoption or usage metrics were also viewed as performance metrics and were not received well by impacted groups.
3. **No place for employee feedback**
   Employees wanted a forum in which questions or concerns could be heard. Employees wanted to talk to someone directly and have a liaison that would help get questions answered.

Adaptations

1. **Gathering feedback**
   Allowing space for and seeking out feedback from impacted groups regarding the change allowed participants to actively monitor resistance and customize communication and incentives around the change.
2. **Acknowledgment**
   Participants reported that the most effective form of incentives was personal acknowledgment. Participants built in and actively worked to acknowledge high performers and early adopters. This acknowledgment often went in parallel with performance and personal incentives as well.

High Performance Orientation Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Employee resistance**
   Participants reported that high performance-oriented employees did not welcome the state of uncertainty that comes with a change and were comfortable with their current jobs. Some employees feared a decrease of productivity during change.
2. **Lack of effective training**
   Employees at all levels did not feel prepared for change after they had been through training, though participants felt that the training was more than adequate. Employees lacked confidence in their ability to apply new skills in the future state.
3. **Lack of employee motivation**
   Employees from every level of the organization did not understand why the change was happening and how adoption of change would improve their performance metrics. High performance-oriented employees were frustrated when they felt they had wasted time and energy on a change they believed to be unnecessary.

Adaptations

1. **Tie performance metrics to adoption**
   Participants tied specific performance measures to specific adoption activities in impacted groups. These groups responded better to incentives that linked to their performance metrics rather than outside enjoyable activities.
2. **Unambiguous communication**
   Participants reported that impacted groups responded the best to unambiguous and technical communication about the change. Further, impacted groups tended to digest and act on more technical and un-watered-down information rather than personal communication about the change.

Table 15.14 shows the distribution of performance orientation scores by region, and Table 15.15 shows the distribution of scores by industry.

Table 15.14 – Performance orientation scores for each region

Region	Low	Medium	High
Africa	37%	26%	37%
Asia and Pacific Islands	29%	29%	42%
Australia and New Zealand	26%	40%	34%
Canada	24%	36%	40%
Europe	25%	34%	41%
Latin America	43%	38%	19%
Middle East	27%	46%	27%
United States	24%	27%	49%

Table 15.15 – Performance orientation scores for each industry that made up more than 1.5% of the study

Industry	Low	Medium	High
Health Care	28%	32%	40%
Government - State	38%	32%	30%
Banking	28%	25%	47%
Finance	23%	35%	42%
Consulting	23%	23%	54%
Oil & Gas	20%	37%	43%
Government – Federal	35%	34%	31%
Education Services	33%	38%	29%
Insurance	28%	37%	35%
Manufacturing	26%	31%	43%
Utilities	35%	40%	25%
Other	14%	27%	59%
Government - Local & Municipal	37%	46%	17%
Information Services	19%	43%	38%
Retail Trade	13%	23%	64%
Telecommunications	19%	19%	62%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	36%	32%	32%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	15%	35%	50%

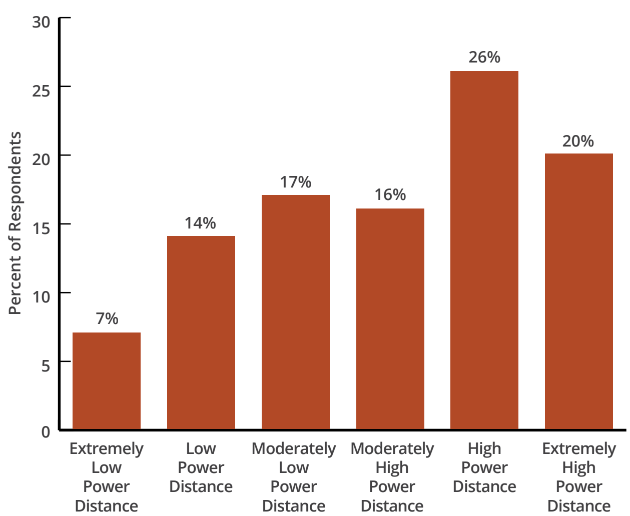
Power Distance

Source date: 2016

Power distance is a cultural dimension that describes the degree to which power is distributed (equally versus unequally) with people at the bottom accepting their position. Organizations with low power distance allow employees access to higher-level members with little to no formal rules or chain of command. Employees expect company-wide decisions to be made democratically and for each voice to be heard. Organizations with high power distance have formal and strictly defined rules for accessing high-level executives. Employees do not expect to be consulted on company-wide decisions.

Participants indicated their locations along the power distance spectrum (using a scale from zero to 100) and identified challenges and adaptations for implementing change given their location on the spectrum. Data were analyzed to identify challenges and adaptations for low (spectrum scores of zero to 33), moderate (34 to 67) and high (68 to 100) power distance cultures (Figure 15.16).

Figure 15.16 – Average scores for power distance across the study



Low power distance cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Impaired communication**
   Due to extensive access, information often skipped levels of the organization which resulted in repeating information several times. Informal communications led to rumors and decreased the credibility of information surrounding change.
2. **Increased resistance**
   Low power distance structures resulted in a large amount of resistance because individuals from all levels of the organization constantly challenged ideas. Employees often did not adhere to changes, and messages were not uniform across the organization. Conflicts arose between levels of management, and productivity suffered consequently.
3. **Decreased productivity**
   Productivity decreased due to more time being spent on gaining buy-in, lack of governance and slower decision processes.

Adaptations

1. **Increase engagement**
   Employee engagement was achieved with an increase in functions and meetings that were used to ensure alignment of the organization across all levels. The quantity of meetings ensured that employees had multiple opportunities to encounter and engage with the change project.
2. **Structure communication channels**
   Communication channels needed to be identified up front to provide a consistent approach for tailoring messages and to open structured feedback from individuals. Communication plans required consistency and frequency, so content could be adjusted to incorporate the topics identified from feedback.
3. **Enhance change management plans**
   Participants in low power distance organizations added structure to change management by placing stakeholders in key positions, including establishing guidelines to ensure all levels were being communicated with and clearly defining roles and responsibilities.

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Moderate Distance Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Decreased ability to drive change**
   Leadership had a decreased capability to direct change, had to put more effort into gaining buy-in for change and had to engage managers more thoroughly.
2. **Increased resistance**
   Resistance occurred because senior leaders did not account for employees' input and concerns when dealing with issues centered on change. Employees were then more likely to resist any aspect of change. Senior leaders appeared to think they had more sway over employees than they did.
3. **Poor structure**
   Participants with moderate power distance organizations reported a need to tailor change plans more specifically to groups as opposed to using a uniform approach. Creating individual plans required more time on the change manager's part and lowered the effectiveness of mass communication regarding change.

Adaptations

1. **Balance communication**
   Participants expressed the need to establish balanced communication during change management. Open and honest feedback was balanced with a clear boundary and understanding of *"who has the final say."*
2. **Gain buy-in**
   Participants reported putting more effort toward gaining employee buy-in. Awareness of the need for and importance of change management was created by using more meetings and team activities. Other activities to gain buy-in included visible sponsorship engagement, involvement of key stakeholders, creation of plans for various groups, and demonstration of the value of change management.
3. **Empower sponsors**
   Sponsors in moderate power distance organizations were encouraged to take charge of change as an adaption to the position on the power distance spectrum. Empowered sponsors bridged the gap between leaders' direction and employees' concerns and feedback.

High Power Distance Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Restricted communication**
   Participants identified too few and poor levels of communication occurring in high power distance organizations. A large gap was described between senior leaders and frontline employees which resulted in a loss of productivity and increased time for implementation. Fear among employees of executives appearing unapproachable were primary limitations to communication from lower levels to executives.
2. **Isolated decision making**
   Isolated decision making was challenging. Executives made decisions without considering the impact to employees. Consequently, the alignment of the organization suffered because different levels and groups had different directions.
3. **Lack of employee engagement**
   Lack of commitment and trust were other challenges for organizations with high power structures. Passive resistance resulted from these issues because employees felt powerless, unheard and not cared about. Resources had to be reallocated to account for these avoidable problems.

Adaptations

1. **Communicate openly and directly**
   Participants reported using executive and senior leaders more often during communications. Higher-level leadership lent authority to communication, and resistant employees were more likely to adopt change when instructed.
2. **Engage leadership**
   Leadership visibility and engagement ensured that impacted groups understood that company leadership was supportive of and behind change from the beginning. Early leadership involvement encouraged and promoted early adopters.

Table 15.17 shows the distribution of power distance scores by region, and Table 15.18 shows the distribution of scores by industry.

