

## Overcoming resistance to change: implementing new technology



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**Introduction to  
change management**

Change management refers to how change and development is managed within a business. There are many types of change, and reasons for it, that a company might pursue. Technology has become one of the biggest drivers of change, as well as a significant aid to the change process. It can be both the cause for, and a way to smooth, a change project.

Management teams have a wealth of models at their fingertips to help them successfully navigate significant change. Consequently, it can feel overwhelming knowing where to start, how to structure the change process, and what success looks like.

Change will always cause some form of resistance. But some organisational changes may be more challenging for employees to accept. If the change being pursued is likely to cause a strong resistance, the best place to begin is probably Lewin's Force Field Analysis, which supports the creation of a clear picture of the scale of resistance to, and the leverage management teams have to demonstrate benefits of, the change being pursued.

However, before getting started it is first helpful to understand how and why humans react to, and process, change in the way they do (and how to influence that behaviour). That is why we've started this white paper with an introduction to behavioural science

and how it applies to change management. Countless models for change have been developed since the field was popularised in the 1980s. So we've outlined the key frameworks you can follow to design your change process, highlighting how or why they might (or might not be) be the right choice.

[According to Forbes](#), McKinsey & Company research shows that 70% of digital transformations fail, while a Boston Consulting Group survey suggests that 75% of transformation efforts don't deliver the anticipated results. These fairly alarming statistics show that it is really easy to get the change management process wrong. But these failures can be avoided. It is helpful to note that there are factors that support change that cross all approaches to and frameworks for change management; these should be taken into account whichever route is taken. Those key ideas are outlined at the end of this white paper.



**Behavioural  
science**

Being able to recognise how and why humans behave and react in the ways they do can be incredibly helpful when undertaking a change project. Behavioural science is the collection of scientific disciplines that relate to the understanding of human behaviour, and includes anthropology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry and political science, among others.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus famously wrote, 'change is the only constant'. It's a fact we've known for thousands of years, yet change still produces – and always will produce – a strong reaction. This collection of scientific disciplines offers ways for us to manage those strong reactions, providing helpful tools to understand and seek to influence, direct or change, human behaviour.

## Heuristics and managing human responses to change

Change management expert [Michael Beaton](#) writes, "Externally imposed change – which can also be regarded as change that is 'done to you' – could be active in nature if you willingly and openly embrace and adopt the change, or passive in nature if you merely allow the transition to occur without making any effort to alter or adopt it yourself." For organisational change to take place without resistance, teams need to be guided towards

becoming active and embracing the change, rather than passively allowing the change to take place around them.

[A Gartner survey discovered](#) that for every \$1 invested in technology, organisations typically spend \$3 to \$10 on change management. But this cost can be avoided. By identifying and understanding how humans respond to uncertainty and risk, managers can design a change process that limits resistance and maximises chances for success from the start.

This is where heuristics come in.

Behavioural scientists have identified over 200 heuristics, or cognitive short cuts, that determine how humans will react or behave in any given situation. These are the 'thinking traps' that humans get unconsciously pulled into. Heuristics have many uses in business and are often applied in PR, marketing and sales, but they're also helpful tools when it comes to change management.

Some of the key heuristics to take into account when planning organisational change include:



### Representativeness

Renowned psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky define the representativeness heuristic as how people compare a judgement to a model that they have in their minds.

For example, a model of the change management process created in early discussions with staff will be compared to their lived experience of the process as it is rolled out. It is key here for change managers to understand the size and shape of the gap between this mental model and the reality, in order to address any resulting doubts created by that gap.

Change managers should consider how they can involve employees in the change management process from the start. Conducting careful and ongoing research with team members who are impacted by the transformation will enable change managers to demonstrate to staff how their concerns are being addressed, and to show how aspects of the business affected by the change are being improved.



### Availability

The availability heuristic relates to how easily people are able to call a scenario to mind. The more readily available a scenario is, the more probable it will seem.

Organisational change – including the implementation of a new technology that will transform business processes – often feels intangible. Therefore, a successful transition to the new way of working can feel improbable to staff. To combat this, change management leaders need to find ways to make the change feel concrete. They could do this by referencing previous changes that the company has navigated successfully, or by sharing case studies of other organisations that have managed the same change process with success.

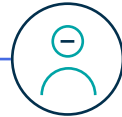


## Simulation

Simulation refers to the power of unrealised possibilities to impact someone's mindset.

Change naturally causes anxiety in anyone who it will impact. Humans are particularly adept at predicting disasters, immediately considering the worst possible outcomes. **Pessimism bias**, another heuristic (although it doesn't apply to us all), causes humans to automatically place a stronger belief in negative, as opposed to positive, outcomes. And simulation causes all these possible scenarios to play out in our minds, impacting how we feel about a given situation.

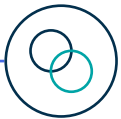
To address this, change managers need to be as transparent as possible about the process, as well as any outcomes that the change they are introducing will bring about. If, for example, staff are concerned that a new technology will eventually displace their jobs, they will naturally resist that new technology in an attempt – whether conscious or unconscious – to demonstrate its lack of effectiveness in comparison with their own abilities. However, if staff's fears about unemployment are allayed early on, teams will be more disposed to embrace the new technology and see the potential benefits it holds for their own work.



## Negative bias

Change managers also need to be aware of negative bias.

If staff impacted by a change gain a negative first impression of the project, it **can be extremely difficult to change**. The change process needs to be designed to maximise a positive impression from the start. Taking negative bias into account might impact how a change project is introduced, who leads it (and their reputation within the company), and how staff are invited to share their expertise by collaborating in the process. Expertise is used intentionally here: staff should be encouraged to understand the value of their contribution to the success of the project, as this will further dispose them to feel positively about the change.



