

Information Management Advice 55 Change Management: Preparing for change

Introduction

Change management essentially is the process of moving from a current state, to a desired future state – and transforming the values, priorities and behaviours of individuals in order to align with, and enable the desired outcomes.

This Advice is intended to assist agencies considering embarking on new EDRMS implementations, system reviews and upgrades, or any significant change to ‘business as usual’ in terms of agency recordkeeping practice. Change management in this context is just not about technical or business process change – but commonly also cultural change.

Change management is a complex and challenging discipline, which agencies can frequently get wrong without the help of experienced qualified facilitators, however being aware of some of the key principles and elements can help smooth the way forward.

Introduction

Too often, organisations attempt to modify staff behaviour as part of technology deployments ‘overnight’, focusing on the technical aspects of the project, to the detriment of the people aspect. Lack of proper planning (or financial/staff resources) can result in concepts like business cases, scope creep and milestone reporting taking centre stage, whilst provisions for informing, collaboration, education, and training become something of an afterthought.

There is a misconception that for any sort of real success, the new initiative must be adopted by as many users as possible, as soon as possible. This is not always a practical reality when considering significant change - the new way of working must become “the norm”. New habits take time to form and old ones can be difficult to break. You may be replacing commonly understood practices with entirely new ones – at the very least, there will be some short term disruption to established work routines and staff duties. The end result of underestimating the importance of change management is usually a failed initiative. IT projects in particular often don’t fail because of the technology, but because of patchy user adoption or outright rejection. There are frequently an additional two undesirable outcomes – first, whatever changes or solutions were required/expected in the first place do not happen, and second, the organisation and its users come to understand that they can simply ‘wait out’ any initiative and it will blow over, allowing the status quo to continue.

There are no shortcuts or easy solutions – successful change management requires significant maintained effort over an extended period. Major cultural change, for example, can take several years to permanently embed. There are, however, a number of tangible benefits of bringing everyone along for the ride. These include opportunities for valuable and creative input from the people on the ground; and the capacity to promote a connected and engaged workforce who have a vested interest in the success of this (and hopefully future) initiatives.

Are you ready for this?

No matter the kind of change taking place - whether technological, cultural, procedural, role-based, or any other - it must first be decided if your organisation (i.e. your staff) is ready to face the change and adjust to it. Change may still take place whether it's welcome or not. However, determining readiness is a major factor in the potential success of your Electronic Records Management/Electronic Content Management (ERM/ECM) project or other records management initiative.

Assess your Agency's readiness for change. The readiness of both the management to support the change, and affected workers to accept and adapt to the change, are the most crucial factors in the success or failure of your project. Management may be far more ready to change than the potentially affected workers, particularly if the idea for the proposed change is coming from management – as it typically is. However, just because you have meetings with middle or senior management who may be very enthusiastic about the new project, doesn't mean that the organisation, as a whole, is ready to change.

Change readiness can be broken into four key areas:

- Your Agency's vision (the vision should provide the basis for answers to the "What's in it for me" question from stakeholders, management and staff),
- The level of trust within the organisation (proposed changes will always be viewed with suspicion in a community where there is no trust),
- The motivation for change (people don't tend to change without good reason and being inspired to do so), and
- Respect (note that being respected is not the same as being liked – you need to say what you will do, then ensure you deliver).

It may be of value to undertake a survey of the organisation to assess readiness for change, and this may be a valuable insight into areas of particular resistance that will require specific targeting and support.

Elements of a change management plan

Most agencies already use formal project management methodologies, so the change management plan will be an activity of the overall project implementation. See the Tasmanian Government Project Management Guidelines¹ for more information in regards to formal project planning.

Planning should begin with a clear articulation of why the change is needed. This helps to establish buy-in from affected stakeholders, and alignment with strategic direction. An example of a change management plan may be made up of the following phases:

¹ http://www.egovernment.tas.gov.au/project_management/tasmanian_government_project_management_guidelines

Phase 1 – Prepare for change. Provides situational awareness that is critical for effective change management.

- Define change management strategy
- Prepare change management team
Whilst technical skills may be required, some team members should have strong project management, and **people management** skills
- Develop sponsorship model
It is not enough just to have 'sign off' – senior management must act as sponsors who advocate the change, and can articulate the value to the organisation

Phase 2 - Managing change. Focuses on developing the plans that define the project activities.