Table 15.17 – Power distance scores for each region

Region	Low	Medium	High
Africa	6%	19%	75%
Asia and Pacific Islands	9%	18%	73%
Australia and New Zealand	20%	31%	49%
Canada	13%	37%	50%
Europe	33%	33%	34%
Latin America	10%	33%	57%
Middle East	9%	27%	64%
United States	23%	29%	48%

Table 15.18 – Power distance scores for each industry that made up more than 1.5% of the study

Industry	Low	Medium	High
Health Care	16%	30%	54%
Government - State	21%	27%	52%
Banking	14%	29%	57%
Finance	27%	25%	48%
Consulting	27%	37%	36%
Oil & Gas	17%	37%	46%
Government – Federal	2%	29%	69%
Education Services	16%	37%	47%
Insurance	27%	27%	46%
Manufacturing	26%	21%	53%
Utilities	12%	37%	51%
Other	11%	56%	33%
Government - Local & Municipal	18%	25%	57%
Information Services	42%	35%	23%
Retail Trade	13%	26%	61%
Telecommunications	15%	45%	40%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	32%	32%	36%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	32%	36%	32%

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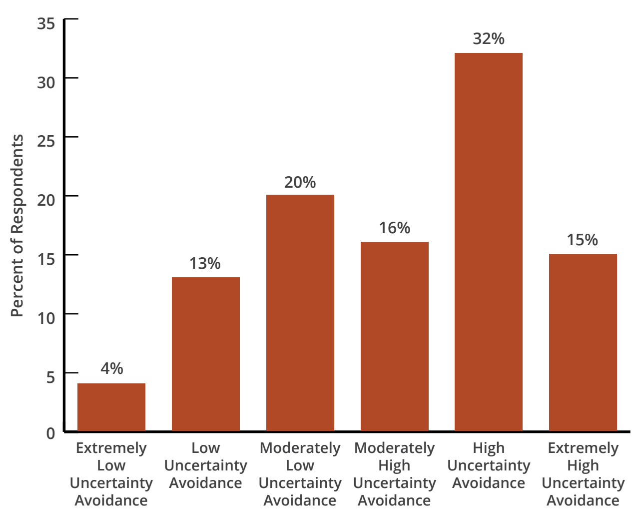
Uncertainty Avoidance

Source date: 2016

Uncertainty avoidance is a cultural dimension that describes a culture's tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. Low uncertainty avoidance organizations do not prefer unknown or unusual situations, but do not avoid them and feel comfortable in new situations. These organizations are pragmatic and are tolerant of change. High uncertainty avoidance organizations try to minimize or avoid unusual or unknown circumstances. Step-by-step planning, rule implementation and attention to detail precede change.

Participants indicated their locations along the uncertainty avoidance spectrum (using a scale from zero to 100) and identified challenges and adaptations for implementing change given their location on the spectrum. Data were analyzed to identify challenges and adaptations for low (spectrum scores of zero to 33), moderate (34 to 67) and high (68 to 100) uncertainty avoidance cultures (Figure 15.19).

Figure 15.19 – Average scores for uncertainty avoidance across the study



Participants identified challenges they encountered to their change management work, and provided adaptations they would make to their change management strategies based on their cultures' uncertainty avoidance scores.

Low Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Too much ambiguity**
   Too much ambiguity regarding change emerged in low uncertainty avoidance cultures. Senior leaders were content to take a *"see what happens"* approach to change. Impacted groups did not see change as having an impact on them and were less likely to care about change initiatives.
2. **Lack of consistency and follow through**
   Organizations were too willing to switch to a new technology or process at any indication that it could be an improvement. Changes were initiated frequently, leading to high change saturation which negatively impacted productivity.
3. **Lack of respect for change**
   Changes were not perceived as something that impacted the organization. Acquiring resources and support was more difficult because the impact of the change and the need for structure and resources for change management were underappreciated.

Adaptations

1. **Communication**
   Participants cited altering communications to reflect their culture's tendency to avoid unusual or unknown circumstances. This included communicating earlier and more often, addressing *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM), providing clarity, setting expectations, ensuring messaging was consistent, and providing the right amount of detail.
2. **Identify and mitigate uncertainty**
   Participants identified uncertainty through analysis, responded quickly to concerns, provided additional information and training for those who needed it, and created awareness regarding uncertainty to let people know that some uncertainty was acceptable.
3. **Training and support**
   Participants increased the amount of training provided regarding changes, provided additional

coaching to people who were struggling with change, created practice scenarios for people to try out change in advance, and rewarded increased effort and early adoption of change.

4. **Planning**
   Participants increased the amount of planning for change, increased details and documentation within their plans, recognized the need to change a plan due to organizational culture, and allowed flexibility within a plan during change.

Moderate Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Uncertainty**
   Impacted groups become paralyzed and unable to respond to uncertain situations. Participants reported a tendency for executives to be more reproachful during uncertainty, leading to poorly executed change.
2. **Resistance**
   When changes were announced, participants reported difficulties in getting change started. Impacted groups had difficulty embracing changes, which required pulling people along. This difficulty was most often a result of fighting a legacy of change resistance.
3. **Change fatigue**
   Change fatigue caused missed deadlines and an overall fear of future changes. Ambiguity and poor adoption of future changes resulted from change fatigue and lack of reinforcement of previous changes.
4. **Confusion**
   Last minute execution and lack of clarity on current projects led to confusion within impacted groups. Lack of awareness and mixed messages added to the confusion during change.

Adaptations

1. **Communication**
   Participants communicated more regularly with increased emphasis on the vision, benefits and solutions surrounding change. They stated that they commonly addressed *"what's in it for me?"* (WIIFM), provided clarification concerning job roles and promoted more one-on-one communication.
2. **Increased coaching, training and support**
   Participants implemented more check-ins and accountability measures, and provided additional coaching and support where needed. Participants provided training to supervisors and managers on dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty in the workplace.
3. **Planning**
   Participants planned fewer changes at once, created better plans with increased detail and documentation, and built clearer and more robust communication plans. They also modified plans to account for reactions based on their culture.
4. **Identify and mitigate uncertainty**
   Participants analyzed change to identify uncertainty and resistance and reinforced key messages among impacted groups to bolster awareness of the need for change and mitigate concerns.

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High Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures

Source date: 2016

Challenges

1. **Need for detailed communications**
   The most frequently stated challenge was the need for significant details to be spelled out upfront prior to the start of change. This fueled a desire for a clearly-articulated vision and a detailed description of the future state prior to employees committing to participate in change. Communication and preparation for change needed to involve a wider audience, so it was comfortable and ready for change and had the knowledge and tools to support it.
2. **Fear of the unknown**
   Change brings uncertainty, and participants indicated that fear of the unknown associated with change led to a lack of tolerance for ambiguity. Many questions arose and frustrations set in when answers were not readily available. An unwillingness to change when people were uncertain about what was expected in the new system was a challenge that stemmed from fear of the unknown.
3. **Risk aversion**
   High uncertainty avoidance environments were marked by a desire to avoid risk and mitigate potential negative consequences of change. Participants noted that risk aversion often led to *"analysis paralysis"* and inaction. Risk aversion also led to bias toward maintaining the status quo until numerous risks had been addressed clearly. Decision making was formal requiring rules and standards.
4. **Slow pace of change**
   Participants indicated that the slow pace of change was especially challenging in cultures of high uncertainty avoidance. Detailed planning, frequent questioning and clarifying expectations repeatedly extended timelines for change.

Adaptations

1. **Communication**
   Participants looked for innovative and creative ways to communicate and increased communications regarding the business value of change. They included more one-on-one communication in their communication plans.
2. **Adapting change**
   Participants slowed change, staggered changes, or limited the number of changes occurring in the organization. Participants also mentioned more planning, increased flexibility, and simplification of the change.
3. **Increased training and support**
   Participants increased training and found new ways to coach employees through change. They used ADKAR® to discover where additional skill building was necessary and provided the support needed.

Table 15.20 shows the distribution of uncertainty avoidance scores by region, and Table 15.21 shows the distribution of scores by industry.

