

Defining Culture and Change

An organization's culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods to employees. The organization's culture shapes employee perceptions, behaviors, and understanding, and defines the proper way to behave within the organization.¹ Therefore, "organizational culture often mirrors the organization's core values and directly reflects the organization's leadership."² According to scholars at the University of Michigan, there are four types of organizational culture, as described in the following figure.

Types of Organizational Culture

Clan-Oriented Culture	Adhocracy-Oriented Culture	Market-Oriented Culture	Hierarchy-Oriented Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Family-like" cultures that focus on mentoring, nurturing, and "doing things together." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A dynamic and entrepreneurial culture, with a focus on risk-taking, innovation, and "doing things first." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results-oriented, with a focus on competition, achievement, and "getting the job done." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured and controlled, with a focus on efficiency, stability, and "doing things right."

Source: Northcentral University³

Organizational culture can facilitate the achievement of the organization's objectives, attract the right employees, customers, and key stakeholders. Although an organization's culture is not static, it can also be resistant to change efforts. In some cases, culture constitutes a barrier against organizational productivity and performance. Therefore, an **organization's leaders need to engage in deliberate cultural transformations and change management practices.**⁴

Additionally, RTI International notes the many ways to classify change based on the origin, execution approach, and scale of the change.⁵ The figure below illustrates these concepts.

Types of Change

BY ORIGIN		
Planned	Definition	Change is a deliberate effort, typically pushed by a core group of centralized and influential change agents.
	Pros	Successful history of effectiveness, common and easily understood approach, controlled, and premeditated change.
	Cons	Does not provide rapid transformation, does not account well for high variability in conditions, not well suited for crisis situations where more directive change management approaches may be required.
Response	Definition	This type of change results from a situational condition that requires action, often a crisis. Typically, this is more directive than collaborative, and managers have little control or influence over situational variables.
	Pros	Generally easier to achieve collective will for change, can have a catalytic change effect fostering faster transformation.
	Cons	Potentially short-lived change outcomes, higher risk of overcorrection or imprecise solution.
Emergent	Definition	Change is a continuous, open-ended process of adaptation to evolving circumstances and conditions.
	Pros	Better suited for unpredictability and rapidly changing conditions, better aligned to concepts of continuous improvement.
	Cons	Less-controlled change, characterized by higher levels of ambiguity.

BY EXECUTION		
Structural	Definition	This approach tends to emphasize execution focused on the structures, systems, and processes associated with the desired results.
	Pros	Emphasizes the specific systemic, structural, and operational changes needed, simpler to organize and execute, results oriented, may be faster to accomplish.
	Cons	Can be too drastic to gain acceptance, often executed as top down rather than inclusive, sometimes too “program” specific to affect lasting behavioral change.
Cultural	Definition	Cultural change tends to reinforce trust, commitment, and capability. Bottom-up engagement is a hallmark of execution, as is the expectation that change will require experimentation and adaptation.
	Pros	Encourages participation, typically focuses on the way people think rather than what they do, often generates greater buy-in to the change effort.
	Cons	May be too unspecific to be actionable, process is less clear and therefore easier to derail or manipulate, requires more time than structural change.
BY SCALE		
Fine Tuning	Definition	Small, ongoing adaptation to strategy or policy
Incremental Adjustment	Definition	Distinct modifications to processes and strategies, but not radical change
Modular Transformation	Definition	Major shifts in one or more groups or departments; may include radical change but only in part of an organization
System Transformation	Definition	Focuses on the whole organization, typically radical alterations (e.g., re-organization, change to interaction patterns, etc.)

