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Tackling Change Management: A Step-by-Step Guide



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Introduction to Change Management

Change management is the management of a change or development within an organization. It's based on the assumption that change can be controlled and planned. And while there are various change management approaches and frameworks, they all assume that we can control other people's behavior. Think about it, though: How many times have you been able to control someone else? Or have had them do something that you need them to do? It certainly isn't easy. And it's even harder to make sure this is long-lasting change that doesn't unravel. So what can you do?

The Purpose of This Ebook

We want to introduce you to a new way to view change management. We'll take a deep look at how to motivate others to change. Not every organization or team is the same, and so we offer practical tips to ensure that the change you implement is long lasting.





1

Changing Human Behaviour

Wouldn’t it be great if we were all rational beings who innately understood the benefits of change and therefore immediately altered our behaviour when change projects were introduced at work? But it doesn’t really work that way. People are complicated creatures, and we’ve spent centuries musing over our behaviour in the hope of predicting and guiding it. When you’re implementing change, the first thing to understand is that we’re not all the same. What will help one person embrace change might not work for someone else. Instead, focus on motivating everyone impacted by the change to embrace it.



The first thing we need to do is make sure that people know change is taking place. The best way to do this is to create a strong and comprehensive communication plan. Why? People go through different stages of acceptance when faced with something new. No matter how small or insignificant the change might seem, it's still a move away from the status quo and a step out of their comfort zone.

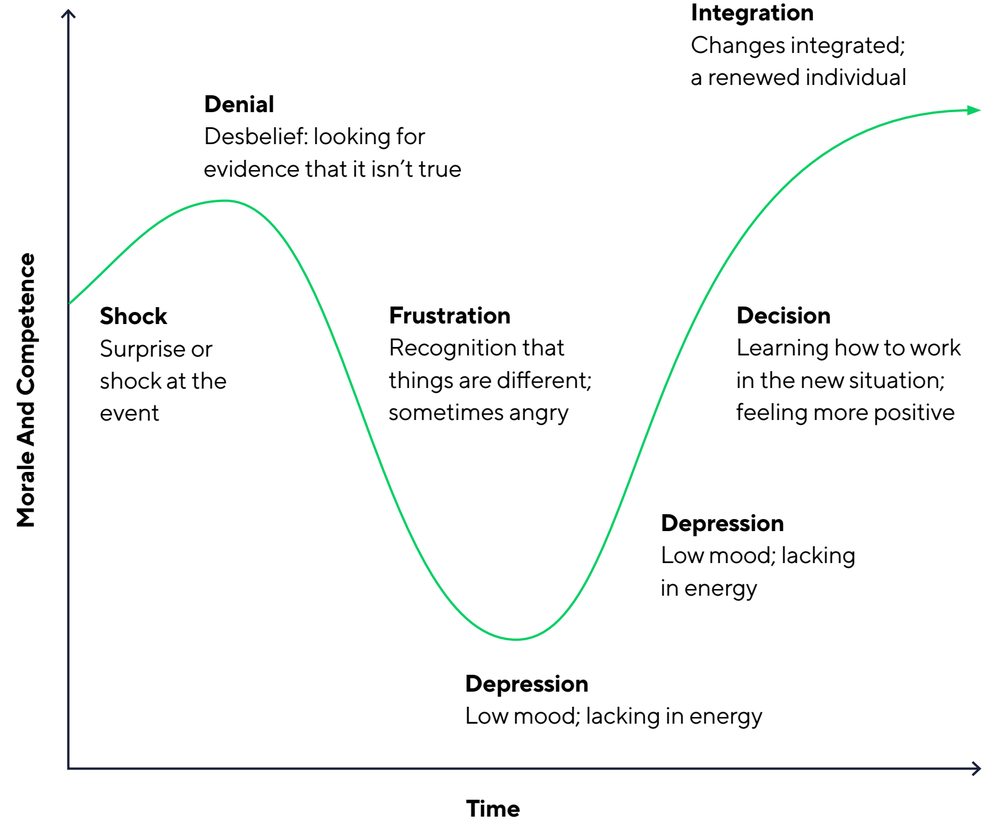
A best-practice communication plan immediately conveys change-based decisions to those it will impact. This includes related teams, even if they won't be directly affected by the change. The sooner people can get on the Kübler-Ross change curve, the sooner they can work through it.