Table 15.20 – Uncertainty avoidance scores for each region

Region	Low	Medium	High
Africa	17%	46%	37%
Asia and Pacific Islands	27%	15%	58%
Australia and New Zealand	13%	39%	48%
Canada	13%	27%	60%
Europe	20%	37%	43%
Latin America	15%	40%	45%
Middle East	9%	36%	55%
United States	18%	35%	47%

Table 15.21 – Uncertainty avoidance scores for each industry that made up more than 1.5% of the study

Industry	Low	Medium	High
Health Care	20%	39%	41%
Government - State	13%	29%	58%
Banking	20%	34%	46%
Finance	17%	40%	43%
Consulting	33%	26%	41%
Oil & Gas	14%	37%	49%
Government – Federal	13%	23%	64%
Education Services	7%	30%	63%
Insurance	10%	40%	50%
Manufacturing	16%	32%	52%
Utilities	13%	25%	63%
Other	26%	40%	34%
Government - Local & Municipal	16%	31%	53%
Information Services	19%	43%	38%
Retail Trade	18%	32%	50%
Telecommunications	29%	33%	38%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	4%	35%	61%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	22%	45%	33%

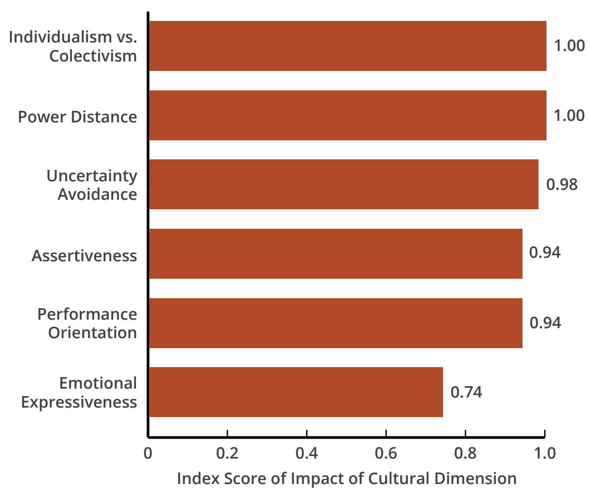
Relative Impact of Cultural Dimensions on Change Management Work

Source date: 2016

After providing input on the six cultural dimensions, participants ranked the cultural dimensions based on the impact they had on change management. A rank of 1 meant the dimension had the largest impact on change management, and 6 meant it had the least.

Figure 15.22 shows the rank ordering of impact of the cultural dimensions of change management work. Responses were weighted and indexed. Individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance had the greatest impact on change management work, and emotional expressiveness had the least impact.

Figure 15.22 – Weighted scores for most impactful cultural dimensions



Looking just at the dimensions participants ranked as having the greatest impact, Figure 15.23 shows that although the top three remain the same, the order shifted. Twenty-four percent of respondents ranked uncertainty avoidance as having the greatest impact on change management, followed by power distance (21%) and individualism versus collectivism (18%).

Figure 15.23 – Cultural dimensions rated as having the largest impact (ranked 1)

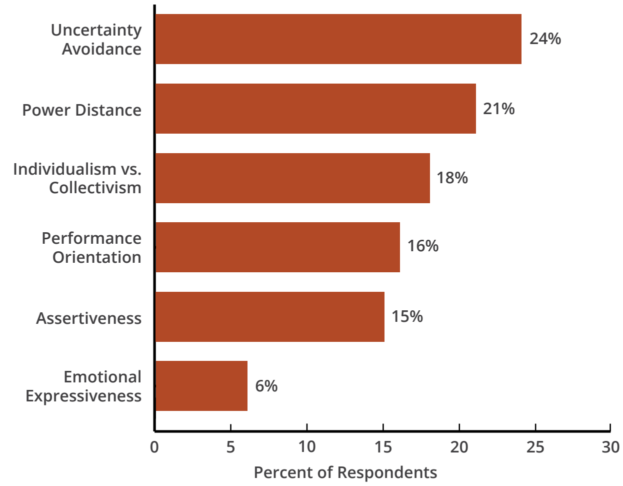
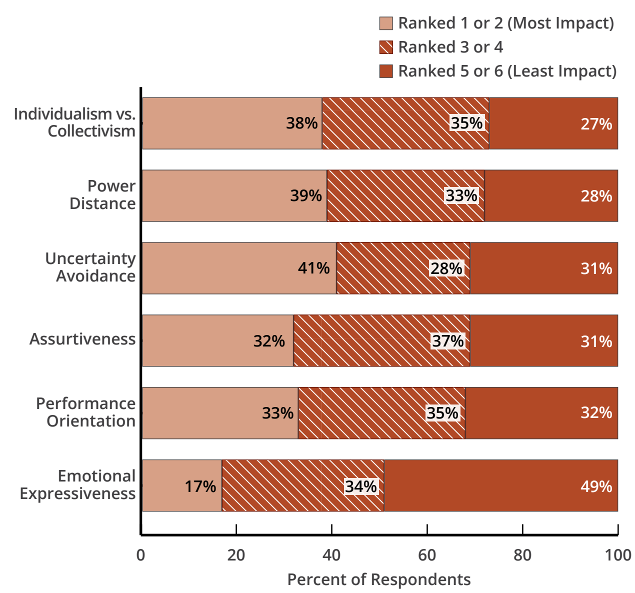


Figure 15.24 shows the distribution of cultural dimension impact rankings. The percentage that ranked individualism versus collectivism (38%), power distance (39%) and uncertainty avoidance (41%) as 1 or 2 was higher than the other cultural dimensions. Nearly half (49%) of all respondents indicated that emotional expressiveness was a low-impact dimension.

Figure 15.24 – Distribution of cultural dimension impact rankings

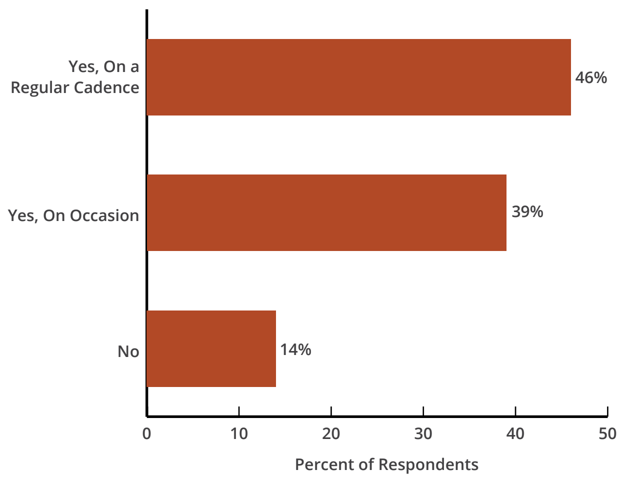


Employee and Stakeholder Engagement

Employee Engagement

Participants reported if their organizations assess employee engagement. Eighty-five percent of participants reported that they did some measure of employee engagement but less then half reported doing so on a regular cadence.

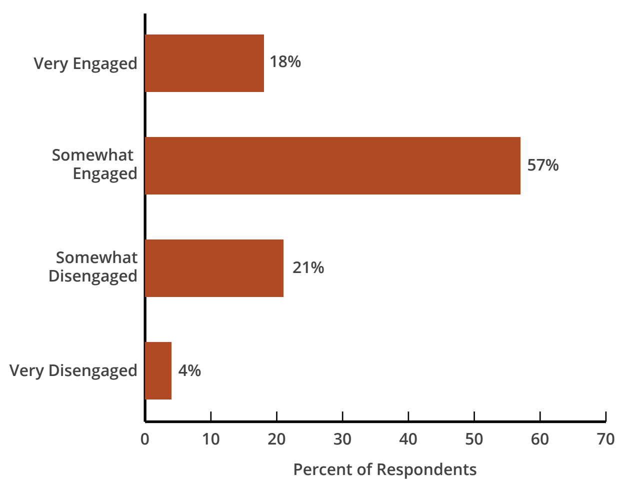
Figure 15.25 – Assessed employee engagement



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 as a result of rounding.

Survey participants were also asked to characterize the level of employee engagement at their organization.

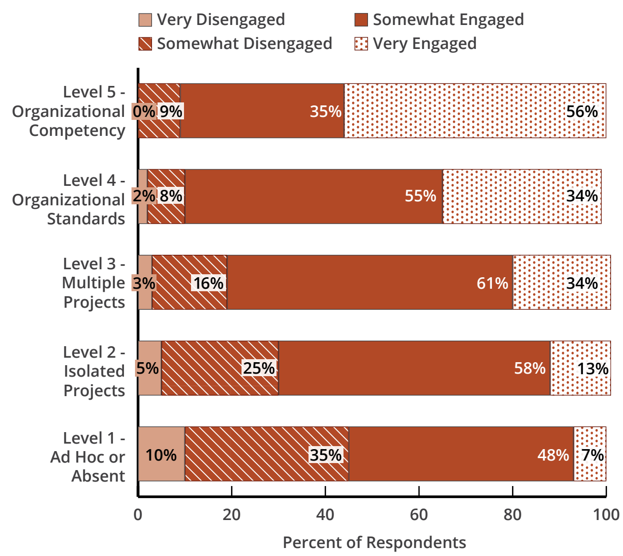
Figure 15.26 – Characterization of employee engagement



Figures 15.27 through 15.29 show employee engagement correlated with maturity level, meeting project objectives and degree of change saturation.

Figure 15.27 shows employee engagement by change management maturity level. Participants who reported having more mature change management practices also reported having more engaged employees.

Figure 15.27 – Employee engagement and change management maturity level



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 or 101 as a result of rounding.

Figure 15.28 shows employee engagement by meeting project objectives. Participants with more engaged employees met and exceeded their project objectives more often than those with lower levels of employee engagement.

