

WHITEPAPER

Making transformation actionable

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WELCOME

Introduction



As with many of my other whitepapers, this one is intended to equip leaders, project managers, and others with capabilities helpful in driving successful change within their organisation. In this particular whitepaper, I focus on frameworks and models that change management consultants are familiar with, but internal staff assigned to transformation initiatives might not be. Learn how to combine and use these capabilities to navigate some of the complexities of transformation, from initial discovery to continuous improvement.

Through practical steps and actionable insights, this whitepaper will cover:

- ▶ Engaging and managing stakeholders effectively
- ▶ Reviewing compliance and policy importance
- ▶ Assessing and managing risks strategically
- ▶ Developing and executing detailed action plans
- ▶ Driving change through education, technology, and process
- ▶ Sustaining change efforts with continuous improvement

Whether you are leading a transformation within a large enterprise or a smaller organisation, this whitepaper will provide you with the knowledge and tools to make your transformation initiatives successful. It is designed to be direct, to the point, and, above all, actionable, providing both theoretical context and practical steps for successful implementation.

Consulting frameworks & models



Transformation and change management efforts often face common issues such as unclear objectives, resistance from employees, and lack of coordinated efforts. These problems can derail initiatives and lead to wasted resources and frustration. Structured guidance, often referred to as frameworks, can help prevent these issues by providing steps to follow and ideas.

Frameworks help to make complex change more accessible and less overwhelming. They offer a systematic approach to planning, executing, and sustaining initiatives, supporting alignment with strategic goals and stakeholder engagement. By breaking down the transformation into steps, frameworks help maintain focus, clarity, and momentum. This helps to address challenges proactively and navigate the transformation process more effectively, ultimately improving the chances of success.

Frameworks also provide direction and ideas that might otherwise be overlooked. They can lead to more comprehensive plans by ensuring more potentially relevant aspects are considered. This can help avoid common pitfalls. However, they are not a one-size-fits-all silver bullet. Frameworks are only as effective as your ability to determine their relevance, adapt, and contextualise them to your organisation, which can be challenging.

The frameworks I include in this whitepaper are the bread and butter of management consultants who have a deep understanding of how they work and can be applied. However, external consultants often lack detailed knowledge of the organisation's operations and people, especially the many individuals impacted at the working levels. Gaining an understanding of this requires considerable discovery and research time, and even after that, there often remain many assumptions that do not fully capture the organisation's nuances.

