

White Paper

Change Management in the Modern Era: ADAPT and Thrive

KEY POINTS:

1. A healthy change management foundation will enable your organization to weather marketplace storms.
2. The right amount of centralization and collaboration can overcome siloed processes.
3. You need to manage change both from the top down and the bottom up.

Change management is the term applied to any program or event the organization undertakes that causes disruption to daily operations. In this context, the disruption is foreseen and affects multiple business units.

In this paper:

1. Adapt or Fail — The Dangers of Playing It Safe
2. The PMO as a Catalyst and Facilitator of Change Management
3. ADAPT – Your Formula for Transformation and Buy-in
4. How Technology Can be Your Best Partner to Conquer Change

Introduction:

Flexibility, adaptability and agility are key characteristics of successful organizations that want to outperform their competitors. Transforming your organization to harness these characteristics requires a strong change management strategy executed from the top down. In this white paper, we'll share why creating an Agile organization that embraces change is so important in today's fast-paced business environment. Next, we'll show you how to utilize project managers to organize the transformation process, track progress and manage implementation.

We will also share the ADAPT formula for creating organizational buy-in and provide insight into selecting the right software solutions to provide visibility and guidance, governance, collaboration, and centralization. By the end of this paper, you will know how to prepare your organization to not just navigate and survive change but, most importantly, thrive while doing so.

Part One: Adapt or Fail — The Dangers of Playing It Safe

Gaining a competitive edge requires organizations to be agile — able to swiftly adapt to the dynamic changes in their unique markets and the evolving needs of their customers. However, changing one's business methodology is not an easy feat. The intimidation factor keeps many businesses in a state of comfortable paralysis that prioritizes stability over growth. On paper, this type of risk aversion seems like a sensible business decision. Unfortunately, that is not necessarily the case and fails to keep up with the pace of change required to be competitive.



Case in Point:

Think of the concept in terms of commuting to work every day in an old, beat up car. On one hand, the vehicle is completely paid off, it gets you from one place to another and it's already in your garage, which means minimal work for you. It's familiar and comfortable. However, that doesn't make it the best option for navigating traffic, distracted drivers or poor road conditions. Compared to a modern car with features like full airbags, rear, front, and view cameras, anti-lock brakes, and all-wheel drive, that comfortable beater is actually putting you and your safety in danger every time you drive.

The failure to be proactive and adapt in business also puts your organization at risk. Being reactive — waiting and hoping change won't be inflicted upon you — costs your organization strategic opportunities to craft an overarching vision, drive messaging and determine processes. Fear cedes control to chance and cuts into your ability to deliver continuous business value internally and to your customers. And if your competitors have seized the opportunities that your organization is missing, you're inevitably going to be left behind.

If the biggest influence preventing your organization from adapting is fear, then the best solution is to create and implement an effective change management plan. Change management is a term that's used quite often, and it has different definitions depending on the industry. When it comes to adapting your business processes and initiatives to enhance agility, change management describes the strategic approach to facilitating that transformation across departments, projects, operations and individuals. In the next section, we'll share how the project management office can be the driver of change to bring your vision to reality.



Part Two: The PMO can be a Catalyst and Facilitator of Change Management

One of the key challenges of change management is implementing change without causing major disruption to regular business operations. Knowing this, the professionals from your Project Management Office (PMO) can swiftly become your organization's star players, for these reasons.

- 1 Your PMO will have access to a portfolio view of all projects, deliverables, tasks and resources. This builds trust and credibility into information you provide to the business and if your organization ascribes to Agile project management, which has them trained to maneuver on the fly, all the better for you.
- 2 Your PMO is already accustomed to upholding standards, ensuring all actions are accomplished and reporting progress to stakeholders.
- 3 Your PMO can support you in selecting the right people for the right tasks, as they work closely with many different departments and can help you match strength to purpose.
- 4 The PMO can facilitate dissemination of information, instructions, organizational standards and best practices through their already established system of engagement and communication.

Your PMO is an asset that you can and must engage to ensure success. They not only have the skillset to accomplish many of your goals, they know exactly what is going on and can make sure no projects or people get left behind.

Part Three: ADAPT – Your Formula for Gaining Transformation Buy-in

In May of 2019, National Geographic published a fascinating article about a type of spider that had adapted its web to operate like a crossbow, loading a central silk line with tension and then holding it until it could release it to capture its prey. The web fires at an astonishing speed — 26 times the acceleration of a NASA space shuttle — making it nearly impossible for its prey to escape. The point of sharing the feats of *Hyptiotes cavatus* isn't to provide you with an interesting story for your next dinner party; rather, this small-but-mighty spider illustrates a far more important concept: Adaptability is critical to success.

Adaptability doesn't just apply to the animal kingdom. For today's companies, the ability to proactively change to meet the requirements of the rapidly shifting business environment is critical to avoiding business extinction. Transformation is an intimidating process, which is why so many organizations and their staff are often resistant to it. However, this transition can be eased through a well-executed user-adoption strategy.

We have refined the key concepts of this strategy into the ADAPT formula that will help your organization take the reins and flourish through transition.

ALIGN WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION

Change in any organization begins with a purpose. It is critical that everyone in the upper echelons of the organization have a shared vision of transformation and understand the purpose for the change. That doesn't just mean desire. In order to achieve the desired results, a comprehensive plan must be developed and agreed upon by all stakeholders. Here are some points to consider:

- Timeline – How long should this take and what milestones should be set?
- Investment – How much time and money should be invested in this? What are the limits?
- Implementation – How will the plan be executed? One department at a time? All at once? Who will facilitate the process?
- Desired Results – What do you expect this transformation to accomplish? What does success look like?

If you can create enthusiasm from the top down through a shared vision, you'll set an example for the rest of your departments.