Figure 15.28 – Employee engagement and meeting project objectives

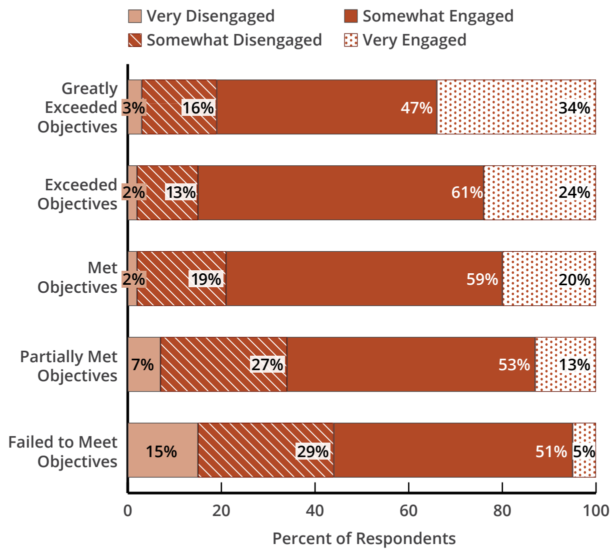
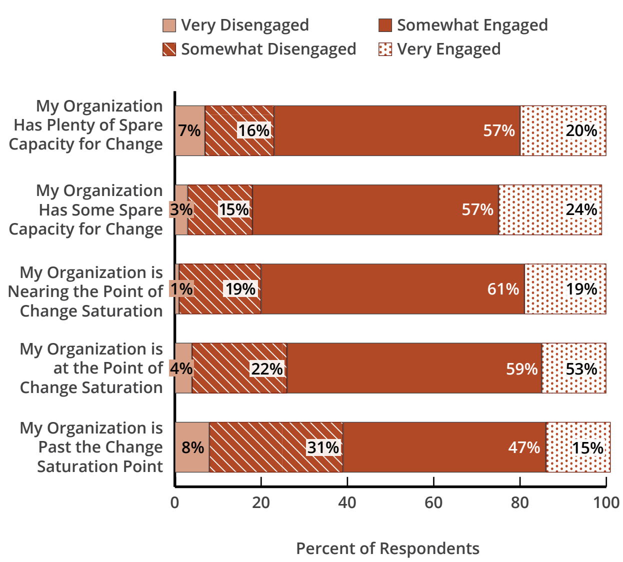


Figure 15.29 shows employee engagement by change saturation. Participants who reported that their organizations were past the point of saturation also reported lower levels of employee engagement.

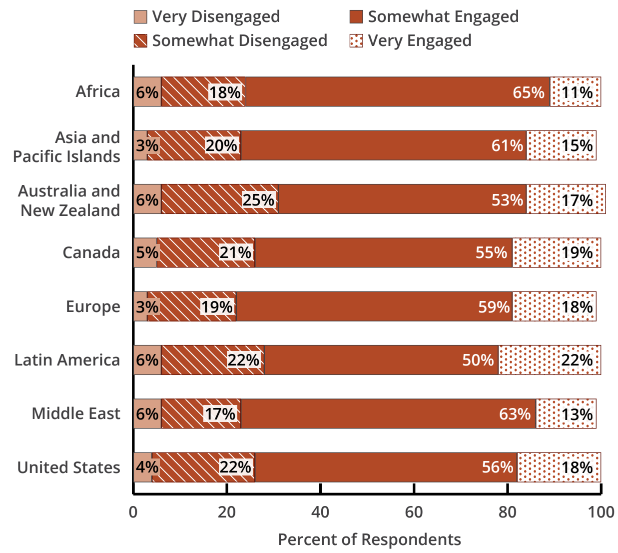
Figure 15.29 – Employee engagement and change saturation



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 or 101 as a result of rounding.

Figures 15.30 through 15.33 show employee engagement by region, industry, revenue and number of employees.

Figure 15.30 – Employees engagement by region



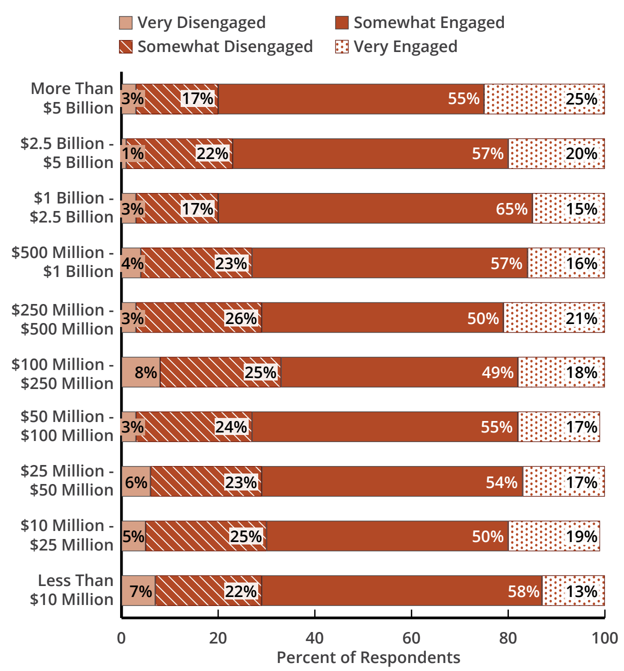
Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 or 101 as a result of rounding.

Table 15.31 – Employee engagement by industry

Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 or 101 as a result of rounding.

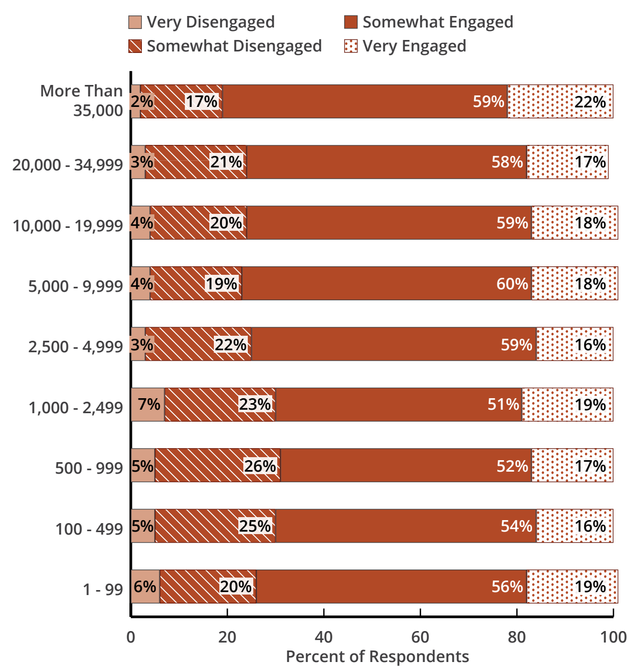
	Very Disengaged	Somewhat Disengaged	Somewhat Engaged	Very Engaged
Other	5%	21%	21%	19%
Utilities	8%	21%	21%	13%
Transportation and Warehousing	0%	22%	22%	15%
Telecommunications	2%	8%	8%	23%
Retail Trade	1%	24%	24%	20%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	4%	20%	20%	24%
Pharmaceutical	4%	19%	19%	24%
Oil and Gas	6%	23%	23%	19%
Non-Profit	7%	19%	19%	19%
Manufacturing	3%	21%	21%	13%
Insurance	3%	11%	11%	33%
Information Services	4%	15%	15%	18%
Health Care	5%	21%	21%	18%
Government - State	6%	28%	28%	10%
Government - Other	5%	20%	20%	15%
Government - Military	8%	25%	25%	8%
Government - Local and Municipal	8%	25%	25%	10%
Government - Federal	7%	25%	25%	12%
Food/Beverage	2%	22%	22%	20%
Finance	0%	20%	20%	21%
Education Services	6%	28%	28%	13%
Consumer Goods Manufacturing	2%	18%	18%	27%
Consulting	3%	16%	16%	24%
Banking	3%	13%	13%	17%

Figure 15.32 – Employee engagement by revenue



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 or 101 as a result of rounding.

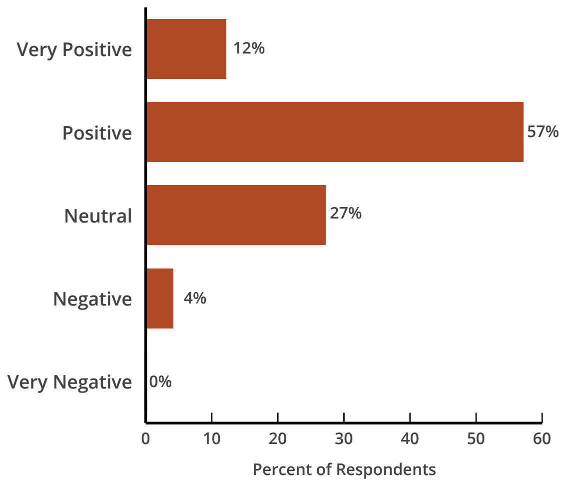
Figure 15.33 – Employee engagement by number of employees



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 or 101 as a result of rounding.

Participants were asked to describe the impact that applying change management has on employee engagement.

