



Navigating Organizational Change: 6 Critical Success Factors & Best Practices

Introduction

The keys to successful planning and managing organizational changes lie in the ability of leaders to address a series of pivotal questions:

1. What will the change entail?
2. Who are the key stakeholders, and how will they be impacted?
3. What is the right pace of implementation to ensure effective adoption?
4. How will the success of the change be measured and communicated?

While each of these questions represents critically important factors in the process, none has more impact on success than the cultural and organizational elements, those aspects of change that directly affect employees.

“Critical to the success of any transformational project is devoting an appropriate level of effort to encouraging change in people’s mindset and focus.”

Often projects are hindered because project leaders and managers focus on tactical tasks, unsure how to navigate the crucial change management activities needed to ensure the transformation effort is fully adopted and desired outcomes are achieved.



Astrix’s Organizational Change Management (OCM) Framework:

Astrix Change Management services, in collaboration with our client’s project manager and leadership, can plan and ensure the necessary steps for successful change management. Astrix leverages the following Framework based on Prosci ADKAR® methodology.

Figure 1



Astrix’s OCM Framework provides a structured approach to successful transformations, focusing on:

- Change Planning
- Change Team & Communications
- Organizational & Process Design
- Skills & Knowledge Management
- Adoption Tracking & Management

To ensure positive results, we at Astrix have identified six critical success factors (CSFs) that are predictors of how effective your change initiative will be.

Critical Success Factors for Change

1. Purposeful Executive Leadership and Commitment

Executives serving as initiative champions, who drive change, are most successful when they communicate the reasons behind the plan to both internal and external teams engaged in planning and support.

Ensure employees understand the company's strategic direction, competitive landscape, and business needs to effectively drive change.

Four best practices for innovative sponsors and leadership teams are:

1. Develop clearly defined program goals.
2. Identify key stakeholders early and maintain visibility, conveying a sense of urgency along with the business rationale for change.
3. Craft consistent, tailored messaging for each stakeholder group, explaining why the change matters to the business and to them personally.
4. Provide regular reinforcement around the tenets and reasons for change throughout implementation.



2. Aligned & Measurable Goals

Goals and objectives for a change initiative must align with the overall organizational strategy and be clearly articulated and communicated across the organization.

Two key steps for success are:

1. Goals & objectives must be measurable.
2. Criteria for measuring progress toward these goals & objectives must be clearly defined.

Critical Success Factors for Change

3. The Right Change Team Must be in Place

A successful change initiative is linked to the level of employee involvement in the transformation.

This is true, irrespective of organization size, from inception through implementation and beyond, to maintaining new organizational policies and practices.

1. Create an approach to both the project organization and communication plans that allow for high employee involvement either directly or through existing communication channels.
2. Identify the right team for the project; those who possess the authority to make decisions regarding the planned changes and are conscious of the overall workflow that will be affected, as well as the larger organizational impact. Credibility and respect for the organization are essential from the bench to the leadership team.



Typically, Astrix looks for change agents, early adopters, and organizational influencers to actively participate in the project. This is particularly important during the Definition & Engagement phase of the project as this team will set the direction and lay the foundation for the overall project.

4. Clear Roles & Responsibilities

Key stakeholders, both internal and external to the organization, should be identified early in the program. In the absence of new directions, people will continue to perform as they have, perpetuating the processes, systems, and issues slated for transformation.

Three effective strategies for establishing new roles and responsibilities include:

1. Detailed Communication: Clearly define roles and responsibilities related to the change.
2. Adoption: Empower stakeholders to adopt and sustain change by driving a clear understanding of change-related metrics enabling them to track progress and recognize their contributions.
3. Follow-up: Ensure everyone involved understands their accountability for their new responsibilities within the changing organization.

Critical Success Factors for Change



- **Be Responsive:** Collect feedback and act promptly so employees feel heard and valued.
- **Consider your Audience:** Tailoring the communications plan to different sites, groups, and functions as needed to ensure sensitivity to corporate culture and the diversity within the organization.

5. Effective Communication and Visibility

Communication is one of the most critical elements to building buy-in. Successful change projects assess current communication channels, leverage proven ones, and introduce new methods to reinforce the change message. For example, an All-Hands video conference is a proven first step that not only increases visibility but also sets a transparent and inclusive tone for the change process from the very beginning. Maintaining consistent communication is critical to avoid delivering conflicting messages to the intended audience. It is best to have a small team review communications to ensure consistency and clarity.

Effective practices for communicating organizational changes are:

- **Solicit Feedback:** Building formal and informal feedback channels into the project to allow employees to share their views and perceptions of the planned changes helps leadership build buy-in and refine strategy.

6. Employee Training & Ongoing Support

Another crucial step is ensuring training and ongoing support for changes to processes, technology, roles, and more. It is imperative to define a comprehensive training approach, create a curriculum, and develop supporting materials needed to enable the organization's mission.

Aligning training needs based on the user groups and contextualizing training by user and project is imperative to the successful adoption of any change.



Summary

Culture and organizational issues are among the greatest challenges in managing change, directly impacting employees' ways of working. To manage change effectively, Astrix has developed a time-tested method comprised of tactics to address these critical success factors.

Change Management Critical Success Factors

1. Strong Executive Leadership
2. Aligned & Measurable Goals
3. Right Change Team
4. Clear Roles & Responsibilities
5. Effective Communications & Visibility
6. Employee Training & Ongoing Support

Managing these factors effectively can make a significant difference in reaching desired outcomes. As employees internalize these changes, the impact on workflows and productivity can be substantial.

As companies strive to bring new products to market, they prioritize processes, software solutions, and organizational improvements. Successfully navigating these changes is essential to ensuring adoption and achieving measurable results.

Astrix has developed mature processes in Organizational Change Management to cultivate these critical success factors.

About Astrix

Astrix has been a market leader in delivering innovative solutions through world class people, processes, and technology that fundamentally improves scientific outcomes and quality of life everywhere. Founded by scientists to solve the unique challenges of life sciences and other science-based businesses, Astrix offers a growing array of strategic, technical, and staffing services designed to deliver value to clients across their organizations.

Astrix achieves success for our clients through skilled facilitation and exceptional management and leadership across Life Science domains from Research & Development, Clinical Operations, and Regulatory Affairs.

Our OCM Delivery teams focus on connecting with the key stakeholders involved in the strategic evolution of your organization.

To learn the latest about how Astrix is shaping the future of life sciences business success, visit www.astrixinc.com.

Citations:

¹ Hiatt, Jeff. (2006). *ADKAR : a model for change*. Loveland, Colorado: Prosci Learning Center Publications. in *business, government, and our community*. -