Whitepaper

Change Management: 
A Scientific Approach

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The greatest challenges of all large scale transformation projects lie in the effectiveness of managing the impacts of change from people perspective. This perspective has historically been ignored. The importance of Change Management is only realized when a transformation fails and its root-cause analysis is carried out. It is then realized that with the best of implementations in place, the program has not been able to reap the desired benefits, because the people aspect of change was ignored. One of the main reasons for the lack of importance to change management is the non-tangible impacts that it creates during the transformation journey. Empirical analysis on intangible factors like culture, leadership, and motivation is a challenge.

As the subject of Change management has evolved over time, different research organizations, practitioners and scholars have created metrics and tools for measuring change and its adoption. Karl Jung, the founder of Analytical Psychology says, “That which is measured improves. That which is measured and reported improves exponentially.” Various tools like Change impact assessment, people risk assessment, change readiness assessment, change adoption metrics and many more are used at different stages of the implementation, to measure the health of change progress. Some of the basic tools of change management are as follows:

### Change Impact Assessment

Change Impact Assessment tools that are used to capture impact from people, process, system and technology perspective, are deployed to measure, report and recommend interventions for mitigation of risks in the agile change processes.

The outcomes of Change Impact Assessments are depicted in the form of risk heat maps that give the overall landscape of change risk in terms of criticality (high, medium, low impact) and perception (positive, negative, neutral).

### People Risk Assessment

There are many other tools that derive people risk and generate risk heat maps to highlight target areas for supporting change. A PROSCI-based people risk tool is one tool that measures the degree of people risk, in terms of complexity and scope of change, and organizational attributes like culture and adaptability towards change.

### CultureKon

Culture, which is one of the most important ingredients of change, is an entirely complex phenomenon. Although there are many tools that have been devised to measure the dimensions of culture and design interventions for cultural integration, it is still quite difficult to gauge the complexities arising of cultural gaps and recommending associated mitigations. CultureKon is a tool that measures the culture of the organization on the dimensions of people, process, innovation or achievement orientation. This tool plots the current culture of the organization, as well as the desired culture that the organization aims to bring in through transformation programs. The results of this tool showcase the areas of cultural gaps. Change Management interventions can be planned in order to reduce the cultural gaps and assist the employees to adapt to the cultural change.
Readiness Assessment

Dip-stick surveys based on scientifically proven PROSCI methodology of ADKAR, are used for measuring Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement parameters of change. As per PROSCI, all individuals undergo a change cycle. Their level of awareness, desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement determines their level of readiness to adopt change. Readiness assessments measuring these parameters are administered strategically after various change interventions. The results of these readiness assessment help in identify which parameter is acting as a barrier in change adoption. For e.g., it may so happen that the awareness and desire of the impacted users is high, but the knowledge about the change is low. In such cases, mitigations around training are planned to increase the level of knowledge of impacted users.

Business readiness surveys that aim at gauging the readiness of business users in terms of business continuity and available resource, logistics and knowledge, are conducted before the Go-Live. The results of business readiness checks act as the Go-No-Go gates before the Go-Live.

Analytics-based Change Tools

In the data-driven world of today, the basic tools of change management are undergoing tremendous enhancement through application of analytics. For example, the ADKAR-based readiness assessments that we just talked about have been modified as descriptive, diagnostic and predictive readiness assessments, enabling more intelligent approach of handling readiness of impacted stakeholders of change.

Applying analytics to identify stakeholder sentiments is another revolutionary approach in the field of change management. Engagement data helps identify likely resistance. Predictive resistance management is used to pre-empt interpersonal conflicts based on behavioral patterns and engagement levels in different forums of the change journey.

Digital learning solutions like web-based training, learning, and many other digital learning platforms are no more limited to digitization of the knowledge content. They also measure the engagement levels of the learners through the application of analytics on data like number of views, likes, comments, share, etc. This helps in improving the learning curve for change, address the concerns and queries digitally and gauge the readiness of the impacted users.

Change Audit tools are used to define the key behaviours as expected, in the standard work template. The level of performance as expected for each of these behaviours, is then keyed over a period of time for different impacted stakeholder groups into the audit tool. The tool is then executed to get results for the level of adoption. The results from the tool give us insights about the adoption like, the change was adopted immediately in all areas, utilization of resources varied, speed of adoption in certain groups was low due to resistance.

The level of adoption is directly proportional to the return on investment because as behaviours change, performances change, which ultimately lead to the realization of benefits for the organization.
Change initiatives that use such structured and scientific approaches are more likely to succeed in producing the desired benefits. Timely interventions in the right place and right direction help save a lot of rework, realignment, retraining and chaos arising out of lack of clarity. The traditional way of gauging project health has been by tracking scope, cost and schedule. But, in order to keep these metrics on track, the underlying equations of business relationships, synergies of implementing teams, buy-in from the business, capability build of the users and their readiness is instrumental. Thus, it is clear that the change management tools design the metrics for measuring these softer aspects of the change journey.

With greater understanding of the change management concepts and the importance of change management, smart organizations have become more focused on handling change in a much better way. The latest trends as per PROSCI suggest that Change Management will move from ‘Project by Project’ approach to ‘Building Enterprise Change Competency’. The organizations will now focus on building internal capability to manage change, rather than to treat it as a project that has limited time and scope. They will consolidate data from change implementations for empirical study and predictive analytics, that will help in making more intelligent decisions for handling change for future implementations, making the organization more change-agile and change-fit.

Resources:
acmpglobal.org
PROSCI: Emerging Trends in Change Management
White Paper: 5 Keys for Successful Change Management
Project Smart: Building an Effective Change Management Organisation
Deloitte: Change Analytics- Complex Basics: Managing change as part of Transformation
About the Author

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Niharika comes with a technical and HR background, and is currently into people and process consulting. She has an experience of working in varied cultures all across the globe.