



THOUGHT STARTER SERIES

Solving the Change Conundrum to Accelerate Your Digital Transformation

In today's rapidly evolving commercial landscape, the only constant is change. If the impact of COVID-19 has highlighted anything, it is that we as individuals, employees, customers, and organizations need to be comfortable with ambiguity, seismic yet rapid change, and a constantly shifting vision of the future.

Yet despite this acknowledgement, why is it that so many change programs struggle to achieve their goals? Consider the following:

- It's hard changing years of 'muscle memory' in people
- Change comes in many guises
- Digital demands fundamentally new digital skills and ways of working

- Change management is often an after-thought, especially in technology implementation
- Humans are inherently irrational beings who resist change

Organizational change has the potential to fundamentally impact everything from strategy, structure, day-to-day roles, processes and capabilities to the tools and technology that individuals use. Embracing this requires a robust but flexible approach, embedding organizational rigor while remaining nimble.

It also requires not only the right mindset, but increased capacity and ability to respond to rapid and continuous change. All of this can only be achieved by creating a change management culture and capability in your organizational DNA. //



Change management needs to be an organizational discipline. It must start with a clear case for change and a plan to deliver this. But more importantly you need to honestly and openly engage stakeholders and be flexible and agile throughout the journey.

The change conundrum and common pitfalls



Humans are wired to resist change, even when we know it's good for us and our organization. We think of this as the 'change conundrum'. Some common pitfalls of change management include:

1. Framing change as a challenge vs. an opportunity

While we know change can be hard and is often met with resistance or inertia, it is more effective to frame and communicate changes as an opportunity to improve the way things are done, or as positive outcomes for employees and customers, being clear with different audiences on the "what's in it for me." Sometimes it's the small things that can build buy-in—for example, a simple system change that saves a lot of time.

2. Expecting change to happen overnight

Even though everyone knows change is hard, all too often a focused management initiative becomes an afterthought. There is often the misguided belief that change will happen by magic, with limited time, effort, and focus. Often leadership knows about planned changes well in advance, but those impacted only experience the effects of change much further down the road, meaning the vision and intended impact can lose momentum. Don't wait to get everything perfectly aligned before you start to engage people. Get local leadership onboard early and communicate early and often.

3. Aiming to deliver a 'Big Bang' change

Although many organizations are delivering transformative, large-scale changes, it can be the seemingly insignificant day-to-day changes that are most challenging for people to adopt and embed. Underestimating the impact of these changes can be detrimental to successfully executing large transformation programs and driving intended outcomes and benefits.

4. Thinking of change as a destination instead of a journey

We will likely never be at a point organizationally where all foreseen and planned changes have been experienced and we are operating in a 'business as usual' (BAU) environment. Change is BAU and it is here to stay. Given the constant state of change it is more helpful to think of organizational change as an evolutionary journey where there are checkpoints along the way, to seek feedback, measure progress, refine, and iterate for the next wave of change. Always address hard truths head on, openly and honestly. //



There is nothing permanent except change.

Change management golden rules

In Veeva's experience, there are six golden rules for overcoming these common pitfalls and delivering successful transformation programs:

1. Start with the why

Change starts and ends with the people affected. Understanding the gap between where we are today and where we want to be is critical. Envision the future state and clearly articulate "What's in it for me?" for each individual involved.

2. Establish practical targets and hold people accountable

A clear plan with defined roles and expectations is crucial, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. By taking an agile approach to planning, you can ensure you have the flexibility to adjust and adapt as things change over time.

3. Balance the rational with the emotional

It's important to think about the practicalities of how the change will benefit the organization and individuals. Remember to take time to understand the broader context. Nudges and incentives can encourage new behaviors.

4. Meet teams where they are

Use a structured approach to understand where people are in acceptance of the change required and plan the change journey. Consider mindsets, behaviors, and perceptions when seeking to drive change.

5. Create a movement

Generate noise and mobilize key people and teams to empower and drive local change. Consider the organizational and geographical culture and how to flex the central approach to suit each team's needs.

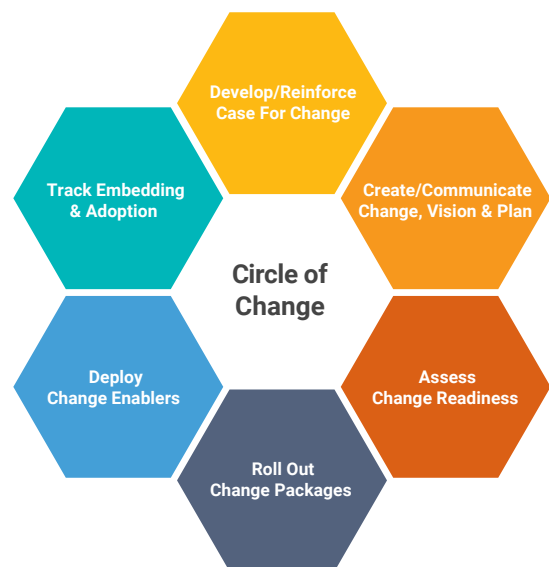
6. Use modern learning techniques

Communication and training are key at every stage. Crystallize the messages you want to deliver and reiterate them through a variety of different channels and formats (e.g. talking head videos and animations to quizzes and how-to guides). //

The virtuous circle of change

Effective change requires focused effort and continuous reinforcement. Given the complexity of delivering sustainable change, leaders should manage it as a cyclical process that enables continuous improvement:

- **Develop and reinforce the case for change** to define and communicate the what, why, and how. Respect where people are starting from and build belief in people to drive commitment.
- **Communicate the change vision and plan** at the outset, as part of strategy or future-state definition.
- **Conduct a reality check** on change readiness to clearly understand the gap between where people are and where they need to be.
- **Roll out coherent, logically sequenced packages** of people, process, and technology changes to address the identified gap. Activate change networks and create a movement.
- **Select and deploy critical change enablers**—for example a communications plan—establishing a change network and targeted capability building.
- **Track change embedding, adoption, and measure progress** to identify issues and maximize value realization. //



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