WHAT DOES CHANGE MANAGEMENT ACHIEVE?

Purpose

The intent of this paper is to generate a meaningful dialogue amongst systems implementation colleagues around the concept of Change Management and its relationship to successful implementation projects. The authors of this paper understand this discussion is not new but believe it could use a ‘breath of fresh air’, namely reinventing the topic of Change Management, at least within the context of system implementations and upgrades. The term Change Management represents many things to many people, so the authors suggest honing the term to a finer level of detail for systems implementation projects, specifically organizational readiness, which should be woven into the fabric of an entire project.

This paper will define organizational readiness and briefly discuss its groundings in the foundations of Change Management. Most importantly, this paper will present for discussion, strategies for integrating organizational readiness into systems implementation projects chiefly to increase the rate of user adoption (aka behavior change) and overall organizational productivity.

Section I – Why Change Management?

Organizations often spend money on Change Management during systems implementations because they are directed to do so. Perhaps it is because for the last 15 years or more the Gartner Group and similar firms have often claimed that more than 70 percent of all systems implementation projects fail to achieve expected results. Organizations appear to be spending more money on change recently because additional research says implementations that address the change issues are more likely to succeed than those that don’t (Kotter, 1996). So, what are these successful organizations getting or doing that unsuccessful organizations are not? A familiar mantra of Change Management is to obtain leadership buy-in so they can communicate the urgent change message to the users. So are we to believe that leadership communications is the only vehicle in making employees happy or at least comfortable with change? Perhaps; these communicating leaders are making their employees evolving through change “happier” or more “comfortable” than if they were not communicating. But, is this adequate? Are the factors “happier” or “comfortable” antecedents to successful systems implementations? The authors say “no”, at least not entirely. “Happier” seems to have little to do with successful change as a causal factor according to the authors based on their project experiences. “Happier” may be a worthy byproduct of successful change but it is not required. “Comfortable”, on the other hand, may prove to be a critical success factor.

Organizations also invest in Change Management because it is often a “check box” on the project schedule. Someone is assigned to “do” Change Management, so someone “does” the Change Management tasks, the tasks are completed; done. On to the next task. What just happened? Someone performed Change Management tasks but what was truly accomplished? Anything? Did any one really care? Does the project manager know what to look for? Sure, messages went out. A newsletter was published. The website was updated. Presentations were delivered. So what? What did the organization get out of all that? Are the users ready to change? Perhaps users are aware that something is about to change, but how does one know if users are ready or not? Should a project wait until users are “ready” to change before going live?
So, back to the question “Why Change Management?” The authors posit a different question “Why NOT Change Management or most so, change readiness?” After all, if an organization spends a great deal of time, money, and energy designing, developing, and implementing a new or greatly enhanced system wouldn’t they ensure the users are fully prepared to use it competently? Further, is it not a risky assumption to believe that users will simply “get it” with basic information, minimal training, and a few days of experience? The stakes are too high. Users must be included in the implementation equation and thus, prepared to accept, adopt, and support the new application or modules as part of their work-a-day routine. The authors are not making elaborate claims. Tomes of research have been published over the last 25 years claiming organizations need to embrace change or fail, and thus, need to utilize best practices when implementing any type of change albeit systems, process, structure, or market. To put it more simply, change is a matter of defining the “Ready – Aim – Fire” sequence for any given systems project.

Since there is so much current literature on Change Management available the authors feel it is imperative to provide the reader with a brief background on the art and science of Change Management. This information will be used to build into a present day theory on managing change, specifically organizational readiness as part of a systems implementation model.

Section II – Change Management Foundations

The birth of Change Management has at times been placed with Fredrick Taylor and the Scientific Management movement during the initial decade of the 20th Century. Change Management has also been linked back to the 1930s when Elton Mayo from Harvard who conducted what has become known as the Hawthorne Studies to rationalize workplace behavior. Nevertheless, most Change Management scholars say the initial framework for the field of study was forged largely in the US from the post WWII industrial boom. The creation of work teams fostered the need for organizations to collaborate, communicate, and create products to meet the frantic demands of an expanding economy. This climate created stress and tension within the workplace but with few tools or skills to address it. Management styles were quite dictatorial during this time period, plus the term “politically correct” was not part of the daily lexicon in American offices and factories.

The need for collaboration and social change led to the work of Kurt Lewin, who is considered to be the founder of the Change Management field, which was known as social psychology and eventually known as organization development. Lewin studied social behavior and found a strong correlation between the motivation to change and action (1958). He generated what has become often referenced as the first Change Management model (Fig 1), the “Unfreeze –Change – Refreeze” model.