Source: RTI International⁶

Culture and Change in Education

A school’s culture has deeply rooted traditions, values, and beliefs. Some of these components are common across schools and some of them are unique and embedded in a particular school’s history and location. It is the school community—teachers, students, parents, and staff— who collectively build the school culture. Hence, managing a school’s culture does not depend on the authority of the school leadership, but on the influence of the school leaders to influence over these behaviors, beliefs, and values.⁷

Organizational change in schools is “any alteration, betterment, improvement, restructuring, or adjustment in the process or contents of education in schools.”⁸ Organizational change in education aims to improve student learning and learning conditions, therefore, school leaders and educators often lead transformative change in classrooms, school systems, and board rooms.⁹ However, as the ASCD notes, “a policy change without cultural change is an exercise in futility and frustration.”¹⁰ Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed how schools and districts build and understand culture, revealing the need to build positive school cultures that support student emotional learning, and favors strong relationships among the members of the school community.¹¹

Fullan’s Educational Change and Coherence Framework

Michael Fullan, a Canadian education policy advisor and worldwide authority on educational reform, has focused his work on educational change¹². He proposed that there are four broad phases in the change process: initiation, implementation, continuation, and outcome.¹³ The following figure provides more details of each phase.

Fullan's Change Model

Initiation

- Affected by the existence and quality of innovations, access to innovations, advocacy from central administration, teacher advocacy, and external change agents

Implementation

- Characteristics of change (need of change, clarity about goals and needs, complexity: the extent of change required to those responsible for implementation, quality, and practicality of the program). Affected by local factors (the school district, board of community, principal, teacher) and external factors (government and other agencies).

Continuation

- Continuation is a decision about the institutionalization of innovation based on the reaction to the change, which may be negative or positive. Continuation depends on whether or not: the change gets embedded/built into the structure (through policy/budget/timetable), the change has generated a critical mass of administrators or teachers who are skilled and committed to it, and the change has established procedures for continuing assistance.

Outcome

- Attention to the following perspectives on the change process may support the achievement of a positive or successful change outcome: (1) active initiation and participation, (2) pressure, support, and negotiation, (3) changes in skills, thinking, and committed actions, and (4) overriding problem of ownership

Source: Pennsylvania State University¹⁴

Fullan also notes that when engaging in the change process, all successful schools experience **implementation dips**, which refers to “a dip in performance and confidence as one encounters an innovation that requires new skills and new understandings.”¹⁵ As described in the following figure, school leaders should understand that people in their community experience two kinds of problems when they are in the dip: the social-psychological fear of change, and the lack of technical know-how or skills to make the change work. Therefore, leaders need affiliative and coaching styles in these situations.¹⁶

The Two Kinds of Implementation Problems

Social-psychological fear of change

- Prefer to keep things the way they are, “Things are fine as they are.”
- Denial, “It’s not going to happen.”
- General mistrust of the change leaders “They don’t know what they are doing.”

Lack of technical know-how or skills to make the change work

- Weak introduction to the innovation
- Few opportunities to receive embedded job support/coaching
- Insufficient resources to support implementation

Source: Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center¹⁷

Likewise, Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn, “an international consultant and author on system change, leadership, and learning,” introduced the coherence framework to help school leaders support their systems.¹⁸ According to Fullan and Quinn, coherence is “the shared depth of understanding about the nature of the work.”¹⁹ The coherence framework consists of the four components described in the following figure.

Coherence Framework Connected Components

Focusing Direction	Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	Deepening Learning	Securing Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherence makers should have a clear purpose, goals, and strategies to mobilize people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders establish a nonjudgmental culture of growth, where making mistakes is part of the learning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create communities of collective inquiry that deeply examine instructional practices and student impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build strong internal accountability, meaning that the group takes self and collective responsibility for its performance and reinforces this by engaging in the external accountability framework.

Source: School Administrator²⁰

Change Strategies

“There are a number of ways to approach change and there is no one strategy that will suit every eventuality. [Therefore], the strategy chosen to affect change should be the most appropriate for the particular change [intended].”²¹ For instance, William Lockitt, an education scholar, distinguishes the five broad change strategies described below.