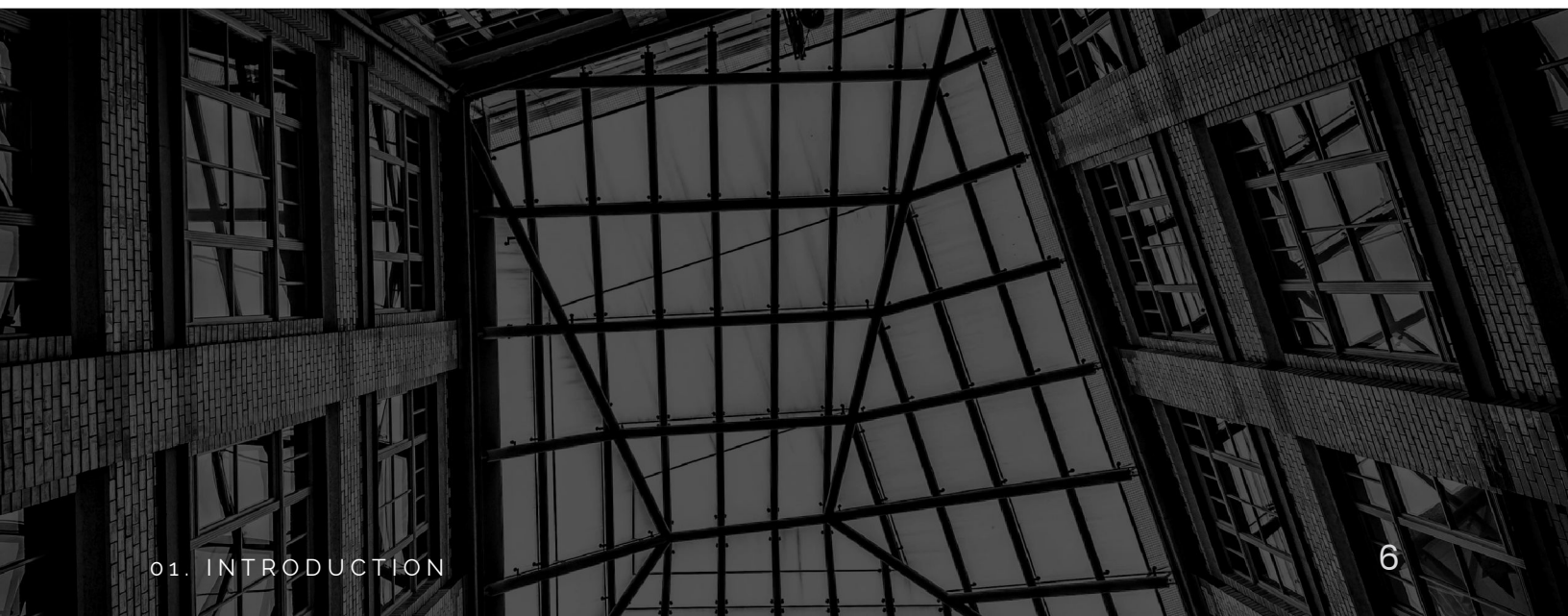
Consulting frameworks & models

Small details that would be obvious to the people on the ground, often go unnoticed by external consultants. Because of this, there is considerable value in transformation leaders learning more about these frameworks and the approach to transformation.

Equipping internal staff with knowledge of these frameworks allows them to take ownership of the transformation process, and they can be more effective at working with consultants.

Internal teams can contextualise the frameworks with deeper insight into their organisation's operational nuances and culture, creating initiatives that resonate more with the workforce and are generally smoother to implement. This creates greater collaboration across the organisation and builds trust among employees as they see their colleagues driving the transformation.

When properly contextualised, a better roadmap for what needs to be done and how to overcome internal obstacles can be designed, enabling the organisation to maintain control over the process, placing people first and ensuring that changes align with the company's values and long-term vision.



Consulting frameworks & models

This whitepaper focuses on three frameworks: the [Prosci ADKAR Model](#), [Kotter's 8-Step Process](#), and the [McKinsey 7-S Framework](#). Each framework brings unique strengths and addresses specific aspects of the change management process, ensuring comprehensive coverage with minimal gaps. This whitepaper will integrate the best elements of these frameworks to maximise effectiveness while mitigating potential drawbacks. This whitepaper also integrates frameworks that I have covered in more detail in previous whitepapers, such as the [Lippitt-Knoster Model](#) and [Uncertainty Matrices](#), to create a robust, actionable change management strategy.

In addition to these established frameworks, this whitepaper incorporates techniques and approaches to managing expectations that I have learned, developed, and fine-tuned over the last couple of decades. These practices are crucial for maintaining clarity, trust, and engagement throughout any complex project. Regular expectation alignment workshops, transparent communication, feedback mechanisms, and readiness to course-correct are essential components of this approach. See my whitepaper, "[Managing expectations in large-scale enterprise projects](#)", for additional views and guidelines on managing expectations.

Every topic that this whitepaper touches on is intended to make you aware of what it is and what it does., but you must consider its relevance within your organisational context. While I aim to provide sufficient detail to understand the purpose and value of each topic, I do recommend further research to gain a deeper understanding of their implementation.



Prosci ADKAR Model

The Prosci ADKAR Model is a goal-oriented change management framework that guides individual change. It consists of five key stages: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. Each stage represents a milestone an individual must achieve for a change to be successful. The model focuses on understanding and managing the human side of change, ensuring that each person involved in the transformation is adequately supported.

Awareness

This stage involves creating an understanding of why the change is necessary. It is achieved through clear communication and engagement with stakeholders.

Desire

At this stage, individuals must have the desire to participate and support the change. This can be influenced by addressing personal motivators and reducing resistance.

Knowledge

Providing training and information to help individuals understand how to change. This must include both desirable behaviours and the required skills.

Ability

Ensuring that individuals can implement the change on a day-to-day basis. This might involve additional training, resources, or support.

Reinforcement

This stage ensures that changes are maintained over time through rewards, recognition, and feedback.

Prosci ADKAR Model

Pros:

- Emphasises the human aspect of change, ensuring that everyone is adequately supported.
- Straightforward, step-by-step approach
- Helpful in identifying individual barriers to change

Cons:

- Focuses on individual, not organisational change.
- It is a component rather than a complete framework for organisational transformation.