- Develop change management plans
- Communication plan
- Take action and implement plans

Phase 3 - Reinforcing change. Ensure that change is sustained. Audit and evaluate mechanisms to see if change has effectively taken hold.

- Collect & analyse feedback
- Diagnose gaps in uptake, and manage resistance
- Implement corrective actions

Lead by example

Leaders who talk the talk but do not walk the walk, as the saying goes, will never bring about true cultural change.

If leaders do not believe in a change they have been directed to create, they are better to voice their doubt and move on. If they stay, their tone of voice and body language will betray them; being in contrast with their words. If the leaders appear ambiguous, people will not follow. When leaders do not believe in a change, the probability of failure of the change rises dramatically.

In context of an EDRMS implementation, it might mean that initial project sponsors or project managers identified by virtue of their position (rather than their commitment to the project) should be replaced by an appropriate alternative leader with the vision and passion to articulate the need for change, capture imagination, and illustrate what the future might look like. An effective leader will ask the hard questions, and foster an environment of honesty and candid discussion.

Expect resistance

Just because it's a good (or even great) idea, doesn't mean it will be accepted. Overwhelmingly, you are likely to find that proposed changes are not welcomed by staff unless there is compelling reason to do so. Just to be clear, a compelling reason might be that the agency has to shed positions or outsource if the new system/procedure is not implemented to improve business efficiency. People need to recognise a need for change – and it helps if they can relate outcomes directly to their role in some way.

When the officer responsible for communications is busy touting all the perceived benefits the initiative will deliver, what is almost always overlooked (or ignored) is the staff perception of what they have to give up. In an EDRMS implementation, for example, there may be several things:

Knowledge – “I know where it is, it’s in ‘my’ folder on my network drive – it’ll be right there when I need it”

Power – “Everyone comes to me to find things, they know I can help them, I have respect”. When change happens within an organisation, power balances often get shifted, and conflicts can arise.

Control – “I set up the structure on my drive in a way that makes sense to me, I am not comfortable trying to learn a new way when the old way works fine”

Autonomy – “I’ve always been allowed to do my own thing”. This can also be perceived as ‘trust’ – “they don’t trust me to do X anymore – now I am being told I have to do Y”.

Accountability – “If everyone can view my work progress, they might see I am not as up to date as I have been suggesting”.

This last example is particularly true of SharePoint implementations, where the visibility of online document collaboration and project management increases transparency of business process significantly. Use of social business tools like SharePoint can actually support the change management project by facilitating engagement and awareness:

“Managers and user communities need to feel like they are a part of a project instead of feeling like the project is happening to them. It isn't just a matter of sending a few emails or putting up a page on a project website. Regular meetings and feedback mechanisms for managers and users can make a huge difference in the perception of any project..”²

People are more likely to embrace change when they feel they are part of the catalyst for it. Whilst organisations tend to rush through the analysis phase to get to the implementation, inviting those people who will be most affected by the change to contribute to the initial articulation and analysis of business problems, helps to forge early support.

Implementing change slowly while building grassroots support, whilst more gradual, addresses resistance more effectively. The emphasis in bottom-up change is on participation and on keeping people informed about what is going on, so uncertainty and resistance are minimized. Furthermore, research has revealed that people are not resistant to change; they are resistant to being changed. People are better at coping with change if they have participation in bringing the change to reality through a gradual, collaborative process where your users, managers, and executives all have input into the overall objectives and direction.

Organisational engagement tactics

Whilst senior executive support and reinforcement is important, change is often something that is driven from the middle – those who can immediately grasp the benefits or improvements, and the people who the change impacts directly. There are a number of stages that the organisation will need to be taken through:

- *Understanding Purpose*
Proof that tactics have been successful is demonstrated by people talking about the change in an informed rather than speculative manner.
- *Care & belief in the project*

² <http://www.aiim.org/community/blogs/expert/the-need-for-change-management>

People asking questions and making suggestions to improve the agency capacity and capability to achieve the change, demonstrate proof of reaching the second stage.

- *Prioritise*

The project implementation must be in the top three or four tasks for the year, and it must be communicated in such a way that Managers/supervisors want to attend meetings and briefings to keep themselves and their staff informed, and they are prepared to send their staff to training.

- *Plan*

Assist teams to plan for the change – what are the tools that will be provided to make it easy?

- *Implementation*

Provide support – helpdesks, super users, FAQs, floor walking, intranet etc.

The point of the engagement journey where people, as a whole, begin to think about what they may have to give up is in the transition from understanding the change and believing the change is good for them.