Types of Change Strategies

STRATEGY TYPE	DEFINITION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Directive Strategies	This strategy highlights the managers’ right to manage change and the use of authority to impose change with little or no involvement of other people	Change can be undertaken quickly.	It does not take into consideration the views, or feelings, of those involved in, or affected by, the imposed change.
Expert Strategies	This approach sees the management of change as a problem-solving process that needs to be resolved by an ‘expert’.	Experts play a major role in the solution and the solution can be implemented quickly as a small number of ‘experts’ are involved	Those affected may have different views than those of the expert and may not appreciate the solution being imposed or the outcomes of the changes made
Negotiating Strategies	This approach highlights the willingness on the part of senior managers to negotiate and bargain in order to effect change.	Individuals will feel involved in the change and be more supportive of the changes made.	It takes more time to effect change, the outcomes cannot be predicted, and the changes made may not fulfill the total expectations of the managers affecting the change.

STRATEGY TYPE	DEFINITION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Educative Strategies	This approach involves changing people’s values and beliefs, ‘winning hearts and minds’, in order for them to fully support the changes being made and move toward the development of a shared set of organizational values that individuals are willing, and able to support.	Individuals within the organization will have a positive commitment to the changes being made.	It takes longer to implement
Participative Strategies	This strategy stresses the full involvement of all of those involved and affected by the anticipated changes. Although driven by senior managers the process will be less management dominated and driven more by groups or individuals within the organization.	Any changes made are more likely to be supported due to the involvement of all those affected. The commitment of individuals and groups within the organization will increase as those individuals and groups feel ownership over the changes being implemented.	It can take a long time to implement and can be more costly due to the number of meetings that take place.

Source: William Lockitt²²

Change management literature often refers to the models proposed by Jhon Kotter and Kurt Lewin as the most commonly used by business leaders pursuing organizational changes.

Kotter’s Eight-Step Change Model

John Kotter, a Harvard Business School Professor, introduced an eight-step model of change. This step-by-step model provides guidance on the entire process of change and emphasizes building acceptability for change by employees for the success of the overall process.²³

Kotter’s Eight-Step Change Model

STEP	DEFINITION	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
STEP 1 Create a Sense of Urgency	Help others see the need for change through a bold, aspirational opportunity statement that communicates the importance of acting immediately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and highlighting the potential threats and the repercussions which might crop up in the future. Examining the opportunities which can be tapped through effective interventions. Initiate honest dialogues and discussions to make people think over the prevalent issues and give convincing reasons to them. Request the involvement and support of the industry people, key stakeholders, and customers on the issue of change.
STEP 2 Build a Guiding Coalition	A volunteer army needs a coalition of effective people – born of its own ranks – to guide it, coordinate it, and communicate its activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the effective change leaders in your organizations and also the key stakeholders, requesting their involvement and commitment towards the entire process. Form a powerful change coalition that would be working as a team. Identify the weak areas in the coalition teams and ensure that the team involves many influential people from various cross-functional departments and working in different levels in the company.