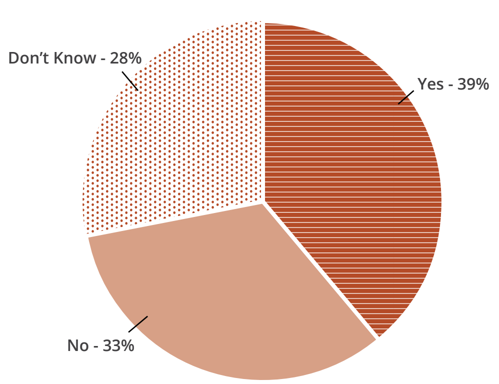
Figure 15.34 – Impact of change management on employee engagement



Organization Shifted to More Open, Participatory and Feedback Driven Approach to Stakeholder Engagement

Participants were asked if their organizations had shifted to a more open, participatory and feedback driven approach to stakeholder engagement in the last 18-24 months. (Figure 15.35).

Figure 15.35 – Organization shifted to more open, participatory and feedback driven approach to stakeholder engagement



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 99 as a result of rounding.

Figures 15.36 shows the percent of participants who reported that their organization had made that shift broken out by industry.

Figure 15.36 – Organization shifted to more open, participatory and feedback driven approach to stakeholder engagement by industry.

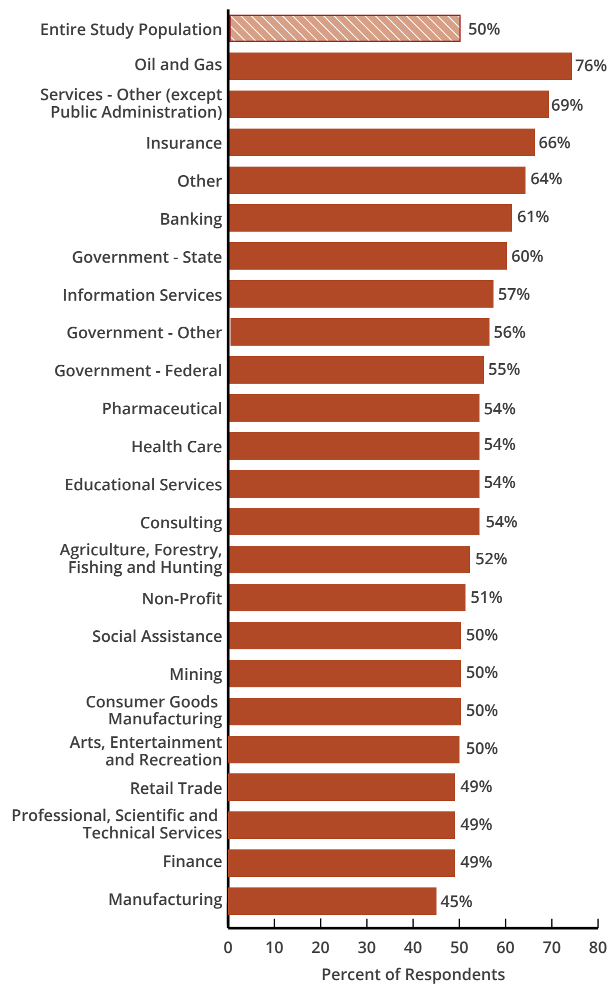
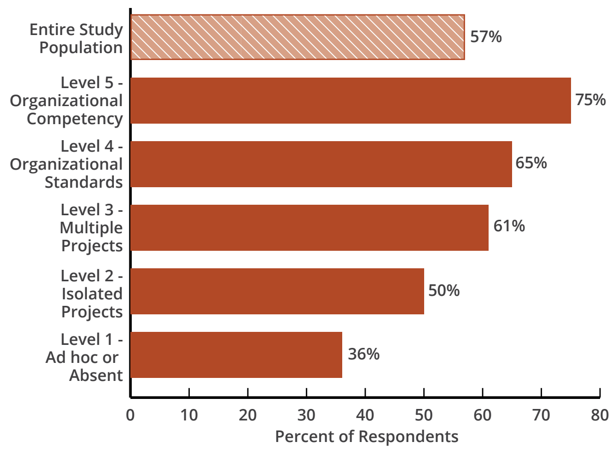


Figure 15.37 shows the percent of respondents who reported that their organizations had made the shift broken out by change management maturity level. Figure 15.37 shows a positive trend between the percent of respondents who reported *"Yes"* and reported a high change management maturity level.

Figure 15.37 – Organization shifted to more open, participatory and feedback driven approach to stakeholder engagement by maturity level



Impacts from the Shift in Stakeholder Engagement Approach on Change Management Activities and Outcomes

Source date: 2019

Survey participants indicated having a greater stakeholder engagement approach resulted in increased stakeholder support, project outcomes, adoption and engagement.

1. **Increased support from stakeholders**
   More engaged stakeholders offered increased support. Stakeholder support led to increased engagement on projects and reinforced the change management team's credibility. Discussions and activities became more purposeful as the level of involvement from management at all levels increased.
2. **Increased success of project outcomes**
   Greater stakeholder engagement resulted in increased levels of project success, including achieved results, increased productivity and improved return on investment (ROI).
3. **Increased understanding and awareness of project needs**
   Greater stakeholder engagement led to increased understanding and awareness, which then increased interest and ownership by employees and decreased time spent explaining the benefits of the change.
4. **Increased engagement from the organization**
   Increased stakeholder engagement led to greater employee engagement, better understanding of other teams' roles, increases in employees' key performance indicators (KPIs), and improved project effectiveness.

Sources of the Shift in Stakeholder Engagement and Impact

Source date: 2019

Participants reported on a shift in stakeholder engagement to a more open, design-oriented and collaborative approach, along with the sources they attributed to this shift.

1. **Organizational directive**
   The shift in stakeholder engagement came as a directive from leadership in their organizations. Participants were not always able to give objective reasons for this directive; however, those that could inferred that these decisions were made to increase retention, decrease attrition, and foster a more effective and efficient work environment.
2. **Impact of enterprise change management**
   Participants concluded that their organization's adoption of an enterprise change management program fostered a culture that was more open, collaborative, feedback-driven, and design-oriented. There was a split in participants who have viewed this shift as a natural reaction to employees being exposed to change management and those who attributed the shift to the organizational effort to embed an enterprise change management competency in the organization.
3. **Stakeholder engagement viewed as critical to success**
   Participants and their organizations shifted to a more open, collaborative, feedback-driven and design-oriented approach to stakeholder engagement because those traits were deemed essential to a project or organization's success. Specifics about how these traits positively impacted a project's success varied by organization, but participants implied that this was a new shift, and it was often associated with a realignment of organizational vision and mission.

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Chapter 19

Saturation and Portfolio Management

Mitigate the Cumulative and Collective Impact of an Ever-increasing Volume of Change

Summary

The amount of change is expected to continue to increase across all industries. This chapter outlines who is experiencing change saturation and who is responsible for identifying and mitigating its negative consequences. Learn tactics for actively managing the portfolio of change and best practices for addressing the time and resource collisions of multiple simultaneous projects. Increase efficiency, effectively allocate resources and maintain employee engagement with a proactive and strategic approach to change portfolio management.

Highlight

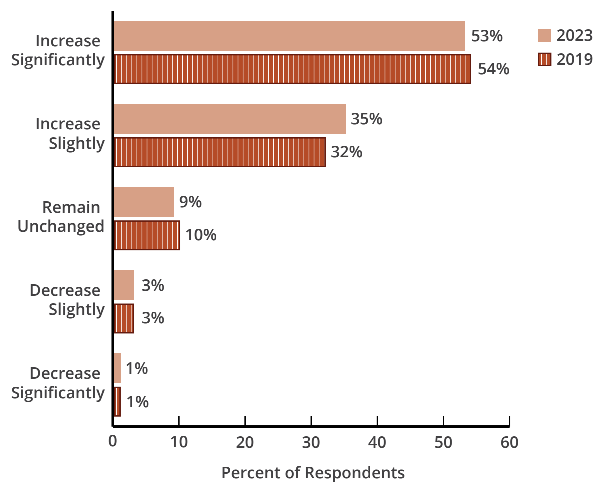
75% of organizations were nearing, at, or past the point of change saturation.


Changes Happening
1 New office

Change Expected in the Next Two Years

Participants responded on the amount of change their organization expected over the next two years. The 2023 participants indicated very similar trends to the 2019 survey participants. Over 50% of survey responses indicated that organizations are expecting a significant increase in the amount of change over the next two years.

Figure 19.1 – Amount of change expected in the next two years

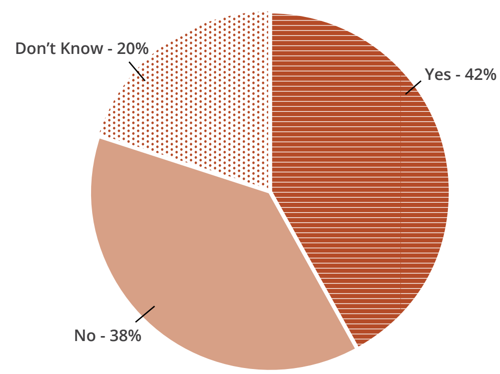


Editor's note: Graph label values add to 101 as a result of rounding.