The Prosci ADKAR Model places an emphasis on the individual aspects of change. This model ensures that each individual involved in the transformation receives adequate support through the stages of Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. It is particularly effective in diagnosing and addressing personal barriers to change, making it an essential component for managing change at the personal level.





Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

John Kotter's 8-Step Process consists of eight sequential steps designed to build and sustain momentum for change.

Creating a sense of urgency

Highlighting the importance and necessity of the change to motivate stakeholders.

Forming a powerful coalition

Assembling a group with enough power to lead the change effort.

Developing a vision and strategy

Creating a clear vision to direct the change and developing strategies to achieve it.

Communicating the vision

Using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies.

Empowering broad-based action

Removing obstacles, changing systems or structures that undermine the vision, and encouraging risk-taking.

Generating short-term wins

Planning for visible performance improvements, creating those wins, and recognising and rewarding employees.

Consolidating gains and producing more change

Using increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that don't fit the vision.

Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Articulating the connections between the new behaviours and organisational success.

Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

Pros:

- Covers the strategic and human elements of change.
- Highlights the importance of strong leadership throughout the change process.
- Focuses on generating and maintaining momentum with short-term wins.

Cons:

- The process can be lengthy and may not be suitable for rapid changes.
- The sequential nature can be restrictive and may not allow for iterative improvements.

Kotter's 8-Step Process combines strategic and human elements and guides the overall direction and leadership actions required to drive and sustain change. By establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, and generating value-adding short-term wins, Kotter's process helps build and maintain momentum throughout the change process. It focuses on broader organisational change, ensuring leadership and strategic initiatives align with transformation goals.





McKinsey 7-S Framework

The McKinsey 7-S Framework is a holistic approach to organisation analysis and change management. It focuses on seven interdependent factors that must be aligned for successful change: Strategy, Structure, Systems, Shared Values, Skills, Style, and Staff. The framework emphasises the interconnectedness of these elements and the need for balance among them.

Strategy

The plan that is created to maintain and build a competitive advantage.

Structure

The way the organisation is structured and who reports to whom.

Systems

The daily activities and procedures that staff members engage in to get the job done.

Shared values

Core values that are evidenced in the corporate culture and the general work ethic.

Skills

The actual skills and competencies of the employees working for the company.

Style

The style of leadership adopted.

Staff

The employees and their general capabilities.

McKinsey 7-S Framework

Pros:

- Considers all critical aspects of an organisation.
- Emphasises the interconnectedness of elements.
- Balances strategic and operational considerations, allowing for change without causing a breakdown of essential live operations

Cons:

- It can be complex to implement due to the numerous factors involved
- Requires significant analysis and data gathering, which can be resource-intensive.

The McKinsey 7-S Framework ensures that all critical aspects of the organisation—strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, style, and staff—are aligned and mutually reinforcing. It balances strategic and operational considerations, ensuring that the transformation is comprehensive and that all elements of the organisation work together seamlessly. The McKinsey 7-S Framework maintains organisational alignment and coherence throughout the change initiative.





Lippitt-Knoster model

The Lippitt-Knoster Model for managing complex change highlights six key elements: vision, consensus, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan. This model is used to diagnose and address gaps in the change process, ensuring all necessary components are in place for successful change.

Vision

Establishing a clear and compelling vision for the future state.

Alignment

Ensuring agreement among stakeholders.

Skills

Identifying and developing the necessary skills for change.

Incentives

Creating motivation and rewards to support change efforts.

Resources

Allocating the necessary resources to support change initiatives.

Action plan

Developing detailed steps and timelines to implement change.

Lippitt-Knoster model

Pros:

- Provides a structured approach to managing change.
- Emphasises alignment among stakeholders.
- Incorporates skills and resource planning.

Cons:

- Can be time-consuming to ensure all elements are fully addressed.
- Requires extensive stakeholder engagement to maintain alignment.

The Lippitt-Knoster Model is particularly useful in preparing for complex change and achieving consensus, which I refer to as alignment. This model helps in diagnosing and addressing gaps in the change process, ensuring that all necessary components are in place and that stakeholders are aligned and committed to the change.

See my whitepaper, *"Cloud and agile transformation in large enterprises"*, for a detailed breakdown and implementation of this model for digital transformation.

Uncertainty matrices

Uncertainty matrices provide a structured approach to risk management by categorising risks based on their likelihood and impact. The model includes categories known-knowns, known-unknowns, knowable-knowns, knowable-unknowns, knowable-unimaginables, and unknowable-unknowns. Each category represents different levels of uncertainty and requires tailored mitigation and management strategies for the risks within it.