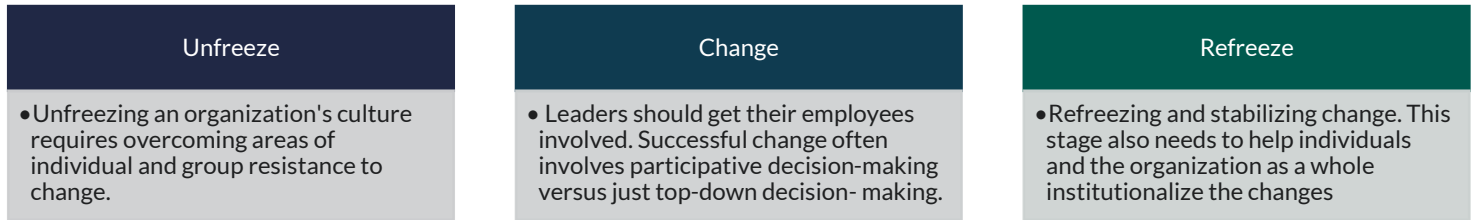
<p>STEP 3 Form A Strategic Vision and Initiatives</p>	<p>Clarify how the future will be different from the past and how you can make that future a reality through initiatives linked directly to the vision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the core values, defining the ultimate vision, and the strategies for realizing a change in an organization. • Ensure that the change leaders can describe the vision effectively and in a manner that people can easily understand and follow.
<p>STEP 4 Enlist a Volunteer Army</p>	<p>Large-scale change can only occur when massive numbers of people rally around a common opportunity. They must be bought-in and urgent to drive change – moving in the same direction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the change in the vision very often powerfully and convincingly. Connect the vision with all the crucial aspects like performance reviews, training, etc. • Handle the concerns and issues of people honestly and with involvement.
<p>SEP 5 Enable Action by Removing Barriers</p>	<p>Removing barriers such as inefficient processes and hierarchies provides the freedom necessary to work across silos and generate real impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the organizational processes and structure are in place and aligned with the overall organizational vision. • Continuously check for barriers or people who are resisting change. Implement proactive actions to remove the obstacles involved in the process of change. • Reward people for endorsing change and supporting in the process.
<p>STEP 6 Generate Short-Term Wins</p>	<p>Wins are the molecules of results. They must be recognized, collected, and communicated – early and often – to track progress and energize volunteers to persist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By creating short-term wins early in the change process, you can give a feel of victory in the early stages of change. • Create many short-term targets instead of one long-term goal, which are achievable and less expensive and have lesser possibilities of failure. • Reward the contributions of people who are involved in meeting the targets.
<p>STEP 7 Sustain Acceleration</p>	<p>Press harder after the first successes. Your increasing credibility can improve systems, structures, and policies. Be relentless with initiating change after change until the vision is a reality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve continuous improvement by analyzing the success stories individually and improving from those individual experiences.
<p>STEP 8: Institute Change</p>	<p>Articulate the connections between the new behaviors and organizational success, making sure they continue until they become strong enough to replace old habits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the success stories related to change initiatives on every given opportunity. • Ensure that the change becomes an integral part of your organizational culture and is visible in every organizational aspect. • Ensure that the support of the existing company leaders, as well as the new leaders, continue to extend their support towards the change.

Source: Kotter Inc and Connecticut State Government.²⁴

Lewin's Three-Step Model

Physicist and psychologist, Kurt Lewin, developed a three-step model for organizational change. In this model, organizational leadership serves as a change agent to unfreeze the organization; however, throughout the process, leaders coordinate with employees, share their knowledge, and give opportunities in making decisions.²⁵

Lewin's Three-Step Model




Source: Michigan State University²⁶

Choosing a Strategy

The Harvard Business Review notes that choosing the right strategy to manage change should consider key situational variables. Therefore, the strategic options available to managers can be thought of as a continuum, illustrated in the figure below:²⁷

At one end of the continuum, the change strategy calls for a very rapid implementation, a clear plan of action, and little involvement of others. This type of strategy mows over any resistance and, at the extreme, would result in a fait accompli. At the other end of the continuum, the strategy would call for a much slower change process, a less clear plan, and involvement on the part of many people other than the change initiators. This type of strategy is designed to reduce resistance to a minimum

Strategic Continuum



FAST	SLOWER
Clearly Planned	Not clearly planned at the beginning
Little involvement of others	Lots of involvement of others
Attempt to overcome any resistance	Attempt to minimize any resistance
KEY SITUATIONAL VARIABLES	
The position of the initiators vis-a-vis the resisters (in terms of power, trust, and so forth)	
The locus of relevant data for designing the change and of needed energy for implementing it	
The stakes involved (i.e., the presence or lack of presence of a crisis, the consequences of resistance, and the lack of change)	

Source: Harvard Business Review²⁸

Data-Driven Culture Change Practices

The data revolution is deeply changing businesses and industries. Data analytics permeates all aspects of organizational lives, forcing organizations to develop strong data cultures. McKinsey & Company notes that “[organizations] develop a data culture by moving beyond specialists and skunkworks, with the goal of achieving deep business engagement, creating employee pull, and cultivating a sense of purpose, so that data can support the company’s operations instead of the other way around.”²⁹

As organizations develop a data culture for decision-making, leadership can leverage data to lead organizational changes. Change management typically relies on qualitative information generated

by a root cause analysis instead of a data-driven model.³⁰ However, data analysis tools can be helpful to drive and track organizational change. For instance, to drive cultural change, leaders should start to quantitatively measure current cultural values to understand the extent of change needed and enable accountability and the ability to track your culture change more precisely over time.³¹ The following figure illustrates how change managers can use data throughout the change process.