## Anchoring

The anchoring heuristic identifies how humans tend to base estimates and decisions on anchors. It's often referred to in behavioural finance, and is commonly used to determine negotiating strategy: the opening figure in a negotiation will influence the response given by the other party, regardless of how close that first number is to the first negotiator's final answer.

However, it is also important to recognise the power of the anchoring heuristic when planning a change management process. Humans anchor decisions or interpretations to the initial information they get. For example, if staff facing a big change at work have a positive association with their change manager – if they are a figure they trust, who has shown good judgement in the past, they are more likely to believe in the vision that person sets out for change.

## The emotional aspects of change management – the Change Curve

The **Change Curve** was developed in the 1960s by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross as a model for understanding human emotional responses to grief. Since then, the model has been used as a way to help people navigate any large-scale change or emotional upheaval, and became popular in change management during the 1980s. While there are many variations of the model in circulation, it now typically contains six emotions grouped into three key stages. This represents a slight evolution from the originally proposed five emotional stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.



In change management, the Change Curve model can be used to understand how performance may be affected by the announcement and implementation of any significant change.

**The three key stages to take into account are:**



### Stage one: shock and denial

Upon learning of a serious upheaval, the natural human response is shock, followed shortly after by denial.

Shock is immediate and while it may be only short lived, experiencing shock can impact productivity levels. Think about the atmosphere in an office after a big announcement is made: employees may return quietly to their desks or meet together to discuss what has been said, but in both circumstances there will be a period of time taken to absorb and understand what they have been told.

Fear of the unknown is often a major contributor to shock, but the level of shock produced can also be influenced by the availability or lack of relevant information.

Denial comes straight after shock and often involves some form of positive reflection on the past, something like, “What is the need for change? Everything was fine before.” In the same way that being in a ‘golden cage’ – having a well-paid, well-rewarded and comfortable job – can stifle an employee’s willingness to progress or move on to seek better opportunities, comfort with the status quo produces this fear (of failure, or of looking stupid) when we are faced with large-scale organisational change.

Reassurance and reiteration will be needed at this stage, as well as clear and consistent communication, to make sure that employees can move towards acceptance, rather than putting their heads metaphorically in the sand.



### Stage two: anger and depression

During this stage, anger demands a scapegoat on which to place blame for the upheaval. That might be the organisation, or an individual such as the person leading the change process. Suspicion, scepticism and frustration can prolong the denial experienced during stage one.

Once the anger dies down this can become depression, as realisation sets in that change is now inevitable, and as the impact of what has been lost is acknowledged.

Depression is the lowest point on the Change Curve and is when productivity and performance will be at their lowest. Apathy might lead employees to continue to work in the same way as before, even if that is no longer appropriate. However, reassurance will come from knowing that others are experiencing the same emotions. It can be helpful at this stage for managers to share information about the Change Curve, so that employees are able to recognise where they are, that their response is normal, and prepare to move beyond it.



### Stage three: acceptance and integration

Finally, when we reach the third stage, individuals are feeling more optimistic about the change they're facing. Potential excitement for the positive impacts the change may have for them will combine with an impatience for the process to be complete.

It is important here to not let impatience stunt the change management process, because implementation is not the end. Once the change has been implemented there will still be a further stage of testing, feedback and iteration, especially when dealing with technology-related change. To satisfy curiosity about opportunities as

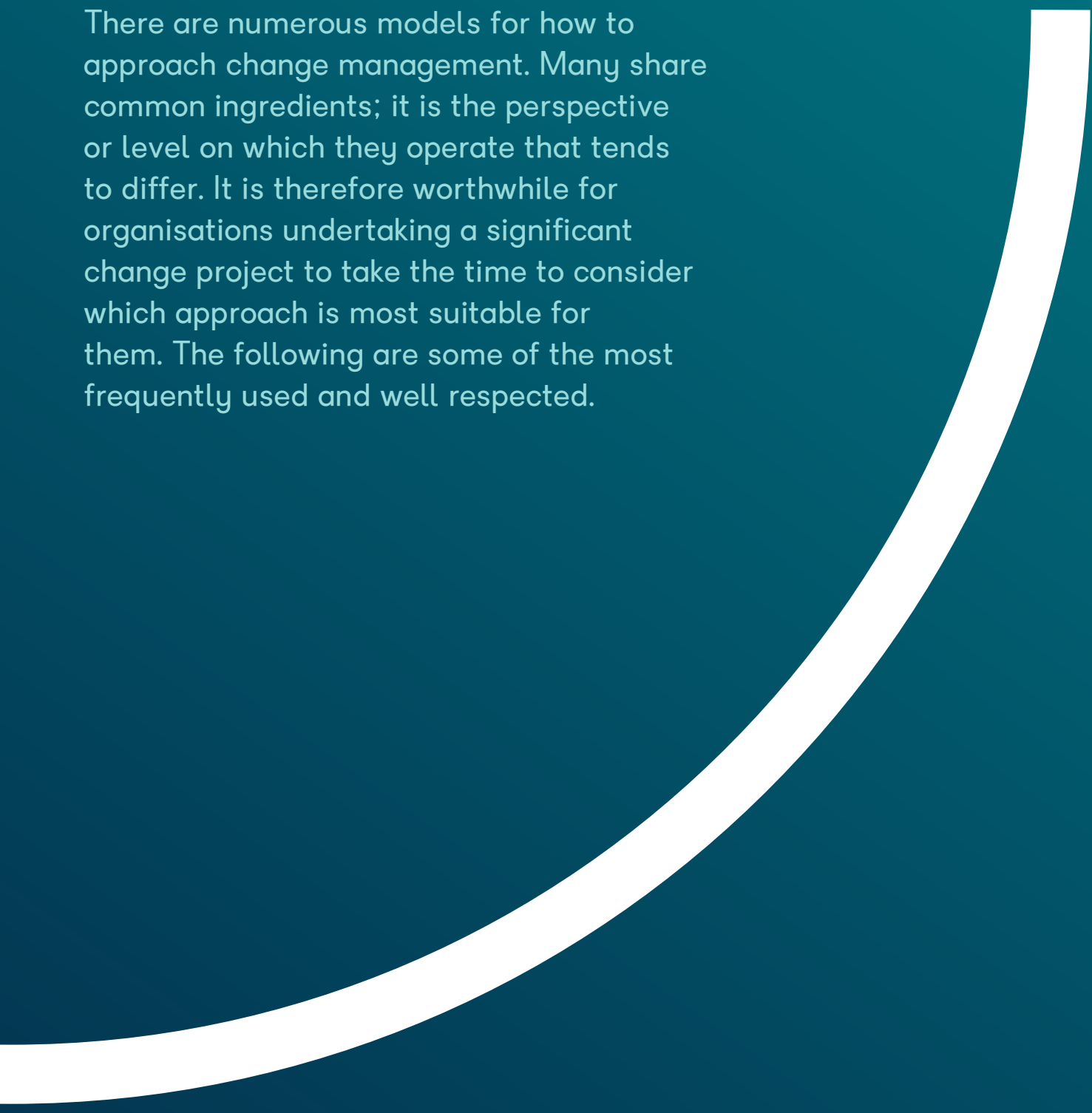
the change embeds, to retain high levels of hope and optimism, and to fix new habits and processes, it is important to communicate clearly, provide continued support, and praise to employees during this stage.