Initial communications should be at a high level. Share what is known, why the change is being made, and what the planned outcome is. Honesty is key. If the project has only started and planning is ongoing, then share this in the first communication. We've all been in a situation where a lack of transparency has sparked rumors and caused work productivity and team morale to tank. When you're not transparent, people waste energy wondering what's going on.





Unsure of how to start your first communication? A great place to begin is the why of the change. Break down the change into bitesize chunks and explain why the change is needed.



Kübler-Ross Change Curve

The why:

- Recap the problem. What was the issue that sparked the need for change? Why is the old way no longer an option?
- Who identified the problem? Was it feedback from frustrated teams? Or did it come from management?
- Who made the decision that this change was needed? Was it a team lead or management? Or did it come from higher up?

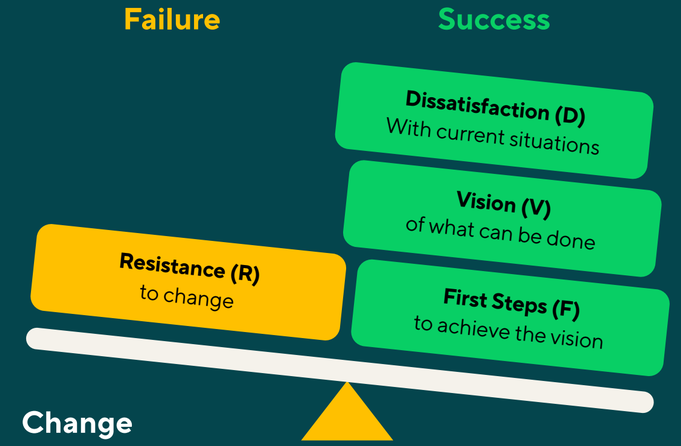
Then you can move onto other questions:

- Who is working on the project? This might not be defined in your first communication but it could also be an opportunity to ask for volunteers to provide their insights and time.
- What has been done so far? You might have purchased only a tool or brought together the team who will be involved, but it's best to share where you are.

What are the challenges? Don't underplay the work that this project will require. There may be a learning curve if you're implementing a new tool, or the challenge might be the time investment. Be honest.

What's the vision? Now that you've acknowledged the challenges, explain what life is going to be like after this change and outline what improvements will be made.

These questions allow us to work towards successful change by easing resistance, highlighting dissatisfaction with the current situation, and outlining a vision of what can be improved. This is the basis of David Gleicher's famous formula for change.



So you've communicated the need for change and your team is officially on the change curve. The next step is to motivate them to get on board!



Motivation

At its simplest, motivation is the reason for a person's actions. There are two different types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is influenced by external forces. An example is when children are promised cash rewards for getting good grades in school. Conversely, intrinsic motivation is driven by an internal push. It's what compels people to volunteer their time when there is no outside reward.

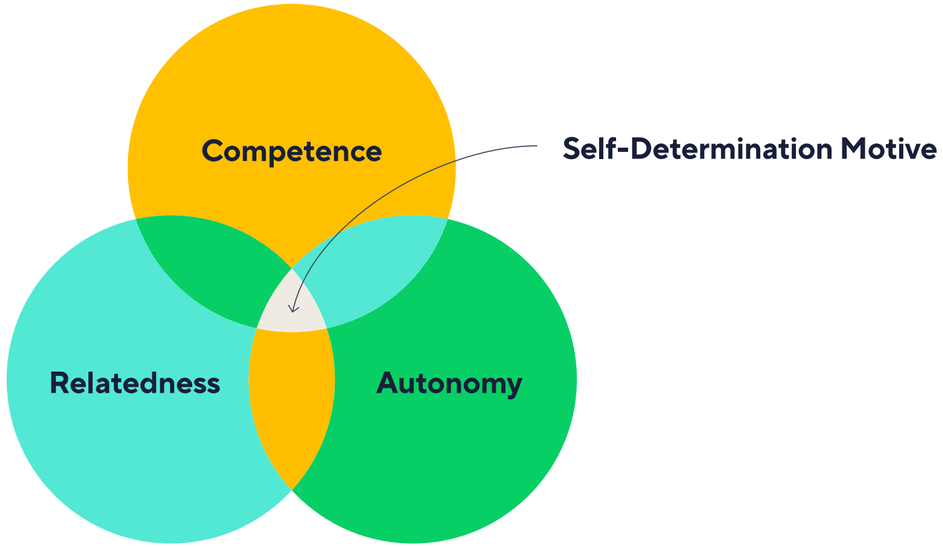
So if both types of motivation generate action, then what's the problem?