Known-knowns

Risks that are fully understood and predictable.

Known-unknowns

Recognised variables with unpredictable outcomes.

Knowable-knowns

Situations that can be understood through analysis or subject matter experts

Knowable-unknowns

Scenarios requiring innovative problem-solving.

Knowable-unimaginables

Emerging trends needing vigilant monitoring and, often, a swift response.

Unknowable-unknowns

Highly complex scenarios requiring an adaptable and agile culture and an ability to pivot entirely if needed.

Uncertainty matrices

Pros:

- A framework to categorise and prioritise risks.
- Helps identify and manage unknown risks effectively.
- Enhances strategic decision-making.

Cons:

- Typically, it only looks at risks, not change management or transformation initiatives.
- Can be challenging to identify all risks. For comprehensive coverage, organisations usually need to involve external expertise

Uncertainty matrices help identify, categorise, and prioritise risks predominantly during the Discovery and Planning phases based on their likelihood and impact. This proactive approach helps focus efforts on managing the most significant risks, reducing potential disruptions. By identifying and addressing potential risks early, we can better prepare for and mitigate challenges that may arise during transformation.

See my whitepaper, *“Uncertainty matrices for digital transformation”*, for a detailed breakdown and implementation of this model for digital transformation.



My perspective



Many business consultants follow the typical *University -> MBA -> One of the top management consultancies* career path. Throughout all of this, their skills and focus are honed for C-level interaction. They speak their language, present what they want to see, and promise the outcomes that C-levels look for. This is simply the result of market economics; this approach is what sells consultancy services.

I believe that many failed transformation projects led by business consultants fail because of two reasons that are related to that background.

1. Difficulties connecting with the working level.

Business consultants are often seen as C-level representatives, and sometimes, they struggle to speak the language of the working level or view things from their perspective. The ability to connect with your audience is essential for communication. Ineffective communication makes the discovery phase—where we want to understand the actual workings of a business—fall short. As a result, discovery is only informed by middle management and executives, missing a significant portion of the facts on the ground. Ineffective communication also means the working level doesn't see what's in it for them; they are not part of the transformation, making it an unwelcome change being forced on them.

2. Consultants are expensive.

The cost of consultants is absolutely worth it when you get the right experience that delivers value. For example, I helped a large enterprise in my region reduce its cloud spend by several times my annual salary by identifying a few key issues that could be fixed within a few days. However, I only identified the issues and recommended the changes. It was not seen as cost-effective for me to implement the recommendations.

My perspective

While that was just a small engagement, and the internal team was able to implement the recommended actions, the same thinking is often applied to more complex engagements. Consultants are asked to perform discovery and design the plans but not to execute them. Internal staff are then given the plans and asked to implement. The challenge they face is that these plans are often built on top of consulting frameworks that the staff are not familiar with. Because of the incomplete discovery phase (point 1), the objectives tend to be a bit aspirational and not grounded in operational reality. It is also common for staff assigned to the initiative to be expected to run it on top of their existing business-as-usual responsibilities.

The outcome of points 1 & 2 should not be a surprise, though often it is. To mitigate these challenges, consider the following.

1

The discovery phase must include involvement and honest input from the working level. If the consultant is unable to connect with them, then find someone who is able to bridge that gap.

2

Consulting engagements must include knowledge transfer and education of internal staff to enable them to execute the plans OR consultants must remain fully present and accountable for the execution of the plan.

My perspective

I have worked in a variety of Western and Eastern cultures, across startups and large enterprises, and come from an entrepreneurial and technical background rather than the typical MBA background. This helps me to bridge the gap and connect effectively with most people in an organisation. I like to believe my background makes me pragmatic and brings unique experiences and deep technical insights to transformation and change management. I think it is these aspects that make my discovery engagements especially effective. I'm able to extract unique contextual information that significantly impacts the scope and planned approach of the transformation.

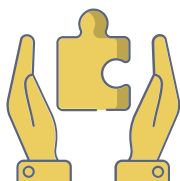
My experience has shown me that actionable, agile plans built on a solid understanding of the organisation's people at different levels are considerably more successful in driving effective and enduring change.