Active Effort to Manage the Portfolio of Change

Participants were asked whether there was an active effort in their organizations to manage a portfolio of change. Forty-two percent of participants in the 2023 study reported that there was an active effort (Figure 19.2).

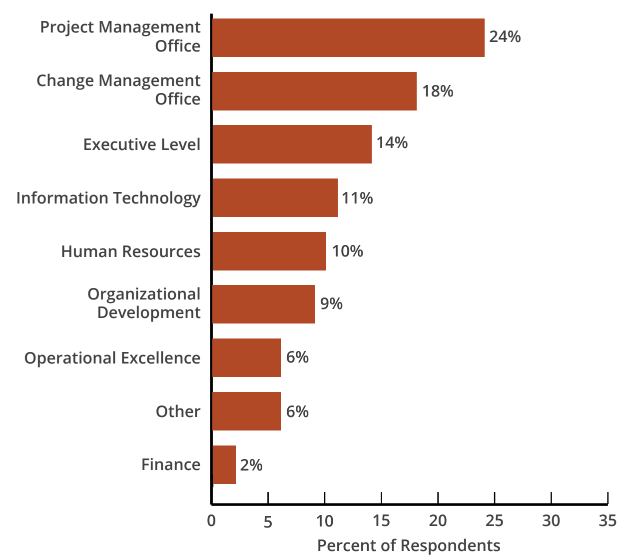
Figure 19.2 – Percentage of organizations managing the portfolio of change



Editor's note: Graph label values add to 101 as a result of rounding.

Participants were also asked where in their organizations the portfolio of change was being managed. Twenty-four percent of participants whose organizations managed a portfolio of change reported that it was managed in the Project Management Office, followed by 18% in the Change Management Office (Figure 19.3).

Figure 19.3 – Where the portfolio of change was managed

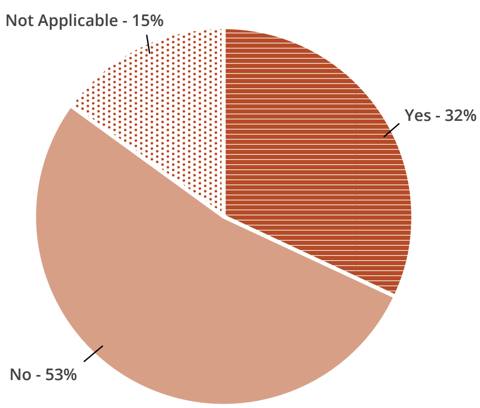


Influence on the Change Portfolio

Source date: 2016

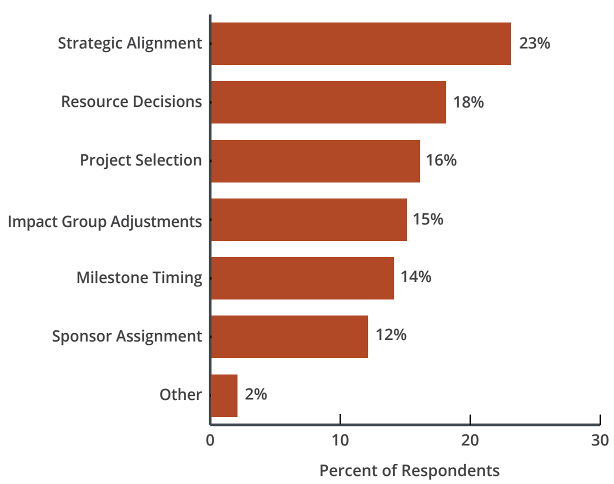
Participants in the 2019 study were asked whether they had the ability to influence the portfolio of change. Thirty-two percent of participants reported having influence over the portfolio of change, a slight decrease from the 34% reported in 2017 (Figure 19.4).

Figure 19.4 – Influence over the portfolio of change



Participants in the 2019 study reported on the ways that they had influence on the portfolio of change. Almost a quarter of participants reported having influence on the strategic alignment of the portfolio of change (Figure 19.5).

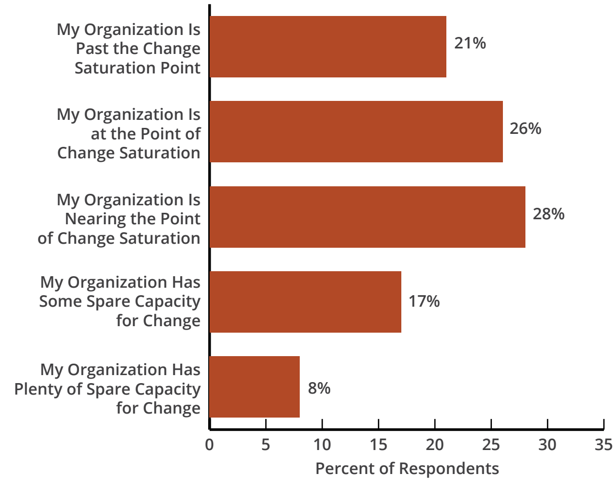
Figure 19.5 – Areas participants had influence on



Level of Saturation

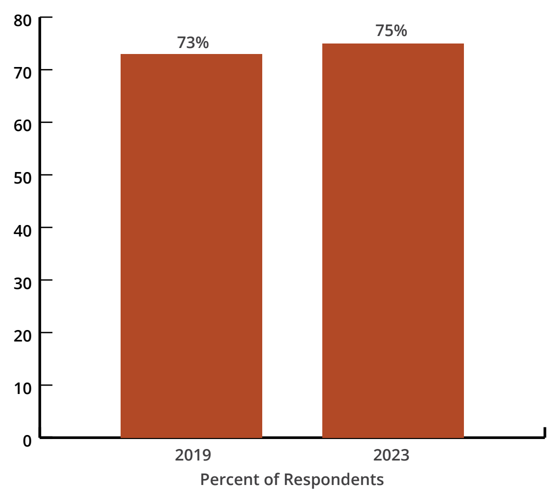
Seventy-five percent of participants in the 2023 study identified being near, at, or past the point of saturation (Figure 19.6).

Figure 19.6 – Level of change saturation



Organizations at or past the point of change saturation remained similar to the 2019 study.

Figure 19.7 – Percentage of participants near or past the change saturation point



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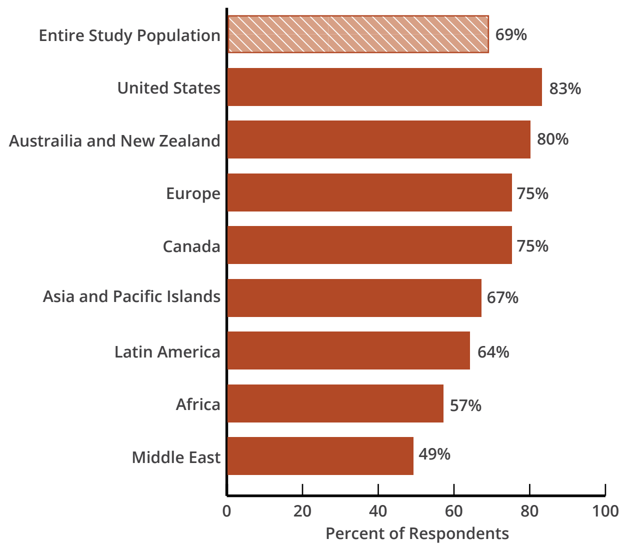
Level of Change Saturation by Region

Figure 19.8 shows the percentage of participants that indicated being near, at, or past the point of saturation by region. The regions are ordered based on the greatest occurrence of change saturation.