Let's look at extrinsic motivation first. Dangling a carrot might work in the short term, but it can undermine an individual's motivation in the longer term. This means that with time, you'll need to find bigger and shinier rewards to influence behaviour. Extrinsic motivation can also have a negative effect on creativity: When a team is focused exclusively on bottom-line, results-only outcomes, they may act like they have blinkers on. Their focus is on hitting a target for a reward, and that's all.

In sales, for example, a salesperson needs to be able to tie the product or service they're selling to the client's needs. An external reward may affect their ability to balance the two because they are hyper-focused on hitting targets.

Intrinsic motivation lasts longer, and is a better investment of your time. Instead of making the carrot bigger every week, it's better to understand an individual's drive and nurture it. This is more beneficial to the organization and has the added bonus of benefitting the individual.

Here's some good news: Although everyone is different, we can help build intrinsic motivation in everyone using a single approach. Namely, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory.



This theory posits that intrinsic motivation can be broken down into three parts: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. When all three of these elements are supported, then internal motivation will be strong, which will make change easier. Here's how to make that happen:

Competence: How competent do those affected by the change feel with regards to the new ways of working?

This can be addressed through training, sharing expectations, and having a clear plan to make sure that they are supported by "champions" within the organization. After the initial training, it's best to see what resources they can access and if there will be ongoing support or further training sessions.

Relatedness: How supported do they feel during the change?

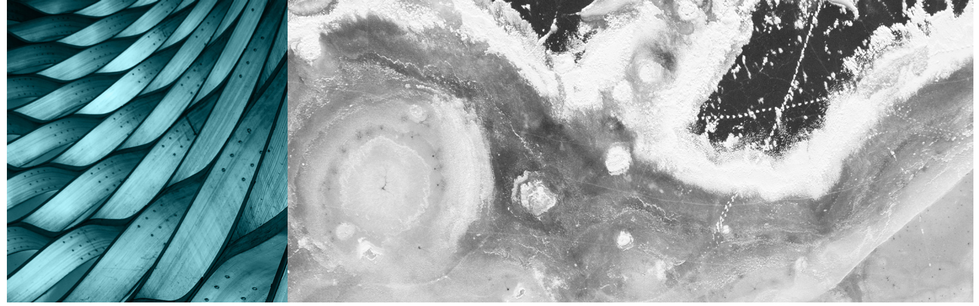
This can be addressed during training to ensure that champions can be approached when questions or concerns arise. It's also something that the team leads or managers need to consider: People need to have a safe space to ask questions and share feedback, even if it's not immediately actionable. If you create a space for these questions and concerns, you will reduce the likelihood of negative chatter behind closed doors.



Autonomy: Do people feel in control of their work and their development?

If a new tool is being brought in to help manage work, streamline the processes, or provide data, how can you ensure people will still have control over their day-to-day work? Put simply: Include people and give them a voice. You need to find a way to allow team members to give ongoing feedback and maintain control. It's important to show people that new tool can help them manage their own work and professional development.

If you've covered all your bases and you still meet resistance, ask for feedback and give your team space. But make sure you're empathetic, and be consistent and clear on the reasons why the change is being made.