The Change Curve is a really helpful model for change managers to understand where their team is emotionally, and to know how best to help them move forwards. However, it is important to acknowledge that everyone will experience the process at their own pace, and may not follow a linear progression from stage one through to three.



**Approaches to  
change management**

There are numerous models for how to approach change management. Many share common ingredients; it is the perspective or level on which they operate that tends to differ. It is therefore worthwhile for organisations undertaking a significant change project to take the time to consider which approach is most suitable for them. The following are some of the most frequently used and well respected.



## Kurt Lewin's Force Field Analysis

**Kurt Lewin** is often recognised as the founder of social psychology. He said: "To bring about any change, the balance between the forces which maintain the social self-regulation at a given level has to be upset." It was his opinion that organisational culture is a balance between readiness for, and resistance to, change. Undertaking a change project requires upsetting that balance temporarily.

Lewin's Force Field Analysis is more a preparatory stage than a change management process itself. It can be applied as part of Lewin's 3-Step Change Management Process, which we will explore next. The Force Field Analysis is used to 'distinguish which factors within a situation or organisation drive a person towards or away from a desired state, and which oppose the driving forces.'

Lewin's process proposes five stages or key questions that change project managers should answer:

- 1 What is the change you want to make?
- 2 What are the driving forces that are favourable to change?
- 3 What are the driving forces that oppose change?
- 4 Now evaluate the two sides. This can be done by creating a rating system and giving each a number between one and five or, more holistically, by thinking about the impact of each force.
- 5 Finally, create a strategy to surmount the difficulties you've identified. The favourable forces that have been identified can be used in a communications strategy to underline the importance of a change process at its outset.