Communications at this point must be crystal clear about what people will and will not have to give up, and what new things they will have to learn. Those segments of the organisation most likely to perceive they have something important to lose, are the key targets for communications such as briefing notes, question and answer sessions, forums and frequently asked questions published on the agency intranet, or in hard copy.

The principles of changing individual behaviour

Managing change through the engagement of the organisation is a good start to getting acceptance of the changed circumstances or adoption of the change in behaviours.

In an EDRMS implementation, it's not enough to just get engagement of the organisation. Success rests on changing individual behaviours and habits. It's no easy task, and requires each of the following three principles to hold true:

1. *The user needs to believe that the change is good for them.* Adopting the new initiative must be seen to be better than the status quo, and better for the individual than most of the other initiatives and activities they are involved in. Communications must be highly visible and resonate with the user's daily activities. Note that even a negative opinion, however, is better than ambivalence.

2. *The user needs to believe that the new habits required of the new level of recordkeeping are the "norm".* Everyone has to do it – no exceptions. Stakeholders with high power or influence over user opinion must be converted into highly visible, active supporters.

3. *The users must perceive they have capability, authority and information required to undertake the new behaviours successfully.* Training should be multi-modal, engaging and fun. Technical and process support must also be readily available (not buried in an intranet, or via uninspired/unmotivated 'champions'), and employees should feel empowered to take responsibility for correct use of the system.

Communication

Often overlooked and underfunded, communication represents the single best way to influence both individuals and the organisation as an entity. A communication plan should identify the key messages, stakeholders,

methods of communication and engagement, and provision for feedback. Stakeholders include all personnel affected, either directly or indirectly, by the proposed changes.

Vision is part of the communication of change management. The vision should make it clear where your organisation is going and what it's trying to accomplish through change. The vision is developed by the stakeholders and should be the basis for answers to "what's in it for me?" for staff, middle and senior management. Remember, defining your vision is not just about implementing a technology or process; it's about facilitating effective engagement, empowering individuals to streamline business activities, driving efficient communications and most importantly, ensuring lasting change that leads to positive business transformation.

A vacuum in communications will be filled with rumours. Many staff members will fear change over the concerns for job security, a change in culture, and the ramifications of the increased use of technology. Similarly, proposed changes will always be viewed with suspicion in a community in which there is no trust.

The corporate communications team within an organisation often plays an instrumental role in driving awareness and ensuring organisational buy-in that drives sustainable adoption. Whether your Agency has a formal communications team or not, what is required is a comprehensive communications plan that ensures a critical mass of the stakeholders at first 'feel', then 'think', and then 'do' what is necessary to achieve the desired outcome.

To drive awareness, corporate communications along with Records/ICT teams can employ awareness campaigns, engagement activities and incentive programs. These may include:

- Development of an internal 'brand'
- Information sessions
- Email/Newsletter announcements and updates
- Intranet/web site
- Team meetings - inclusion in meeting agendas
- Workshops
- Lunchtime system demonstrations and networking opportunities
- Group competitions
- Mentoring sessions
- Internal user group(s)
- Knowledge bases and "FAQs"
- Reward programs
- Video from the GM or Director
- Product demonstrations

A comprehensive, internally and externally consistent communication plan, which is measured for its effectiveness and continuously improved, is a must to change something like a culture where ingrained values and behaviours exist at all levels of an organisation.

Don't forget that communication should be an integral part of the plan throughout the implementation of the new initiative – sell good news stories, advertise your achievements. When you make progress or remedy a problem, let people know (and thank contributors accordingly).

Engage Support

Invite people to the party (key leaders, early adopters, 'champions'). Think of those vocal, influential teams or individuals that people often look to for guidance. Be careful - selecting the right kind of groups is crucial. Make sure you don't attract naysayers. They may be very vocal and influential and might even show interest in your initiative, but they could also derail it. Stick with the positive groups that are open to change and are more likely to embrace your plan. The goal of this phase is all about getting a key group of influencers inspired to see the vision of success.

Don't forget: advocates or champions can effectively help scale and drive adoption. These individuals are business users that are not only passionate about what they do, they are equally as excited to evangelize the benefits to their peers within the organisation. Typically, champions are involved with:

- Mentoring or coaching users on common usage and best practice
- Facilitating internal user groups
- Moderating knowledgebase discussions
- Sharing tips and tricks

As part of your initiative, champions should be identified and prepared. Promote what the role entails, what responsibilities that they commit to and any benefits associated with being a champion.