2

Organizational Culture and Its Impact on Change Projects

So you've got your communication plan and you're already lining up opportunities for feedback in the days after the change. Great!
But there's a bit more to consider. Change management doesn't happen in a vacuum — it happens within a team or organizational culture.

Organizational culture refers to the underlying values and behaviors that contribute to the social environment of that company. Each company has its nuances. A startup might not feel the same as an established company, for example. The better you understand the culture in which you're managing change, the better you will be able to anticipate risks and create a contingency plan.

There are a few ways to determine your organizational culture.
A great way is to take a look at your mission statement. It should offer insight into company philosophy and how it impacts employees and customers. Let's have a look at some:

Tesla: To accelerate the advent of sustainable transport by bringing compelling mass-market electric cars to market as soon as possible.

Starbucks: To inspire and nurture the human spirit — one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time.

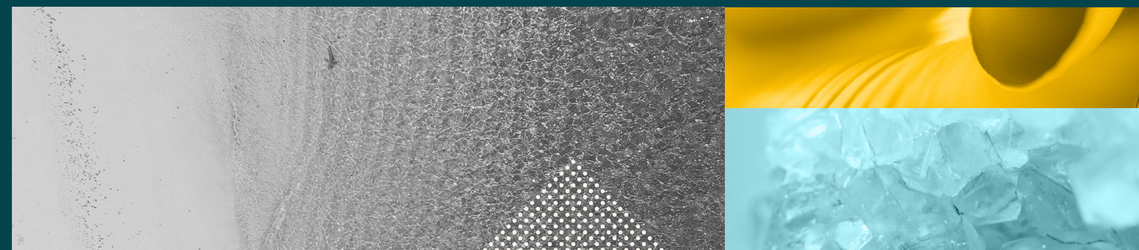
IKEA: At IKEA, our vision is to create a better everyday life for the many people. Our business idea supports this vision by offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them.

Facebook (up until 2014): Run fast and break things.

What does your mission statement reveal about your organization? Is it focused on increasing market share, innovating, growing people in a family-like structure, or building upon a strong foundation of consistency? Cameron and Quinn's competing values framework is a great way to guide your search.



Cameron & Quinn's Competing Values Framework





Caption: Cameron and Quinn's Model Explained

This model splits company culture into four quadrants known as clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, and market. There is no "wrong" type of culture. But based on how your organization works, there are a few things to watch out for when managing change.

Clan: This culture makes room for many "in-house" voices. In these companies, everyone gets a say. A great benefit of this culture is that it's collaborative and nurturing by nature. But this can turn into a "too many cooks" situation quickly. If you're involving others in championing change in a clannish company, make sure to create a focused core team in which everyone has clear objectives and executes actions after every meeting.

Adhocracy: Adhocratic companies are more open to taking risks. They are used to change and are unafraid to try new things. This can make change easier to introduce, but it's vital to ensure that people don't suffer from "change fatigue" and instead learn from previous rollouts. In this dynamic culture, you might find people want to do too much too fast. Break down change into phases in which you optimize rollouts, while securing resources for follow-up. These phases can include goals, such as rolling out the change to another team, or integrating the new tool with other systems.

Market: A market culture is results driven. Start with clear goals and break down change into digestible "champagne moments" that help create excitement for your project. Watch out for other projects and goals that take time from yours. A market culture is often fast moving. Getting regular feedback on your change project's status and setting realistic milestones will help keep your project in people's minds.

Hierarchical: Hierarchical cultures have clear processes and procedures. It often works well to have people higher in the chain of command communicate the change. Here, a top-down culture encourages others to get on board. It's important to make sure that management is practising what they preach though. And make sure front-line employees who the change will affect the most feel like they have enough information.





3

The Impact of Country Culture

So we've navigated the basics of human motivation and touched on the ways that organizational culture might help catalyze change. But if you're in a large organization that spans multiple countries, or you work in a culturally diverse team, you might want to view this change project through one final dimension — country cultures. Here, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is very helpful.