![Change Model (Lewin, 1958)](image)

Lewin’s theories on change and organizational behavior attracted the attention of a group out of Connecticut in need of improving race relationships in the mid 1940s. This work by Lewin created what was probably the first official Change Management intervention called sensitivity training, which was later adopted by the Navy as a way to help change behaviors and attitudes. Participants attending these role-playing and discussion sessions were called T-Groups. Since the workplace in the late 1940s and early 1950s did not include much “soft” training or allowances, these sensitivity groups made monumental impacts on a variety of audiences. It was here that the label of organization development was created, but by the late 1960s and early 1970s the term started to be considered a “soft” discipline as clients and practitioners started to sense the field had not evolved much from the days of Lewin and others.
The field of organization development has gained a great deal of popularity since the 1980s as technology increased the speed of change in organizations and emerging markets. The traditional OD model of focusing on the “soft” stuff did not fit well within the expanding business community. Further, consulting firms working with client organizations deploying technological improvements have sifted through the various organization development works to generate a professional branch called Change Management. This latter phase of the professional field emerged throughout the 1990s as a service offering from consulting firms as a way to address change related to business transformation (Worren, Ruddle, and Moore, 1999). Yet after 20 years of practice the management of change, especially related to systems implementation change is often disconnected from the implementation project. Estimates from think tanks like Gartner and other consulting groups still place the success rate of planned change at 30 percent or less as mentioned previously. Therefore, the authors posit a need to do something slightly different; after all, doing the same thing and expecting different results is insane, at least according to Einstein. So where to begin? Look back on the simple model created by Lewin over 60 years ago: Unfreeze – Change – Refreeze. He suggested something needed to be done before the change began. Simple yet elegant. Unfreeze is the planning and preparation for change, not the act of change itself. The authors make no claim they have a silver bullet for all Change Management deficiencies but they posit a need to revise the early stages of systems implementation projects to focus on integrating the preparation for change. Based on experiential data, the authors suggest that user groups tend to get little advance notification that change is imminent, few opportunities to provide input into any new system, and provided little or no practice prior to “going live”. These examples illustrate why the authors suggest focusing on readiness as one way of improving the outcomes of systems implementation projects. Again, readiness may not be a silver bullet but the authors suggest it is a critical factor that must not be overlooked.

**Section III – Organizational Readiness**

So, what is readiness?

Readiness, by definition, describes a state of preparation, ready for immediate use. Look further to a military connotation and one finds the term readiness associated with specific battle missions that suggest specific tasks that need to be accomplished within a given standard in order to win the day. The authors point out this battle mission is roughly the same thing we ask users to do once a new system is brought online. There are steps, tasks, and requirements users need to know in order to fulfill their job requirements, which is similar to a soldier’s battle mission. After all, for many users, learning a new application can be a battle within itself. Yet it is one thing for one user to be ready, but what about an entire organization? This is where the authors posit a need for a systemic approach to the preparation for change, as Lewin would describe it “Unfreezing” and calling it organizational readiness.

When thinking of organizational readiness one may ask, “Ready for what?” The authors contend, quite simply, behavior change, which may come as a surprise to some systems project experts who have associated Change Management with “soft” stuff as mentioned previously. Change Management is ultimately about changing behavior. Yes, there is a mental and emotional component to change, but the authors take the position that behavior and performance is what gets results. Optimal organizational performance is achieved when three change-related components come together; communications, training, and a supportive infrastructure. Communications creates the awareness that change is about to occur while training provides the user with the skills necessary to be successful. The infrastructure is comprised of a compassionate leadership community that offers coaching, practice, and patience, which results in trust. Through experience, the authors believe without trust, all systems implementation projects will fail.
Communication Readiness
It has been common practice to communicate change in systems projects for many years. This has been accomplished by sending out a newsletter, conducting a user forum, or having a kick off celebration in the cafeteria. These tasks and events are adequate but what are they intended to accomplish? Awareness is first and foremost the modus operandi for communications, but communications should also stimulate and inspire questions, create some reaction like resistance. Resistance to change is natural and should be addressed if an organization is going to be ready to change and successfully negotiate the change landscape. Therefore, an effective communication plan allows for two way communications so users can ask questions, voice concerns, and generally get involved in the project.