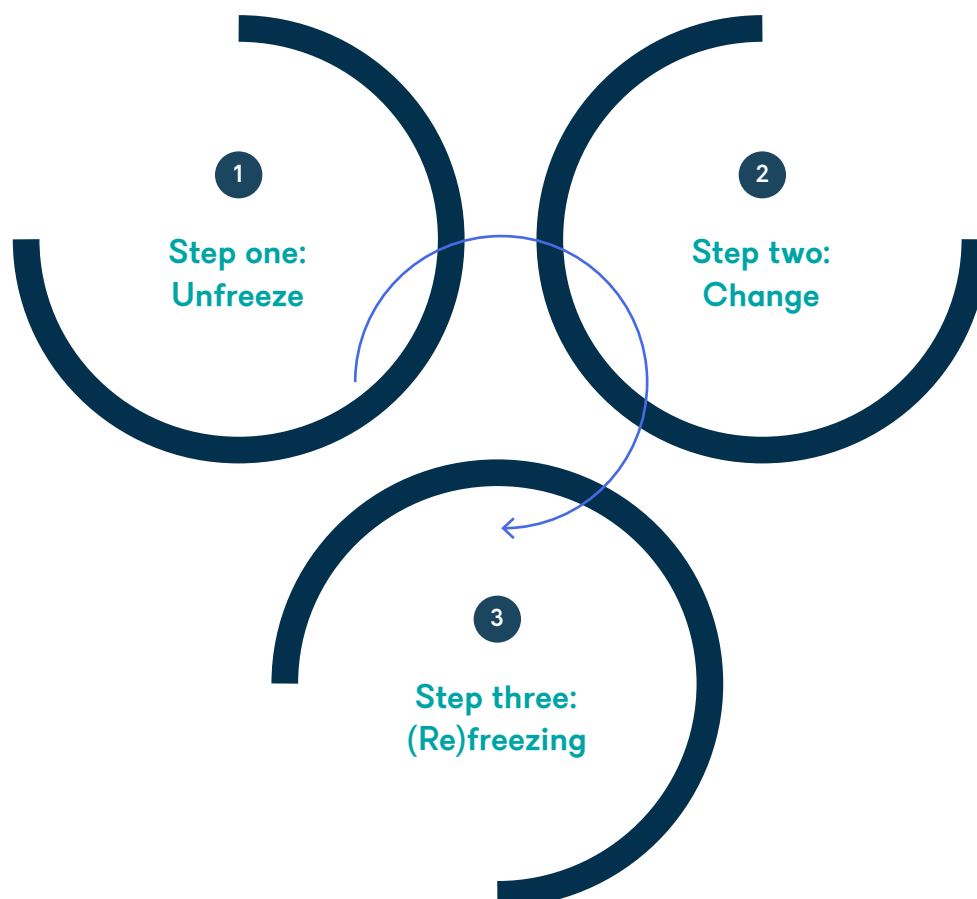


This process is a useful starting point for change management. However, critics argue that the subjective nature of the evaluation stage is a weak point in this approach.

## Lewin's 3-Step Change Management Process

Kurt Lewin's interest in the human aspect of change management led him to [develop this three-step process](#). Although Lewin wrote his theory in 1947, it is still relevant today and, as we will see, forms the basis of many other more modern change models.

Lewin's three key steps focus on the individual's journey through the change process. They are:



1

### Step one: Unfreeze

This is the preparation stage, where you get ready to implement the change. This first stage is also when it is helpful to use Lewin's Force Field Analysis. During the 'unfreeze', if possible, you want to create a situation in which the pending change becomes desired. To motivate employees to undertake any work required in implementation, the project should be seen as both necessary and urgent. Deadlines, alongside punishments or rewards, can be used to generate additional motivation. It's helpful to know that, according to behavioural science and the loss aversion heuristic, punishment has been found to be more effective in motivating people than reward.

2

### Step two: Change

The second step recognises change projects as a transition. It takes time to guide people towards a new way of being and working, and it is as much an inner journey as an outer one. For this reason, it's not possible to define a standard amount of time that change managers need to allow for this stage – that will depend both on the person and the nature of the change they are undertaking. Continued clear communication and the availability of support and training will be key here to enabling people to conquer any fears they have about the process (such as fear of the unknown, of making mistakes and of looking stupid), and to see the benefits and positive impact the change can have for them and their work. Using role models can help others to embrace the change. Allowing people to develop their own solutions will give them agency and make them feel empowered.

3

### Step three: (Re)freezing

The final stage is referred to interchangeably as both freezing and refreezing. This is when stability is re-established, the changes have been completely integrated as habits and are now considered the 'new norm'.

Criticisms of Lewin's three-step approach typically focus on the third stage. Particularly now, in a world often described as VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), the idea of refreezing seems both improbable and contrary to a modern understanding of change as an ongoing, chaotic process. However, supporters of this model emphasise Lewin's focus not on stasis at this final stage, but on embedding the change and making sure that it is sustained.

## ADKAR model

The CEO of Prosci Change Management, Jeff Hiatt, developed the [ADKAR model](#) and published it in 2003. His approach also places emphasis on individual change. Hiatt focuses on five actions and outcomes that he considers are necessary to successful individual, and therefore organisational, change. The model was built on practical research carried out in over 900 organisations; Hiatt's company [Prosci](#) are the self-proclaimed 'global leaders in change management'.

Where many models focus on what needs to be done to accomplish the change, the ADKAR model focuses on outcomes. This purportedly makes it simpler to identify where an individual sits in the process, and what needs to be done to support them.

The five outcomes in Hiatt's model are:



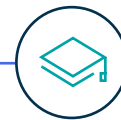
### Awareness

The individual needs to understand why the change is necessary.



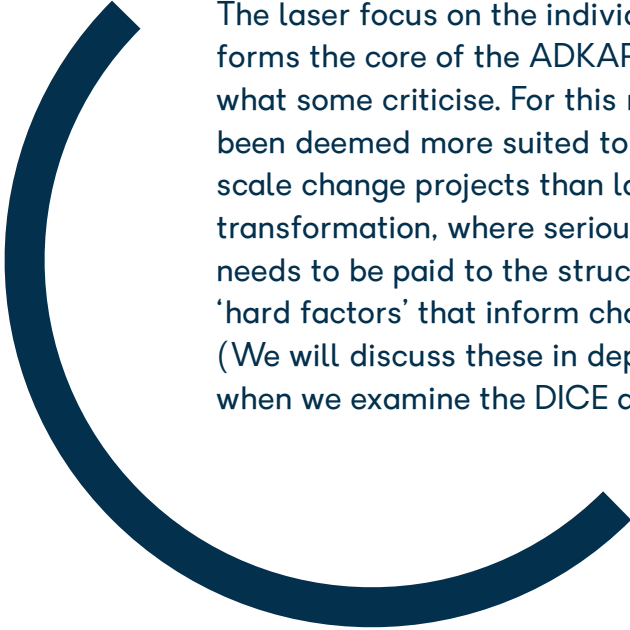
### Desire

The individual needs to reach a point where they desire the change and take an active role in making it happen. Incentives can play a part in reaching this outcome.



### Knowledge

The individual receives training, coaching, mentoring – any support deemed necessary to be comfortable with the transformation – and so they know what to do, how to behave and the processes to follow, once that change has been implemented.



The laser focus on the individual that forms the core of the ADKAR model is what some criticise. For this reason it has been deemed more suited to smaller-scale change projects than large-scale transformation, where serious attention needs to be paid to the structures and other 'hard factors' that inform change projects. (We will discuss these in depth later, when we examine the DICE approach.)