I strongly advocate that transformation leaders take an end-to-end, hands-on approach to the transformation. Either in-house staff are trained in the frameworks and models required for change, or the consultants' support must extend beyond the planning phase. Either way, those experienced in the necessary frameworks and models must be able to communicate effectively with all levels of the organisation and stay engaged with the execution teams, providing knowledge transfer, mentorship and ongoing support until they are comfortable and capable of independently implementing change.



My perspective

Regardless of the organisation or industry, my approach is based on the following principles, which I believe help drive successful transformation.



Solve real problems/deliver value

Identify clear problems that need solving and define the value these solutions will bring. Whether it's improving efficiency, enhancing customer satisfaction, or streamlining operations, every task and project should have a realistic and accepted return on investment. Ensure that the value of solving a problem is clear to all stakeholders so efforts are aligned with achieving that ROI.



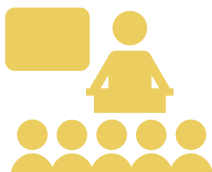
Action over aspiration

Focus on defining tangible, achievable goals with clear steps. Avoid theoretical or vague objectives that are hard to action. Break down larger goals into manageable tasks that can be tracked, measured, and adjusted as needed.



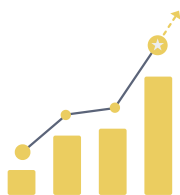
Accountability and support

Keep those who design the strategy and plans involved in its execution. Ensure accountability by having a clear follow-through mechanism where consultants or internal leads support teams until they are ready to take over. This continuity is key to maintaining momentum and ensuring success.



Enablement and communication

Equip teams with role clarity, knowledge, and required skills through RACI matrices, leadership, and training. Teams and individuals need to know what they are responsible for and have the confidence to take ownership of their new role. Communicate what's in it for them and motivate staff at all levels to be part of the transformation.



Continuous improvement

Regularly review progress and be ready to adjust plans as necessary. Flexibility ensures that unforeseen challenges are addressed, and teams can adapt strategies based on real-time results, improving long-term success.

Keeping up with transformation



Industry transformation occurs through technological advancements, or transformation states, which typically emerge every one to five years and can be clearly distinct or more subtle. As enterprises adapt to each new state, they will need to update their operating model and strategy. Maintaining pace with these advancements helps maintain a competitive advantage. Below is a timeline highlighting the key transformation states during my career (until 2024).



High-speed Internet (2004)

The widespread availability of broadband internet in many countries was marked by significant influence on businesses and consumers. This enabled faster data transmission and facilitated subsequent technological innovations.



Search engines and Web 2.0 (2005)

The rise of interactive and social web platforms, with significant milestones like the launch of YouTube and the rise of social networks such as Facebook, enabled user-generated content and social interaction online. Google's dominance in search also led to the boom of SEO practices, essential for online business visibility.



Cloud computing (2006)

The launch of Amazon Web Services (AWS) made scalable cloud infrastructure widely accessible, revolutionising IT infrastructure management.

The mantra, "*Why do something for 100 hours with one PC when you can do it in one hour with 100 PCs?*" really highlighted the possibilities of this new era when parallel processing was considered in applications.

Keeping up with transformation



Modern cloud architectures (2010)

The continued evolution of cloud platforms and the adoption of microservices and containerisation, heavily supported by the DevOps movement, allowed for optimised cloud-native architectures. More agile startups increasingly adopted these approaches, while most larger enterprises were slower to adapt to this new and very different way of working. Architectures built for the cloud diverged from migrated legacy architectures, achieving significantly better returns in the cloud.

Big data and analytics (2012)

The rise of big data and analytics, with tools like Apache Hadoop and Apache Spark, allowed businesses to process and analyse increasingly larger datasets. When applied effectively, this greatly improved the effectiveness of data-driven decision-making.

Internet of Things (IoT) (2014)

The proliferation of connected devices and platforms like Google Nest led to significant growth in consumer IoT applications and transformed industries with real-time data, predictive maintenance, and other industry 4.0 capabilities.

Edge computing (2018)

The advent of edge computing, which processes data closer to its source to reduce latency and bandwidth use, became crucial for real-time data analysis and IoT applications. This technology supports applications requiring quick data processing, such as autonomous vehicles and industrial inspection and monitoring.

5G networks (2019)

The rollout of 5G networks began in earnest, offering significantly higher speeds and lower latency compared to 4G. This enabled advancements in IoT, autonomous vehicles, and augmented reality, supporting a new wave of innovation in various sectors.