Align with the strategic vision

Deploy a command center

Ask the naysayers

Provide quick wins

Tell the story



DEPLOY A COMMAND CENTER

Once you have achieved a shared vision, it's time to create a system of accountability. Assign roles and responsibilities to your teams so that information never gets lost due to a communication breakdown. Your leadership will need to shine at this point in the process. It is important that part of your accountability plan includes communication between all levels and departments, not just between leaders and subordinates. Now is not the time for silos to spring up and derail progress.

Speaking of progress, make sure you set measurable goals. This allows for frequent check-ins to see the progress that has been made — or to discover gaps. It also creates a record of your wins that you can share with your teams (more on that in a moment).

Last, create a centralized database that holds all of the information pertaining to your goals. This eliminates the aforementioned silos and also keeps all parties on the same page.

ASK THE NAY-SAYERS

Employees are the backbone of every organization, but they can also be one of the key resisters to transformation. As such, employee buy-in is usually a chief concern for senior executives embarking upon organizational transformation. The reasons for resistance can vary. Some individuals worry they don't have the ability to adapt their skillset to meet new demands. Others suspect that change signals potential job insecurity, i.e., layoffs or salary changes. Still others just don't like stepping out of their comfort zone — familiarity with their jobs allows them to feel safe and confident.

Notice in the above scenarios that there is no malice on the part of the employees. People who struggle with adaptation are not doing so intentionally and it's important to keep that in mind as you implement change. Savvy organizations understand that change management is as much about understanding the mindset of their people as it is about achieving business goals and often times the nay-sayers have the best insight; a viewpoint on the change others don't share. Empower your nay-sayers and incorporate their feedback to ensure you are not missing anything. If you can get them on board, your plan is that much better for it.

Here are some tips to enlist your nay-sayers in the process:

- Ask your nay-sayers how they feel and work to relieve those pain points. The authentic desire to help them through the process builds trust and eases the challenges that will inevitably occur.



- Find your change cheerleaders and bring them into the process right from the beginning. Encourage them to boost morale and reassure their fellow employees that this doesn't have to be a negative event.
- Work with multiple departments to ensure the people in charge are prepared to address inevitable questions that arise. They need to be all-in and understand the value of the change, not just the impact.
- Be transparent about the process. Acknowledge small and large issues while proactively addressing them. One of the most frustrating things for employees involved in a sweeping transformation is an organization that won't admit their process isn't perfect. Also remember that transparency is a two-way street. Your willingness to share and address issues encourages employees to provide the type of input that can have a real impact on overall success.

PROVIDE QUICK WINS

Transformation doesn't happen overnight. While managing to outcomes — focusing on the bigger picture — is important, it's also necessary to provide people with quick wins that motivate them to continue pursuing the strategic vision. This is where setting measurable goals comes into play. By breaking the big picture into smaller pieces, you'll have more opportunities to tout the positive accomplishments that are occurring. Sharing those positive results will give people a reason to persist through the rougher parts of the process. Perseverance is a key attribute of change management success.

TELL THE STORY

Will change make work easier? Will it increase sales? Increase stability? Why should everyone get on board with the process? The story that you craft should consistently communicate the overarching goals of the transformation. And remember, don't just talk in terms of how it will benefit the organization — also share how it will benefit all the individual stakeholders.



Part Four: Leveraging Technology to Conquer Change Challenges

How can you be sure your change management plan is working as intended? By centralizing the information and tracking against key milestones set forth in the beginning. Monitoring your progress can significantly reduce the execution risk of complex change programs by providing consistent real-time data on progress, resources and challenges. Whether technology is your change or you are using it to help manage and mitigate the impact, a strong Project Portfolio Management (PPM) foundation is key because it will drive best practices and coordination throughout the organization.

If you already have a PPM tool, it is important to ask the following questions before using it as your change management software.

- 1 Can your existing PPM technology solution deliver the change management that your business demands?
- 2 Can it handle both Agile and traditional projects?
Can it balance and prioritize features such as skills databases, resource management, and capacity management, along with project methodologies to meet your organizational needs?
- 3 Is insight and measurement functionality up to the challenge?
- 5 Can it forecast and manage deliverables against industry best practices and governance metrics to manage the transformation?
- 6 Does it use predictive analytics and intake templates to make measurement easy?

If your current tool cannot accomplish the capabilities listed above, you may need to consider seeking out one that does. Business transformations and large-scale change programs are complex. Your organization will benefit from a PPM tool that provides accurate, comprehensive visibility of benefits, costs, activities, milestones and resource deployment. This will encourage the effective management of costs and resources, as well as provide a robust and connected planning process with no unnecessary surprises.

Summary

The modern business environment requires organizations to embrace change if they want to outperform their competition. Transform your organization into a business that is agile, adaptable and flexible by implementing a strong change management strategy enhanced by the ADAPT formula and powered by a comprehensive PPM solution.



About KeyedIn™ Projects

KeyedIn Projects is a supremely flexible solution for managing projects, programs and entire portfolios – from a single platform that provides a comprehensive view of the status of every project. Used by project managers, boardroom decision-makers, and frontline users, KeyedIn Projects increases success rates and profit margins, enables better decisions about project selection, planning, and prioritization and optimizes resource usage across the entire business. Headquartered in Minneapolis, KeyedIn has hundreds of customers worldwide, including Walgreens Boots Alliance, LexisNexis and Office Depot.

For more information, visit www.keyedin.com



Copyright © 2020 KeyedIn Solutions. All rights reserved.

Corporate Headquarters

8500 Normandale Lake Blvd
Suite 400
Bloomington, MN 55437, USA
p +1 866 662 6820

EMEA Headquarters

Maple House
Woodland Park
West Yorkshire, BD19 6BW, UK
p +44 (0)1274 863300

www.keyedin.com