### Ability

The individual demonstrates their ability by putting the theory into practice, they are given support and structured opportunities to give and receive feedback.



### Reinforcement

Similar to Lewin's 'freeze' stage, this outcome sees the individual embed and maintain the change as part of their daily practice. Positive feedback, rewards and recognition, as well as continued attempts to measure and improve performance, form part of this final outcome.

## McKinsey's Influence Model

First introduced nearly 20 years ago – in 2003 – and still relevant today, [McKinsey's Influence Model](#) is centred around what they've identified as the four building blocks of change. Their research and practice has found that successful transformations are nearly eight times more likely to use all four of these building blocks than just one of them.

The guiding principle behind the Influence Model is that if all four blocks are achieved, the individual will change their behaviour and mindset as desired. The blocks are:



### Fostering understanding and conviction

The individual understands what is being asked of them (their place within the change) and it makes sense to them. The reason this works is that humans seek consistency between their beliefs and actions. It's the same reason Simon Sinek advocates we all [Start With Why](#), and why the first outcome of the ADKAR model is awareness.

Even if it seems obvious, it is important to start any change process by defining what the change will involve and why it is necessary. Be aware of the 'false-consensus effect', which leads us to imagine others share our attitudes, beliefs and opinions. Similarly, remember that the 'curse of knowledge effect' makes it hard for people to believe others do not know what they know. Change management leaders need to recognise both of these tendencies and work hard to make sure their teams are properly informed.



### Reinforcing changes through formal mechanisms

It is clear to the individual that the structures, systems and processes needed to support the change they are being asked to make are in place. This is about backing up intention with action, giving teams the tools required to fulfil tasks and processes associated with the change project, and with embedding the change into the future. If these structures are not in place, the challenges to implementing the change may appear insurmountable, which can have a detrimental effect on employee motivation. This connects back to the availability heuristic, and the ability of individuals to understand a proposed change as probable and possible.



### Developing talent and skills

The individual desires progression, and subsequently develops the skills and opportunities needed to behave in the new way. There is no age limit on learning, our brains remain malleable, and so change can be dealt with at any life stage. All we need is the time and support necessary to understand and practise new behaviours.

Developing a willingness to learn new skills is essential for individuals to take a more active role in the change process. And it's key to avoiding a state of learned helplessness, characterised by apathy and disinterest. To ensure this, management needs to make sure that positive outcomes of the change process are apparent from the outset, and that paths towards them are clearly communicated.

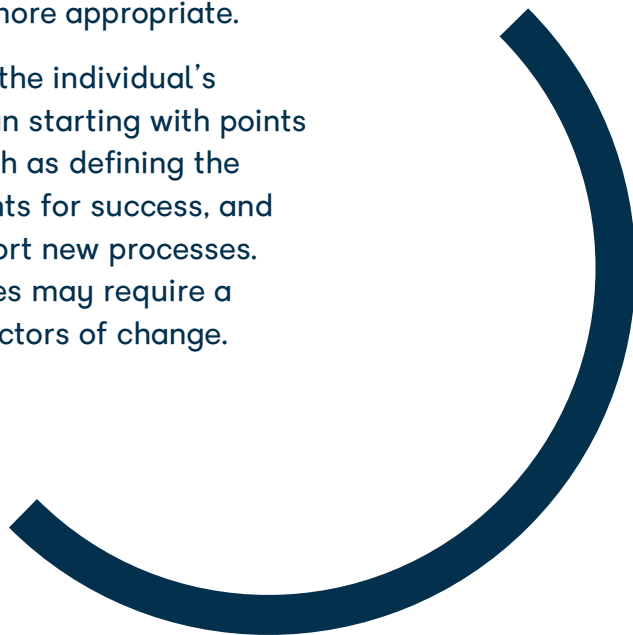


### Role modelling

The individual recognises that leaders and colleagues are embracing the change and acting in a new way, and they are therefore more inclined to do the same. The work of professor of psychology and marketing Robert Cialdini highlights the power of 'social proof' and how susceptible we are to the behaviour and suggestions of others. Whether unconsciously or consciously, humans are hard-wired to mimic those around them.

McKinsey's Influence Model is a difficult one to criticise as all four blocks are undoubtedly important to generating effective change. However, it's important to ask if this is the right lens through which to structure a particular project, or if another model might be more appropriate.

McKinsey's model focuses on the individual's response to change, rather than starting with points of organisational strategy, such as defining the why, determining measurements for success, and developing structures to support new processes. Larger, more structural changes may require a stronger focus on the 'hard' factors of change.



## The DICE model

The DICE model identifies two sides to change management: the hard side, and the soft. According to *Harvard Business Review (HBR)*, creators of the DICE model, what's often [missing from change management projects](#) is a focus on these 'hard' factors. They write:

"These factors bear three distinct characteristics. First, companies are able to measure them in direct or indirect ways. Second, companies can easily communicate their importance, both within and outside organisations. Third, and perhaps most important, businesses are capable of influencing those elements quickly. Some of the hard factors that affect a transformation initiative are the time necessary to complete it, the number of people required to execute it, and the financial results that intended actions are expected to achieve. Our research shows that change projects fail to get off the ground when companies neglect the hard factors."

The soft factors, by comparison, are elements such as organisational culture, leadership and motivation. While these are also undoubtedly fundamental, it is notoriously difficult to get reliable data on soft factors. And as we will come to discuss, collecting data throughout the change management journey is essential.