Low-latency, high-speed satellite internet (2020)

The launch of satellite internet services like SpaceX's Starlink provided high-speed internet to rural and remote areas, significantly expanding global internet accessibility and supporting economic and educational opportunities in underserved regions.

Breakthroughs in Artificial Intelligence (2022)

The launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT marked a significant milestone in AI adoption, showcasing the potential of advanced machine learning models in various applications.

Keeping up with transformation

Technological advancements are frequent and each new state builds upon the previous ones, making transformation increasingly challenging for organisations lagging behind. Organisations that have not kept pace with global or industry transformation face a widening gap. For example, a company still adapting to cloud computing may find it difficult to leap directly into AI and machine learning without first achieving a degree of cloud maturity, mastering big data, and understanding modern architectures and tools.

While new technology is desirable and tends to trigger transformation initiatives, transformation and change itself are usually far more about culture, capability, and processes. For example, it's easy to **use** AI technology. Just sign up for one of the AI services and create a chatbot or start generating content. However, **integrating** the capabilities that AI can provide into an organisation and achieving its benefits requires the right culture, capabilities, and processes.

Culture

Curiosity, open to experimenting, and able to manage unknown technology risks.



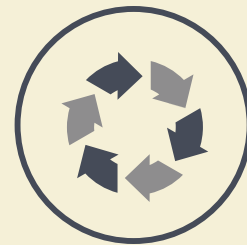
Capability

Competency to safely design, implement and use it. Having the right foundations to build on.



Processes

Adaptable to a new way of working required for effective use of the new technology.



Keeping up with transformation

These three aspects of technology adoption are often overlooked, leading to underestimating the actual effort and cost required. When organisations keep pace, these changes are incremental, and each new advancement can be manageable. However, changing culture, capability, and processes to catch up with multiple advancements requires significant investment in resources and workforce upskilling. Organisations that fall behind may struggle to allocate the necessary resources to catch up. Additionally, the resulting organisational and cultural changes can be highly disruptive, leading to increased staff churn and impacting productivity and quality.

Different organisations exist in various states of technological adoption. Those at the forefront are early adopters of new technologies, continuously innovating and leading the market by integrating the latest advancements into their operations. They often have a robust culture of innovation and are agile in adapting to new trends. Others keep pace by observing early adopters, learning from their experiences (often by headhunting their staff), and implementing new technologies soon after to maintain competitiveness. However, organisations that are slower to adopt risk losing their competitive edge until they catch up with the current technological state.

To handle the rapid pace of technological transformations:

Develop strong processes and cultivate a mindset of continuous improvement and change.

Build a culture of innovation where change and experimentation are encouraged, and failures are seen as learning opportunities.

Plan and invest in long-term initiatives that align technological adoption with business goals, including training and upskilling employees.

Implement agile and continuous improvement to quickly adapt processes to new technologies and ways of working, allowing for faster adoption.



Importance of a structured approach



A structured approach improves the chance of successful transformation. It provides a clear roadmap, aligns stakeholders, and ensures that each step of the process is planned and executed. However, this structure must balance upfront effort with the flexibility to adapt and respond to emerging challenges. Rigid adherence to a predetermined plan is a waterfall approach and unsuitable for the dynamic nature of modern business environments and the complexities of change management.

A structured approach does not mean that it is rigid. It balances initial risk-focused planning with the flexibility to add detail and adapt as the project progresses and the insight to predict where changes are most likely to happen. This balance can be achieved through several key practices.

An efficient discovery phase is crucial for setting the foundation for the entire transformation initiative. By focusing on quickly and efficiently collecting and analysing the most critical data, organisations can identify key stakeholders, map out compliance requirements, and assess potential risks. A transformation report by McKinsey (*How to beat the transformation odds*) supports this, indicating that *completing a comprehensive, fact-based assessment of the business is one of the most predictive actions for transformation success*.

Organisations must understand their starting point before they can set realistic, data-driven targets for improvement.

Importance of a structured approach

Identify and engage stakeholders at all levels to ensure that their needs and concerns can be addressed, improving buy-in and getting them involved. The McKinsey report highlights several practical actions related to stakeholder involvement and communication that can increase the chances of success:

Leaders must communicate openly about the transformation and its implications and role-model the behaviours asked of employees. The primary role of leaders is to lead by example and develop and mentor their teams.