Training Readiness
This section of the organizational readiness formula may seem simple but it can be quite complex especially if a user has never encountered automated technology prior to go live. The authors have experienced users who have recently been using dial-up connection to the internet, which creates a unique context for those users who are about to learn a strange new way to perform some of their daily tasks. A user manual and some exercises will not sufficiently prepare such a user to be successful, and being successful is a major goal of organizational readiness. Successful readiness results in exceptional user performance. Regardless of user, projects need to allow anyone who desires it, practice time in a lab or using another environment such as User Productivity Kit (UPK) to gain experience before and after the implementation date.

Infrastructure Readiness
This component is the largest of the three sections of organizational readiness in terms of scope. The infrastructure is comprised of the following groups.

- Leadership
- Readiness coordinator coaches
- Help Desk
- Performance standards

As with most of the contemporary literature regarding managing change, leadership engagement is critical because organizations do things that the manager not only says are important but also checks to see they are done correctly. This is to say users will take the time and effort to engage with an implementation project if a leader tells them it is important and is a priority and that they will be held accountable for their participation. The authors advise clients to clarify the priority of the implementation project when compared to other projects so that users understand where they need to spend their time. Further, if other projects have a higher priority, don’t expect users to enthusiastically engage with the implementation project. So, leaders set the stage; they pave a barrier free path towards the goal of increased user performance, which results in getting the most bang from the implementation buck.

User readiness coaches have been implemented by the authors as front line experts during the days just before and weeks just after Go Live. These coaches are selected due to their stature within the organization and their earned respect through competence. Users who need a helping hand tend to learn faster from someone they know and trust, who is from their department, not from a consulting group or the central office.

Having an adequate or above average help desk can calm fears and increase the learning curve much quicker than an organization that does not include their help desk in their readiness plans. The readiness coaches will be available for quick items and to reinforce training, but true trouble shooting and problem solving will need to be addressed by an educated help desk team. The help desk can track performance trends that may indicate a need for additional training or identifying network performance issues that strain the learning process during those initial weeks after deployment.
It may seem simple to say users just want to know what is expected of them, but it tends to be true when talking to them. So, the authors recommend project leaders determine the performance standards and measurement plans well ahead of the implementation date to manage user expectations. It is also fair to say that users tend to feel more comfortable when leaders openly state they will tolerate a learning curve and ramp up performance period to allow users to get comfortable and competent using the new applications. This ramp up period could be weeks, months, or even longer depending on the complexity of the change.

There are a plethora of Change Management models, methodologies, and strategies that say similar things but largely focus on the project portion of change and do not include as much time and attention before and after the implementation. The authors suggest this is true of most implementation strategies as well. Project leaders need to allow time to not only prepare the project team but also the user population and their leadership before the project starts, keep them engaged and ready to deploy on the given date, and to be ready to ramp up and perform to a given standard shortly after the Go Live date. So, the authors posit that readiness must be expressed in terms of stages, namely before, during, and after the project (Fig 2).

![Fig. 2 – Stages of Readiness](image)

Project sponsors and stakeholders can ask the simple questions included in Figure 2 at each point in the project in order to proceed to the next phase. Unfortunately, most projects do not fully include the sustainment or maintenance of the change, at least from the user’s point of view. The authors feel this last stage is often not included in the project scope due to cost but mostly due to the ambiguity of user acceptance compared to systems implementation tasks. A recent discussion on a Change Management professional development site garnered over 300 responses to a question about why project management does not often recognize Change Management. A large percentage of the responses could be summarized in a word – measurement. So the authors feel if readiness measures can be created, project managers as well as sponsors and stakeholders will embrace this part of systems implementation.

**Section IV – Measuring Readiness**

The military measures readiness to determine if they’re capable of launching an offensive campaign or can sustain an attack from an enemy. Systems project leaders are able to do the same when looking at readiness if they use the three components listed above. The authors contend that measuring the three components before, during and after the project is essential for gauging the degree of readiness of the organization to go live with the project. A brief review and description of the components discussed above follows:
• Communications - Users need to know that change is coming and how that change will impact their daily routine. So, project leaders can measure awareness and understanding at different points in time.

• Training - Simply building the skills necessary to negotiate the new application. Users can be allowed to practice in a lab environment to hone their skills prior to being allowed access into Production. Skill can be measured in several ways based on the process owner’s performance standards such as short answer quizzes or hands on exercises.