As we have seen elsewhere, the dynamics of change management have barely shifted since the field became popular in business in the 80s. In 1992, *HBR* conducted a research project involving 225 companies. They identified four hard factors that have a significant impact on the successful (or otherwise) outcome of a change management project.

The four hard factors that have a significant impact on the successful (or otherwise) outcome of a change management project are:



### Duration

This is not just project duration, but also refers to the time left between project review meetings. In fact, the latter was found to have more impact on the success of a project than the former. Research revealed that eight weeks is the absolute maximum time that can be left between reviews before the chances of project failure rise exponentially. These reviews should be high-level conversations involving management teams and project sponsors where the project is formally evaluated against all of the measures of success and failure that are relevant.



### Integrity

This is the integrity of performance, and refers to the capabilities of a project team. It's essential that teams are carefully chosen before the project starts. Between them, project team members should hold the full suite of skills that will be needed to implement and embed change. Roles within the team need to be clearly defined in order to support the efficient running of the project and, if possible, teams should include some members who are less overt supporters of the change project. This will help to motivate and change the minds of others.



Following the completion of *HBR*'s study in 1994, these four factors were used by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to, "predict the outcomes, and guide the execution, of more than 1,000 change management initiatives worldwide." *HBR* reviewed this in 2005 and saw that, "Not only has the correlation held, but no other factors (or combination of factors) have predicted outcomes as well."

None of this is to say that the soft factors aren't also incredibly important. They are. In fact, they are essential to ensuring that employees are willing to make the additional effort needed, and to feel committed to the project. However, using the hard factors as a framework ensures – according to *HBR* and BCG data – the success of a project. This will also ensure that success will be measurable, an essential factor to gaining the trust of key stakeholders and demonstrating ROI.



### Commitment

The commitment of everyone involved, from senior executives to the staff who will be most impacted by the change being made, is integral to the success of a project. This factor is similar to role modelling, which is important to McKinsey's Influence Model. Visible commitment from influential, well-respected members of the executive team will bolster the commitment of other employees. According to *HBR*, enthusiasm should be set far above the level that feels appropriate: "When you feel that you are talking up a change initiative at least three times more than you need to, your managers will feel that you are backing the transformation."



### Effort

This refers to the amount of additional effort employees will have to make in order to deal with the change. The rule of thumb, *HBR* says, is that, "no one's workload should increase more than 10%." This means calculating the amount of additional work that employees need to do to manage the change, and considering bringing in temporary workers to alleviate some of the pressure.

## Agile

While not exactly a model for change management, it feels pertinent to include Agile in this list. [According to the Agile Alliance](#), “Agile is the ability to create and respond to change. It is a way of dealing with, and ultimately succeeding in, an uncertain and turbulent environment.”

The clue is in the name: ‘Agile’ suggests a certain openness to change. The emphasis is on collaboration and self-organising, cross-functional teams. Each team in Agile contains the skill-sets necessary to achieve their goal, and possess the autonomy to work on their own to get there. Managers are there to ensure the right skills are in place and that the team remains on track. Otherwise, they mostly take a step back.

Practically speaking, Agile is an iterative approach to project management that is used primarily in software development. Yet the principles and practices collide with change management models. At the centre of Agile is the MVP, or Minimum Viable Product. This

approach advocates for the release of an MVP which will gradually improve and develop through sprints: short cycles of concentrated work towards identified outcomes. Feedback loops are built into the process to ensure that anything that does not function well is corrected as the process continues.

Agile is an approach without an end. The philosophy – which is obviously central to software but also important in organisations – is that the change process does not end. In order to have a product that customers want, and continue to want, the change must be ongoing. For organisations wanting to attract and retain both talent and clients, an openness to change and ongoing improvement is essential. Similarly, the emphasis on testing, feedback and making additional, required changes is fundamental to the final step in many change management models, where it is verified that the change works well, is embedded, and is maintained into the future.



**Case studies for  
change: implementing  
a new technology**

## Bradford College

Bradford College brought in Aptem to manage and deliver their apprenticeship programmes.

With around 20,000 students to manage across a variety of programmes, they were looking for a streamlined solution that could support continued growth.

The first two outcomes of the ADKAR Model, Awareness and Desire, were already recognised in the early stages for Bradford College. Previously, Bradford College had used various LMS (learning management systems) alongside a CRM to deliver their apprenticeship programmes. Uploading data from one system to another was time-consuming and inefficient, and correlating and searching data across systems was extremely problematic. The college wanted a system that contained everything related to its apprenticeship programmes delivery in one place. “Straightforward access to

information was one of our primary objectives when we started to look for an alternative system,” explained Dominic Scott, CRM/LMS Officer at Bradford College.

To achieve outcome three of the ADKAR Model, Knowledge, effective and structured implementation processes combined with engaging training that teams could refer back to were key to not only making the change, but also maintaining it. “The implementation process was excellent. Our Implementation Consultant was always available, proactive, helpful, enthusiastic, and always had a smile on her face. All training was recorded and we now have a library of video resources that we can refer back to. This isn’t something we’d have necessarily had if it were delivered face to face.”



Our Implementation Consultant had brilliant techniques to keep engagement levels high during these sessions, including asking questions of people throughout to ensure they understood, and making the sessions really interactive.

**Dominic Scott**, CRM/LMS Manager, Bradford College

Implementing a system like Aptem Apprentice is an investment in a college's future. Internal support is required to ensure the platform is implemented in a customised way that supports programme delivery, both now and in the future. Bradford College used Champions – a core working group within the organisation. They also selected a few champions across different functions within the college who would act as the go-to people for Aptem and its implementation. For others implementing a system of this type, Bradford College recommends technical champions that you engage right from the start and keep in regular touch with throughout the implementation process.