Using Data Throughout the Change Process

Use data to baseline and define the change roadmap

- Leaders should identify the organization’s current state, taking a “baseline” of employees’ current capabilities to quantify key information that will build the foundation for the transformation plan.
- Baseline data can help leadership prioritize and select the change programs that are most likely to succeed with the teams’ current skills and capabilities.

Use data to create a culture of trust and learning

- Data can help build credibility and internal support for change initiatives.
- Data can also be used to eliminate fear and drive a learning culture that supports change.

Use data to measure progress and build support

- As the transformation roadmap progresses, data enables managers to quantify progress and quickly make credible changes to their plan.

Use data to identify and develop key skills essential for change.

- Collecting real-time skills data can help leadership identify skill gaps and proactively develop new strategies, training programs, and resources to combat this potential roadblock.
- Capturing and measuring skills data also allows managers to compare progress across various teams. If one team is successfully implementing the change and another is struggling, a manager can use skills data to evaluate the potential cause and take action.

Use data to build resilience instead of just reducing resistance

- Instead of investing time into resisting change, leadership should invest in supporting and creating resilient workers ready for change.

Source: Visual Workforce³²

The Harvard Business Review notes how some companies now use data science for change management. Companies can build predictive models for change management by collecting large and diverse data.³³ The following table describes the practices that organizations can take to gather data and includes some examples of existing data-collection tools.

Data-Driven Practices in Change Management

PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Using Digital Engagement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a new generation of real-time employee opinion tools that are starting to replace old-fashioned employee opinion surveys. • The real-time feedback means we will learn very rapidly how communications or engagement tactics have been received, thus optimizing our actions in days rather than weeks • These tools can help answer questions like: Is a change being equally well-received across locations? Are some managers better than others at delivering messages to employees? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture IQ polls – sample groups of employees through a smartphone app on a daily or weekly basis to generate real-time insights. • Waggl.com – creates an ongoing conversation with employees about a change effort, allowing change managers to tie this dialogue to the progress of initiatives they are undertaking.

PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Apply Social Media Analytics to Identify Stakeholder Sentiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change managers can also look beyond the confines of the enterprise for insight about the impact of change programs. Customers, channel partners, suppliers, and investors, to name just a few, are all key stakeholders for change programs. They are also more likely than employees to comment on social media about changes a company is making, thus giving potentially vital insight into how they are responding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linguistic analysts of text tools can help capture clues about behavior from people's word choices. Applying these tools to anonymized company email or the dialogue on tools like waggil.com will give fresh insight into change readiness and the reactions of employees to different initiatives.
Capture Reference Data About Current Change Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are opportunities to capture information about the team involved, the population engaged in the change, how long it took to implement, what tactics were used, and so on. Building a reference data set like this may not yield immediate benefit, but as the overall data set grows, it will make it easier to build accurate predictive models of organizational change. 	--
Use Data to Select People for Change Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying data-driven tools for personnel selection when building a team could both improve project performance and help to build another new data set. If every change leader and team member underwent psychometric testing and evaluation before the project, this data would become variables to include as you search for a causal model on what leads to successful change projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California startup LEDR Technologies is pioneering techniques to predict team performance. It integrates data sources and uses them to help teams anticipate the challenges they may have with team dynamics, so they can head them off before they occur.
Build a Dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each organization should have a bespoke dashboard, developed in partnership with the organization's leadership team, reflecting their priorities, competitive position, and future plans. Dashboards can bring insight to specific transformation investments the organization is making. 	--

Source: Harvard Business Review³⁴

Change assessment data can also support change management projects to identify potential people risks. Changefirst, a technology-focused change management company, identifies the Change Impact Assessment and the Initiative Legacy Assessment as two key tools to measure change management people risks. The table below provides a broad description of these tools. Leaders can use these tools to identify the highest people-related risks for the change, meaning where leaders are more likely to face resistance and where risk mitigation should occur.³⁵

