



- LISA MEGINBIR -

Change Management: *If you build it they will come!*

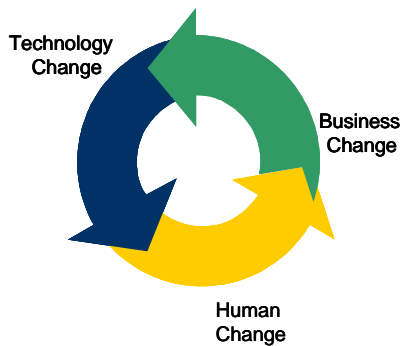
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Well, in fact they might not.

Many technologically sound Information Systems solutions and even some sure-fire leading edge innovations end up with dismal implementations and poor returns on investment because the users of these systems, at best don't take full ownership of them and at worst outright sabotage the desired results. Resistance to change is a normal healthy response by individuals and organizations because we prefer to remain in our comfort zones where we are confident and competent.

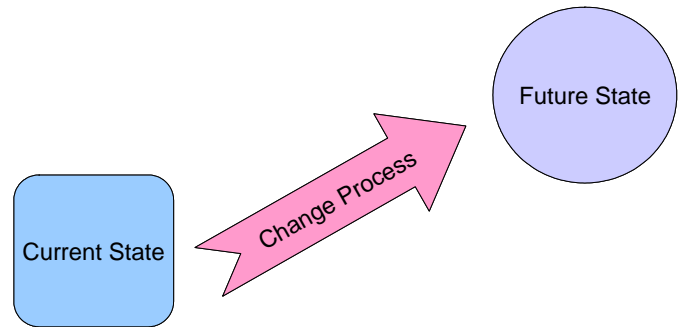
Change management seems to be the mantra on everyone's lips these days and in every consultant's portfolio. Is it really new, or is it something we have been doing all along and just didn't have a name for? Well, as is often the case, it depends.

Good project managers or good managers with projects in their areas have probably been engaging in change management activities regardless of whether or a not the methodology they were using contained it. On the other hand, poorly run projects, less seasoned project managers, projects where budgets were tight, or viewed solely from a technology perspective, probably didn't focus as much on the on the human change aspects as they did on the business or technology ones.



So what is change management?

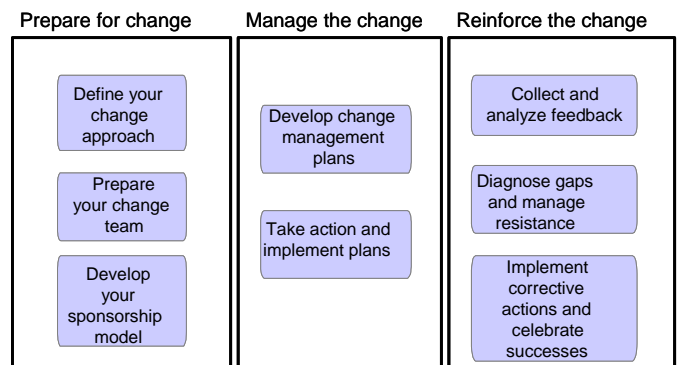
Change management definitions usually encompass two areas, the organizational aspects and the individual aspects. Nancy Lorenzi and Robert Riley define it as "the process of assisting individuals and organizations of passing from an old way of doing things to a new way of doing things".² It is usually a systematic approach to preparing and supporting the organization and individuals in moving from how things are done today to how they will be done in the future.



Many factors might influence how and to what degree change management activities need to be engaged in. How ready or resistant is the organization to change, how large or small is the change facing the organization and what is the organizations' past experience in dealing with situations involving change. Whether the situation was the implementation of a new laboratory system, the outsourcing of the housekeeping function, or the merger of two hospitals, how the change was handled in the past may largely affect how resistant employees (and managers) will be to the current planned activity.

Whatever change methodology is selected it should consist of planned processes and activities to prepare people to adopt and sustain the change. One such methodology developed by Prosci³ is outlined below.