#### Key lessons:

- 1 Engage all the departments who need to be involved upfront to ensure you have scoped everyone's requirements.
- 2 Appreciate that to build a future-proof system that is customised to your requirements requires time and effort, both initially and throughout the implementation process.
- 3 Spread the load and ensure you select people who have the necessary technical skills.
- 4 Involve your Compliance Officer and Quality Assurance Officer from the beginning.



Edge Hill  
University

Like Aston, [Edge Hill University](#) chose Aptem's apprenticeship management system to support the delivery of their degree apprenticeships.

Edge Hill educates students across a wide range of subjects and is one of the largest providers of health, social care and medicine education in the North West of England. Among the wide range of undergraduate courses on offer, Edge Hill has a range of degree apprenticeships in Nursing, Nursing Associate, and Advanced Clinical Practitioner. The University works with a number of NHS Trusts and the demand for nursing and healthcare professionals is increasing significantly.

For Edge Hill, Aptem was the technology partner of choice for many reasons, not least its reputation: "It [Aptem] was the market leader in the university apprenticeship sector.

Feedback from current Aptem customers was very positive. We were also very impressed by the support Aptem was offering, both during Implementation and beyond, with their Customer Success strategy," said Craig Hutchinson-Howarth, Director of Strategic Planning at Edge Hill University.

Edge Hill had a very tight timeline in which to implement the new technology. The team had just six weeks to get the new systems up and running ready for enrolment. Again, the people involved were central to achieving project deadlines and successfully implementing Aptem. At Edge Hill, a dedicated project team worked with support from the leadership team, and alongside



We ran a scoping and project-mapping workshop upfront, the output of which was a roadmap that we stringently followed. We had good internal support and were very well supported by Aptem.

**Joanne Sage**, Compliance Manager, Edge Hill University

their Implementation Consultant from Aptem. Within six weeks, the first learners were being enrolled onto the new system. Within five months, the system was fully up and running.

Joanne Sage, Compliance Manager at Edge Hill University, explained how they managed such a tight turnaround so successfully: “We achieved an ambitious project timeline by having a very focused collection of colleagues at the University, supported by a culture of delivery. Our Leadership team supported the project team to implement Aptem. In addition, we had a superb, proactive, flexible yet focused Implementation Consultant at Aptem.”

#### Key lessons:

- 1 Choose your implementation team strategically; a small and dedicated team with the right skills might be better than a larger, more complex group.
- 2 Make a plan carefully and stick to it!
- 3 Enlist the support of internal leadership and other stakeholders early in the project.



As the largest training provider in the UK, a position they've maintained over many years, **Lifetime Training** is no stranger to the concept of Change Management.

There are two key factors to any change management programme at Lifetime: organisation and communication. "We follow the first two principles of Lewin's change management process. Firstly, unfreezing/preparing to implement the change, which is probably where 80% of our efforts are expended. And successful communication, training and support is at the core of that change step for us," explained a Project Manager at Lifetime.

"We never underestimate the need to bring individuals on the journey with us. We ensure individuals understand from the outset what is being asked of them and what their role is within the change programme. We provide them with the tools, structures and empowerment to enable the change. And we role-model those who are embracing

the change or acting in the new way, so the others can follow in their footsteps."

When Lifetime selected Aptem for their end-to-end apprenticeships delivery system, a great deal of effort was expended upfront defining the 'why' and the 'who'. This stage involved a year-long consultation period, over 100 hours of pre-contract sessions, and a three-stage approach, as it sought to replace its proprietary systems with an 'all in one place' apprenticeship and vocational training delivery platform, to manage all aspects of its programmes.

Key to this successful approach was a small group of senior-level, highly knowledgeable people, on both sides of the partnership, who directed the project and stayed with it through implementation and training.



Our purpose is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn. As a result we never stand still. Change is a constant and something we embrace as a part of our culture.

**Carl Cornish, COO, Lifetime**

This team collaborated with a number of departments and kept asking themselves, 'what are the problems we are trying to fix?'

They ran a series of detailed deep dives into all aspects of the system, from pre-enrolment through to ILR, funding, the learner journey and more. Every area of the system was walked through in detail and people were encouraged to challenge, ask questions, and raise concerns.

There followed a discovery phase involving a set of very detailed workshops where the project team from Aptem and Lifetime walked through and understood Lifetime's various business processes, before recommending a solution and way of working using Aptem. During this phase, a small group of Lifetime learners

commenced their programmes using Aptem, enabling live feedback, before the majority of learners were transitioned across to the Aptem system.

#### Key lessons:

- 1 Use a 'train the trainer' approach: identify dedicated trainers and support them with bespoke documentation.
- 2 If your change involves a supplier, make sure there is a partnership approach in place. It's essential they understand in detail your business processes, culture and people.
- 3 Throughout the process, constantly challenge and ask 'why?'



**Implementing  
change**

Change management has been around since the 1980s and many of the models we use are largely the same as they were then. The tools at our disposal, however, have come a long way.

Once the framework, overarching aims and principles for a project have been defined, the next stage is project planning. Here it's useful to explore how technology can support the smooth running of the change process.

## Communications technology

Communication is key to a successful change project. Across all of the models explored, and as explained by behavioural science disciplines, good communication is vital to reassuring, motivating and empowering employees throughout a change project.

Technology now provides many means by which companies and change management leaders can communicate with employees clearly and in a timely manner.