• Infrastructure - The infrastructure required to successfully support change includes the leadership community, a readiness network of peer coaches, and a competent help desk. Having this support infrastructure is a key ingredient to building confidence, competence, and trust quickly. Measuring the readiness of this component requires a triangulated approach; using a variety of measures from multiple perspectives.

Leadership Alignment and Commitment

The “Unfreezing” of an organization will likely result in the disruption of comfortable routines employees have developed over time. It is common to find employees questioning leadership and the direction the organization is heading. For that reason, leaders need to have a common understanding of the need for the change and the value the change will bring to the organization. Leaders also need to be united in defining and communicating common set of goals to be achieved.

For readiness to be measured, a goal needs to be in place. The authors suggest an early readiness goal be the confirmation that business leaders share a common understanding of the business case that is creating the change, leadership expectations, and commitment that in spite of organizational resistance the project will move forward. This ensures the leadership community is unified, on the same page, and ready to collaboratively navigate to a new way of doing business. This kind of consistent message sets the tone that users are expected to be ready when the project goes live.

• Leadership alignment assessment tool

Project teams can measure leadership alignment and commitment using a variety of readiness surveys. One such survey the authors have reviewed comes from the Boston Consulting Group and was featured in a Harvard Business Review article in 2005. The authors customized this readiness assessment to fit within their firm’s methodology, but their tool measures similar factors related to readiness and predictors of project success. The leadership readiness assessment tool should attempt to measure some of the following factors:

  – Commitment: Will the leader commit time and resources to this effort?
  – Capacity: Does the leader feel there is too much going on to change?
What Does Change Management Achieve?

- Capability: Does the leader believe the organization has the skills to change?
- Culture: Will the organizational "rules" hinder or enhance the change?

Project teams can create their own measures as they deem appropriate based on what is important in their local culture.

**User Awareness**
The "unfreezing" process needs to happen at all levels within the organization. In the case of end users, this means that employees need to be aware that a project that will have an impact on operations is about to begin.

The readiness goal to be measured at the outset of a project is to gauge the awareness of users regarding various aspects about the project to include the business case, the goals, and their belief that leaders and the rest of the organization are committed to the project. One word of caution here about communicating the business case and goals to users; they may be able to recite a business case or strategic goals but do they know how the change will upend the way they perform their daily tasks? Sometimes business goals do not translate well to those "What's In It For Me" (WIIFM) messages. Users in small organizations tend to go along with strategic goals more so than users in large organizations because the front line and CEO office are probably on the same floor or at least in the same building. Users in large organizations may not feel a direct connection with ambiguous goals. So, project leaders need to understand what they are communicating and what they are measuring.

There are several tools that can be used to assess user awareness:
- Stakeholder interviews and surveys
- Ensure people who are dedicated to the project have their calendars cleared
- Ensure people who are backfilling for project team members are aware of the new work they will need to pick up
- Survey at the completion of a Project Kickoff

**Knowledge / Skills / Support**
Part of the unfreezing process is to understand what will be required to facilitate the change and begin the refreeze process. To that end, the readiness goal against which readiness must be measured is to provide the key ingredients for success – knowledge, skills and support.

Tools that can be used to achieve this goal include:
- Knowledge: Having an appropriate number of Subject Matter Experts that provide adequate representation from across the organization who will inform the project
- Skills: Providing project team member the training they need to deliver the project
- Support: Providing a source for help the project team can utilize to help overcome the inevitable challenges that will arise as part of the project

**During**

According to Lewin, this is the “change” stage. Essentially, this stage encompasses most of the implementation project activity except for post production support. During this time leaders, users, stakeholders and all concerned begin to see how business will change as the software is designed, configured, tested, and readied for deployment. Employees really begin to see, learn, and experience the change as they complete training, use learning labs, and participate in user groups. All of these activities lead up to the question of “Are we ready to Go Live”? Sure the application, the network, and all things transactional and technical may be ready, but are the users ready? If not, then what? Leaders must prepare for this situation.
Leadership Behaviors, Perceptions
Leaders set the tone for how a project will be received as well as the level of urgency on a project. As such, leaders need to be coached on the messages that need to be communicated and the behaviors that need to be demonstrated if the organization is to understand and accept the change. It is also important to note that teams should communicate with informal leaders within the organization as much as the formal leaders because they can provide on-the-ground insights that many formal leaders do not know.

The readiness goal at this point is to engage leaders at all levels of the organization, formal and informal, to communicate project messages and model the behaviors that employees will encourage employees to prepare for the change.