When engaging with business users to help them identify how to best use, always approach it from their perspective. What "pain points" (burdensome, repetitive or overly complex tasks) do they have to deal with regularly? Any manual activities that can be automated? How about saving time?

Critical mass is achieved once enough individuals in the organisation have adopted the new idea so that the idea is commonplace and self-sustaining. In short, critical mass means the new initiative will survive. The problem with achieving critical mass is that there is a time lag in how fast new ideas are adopted. This is why it is important to understand the different groups that naturally exist in your environment.

Innovators. This group makes up about 2.5 percent of the overall population. They accept new ideas quickly and need little persuasion. They often like new ideas simply because they are new. They tend to be venturesome, daring, and risk-takers. They also tend to have the financial resources to absorb a loss if the new idea proves to be unprofitable. Finally, this group has the ability to cope with a high degree of uncertainty about the innovation along with the time to understand and apply the technical knowledge the innovation represents.

Early Adopters. This group represents about 13.5 percent of the overall population. They are open to new ideas, but will accept them only after serious consideration. This group usually holds the greatest degree of opinion and thought leadership within an organisation. They tend to look for the strategic opportunity an innovation can provide. They serve as role models for others in the organisation and they tend to be highly respected.

Early Majority. This group represents about 33 percent of the overall population. These people frequently interact with one another and tend to be followers, not leaders. They want to see that others have been successful with the innovation before they adopt it themselves. Critical mass is usually achieved once this group has adopted the new idea.

Late Majority. This group is also about 33 percent of the overall population. These people tend to be sceptical and cautious and will usually adopt new ideas only when pressured to do so.

Laggards. This is the last group to adopt a new idea, which by the time they adopt it, is a current (or fading) idea. This group possesses no opinion leadership at all. They tend to be isolated and suspicious of new ideas and will filter these ideas through referential points in the past. Their acceptance of a new idea results from other's pressure, coupled with the certainty that the innovation cannot fail.

This will enable you to target your communications appropriately. Ensure that adequate support is provided to champions to assist with successful uptake, and to ensure they can continue to support the various elements of the project and do not lose interest, or enthusiasm.

Training, Coaching and Mentoring

Training, to build skills and/or to change behaviours, cannot afford to be fifty PowerPoint slides and twenty minutes of eLearning. It should be experiential and designed to take people from a state of 'unconscious incompetence' to 'conscious incompetence' to 'conscious competence'. What does this mean? It means going from a state of not realising how much you don't know, to appreciating that there's a lot you have to learn, to having appropriate knowledge and confidence in your skills to perform a given task.

While technically focused training may suffice for some people in the organisation, it is frequently not as effective as it might be, because it doesn't provide business context nor relevancy to the individual.

Key considerations when delivering training:

- **Training should be role-specific and contextual.** For example, there may be a training course provided for the accounts team where the scenarios and examples are focused specifically on their business activities – how they might expect to interact with the new system. More importantly, it should clearly identify why utilizing the new system is valuable to them in their role.
- **Set expectations of roles and responsibilities.** Apart from showcasing the business benefits and capabilities of the new system, the training should educate individuals in what's expected of them. Ideally, these roles and responsibilities are defined in your governance strategy. The last thing you want is having users undertake training and once it's done, go straight back to the 'old ways'. Expectations should be set about the system as a critical tool in the business, what people can do and cannot do, and that it will be assessed/enforced – either through the performance management process, or (in the event of a serious breach) appropriate disciplinary action.
- **Provide peripheral learning tools and job aids.** While the initial training is important for users to learn about the value of the system to them in the performance of their role, don't expect your users to remember everything. Provide various on-demand resources they can leverage when they need to jog their memory.
- **Enable multi-delivery training mechanisms.** Ideally, face-to-face, instructor-led training would be best for users to learn new systems. However, this is not always possible in today's fast-paced,

geographically dispersed, budget-constrained environment. Organisations should establish a variety of training delivery options such as:

- Live Instructor-led onsite and/or remote training
- On-demand instructor recorded training
- Self-guided training

Transition planning

A key element of organisational change management, transition planning involves planning for the new environment once the project has been completed. It is the determination of how the changes are implemented and enacted to become the norm - 'business as usual'. One way of achieving this is by determining the answers to the following:

- What is the current situation?
- How will the project change this (what is the new situation)?
- How will the organisation/department/business unit move from the current situation to the new situation (transition arrangements)?