Organisations used to rely on the flow of information from CEO level down through executives, directors and managers to reach employees – a cascade communication technique – but this approach should be relegated to the past. As we have seen, change management projects rely on good communication to succeed. Not just a clear articulation of the 'why' at the start of the project, but regular, concise and accessible

updates on project process, as well as tailored updates designed to allay fears that emerge as the project rolls out.

Technology facilitates the agile sharing of information, making project communications incredibly easy to do well. Instead of waiting for essential information to trickle down, personalised messages can be sent by email, a central store of updates and core information saved in an organisational intranet, and a Slack or Teams channel dedicated to questions and answers regarding the project.

Of course, the exact mechanisms used will depend on the organisation and the systems they have in place. When making a project plan, leaders should consider all of the channels available to them and determine the most suitable use of those platforms to inform, reassure and energise their teams.

## Influence and commitment

Digital technology can also support project management teams to identify role models or influencers within the company, and to measure support for a project as it is rolled out.

**Social Network Analysis (SNA)** is a method of analysing networks, one that McKinsey and Company have seen employed with success in change management projects: “Over the past couple of years, we’ve seen a growing number of companies use social-networking analyses and similar techniques to help identify hidden influencers: people whose attitudes may command respect among their colleagues and whose role might be critical for the success of a change program. Having identified a few dozen influencers across regions, functions, and roles in this way, a large manufacturer we know enlisted the support of these employees to help communicate the changes it wanted to make, role-model the desired mind-sets and behaviour, and fight scepticism.”

Once identified and brought on board, these influencers can become a two-way channel, enabling information to flow to employees via a trusted source, and also for feedback to flow back to management. At the outset of building relationships with these role models, it should be made clear that feedback is valued by the change project managers: influencers should see themselves as a helpful conduit between their colleagues and leaders, which will help to ensure that they have the confidence to speak up.

Influencer relationships like this can be a vital resource to the success of a project. As employees raise fears and doubts, management will be informed and able to demonstrate how perceived negative effects are either unfounded, or are already being dealt with.

## Measuring success

No project should be undertaken without a clear idea of the 'why'. Once the project goals have been identified, key performance indicators (KPIs) should be set. These will enable management teams to demonstrate any initial and ongoing success.

What the goals are will determine which data is collected and analysed, but regardless of the focus, technology will be vital when it comes to measuring success. This could include implementing regular feedback surveys throughout the project to gather quantitative and qualitative feedback from employees, or running polls using an online platform. Alternatively, staff satisfaction could be measured before and after the project ends, in order to determine how employees feel about the new status

quo, and whether their overall happiness at work has remained the same or increased as a result. Or, more granular data could be assessed to understand how the time it takes for employees to complete routine tasks has been impacted.

KPIs must be set at the project outset to ensure that meaningful data is collected along the way. As with channels of communication, project managers should assess the available platforms they already have at their disposal to gather and understand insights, and determine if any additional systems or resources will be needed to truly understand the project's success.



**Universal factors for  
successful change  
management**

As we have seen, there are numerous models that can be used to inform the design of a change process.

When assessing which is most suitable for any given project, it's important to take into consideration the purpose of the change, the scale (i.e. the size of the company and how much of the business it will affect), and the budget available to support the change process. The specific frameworks explored in this paper provide a structure to guide the measurements for success, and determine whether change is best approached from an organisational, or at an individual, level. But for all their differences, there are key similarities across these change models that should be taken into account when designing any change process.

The importance of influence in motivating employees has come up again and again throughout this white paper. The representativeness heuristic suggests that employees should be consulted during the design and implementation of a change. One key way to do this is through identifying and enlisting the support of role models and influencers within the business. As Bradford College testifies, internal champions can have a significant impact on the success of a change project. These figures can act as a conduit of information between

employees and management. They can help to create a good first impression, as well as being sources of technical know-how available to help other members of the team to problem-solve when needed. Their support is crucial to the overall success of a project (as underpinned by the anchoring and negative bias heuristics), as it will help to establish a change project as desired in the minds of employees. This approach is important to McKinsey's Influence Model, HBR's DICE model (in both the integrity and commitment factors), and to Lewin's 3-Step Model for Change.

Comfort with the status quo and fear of change are natural human impulses. To address these and to tackle the denial stage of the Change Curve, clear and timely communication is essential. This has been another recurring theme, particularly the importance of expressing *why* a project is essential and *how* it will improve conditions for everyone it will impact. This emphasis appears both in McKinsey's Influence Model, which starts with understanding and conviction, as well as in the ADKAR model and its awareness outcome.



**How you start  
will be a key indicator  
of success**

As a driver for change, technology can be a nebulous thing for non-experts to grasp (non-experts here meaning people that are not close to the use case for the technology being introduced).

Which means it can be tough to get to the point of beginning a change project. And it's one of the reasons that during a recent webinar, Henry Cohen, Change Professional, advised that, "the only way to make technology change successful is to embed it in a business change." Gathering leadership team members to discuss new technology is much more effective when situated in the frame of organisational change: how that technology supports larger business goals and necessary organisational transformation. The key is to develop alignment among leadership as to the nature of, reason for, and desired impact of the change that will be introduced. If you are not sure where to

begin, Cohen suggested starting with a blank piece of paper and the question, 'what does good look like in 12 months' time?' Focus this question in turn on employees, management, suppliers, partners and customers, to ensure you're looking both inwards and outwards.

Once you know where you want to get to, work backwards to understand what good looks like at the end of each quarter leading up to your 12-month goal. This simple method is an efficient way to dig deep into the change project, define the *why*, outline the *how*, and create a roadmap that will guide the development of the rest of the project plan.



The only way to make technology change successful is to embed it in a business change.

Henry Cohen, Change Professional



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