Tools that can be employed to measure progress toward the goal include:
- Leadership Assessments
- Readiness Coordinator Network
- Organizational Readiness Assessments

User Behaviors and Perceptions, and Intentions
Introducing change into an organization and expecting users to accept the change all at once is unrealistic. Change is absorbed at different rates by different people as noted by Rogers (1962) who developed the technology adaptation curve (Fig 3).

Some users will grasp the new functions, features, and business process quickly while others will lag far behind. The key to readiness is getting a critical mass of the right users such as early adopters to begin using the application as soon as possible. These early adopters could be super users who can act as coaches and form the nucleus of a readiness network of experts that informally train the organization. Project sponsors and process owners need to recognize that some users don’t have a need to perform some functions very often, and therefore, may never fully embrace or be able to cleanly perform a task. This does not mean leaders need to give up on these kinds of users. It means leaders need to provide some kind of experience that will help users at least refresh their knowledge from when they completed their initial application training. The authors have noted that experience is a great readiness tool; the more one performs a task, the more one identifies with the task and accepts the task as part of their work.
As change is introduced into the organization, the behaviors, perceptions, and intentions of users that indicate willingness or readiness to embrace change need to be measured over time. The readiness goal at this stage is to facilitate user acceptance of the change. One foundational study revealed key predictors of user success include the user’s belief that changing to a new application will improve their quality of work life and that they will be successful (Davis, 1989). In other words, users will most likely want to dive into a new application if they think it will be easier to use and that they will be fully trained on how to do it. Unfortunately, not all ERP applications are easier than a simple in-house tool, which is a communication and performance management challenge.

Tools that can be used to measure user readiness during this stage include...
- Communication effectiveness surveys
- Road show attendance
- Organizational Readiness Assessments

**Knowledge / Skills / Support**
As users learn more about the project, they move toward a point where they need to ready themselves to be successful when the project goes live. This transitional phase for users is largely internal; in other words, emotional. How do they feel about letting go of the old way? Do they feel forced? Do they feel it is about time the nasty legacy system is retired? These questions certainly come for what many call the “softer” side of change but users do need to process these questions to fully embrace the change and accept the fact there is no turning back. If leaders do not make this fact clear, users will not likely fully embrace the change, which could foster the creation of shadow systems and processes.

The readiness goal at this point is to facilitate skill development among users that is relevant to using the new system in to fulfill their job duties. So, do users know how to do their job using the new applications?

Tools that can be used to assess user competence include...
- Training registration and attendance
- Training evaluations
- Assessment identifying if people are aware of how to find help related to the project at go-live

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**After**

**After the Project is Completed**
This is the “refreeze” stage, or when organizations try to stabilize after deployment. This stage is just after post production support and is intended for organization leaders to ask if they can sustain the change once the consulting team leaves. Yet, the level of user acceptance of the new system can determine how long it will take to “refreeze” the organization in the new way of doing business, which is why project managers typically do not want to include this kind of work in a project scope because the time it will take for the organization to fully sustain the change may take an unknown amount of time. When is such a task truly complete?

**Leadership Behaviors and Perceptions, and Intentions**
Injecting change into an organization typically results in a period of confusion for the organization for an unspecified amount of time after go-live. The length of this period of instability can be influenced by how leaders communicate and perform until the change has stabilized throughout the organization. The readiness goal at this point is to reinforce the new processes and functions as the standard for doing business; reinforce behavior change.
Tools that can be utilized to achieve this readiness goal include:

- Communicate progress on original goals
- Communicate commitment to “stay the course”
- Check process performance such as:
  - Payroll accuracy
  - Month End Close efficiency
  - Procurement activity

**Leadership Behaviors and Perceptions, and Intentions**

One of the unfortunate realities of project work is that while project teams strive to account for as much as they can, some things will be overlooked. The result will likely be users who express dissatisfaction with the system. In most cases, users understand that change is difficult and are willing to provide a “grace” period after go-live. For that reason, it is important to communicate commitment to providing support and prompt resolution of problems. The readiness goal at this point is to facilitate user acceptance.

Tools that can be applied to facilitate user acceptance include:

- Help desk assessment
- Number of help desk calls
- Types of calls and numbers of each type
- Number of calls by department
- Daily or weekly support calls with user groups
- User group meetings designed to share success stories and challenges

**Knowledge / Skills / Support**

Once the system is stabilized and the new way of doing business has become the standard for the organization, it becomes possible to build on the change that has been “frozen” into the organization. This is not another change, it is expanding the value of what has become familiar and is therefore challenging but not necessarily as threatening as change to users. The goal at this stage is to foster a commitment to continuous improvement that builds on the success the project has achieved.