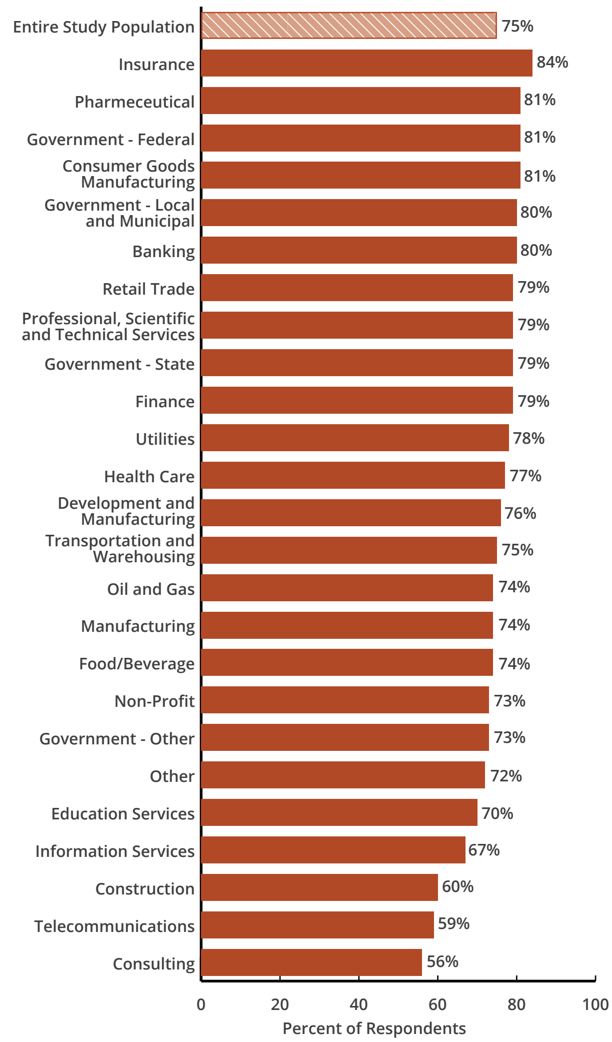
Figure 19.8 – Change saturation by region



Level of Change Saturation by Industry

Figure 19.9 shows the percentage of participants that indicated being near, at, or past the point of saturation by industry. Data was provided by individuals from industries represented by 1.5% or more of the total survey participants.

Figure 19.9 – Change saturation by industry



Level of Change Saturation by Organization Size

Figures 19.10 and 19.11 show the percentage of participants that indicated being near, at, or past the point of saturation by organization size, versus annual revenue and number of employees, in comparison to the entire study.

Figure 19.10 – Change saturation by annual revenue of organization

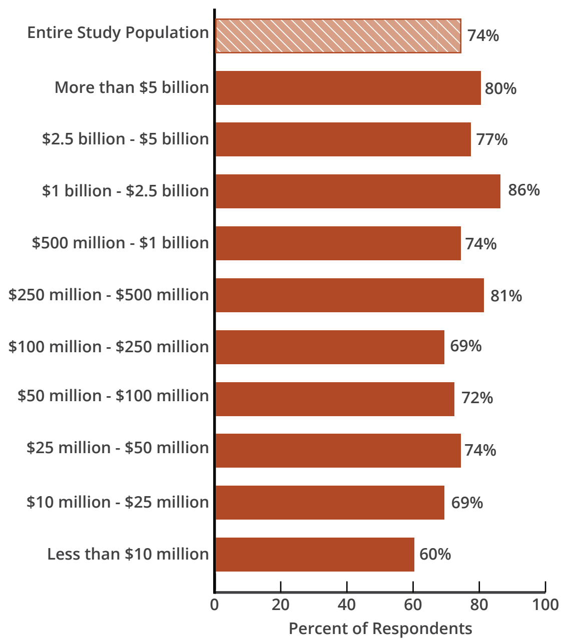
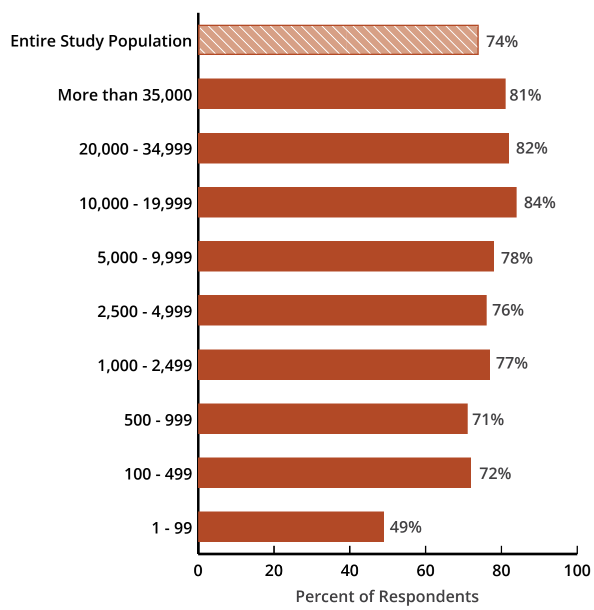


Figure 19.11 – Change saturation by number of employees in organization



Parts of the Organization Experiencing the Greatest Change Saturation

Source date: 2016

Participants identified which parts of their organizations experienced the greatest change saturation. Participants reported that change saturation was occurring across the organizations as a whole. This is either due to too many changes affecting the whole organization or to every department undergoing a variety of change projects.

1. **Frontline employees**
   Frontline employees were cited as experiencing high degrees of saturation. This was due largely to any change in structure or operations cascading impacts on the daily work of frontline employees. Participants also reported that, to keep up in their respective markets, the need for change was constant, and frontline employees are the first and most impacted by these changes.
2. **Middle managers**
   Middle managers were also cited as experiencing high degrees of change saturation. Middle managers were often tasked with the implementation of change and were the first to feel the impacts in the work group. Other functional areas experiencing saturation included:
   - Operations
   - Customer service
   - Customer facing roles
   - Sales
   - Shared services
   - Human Resources (HR)
   - Support staff
   - Corporate services
   - Change Management Office

Universal and Localized Saturation

Source date: 2013

Participants identified whether saturation was universal across the organization or localized within small areas or pockets. More participants (48%) expressed that saturation was universal (Figure 19.12).

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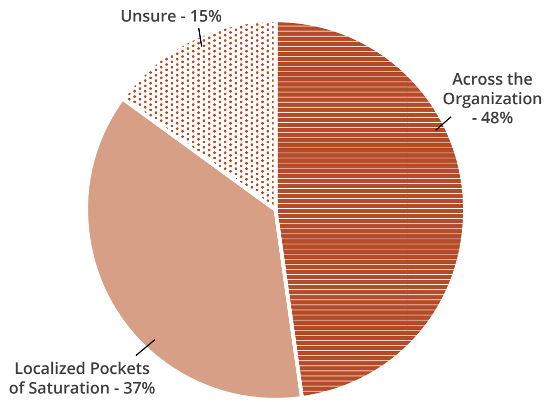
Figure 19.12 – Spread of change saturation



The 37% of participants who indicated saturation was concentrated in localized areas within the organization identified the areas experiencing the greatest levels. Participants reported that Information Technology (IT) was the most saturated area. Human Resources (HR) and customer-facing roles, such as sales, were also areas commonly experiencing saturation. Other notable areas of saturation were finance and the Project Management Office (PMO). Some participants identified employee groups that were experiencing high levels of change saturation, including frontline employees and leadership.

Understanding/Measuring Saturation

Source date: 2016

Participants in the 2015 study described how they measured/understood their employees' level of change saturation.

1. **Saturation behaviors**
   Participants cited several behaviors that were viewed as either demonstrating or caused by change saturation. These behaviors included: higher volume of sick leave, resistance to the change via talk or behavior, gossip, and refusal to attend informational meetings about the change.
2. **Feedback**
   Participants utilized formal and informal feedback channels to evaluate their employees' saturation levels. While a variety of assessment types were used, participants stressed the importance of routine checkups throughout the course projects.
3. **Observation**
   Participants actively observed and monitored the amount and complexity of changes that impacted groups were experiencing. This required participants to actively monitor and keep track of the changes that were being implemented in their organization and the groups affected by those changes.
4. **Intuition**
   Participants often cited *"gut feelings"* or the importance of keeping their *"finger on the pulse"* of their organization's change culture.

Change Management Actions Taken to Address Saturation

Source date: 2013

Participants described what they did in response to saturation. Some participants did not address change saturation for a number of reasons. The most common reason was that the activity fell outside of established change management responsibilities. Other reasons included that the organization was not viewed as saturated or that the sponsor did not request saturation analysis.

Remaining participants indicated that the following actions were taken in response to saturation:

1. **Communicate clearly and consistently**
   Participants engaged in clear and consistent communications for each change. Some participants marketed the change internally, so it stood out from other initiatives.
2. **Engage the sponsor**
   Sponsors were engaged by the change manager to prioritize which changes required immediate attention and which could wait or be discontinued. Participants also engaged sponsors to allocate more resources and funding to change.
3. **Adjust the schedule**
   Changes were rescheduled, if possible, to give impacted groups more time to deal with changes in progress. This included canceling projects, staggering go-live dates, and heat-mapping affected groups to identify groups experiencing saturation and change fatigue.
4. **Integrate**
   Participants integrated similar changes and placed them under the umbrella of a program. They also tried to identify overlap between projects and to minimize redundancies when possible.