Risk assessment helps identify those areas with the most significant risks early in the process. This allows organisations to allocate resources effectively and mitigate potential issues before they impact. Proactive risk management enables better handling of uncertainties and reduces disruptions.

Clear objectives but iterative detail planning ensures the project plan is treated as a living document. Starting with large, high-level blocks of work and then detailing, fine-tuning, and iterating them as the team gets closer to executing the task allows the plan to remain responsive to new information and changing circumstances. This approach prevents the project from becoming bogged down by unforeseen challenges, keeps it aligned with the overall strategic objectives, and avoids executing tasks that are no longer of value.

Structured and consistent communication is a final area I want to note as being critical to transformation success. This is another one strongly supported by the McKinsey report, which notes, "*Across all 24 transformation actions, communicating—especially about progress—links most closely with success*".

Be transparent and honest about progress, about objectives, and, most of all, about the challenges. Learn together and don't repeat the same mistakes.

The transformation team



Transformation projects are inherently large and complex, often requiring them to be divided into multiple streams, each with its own focused team operating under a governance team that tracks and provides leadership. While I will go more into the specifics of the streams in Chapter 4, it's important to plan these streams and their respective teams early in the process. Ideally, the leaders of each stream should be involved in the planning phase and, if possible, even the discovery phase.

A central transformation team is another initiative that, according to the McKinsey report, improves the chances of transformation success. The report notes the following commonality between organisations that achieved successful transformations, "*A dedicated organizing team (e.g., a project management or transformation office) centrally coordinated the transformation*". And, "*The organization assigned high-potential individuals to lead the transformation (e.g., giving them direct responsibility for initiatives)*".

The following is my perspective on the foundations for a well-structured transformation team. This is a general outline that should be adapted to fit the unique needs of your specific industry and organisation by adding additional roles or even entire streams with their associated teams. Each role should ideally be filled by senior staff who are deeply familiar with the organisation. Depending on their experience, one person might take on multiple roles.

The transformation team

Governance stream >>

Transformation Lead

The initiative's overall lead reports directly to the C-level executives. This role ensures consistency in the strategy and overall approach. They are responsible for the budget, obtaining C-level approvals, and maintaining executive buy-in and management. The transformation lead must have strong leadership skills, extensive experience in managing large-scale projects, and a deep understanding of the organisation's strategic goals.

Change Management Specialist

A highly experienced specialist, potentially a consultant, who supports the Transformation Lead with guidance on organisational and cultural transformation. This role is critical for driving the necessary mindset change and the adoption of new ways of working. The change management specialist mentors and supports the leads of other streams, ensuring that all aspects of the transformation are aligned with and support the desired cultural shift within the organisation.

Governance Lead

The governance lead is an expert in managing complex, multi-year projects. This role maintains oversight and status of all ongoing initiatives. It provides agile guidance and mentorship to individual stream project managers, ensuring a consistent approach to project management, meeting etiquette, and reporting. This consistency helps the transformation lead stay well-informed and make effective decisions.

Project Managers/Scrum Masters

At least one project manager or scrum master is assigned to each stream and reports into the Governance Lead. They are responsible for the day-to-day management of stream-specific initiatives, ensuring that projects are delivered on time and within budget while adhering to the overall strategy and objectives.

The transformation team

Transformation Data Analyst

Oversees data collection, validation, and visualisation efforts for the transformation. This role ensures that accurate and relevant data is available to inform decision-making, support governance, and ensure accountability across all initiatives.

Risk Manager

The risk manager is responsible for overseeing the efforts related to risk identification and categorisation. They are also responsible for managing the risk register throughout the transformation, ensuring that risks are collected, highlighted, tracked, and avoided or mitigated accordingly. Most of their duties are performed in close collaboration with teams across the organisation.

Communication Manager

Responsible for developing and executing the communication strategy for the transformation initiatives. This role ensures that all stakeholders are kept informed and engaged throughout the transformation process, using clear and consistent messaging.

Education & enablement stream >>

Enablement Lead

Familiar with HR practices and learning and development, they curate suitable training content, develop contextualised content, and collaborate with HR on career frameworks, RACIs, and incentives. This role works closely with the change management specialist to ensure employees are prepared and motivated to adopt new ways of working.

Training Development team

Works under the enablement lead to design and deliver training programmes that support the transformation. They ensure that training materials are engaging and equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to operate in the target state.