Caption: Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory

When rolling out a global change or implementing a new tool across international offices, one size certainly does not fit all. Within your company, you might find that certain office locations are more forthcoming with individual feedback, while others rely on teamwork to get through transitions. With Hofstede’s 6-dimensional model of country culture, you should be able to adapt communications depending on who you’re working with.

This model divides culture into 6 elements, which provide insight into how culture influences people’s behavior and thinking. 3 of these dimensions are of particular use when it comes to managing change: collectivism and individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance.



Collectivism and Individualism

Using this first lens, you should get an understanding of the degree of interdependence in the society in question. Those that lean individualist — such as the United States — value independence more highly. Here, people may seem more self-reliant and prefer resources that they can go to on their own time to learn about your change project. This doesn’t mean you should ditch group training, but it does suggest that providing resources that can be reviewed by employees alone, such as explanations or quizzes, might be more effective.

If the culture leans more collectivist — such as the United Arab Emirates — a teamwork-based plan should be front and center. Here, everyone likes to focus on the greater good. The importance of the team can be leveraged during the change: You can ensure that key players or champions within teams encourage their colleagues to adapt to the change. But make sure to encourage and elicit ideas. In collectivist cultures, people can be less confident when it comes to sharing suggestions, becoming more susceptible to “group think” environment.

Power Distance

Power distance examines how people view power relationships and the degree to which power is spread unequally in a company. In cultures where there is a high power distance, what a manager says often goes. This can aid in managing change because the top-down power structure means those lower down will adapt relatively quickly. But in order to be employee centered and build internal motivation, make sure that the power distance isn't so great that feedback is unwelcome or that red flags spotted by front-line employees aren't shared with management.

Alternatively, lower power-distance cultures — like what we see in Denmark — can facilitate a large amount of candid feedback. This can sometimes seem like resistance, but it's important to apply the power distance lens and realize that it might simply be openness facilitated by more equal power distribution. You can use this to your advantage when managing a change: Feedback from low power-distance cultures provides the opportunity to refine a tool or process before a rollout.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance measures the degree of discomfort that is created by uncertainty or unfamiliar situations. When working with a culture that scores low in uncertainty avoidance — such as Singapore — it might be easier to identify an MVP or take an agile approach to the project. Although a clear end point isn't a must-have when getting buy-in from those impacted by change, using milestones can help avoid the change project from dragging.

On the other hand, having a clear end goal, transparent steps on how to get there, and information on what's involved will help those in a high uncertainty-avoidance culture to get on board. An example of this is many of the countries in Latin America and Russia. Here, communications should include clear, structured information (avoid non-essential information), and leverage formalized and familiar processes.

This country comparison chart will be helpful as you make your assessments.