Addressing Saturation and Collision

Source date: 2016

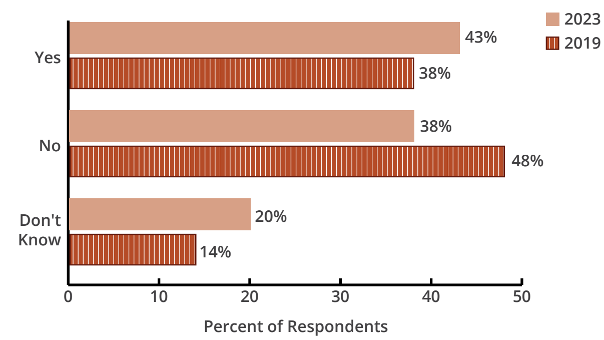
When participants were asked to identify how their organization addressed change saturation and the collision between multiple changes, the top response was *"nothing,"* as many organizations did not address this issue. The top responses for those who did state specific solutions were:

1. **Apply portfolio management techniques**
   The most frequent response was to take an objective view of the changes taking place and utilize formal tools to manage the changes. Having a portfolio of changes allowed participants to streamline work flows, efficiently allocate change resources, and coordinate plans among different projects. Assessments like heat maps and questionnaires were frequently used to identify the change capacity of and impact to people in the organization.
2. **Support prioritization**
   Participants noted that prioritizing changes helped address the issue of change saturation and collision. Prioritization ensured that changes were aligned with the direction of the organization and were both created from and enhanced by previous experiences.
3. **Use of structures**
   Another frequent solution to change saturation and collision was to use a dedicated resource. Project Management Offices (PMOs) and steering committees were most often used to oversee, manage and decide on collision and saturation issues.
4. **Adjust the portfolio**
   The main adjustments to the change portfolio that addressed change saturation and collision were to limit the number of changes happening at a single time, modify the time frames of different projects of different priorities, and distribute resources to the necessary areas.
5. **Increase communication efforts**
   Participants noted that communication efforts helped address saturation and collision by providing a roadmap and status of the portfolio of change, understanding of the amount of change underway and aligning with the organization.

Managing the Change Portfolio

Participants in the 2023 study indicated whether their organization managed the change portfolio (Figure 19.13). Forty-three percent reported that the portfolio was being managed in 2023 in comparison to 38% in 2019.

Figure 19.13 – Managing the change portfolio



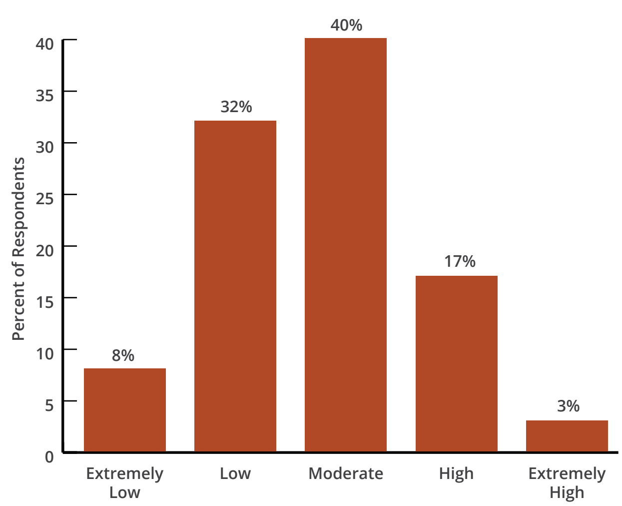
Editor's note: Graph label values add to 101 as a result of rounding.

Interest in Portfolio Management

Source date: 2013

Participants in the 2013 study rated the organization's level of interest in managing the change portfolio. Only 20% reported high to extremely high interest, and 40% expressed low or extremely low interest (Figure 19.14).

Figure 19.14 – Organizational interest in managing the change portfolio



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Primary Motivations for Managing the Change Portfolio

Source date: 2013

Participants in the 2013 study reported on motivations for managing the change portfolio. The most common, in rank order, were:

1. **Mitigate or alleviate change saturation**
   The primary motivation for managing the portfolio of change was managing change saturation. Participants managed the portfolio of change as a step to increase and monitor the organization's capacity for change. Participants emphasized the need to manage the saturation that affected various groups at the employee and leadership levels. Portfolio management was also conducted to handle or resolve competing change initiatives better.
2. **Ensure project success**
   Participants managed the change portfolio to increase the likelihood of success on each project and achieve the desired return on investment (ROI) for projects that comprised the portfolio. Ensuring project results were sustained, avoiding project failures, and setting up future projects for success were also reasons for managing the change portfolio.
3. **Increase organizational effectiveness**
   Managing the portfolio of change was driven by a desire to increase strategic effectiveness, process efficiencies, productivity and organizational growth. Participants were motivated to manage the portfolio to ensure efforts were not duplicated. Participants also noted the role portfolio management plays in aligning change initiatives with the organization's strategic goals.
4. **Allocate resources and budget**
   Participants managed the portfolio of change to allocate resources and funding to change initiatives more effectively. Participants drew attention to tracking and monitoring portfolio management to support allocation.
5. **Maintain or improve employee satisfaction**
   Managing the portfolio of change allowed organizations to improve employee satisfaction and engagement. Participants were motivated to manage the portfolio to minimize change fatigue experienced by employees and mitigate resistance stemming from oversaturation of individuals.

Tactics for Managing the Change Portfolio

Source date: 2013

Participants reported on tactics used to manage the change portfolio. The top four responses were:

1. **Monitor changes underway**
   Participants created an umbrella of oversight to monitor multiple changes underway in the organization. Functions included tracking progress of multiple projects, tracking resources assigned to projects, monitoring management's capacity for change, and gauging the degree of impact on other groups and individuals. Monitoring projects allowed mapping of projects including prioritization and the staggering of timelines. Tools included heat maps, calendar maps and impact surveys.
2. **Centralize information and reporting**
   Participants created systems for openly exchanging and coordinating information. Central locations or databases were created to share information regarding resource availability, project details, communication plans and general change plans. Reporting was centralized so that all project reports were viewed by the change management lead, Change Management Office (CMO), or other lead individual or functional group. *"There are change management communities across projects that meet to compare plans and impacts. All change management plans are also reviewed by the central Change Office." "All of the change management and project management teams report initiatives to a single database."*
3. **Formalize portfolio management**
   A common tactic for managing the portfolio of change was formalizing it as an initiative. Activities included:
   - Establishing a formal strategy and creating a project plan that outlined portfolio management
   - Developing a communications plan focused on sharing information about portfolio management
   - Building a business case and justifying the need for managing the change portfolio
4. **Collaborate with leadership and other groups**
   Participants emphasized leadership involvement as an important step in managing the portfolio of change. Leadership was called on to allocate funding

and resources to portfolio management. Leadership meetings allowed participants to give updates and guide discussions about the portfolio. Participants delivered formal reports to leadership including tracking and monitoring reports. Participants involved other groups, such as the Project Management Office (PMO) and frontline employees, through informal discussions, cross-functional meetings, networking and engagement.

Resolving Conflicts When There is Competition for Resources

Source date: 2016

Participants defined how their organizations resolved conflicts between projects when there was competition for resources, budgets or impacts on people.

1. **Prioritization**
   Prioritization methods were used in both formal and informal settings to resolve project conflicts. Formal prioritization took place ahead of project launch and involved criteria for comparing projects. Informal prioritization typically occurred after a project launch and did not involve methods for comparison. The most frequently cited prioritization criteria included highest value, highest impact, highest expected return on investment (ROI), strategic alignment, importance to the business, business urgency, and regulatory or legislative mandates.
2. **Senior leadership decisions**
   In some cases, decisions were simply made by the CEO, while other cases involved discussions with senior management teams. When conflicts arose and could not be resolved, they were escalated to senior management.
3. **Negotiation**
   Negotiation and collaboration directly among teams resolved conflicts between projects. These tactics were used in face-to-face meetings, in discussions with project teams, with leaders and representatives from the business.
4. **Use of oversight committees**
   Project conflicts were addressed by the collective work of an oversight group. Participants shared a number of names for this group including steering group, steering committee, management review board, project control board, business exchange team, change control board and advisory board. This group had visibility across multiple projects and made decisions to resolve conflict.
5. **Increased resources**
   Conflicts between projects were resolved by increasing the amount of resources and typically included a larger budget or workload for employees.

A number of participants cited the role of individuals in influencing decisions when conflict occurred. Politics and the use of influence and clout resulted in projects moving forward. Several participants also cited, with a negative connotation, that the loudest people (*"squeaky wheels"*) were the ones who were heard. Finally, several participants indicated that projects with the strongest sponsor were favored in times of conflict.

Best Practices In Change Management

Apply best practices research to the changes in your organization to optimize your change management approach and achieve results. As the most comprehensive body of knowledge on change management, ***Best Practices in Change Management*** gives you the access to benchmarks and best practices you need to be effective.

Since 1998, Prosci has conducted research with more than 10,000 change leaders. The ***Best Practices in Change Management*** presents data from the 2023 study, which surveyed 2,668 project leaders and change practitioners, representing organizations from 101 countries.

Participants revealed the factors that contributed to their project success, what they would do differently on their next change project, how they integrated change management in their organizations and how they built an enterprise-wide change management capability. Compare your efforts to these benchmarks and apply best practices in your own change management work.