Tools that can be used measure this readiness goal:

- Training
- User groups internal to the organization
- Regional and national user groups
- Process Analysis

**Section VII – Conclusion**

So, what does Change Management achieve? The authors have provided a variety of information related to the purpose and practice of change readiness, aka Change Management, throughout this document. Here is a summary of key points:

- When thinking Change Management, think readiness via behavior change.
  The authors suggest that Change Management is more than balloons and pep talks from the executive suite. Leading change is about driving a change in behavior by communicating what needs to be done, teaching people how to do it, and providing a support system that will ensure users will be successful. The ultimate goal of a change readiness strategy is to foster improved organizational performance that reaps optimal returns from a new application or business process.
• The practice of change is based on history and hard science, so give it a chance. Change readiness and all other related organizational behavior fields were founded by years of rigorous study and practice. The authors described where the discipline of Change Management and readiness have originated to include what many call the first change model from Kurt Lewin; the Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze model, which is often referenced today more than 60 years after it was created. Practitioners involved with change are usually motivated by a passion for helping people cope with challenges in the workplace whether that be related to communications, training, or other management consulting discipline. The authors suggest project managers use this passion to their advantage by including the change person as a trusted business advisor on their next project.

• Trust is a major component of readiness. Users at all levels within an organization can be uncomfortable and even absolutely terrified of an impending change; this feeling of resistance is normal. Yet organizations can mitigate these feelings of fear, anxiety, and resistance by developing a foundation of trust through open and honest communications as well as the creation of a network of readiness change champions. The authors have used this informal network of champions to create a face and voice of change that users trust because the change champion understands their concerns and speaks in their local language. Most users are not receptive to getting news or instructions about change from consultants because users simply do not trust that consultants understand their situation. Therefore, they do not listen or process information from consultants, even from a Central Office that is often distant from a front line user. Local change champions can help ease tension and instill the kind of trust that is a key ingredient to creating open minds that will learn and perform well once the new application are deployed across an organization.

• Experience leads to optimal behavior change. The ultimate goal of change readiness is competent and productive behavior change but getting to a competent and productive level of performance does not occur overnight. It takes repetition, which occurs over time. Creating opportunities for users to gain practical experience, either in a lab environment or in Production, provides users the chance to hone their skills as well as their ability to recall how to perform frequently used tasks. The biggest challenge for front line supervisors is to coach and motivate users who use the applications the least frequently as their ability to recall task steps and features decreases with time. Teaching these casual users how to use reference materials and other support aids will help increase overall organizational performance by increasing the quality of work and process outputs performed by the casual user.

• Readiness has three stages; before, during, and after the project. Getting ready to use a new system is more than just “going live” on a specific date on the calendar. Readiness occurs in stages throughout a project, even well after the implementation team has disbanded and rolled off to other projects. Readiness begins before the project kicks off by ensuring the business case is solid and that the project team is well positioned to begin a project that will lead to a successful implementation. Once the project is underway, most of the tasks and activities that occur are geared towards systems readiness through various levels of testing and checking. What about user readiness? Are they ready to truly begin the journey of learning a new way of performing job tasks? These are questions that need to be at the heart of a user readiness strategy. Then, once the application is live and users are busy making sense of new screens, new fields, new data tables, and other oddities that are different from their legacy system, project sponsors need to be asking questions about sustainability. Is the organization ready to let the implementation team go or do they need to stay longer? What does sustainability look like? This third stage of readiness can be outlined in a maintenance and support strategy that should be completed even before Go Live or soon after.
• Readiness needs to be measured. What does readiness look like? One would be hard pressed to identify readiness without having performance measures that can be used to illustrate the level of readiness. The authors have suggested measuring communications, skill development, and the support infrastructure throughout each stage of readiness so that project managers and sponsors can best facilitate the change process.

The practice of change readiness is not perfect as the authors believe there are no silver bullets that work every time for every challenge, which is why this discipline is as much an art as it is a science. Project managers seem to shy away from "art" as it is hard to quantify into a project schedule, which is why the authors suggest ways to manage and scope change readiness.

Nevertheless, the authors hope that this paper and the discussion generated during the conference session inspires rich conversations within project teams about the placement and positioning of the change readiness practice on the next effort or engagement. In fact, hopefully the next question a project manager asks his or her sponsor and steering committee is…

“Are you ready to change?”
References