Change Assessment Data Tools

TOOL	PURPOSE
Change Impact Assessment (CIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure and compare how difficult it might be for different individuals and groups to adapt to the change solutions. It allows change leaders to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure and compare likely disruption to different parts of the organization Identify areas or teams that might have difficulty with adapting and committing to the change Clearly identify risks in project risk logs Create dynamic change plans

<p>Initiative Legacy Assessment (ILA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILA allows understanding the legacy of change implementation done in the past. It provides change managers with an understanding of the key implementation challenges and allows them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predict likely barriers and areas of resistance • Predict likely levels of commitment • Measure the effectiveness of past change • Clearly identify risks in project risk logs • Create dynamic change plans
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Source: Changefirst³⁶

Culture Change and Stakeholder Participation

Resistance is a natural response to change and change managers should effectively recognize and manage this resistance to lead through change effectively.³⁷ Gregory Shea, a Senior Fellow at the Wharton Center for Leadership and Change Management, notes that “if you are leading change and there is no sign of resistance, either you’re not being taken seriously, or the resisters are not telling you the truth.”³⁸

Stakeholder Mapping

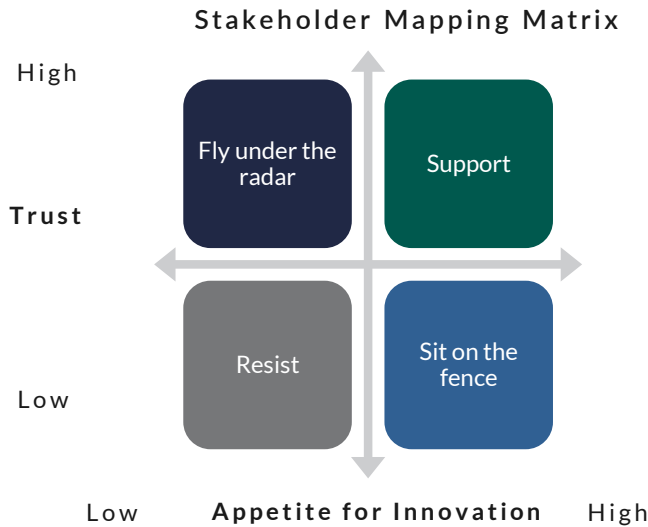
Change managers should map stakeholders, those groups and individuals who influence the success of a determined change, to identify if the initiative has a chance to succeed. Gregory Shea also shares a technique for mapping stakeholders into four groups, based on two criteria: who supports the change, and who can be trusted.³⁹ The following table provides a brief description of these four stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Groups Participating in Organizational Changes

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	DESCRIPTION
<p>Allies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can be trusted to give change managers honest feedback. • Change managers should turn to them when they are stressed or frustrated and layout their thinking with them.
<p>Opponents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change managers get the gift of public, explicit resistance from them. This means that opponents take the change manager seriously. • They give the change manager something that can be addressed, and if solved, change managers may be able to turn them into allies.
<p>Bedfellows</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the most unstable group. Change managers should give them small, regular, public tasks that support the initiative and move it forward. ‘Small’ limits the damage they can do, ‘regular’ means keeping an eye on them and tracking what they are doing, and ‘public’ means there are witnesses – others see how they are helping, and if they don’t comply, they lose credibility. If they do all of the tasks flawlessly, that means they are really allies. If they do two tasks flawlessly, one poorly, and one not at all, they send strong mixed messages. If they won’t do any of them or do them poorly, they’re really adversaries.
<p>Adversaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a tendency to put more people in this group than change managers should, especially if they are frustrated. Change managers should not spend time and resources on adversaries, as these are the people who are very unlikely to be moved.

Source: The Wharton School⁴⁰

Change managers can also identify stakeholder groups by using a stakeholder mapping matrix, considering each stakeholder’s level of trust and appetite for innovation. For instance, change managers can undertake qualitative or quantitative analyses to rate (low, average, high) the level of trust (how much a stakeholder is convinced about the potential of the change and that can be trusted) and appetite for innovation (how much a stakeholder has historically welcomed and embarked on innovative initiatives).⁴¹ The following figure illustrates this matrix.