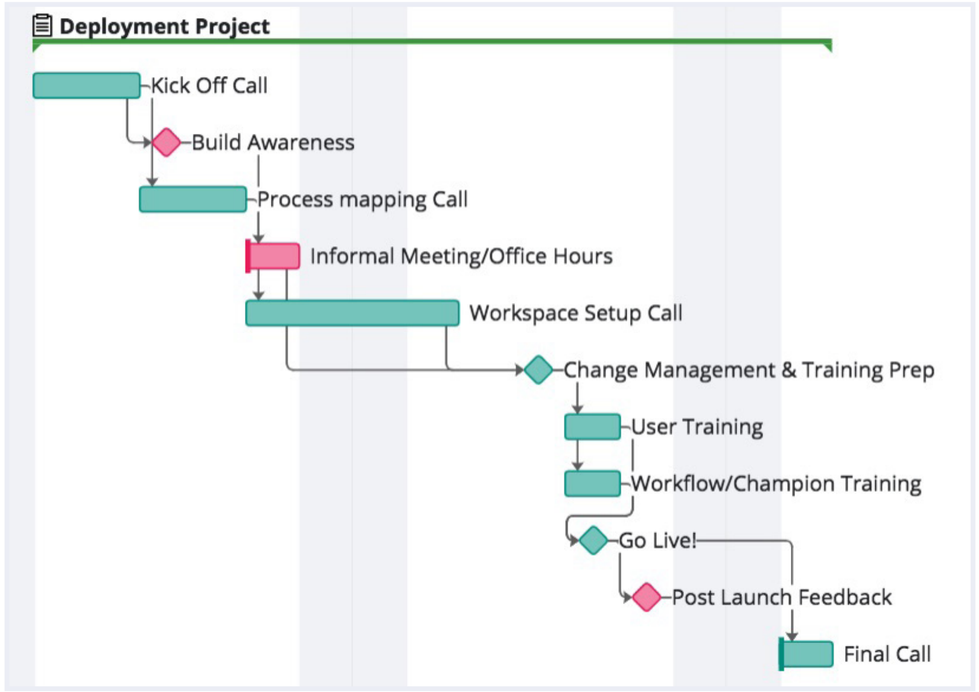


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Tips to Get Started

After making it this far, you should have a good understanding of intrinsic motivation, organizational culture, country cultures, and how all of these aspects can impact a successful change.

For example, if you are managing a change in a hierarchical culture, you might now be aware of the power managers have, and also the importance of involving individual front-line employees by putting emphasis on their day-to-day experience. In contrast, if you're managing change in a market culture with a high uncertainty-avoidance level, you'll know that it's important to keep change at the top of everyone's list, offer insights into tangible steps, and ensure that communications are clear. Here are some tips to get you started:



1. **Include communications in your project plan.** Strategically manage when communications are sent and office hours are scheduled. Make sure to include when you intend to share more information in your communications.

2. **Find the right people to join the change team.** These are people who might be involved in the early trainings, who provide feedback, or who are known to influence others in the team.

3. **Start communicating.** In your first communication with the team who will be impacted by the change, make sure to use the why. Provide insight into why the current way of working isn't sustainable, and paint a picture of what work will be like after the change. Use the company culture to your advantage. If it's hierarchal, have a manager or higher-level executive send the communication. If it's a clan culture, then you can follow up the email with a response.

4. **Keep communicating.** After the initial email or communication has been shared, follow up with an informal meeting. This could be within office hours and may involve a feedback form. Uncover people's concerns while you provide more details about the change. Clan cultures might get more out of office hours, while those with a bigger power distance could benefit from anonymous feedback questionnaires.

5. **Training.** Make sure that people understand what the training is for and what you expect of them. Give them information if there's a cross-over period where the change is monitored before being fully implemented.

   After training, provide resources that cover everything discussed in the training, quick access to a shared document with the expectations, and somewhere to ask questions. You may lighten the workload of champions in the team so they can support others during the transition, or provide a simple contact form. Individualistic cultures might prefer to have self-service trainings, while market organizations might need training that can be done on their own time and possibly, a competition for those who complete it by a certain date.

6. **Feedback.** Change doesn't stick as easily as we would like it to. Offer people an opportunity to share feedback on the change a few weeks after it's implemented. This will not only give the employees a space where their feedback is heard and seen as important — which builds on the relatedness side of internal motivation — but it will also be valuable for the project team. It also allows for iterations to be made to the new process and helps you spot risks before the next project.



Uncertainty Avoidance

As the project gains speed and the change is imminent, resistance to the change by a few is only natural. Don't challenge it — just roll with it. Try to find the true source of their resistance:

- Do they struggle with new technology?
- Do they fear redundancy?
- Do they not undertand the new vision and the positive impact it will have?
- Are they resisting due to their lack of control over the situation?

Many of these issues can be addressed by training, whether group or e-learnings or documentation explaining what the expectations are. They might simply need the space to provide this feedback. Empathy is key in situations where there are outliers.

Remember to focus on the organization type to support these final holdouts in a way that reflects the cultural and environmental path they've been working in. In market cultures, a competition might be useful to encourage people to get on board, whereas in a traditional hierarchical organization, further communications from higher-level execs may be enough to get the ball rolling.