Transition planning should include consideration of:

- Organisational culture
- Business processes – how will these change?
- Physical environment
- Job design/responsibilities
- Skills and knowledge required
- Policies and procedures – what frameworks will need to be revised, or developed and introduced?

To effectively transition *people*, it must be made clear to them what is going to end for them – what processes, behaviours, systems, measures and frameworks will no longer be used or acceptable, and at what point this expectation will be enforced. It must also be clear when the new processes, behaviours, systems, measures and frameworks will commence. People tend to make this transition at different rates, and many may require assistance to move from the old and known, to the new. Assistance may take the form of the following:

- Frequent and clear two-way communication
- Counselling
- Documentation (FAQ sheets, 'how to' cards, cheat sheets) about new systems and processes
- Training and re-training
- Social – celebration of the old and a welcoming of the new

Treat people with genuine concern and consideration. Spend time with them, learn their processes and problem areas, and ask them about their concerns and ideas.

Performance Management

Change is lasting when it influences end users to change their behaviour, and influences managers to adapt to and accept new priorities. Without there being a consequence for not adhering to the new ways, behaviours are unlikely to change. Similarly, how will a return on investment and effort be measured, with no ongoing monitoring of performance, progress and issues? Project management exhorts the value of post-project evaluation and review, and a similar approach applies in any change management program.

- Develop new procedures & processes, new position descriptions/statement of duties, and appropriate key performance indicators/benchmarking tools
- Clearly define expectations, changeover dates, and support mechanisms to assist staff
- Allow for a decline in productivity in the initial 'bedding down' period, as staff introduce new and unfamiliar work processes
- Identify some 'quick wins' – those small but visible activities selected for a quick return and recognisable result. They need to be close range, short-term, easy to implement and with an obvious yield. They should complement, not compete with, broader strategic goals, and assist to provide forward momentum and positive reinforcement
- Provide two way 'open' communication mechanisms for constructive feedback. This allows for review of procedures/processes in the event non-compliance is due to procedural failure rather than poor application
- Audit performance – whether by business unit or individuals - and monitor adherence to standards
- Formalise reporting outputs, frequency, and reporting structures
- Define responses (informal, support, formal disciplinary procedures) in the event of continual non-compliance

Resources

<http://www.changefactory.com.au/service/creating-strategy/change-management/>

Video - <http://www.aiim.org/training/certification/get-prepared/videos/plan%20implement/change-management/change-management-principles>

Video - <http://www.aiim.org/training/certification/get-prepared/videos/plan%20implement/change-management/transition-planning-strategies>

Video - <http://www.aiim.org/training/certification/get-prepared/videos/plan%20implement/change-management/readiness-governance-support>

<http://www.aiim.org/training/certification/get-prepared/videos/plan%20implement/change-management/readiness-governance-support>.

<http://community.aiim.org/blogs/errin-oconnor/2011/11/18/best-practices-for-sharepoint-cultural-change-management---from-the-sharepoint-consulting-trenches>

<http://community.aiim.org/blogs/jeffrey-lewis/2012/08/10/how-to-make-implementation-of-your-rim-project-succeed>

Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office
91 Murray Street
HOBART TASMANIA 7000
Telephone: 03 6165 5581
Email: gisu@education.tas.gov.au

Acknowledgements

- The Change Factory - Leading Change Program with Kevin Dwyer
- The Change Factory - Secrets of organisational transformation success³
- AIIM How ready is your Organisation for Change?⁴
- State Records NSW Managing the People factor

Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

Document Development History

Build Status

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Sections
2.0	April 2015	Christine Woods	Template	All
1.0	March 2014	Sam Foster-Davies	Initial Release	All

Amendments in this Release

Section Title	Section Number	Amendment Summary
All	All	Document imported into new template

Issued: March 2014

Ross Latham

State Archivist

³ <http://www.changefactory.com.au/our-thinking/articles/secrets-of-organisational-transformation-success/>

⁴ http://info.aiim.org/hs-fs/hub/332414/file-418386416-pdf/Training-Briefing-Papers/Q22013_Checklist_ECM_How_Ready_is_your_organization_for_change.pdf?utm_referrer=http%3A%2F%2Finfo.aiim.org%2Fthank-you-for-downloading-how-ready-is-your-org-for-change%3FsubmissionGuid%3D570d576d-b589-4cc8-a5c7-9310c504e758