The Change Management Methodology
Prosci (c) ADKAR model



The model defines three major change management processes, each process containing a number of activities. No two change situations will be exactly the same and each will require different activities or degrees of an activity within each process. An upgrade to a radiology system that has been in place for a number of years will

require a very different change approach than the introduction of a PACS system throughout a health region.

To be an effective change enabler the team members should have excellent communication skills, respect of their colleagues, influence and knowledge in their business area, and a commitment to the change. Training and resource material may be required to prepare the team for this role. As prepared as the team needs to be to ensure a successful change implementation so too does the sponsor need to be developed and supported. One of the prime reasons projects fail is inadequate sponsorship⁴. As much attention needs to be provided to ensure that the sponsors are engaged as the rest of the change team. Ensuring that the sponsor has the adequate skills to create and maintain this role throughout the life of the project (and past implementation) is often a key challenge in health care as new priorities emerge.

One of the key activities that the change team will engage in is assisting employees with their individual change efforts. The ADKAR model (© Prosci) identifies five key stages an individual goes through in any change effort: A- awareness of the need to change, D- desire to make the change happen, - K- Knowledge about how to change, A- Ability to change and R-Reinforcement to sustain the change. The following describes these stages and key enablers at each stage.

Employee phases of change	A	Awareness of the need for change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management communications ▪ Customer input ▪ Marketplace changes ▪ Ready-access to information
	D	Desire to participate and support the change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fear of job loss ▪ Discontent with current state ▪ Imminent negative consequence ▪ Enhanced job security ▪ Affiliation and sense of belonging ▪ Career advancement ▪ Acquisition of power or position ▪ Incentive or compensation ▪ Trust and respect for leadership ▪ Hope in future state
	K	Knowledge on how to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training and education ▪ Information access ▪ Examples and role models
	A	Ability to implement required skills and behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practice applying new skills or using new processes and tools ▪ Coaching ▪ Mentoring ▪ Removal of barriers
	R	Reinforcement to sustain the change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incentives and rewards ▪ Compensation changes ▪ Celebrations ▪ Personal recognition

Enablers

How we change is just as important as what we change:

In considering change initiatives in health care organizations, while it is important to focus on what is changing, for instance (the structure, the strategy, workflow, product or system), it is just as important to reflect on the way the change is planned and implemented. This includes the people and process aspects.

In the past we may have focused on some of these components (i.e. a training plan), but rarely have we focused on all the steps and even rarer still do we do them early enough in a project. Often these activities only begin when we get to the implementation phase of a project. For instance, except for a very select group of individuals that may have been involved in a pilot group or project team those individuals directly affected by the change may not be communicated with until they need to know. The transition period that individuals go through can vary and many may take months to adapt to the new way of doing things. Again, early and often communication is key in making the change process effective.

Some lessons learned:

- Understand that resistance to positive change is just as common as resistance to negatively perceived change and that these reactions can be anticipated and managed.⁶
- Incorporate change management activities in parallel to your project management ones not as a distinct project phase.
- Involve the individuals affected by the change early enough and often enough to ensure their successful adoption of the new way of doing things.
- Do it early in the project life-cycle.

Successfully managing the change components of projects will benefit the projects and activities we are currently engaged but developing this competency in our organizations could be beneficial in many other areas as well.

If you build it, they will come, and they might even stay!

¹ Sandra Price, Change Goddess, GNA Consulting

² N.M. Lorenzi, R.T. Riley, *Organizational Aspects of Health Informatics*, Springer-Verlag, New York, N.Y, 1995

³ www.change-management.com

⁴ P. Schimid, Koch, A. *How sponsors and Top Management Make Projects Succeed or Fail*, 2004 PMI Global Congress Proceedings - Prague

⁵ www.change-management.com

⁶ D. Conner, *Managing at the speed of change how resilient managers succeed and prosper where others fail* (1st ed) Villard Books, New York, 1995