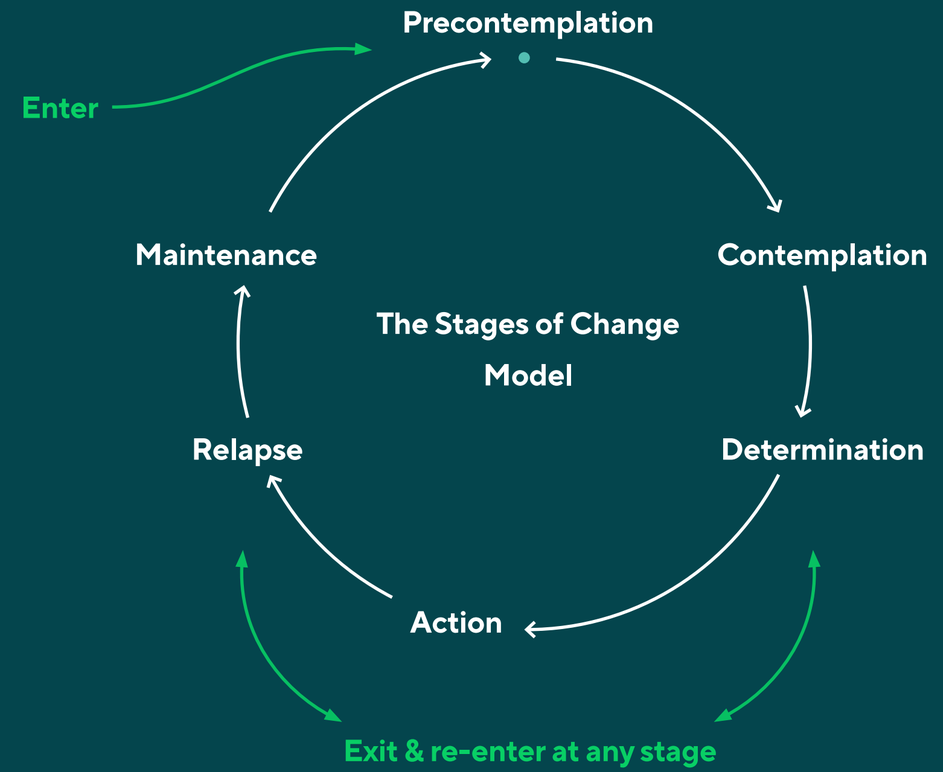


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Is It Too Late...?

Maybe you already rolled out a change, but weren't armed with all of this knowledge at the time. Your change project might not have fully taken root, and employees may be reverting back to old ways of working. Or perhaps they are not investing as much time into the change as they should. The good news is that it's not too late!

Even if a change felt successful at the time you implemented it, it takes work for people to avoid falling back into their old ways. Prochaska and DiClemente's Stages of Change Model provides an insight into the different stages of changing behavior, and why people can exit and re-enter the process.



Restarting Change

1. Feedback
2. Bridge the Gap
3. Relaunch
4. Feedback

Feedback

The best way to get to the root of why the change wasn't successful is to ask people. Send a survey, spend some time with the team, or have managers and team leads provide feedback. Approach feedback in a way that fits the organizational culture. If you're in a hierarchical culture, an anonymous survey could work best, where open group sessions might be the best option in clan cultures. Keep in mind the country culture, too. High power-distance environments might mean that managers won't get feedback as quickly as in low power-distance ones.

Bridge the Gap

Once you have a better understanding of the reasons people aren't changing, you can address these factors by encouraging intrinsic motivation, and providing support for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.



Don't underestimate the power of involving "change champions" from teams, or people who will be able to provide candid feedback on the gaps in the first rollout. As you start to plan sessions and build resources to bridge the gap with training and clear standard operating procedures the "change champions" should be able to provide feedback and express what they believe will help their colleagues the most.

Relaunch

Along with having a "champagne moment" to celebrate the relaunch of the change and sharing the why, make sure to acknowledge the gap in the initial launch and that, thanks to feedback from the teams, this is being relaunched. Relaunch with a focus on building intrinsic motivation, leveraging the organizational culture, and outlining how the teams can provide feedback in 2 to 4 weeks' time.



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