Source: ProjectManagement.com⁴²

Based on the trust-appetite for innovation matrix above, change managers can identify those stakeholders that are likely to support and resist change, and those that are skeptical and sit on the fence or fly under the radar. The table below provides a description of these groups.

Trust - Appetite for Innovation Matrix Stakeholder Groups

GROUP	DESCRIPTION
Resist	Stakeholders who are not interested in investigating or implementing new approaches and are highly skeptical to change.
Support	Stakeholders who are keen to investigate and implement new approaches and believe that new approaches can benefit the organization.
Sit on the fence	Stakeholders who are keen to investigate and implement new approaches but that are skeptical about the benefits or outcomes of these new approaches. These stakeholders may invest some resources to pursue a new approach but do not commit fully to its implementation.
Fly under the radar	Stakeholders who are ok or ambivalent to new approaches; however, are not interested in investing resources or actively participating in the implementation of a new approach.

Source: ProjectManagement.com⁴³

The following figure highlights several questions for change management leaders to consider when mapping stakeholders.

Guiding Questions for Stakeholder Mapping



- Who are the stakeholders and what are their key attributes?
- What are the likely responses of these stakeholders to the change being implemented?
- Why are these stakeholders having this reaction to the change?
- How can these stakeholders be effectively engaged, so as to increase their support toward the successful implementation of this change?
- How will they measure the success of this change? What is it that they want to see?
- How much influence do they have?
- Could they stop or seriously undermine the change if they wanted to?
- How important are they?
- Do they have power because of their authority or because they are experts in what they do?

Source: Multiple⁴⁴

Manage Resistance and Communicate Change to Stakeholders

After identifying stakeholders that are likely to support the change and those who are likely to oppose it, change managers should communicate with these groups and manage resistance. Change managers should first understand why stakeholders react to change the way they do, particularly those that resist it.⁴⁵ The figure below illustrates some of the reasons behind resistance to change.

Common Reasons for Stakeholder Resistance

Defensiveness	Many stakeholders working for organizations for several years can see change as threatening.
Lack of conviction about the need for change	This is closely linked to defensiveness, particularly at those organizations in which work practices have existed unchanged for a long time.
Uncertainty	Stakeholders are likely to be negative about a change if they are uncertain about what impact the change could have on them personally and in their work areas.
Fear of transition	Stakeholders can be stressed about the transition process and the amount of extra work they and their teams would have to implement a change.
Feeling of being left out/loss of control	Stakeholders might feel that they are left out of the decision-making process.
Lack of knowledge	Stakeholders might be unsure of what the change is all about.

Source: ProjectManagement.com⁴⁶

To manage resistance, change leaders should engage in effective change communication practices. The purpose of communication in change management is to help stakeholders embrace change by explaining to them why the change is needed, and the steps required for that change to happen.⁴⁷ Change leaders should also be clear about the message they want to communicate and how they communicate it. This means that leaders should choose the right time and space to communicate the change to the audiences, and the best channel to deliver the message (i.e., face-to-face, phone call, email).⁴⁸ The following figure describes some practices that individuals leading change can implement to communicate the change to stakeholders.

Best Practices to Communicate Change to Stakeholders

Communicate the Vision

- Leaders of change need to communicate the necessity of change by clearly expressing why the change is needed and how it will be realized. Employees want to understand the big picture context and the path ahead.
- Inspire the workforce with a clear and compelling vision for change of a better future, the agreed-upon reasons that the status quo is dissatisfactory, and the practical and thoughtful business case for change.

Communicate Regularly and Honestly

- Once is not enough. It is critical that you communicate the change regularly and in multiple venues. Give your employees opportunities to question the plan and voice their issues.
- Be honest in your answers. When you know, be clear and consistent. When you don't know, say so, then find out and share the answer. Be sure to make change communications personal. Employees will be most interested in how the change will affect them personally.

Communicate through Modeling

- Through their actions, leaders can effectively model not only the behaviors that the change will require but also their confidence that the change is good for business. The more thoroughly leaders understand the dynamics and challenges of change, the better they will be able to set the tone.
- Their acceptance of the change trickles down to managers and then cascades to employees. When this happens, change is five times more likely to be successful.

Communicate through Engagement

- Don't forget who the real implementers of change will be – the employees. Recognize those who adopt the desired behaviors for change. This will encourage others to get engaged and adopt the same behaviors.
- Employees who receive positive feedback for their efforts are more likely to support the change, and even advocate for it.

Source: LSA Global⁴⁹

When engaging in stakeholder communications, change leaders should consider all aspects of effective communication to ensure that the message gets delivered to the clearly and consistently. Effective communication also opens the opportunity to receive feedback from stakeholders and understand their concerns.⁵⁰ The following figure illustrates the elements of effective communications.







Elements of Effective Communication

Simplicity	Complicating the message with unnecessary details confuses the message and makes it difficult for the audience to understand. Keeping the messaging to the point will ensure your message is what the audience hears and understands.
Clarity	Be specific in your details. The audience shouldn't have to decipher what you are trying to say or "read between the lines."
Consistency	Make sure you are telling the same thing to multiple audiences. Your message should also be consistent across various platforms.
Multiple forums	You want to be consistent about sharing your message, but you also want to be able to reach as many stakeholders as possible. Multiple platforms such as newsletters, meetings, webinars ensure your message reaches the right people.
Repetition	Messaging needs to be reinforced multiple times to take root. It can take time for people to process what is happening and their role in it. Repetition gives this time.
Explanation of seeming inconsistencies	Messaging should be correct when information is shared, and if it is a clear message, there should not be inconsistencies; however, different people may interpret the message in different ways. Leadership should think about how to answer questions that may arise and deal with them directly.
Give and take	Sharing a message opens up the opportunity for questions from stakeholders. Good communication allows for a response and opportunity for input from the audience, whether the input is accepted or not

Source: The National Reporting System for Adult Education⁵¹

Supplemental Resources

The following resources provide additional information for school leaders to explore shared leadership and responsibility distribution. These resources support stakeholders as they prepare to lead in cultural changes in their schools and districts.

RESOURCE	PUBLISHER	QR CODE
AIHR Cultural Transformation Guide	Academy to Innovate HR (AIHR)	
<p>Description: This guide provides step-by-step guidelines to lead organizational cultural transformations. It includes case studies from the corporate world. School leaders can use this resource to deepen their understanding of cultural transformations at diverse organizations.</p>		
Leading Coherence Making in Complex Times	Michael Fullan and Joann Quinn's presentation at the Regional Leadership Conference 2018 in Melbourne, Australia	
<p>Description: This presentation deepens on the coherence making framework and includes activities and discussion questions to help school leaders reflect on coherence making at their schools.</p>		
Managing Change in Education. Practical Strategies to Improve Change Outcomes in K-12	RTI International	
<p>Description: This resource provides detailed information about the implications of organizational changes in K12 institutions. It also includes guiding questions to support K12 leadership in implementing change strategies.</p>		
Managing the Implementation Dip - Guiding Questions & Strategies for the State Systemic Improvement Plan Implementation	WestEd NCSI	
<p>Description: This resource includes guiding questions to help school leaders identify specific challenges that may lead to an implementation dip and recommended practices to support change management plans implementation.</p>		
Change Management Toolkit	University of California, Berkeley	
<p>Description: This toolkit provides a collection of tools and techniques to support change management, including change-management pre-work, managing resistance, developing a change plan, and implementing and monitoring change.</p>		
Change Management in K-12: Six Change Management Models for K-12	Frontline Education	
<p>Description: This resource provides practical examples of how K12 institutions can use diverse change models to implement changes. School leaders can use this resource to identify case studies for a particular change model, including Lewin's three-step and Kotter's eight-step models.</p>		

Source: QR Code Generator⁵²

Endnotes

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