The transformation team

Process stream >>

Process/Operations Lead

Deeply familiar with the organisational processes and responsible for cataloguing, modernising, and optimising these processes for the target state. This role works closely with specialists in different areas, such as finance, operations, and procurement, to ensure that all processes are aligned with the transformation goals.

Technology stream >>

Technology Lead

An experienced solution or enterprise architect who is familiar with the organisation's data centres or cloud service provider(s). The technology lead plans, designs, and executes the modernisation of the organisation's IT infrastructure. In their team, they have specialists in technologies such as cloud, security, data warehousing, AI, and corporate architecture.

Compliance stream >>

Compliance Lead

Responsible for ensuring that the transformation adheres to all relevant policies and regulatory requirements. This role is supported by regulatory specialists, risk specialists, and cybersecurity specialists who help cover all aspects of compliance and risk management.

Other streams >>

Organisations that work with many vendors can benefit from a lead that focuses on contract renegotiations and vendor SLAs to help align vendors to the organisation's desired state. In the healthcare industry, a team might include patient experience leads. In the finance sector, additional roles might include fintech integration specialists.

02. Discovery



02. Discovery

A discovery phase is the first step in any complex project. It establishes an understanding of the current state and roughly defines the target state. This phase involves comprehensive discussions and reviews to understand the organisation's current state, identify potential risks, and establish what 'good' looks like. It's essential to approach this phase not as an audit but as an opportunity to educate and collaborate with various teams.

During discovery, we research and identify common risks in transformation. Many of these risks are described in online articles, industry forums, and public case studies. I have also written about many in my own articles, whitepapers, and books. Focused discussions around known risks and possible mitigations can provide insights into their relevance to your organisation.

At this stage, avoid jumping to solutions. Instead, concentrate on understanding the current state by asking the right questions and remaining open-minded, unbiased, and non-defensive. It's crucial to appreciate that many teams and their leads are proud of their accomplishments, even if they do not fully align with the best practices. Approach these situations with empathy and diplomacy, aiming to understand the reasons behind any gaps or differences from the ideal state.



02. Discovery

Simultaneously, without planning or solutioning anything yet, it's beneficial to get a sense of the desired state. Various best practices and models outline what good looks like, but these need to be tailored to fit your company's unique context, including cultural nuances, competencies, industry regulations, and available resources. Setting a desired state that is too aspirational can be demoralising. The goal should be to define a state that is better than the current one but visibly achievable, with realistic milestones.

I'm not a proponent of the "aim for the stars, land on the moon" approach. For many, aiming for the stars feels overwhelming and can lead to demoralisation. Even if you achieve significant progress, it may still be perceived as a failure if the original goal is too ambitious.

Transformation should be viewed as a journey. Aim for something realistic, and once you achieve that desired state, set the next goal. Progress step by step, or "one planet at a time", until you eventually reach the stars. This pragmatic approach ensures continuous improvement and sustained motivation throughout the transformation process.



Applying the frameworks to this phase



In the discovery phase of the transformation process, leverage the frameworks and models to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the current state.

Each framework (Prosci ADKAR Model, Kotter's 8-Step Process, McKinsey 7-S Framework, Lippitt-Knostrer Model and Uncertainty Matrices) provides unique strengths and perspectives, which, when combined, ensure a thorough understanding of individual and organisational aspects of change.

The combination of ADKAR, Kotter, and McKinsey aligns vision, strategy, and operational elements. Uncertainty matrices offer a robust method for identifying and categorising risks, allowing for proactive tracking. The Lippitt-Knostrer Model provides a structured approach to managing complex change with vision, alignment, skills, resources, and action plans.



Prosci ADKAR Model

In the discovery phase, this model helps build a foundation of engagement and readiness for change by creating awareness and desire among stakeholders.

The first step is to create awareness of the need for change. Engage stakeholders to understand their perspectives, concerns, and the current state of the organisation. Through initial stakeholder analysis and communication efforts, the aim is to clearly articulate why the change is necessary and how it will address known current challenges. Use presentations, discussions, and workshops to explain the rationale behind the transformation, the benefits it aims to achieve, and the potential impacts on various teams and individuals. By addressing the **why** of the transformation, you lay the groundwork for building awareness across the organisation.

The next step is to gauge stakeholders' willingness to participate in and support the transformation. Assess their readiness for change and understand their motivations. Through stakeholder engagement activities, such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups, you can identify the factors that drive or hinder their desire for change. This stage focuses on building a compelling case for the transformation, addressing concerns, and highlighting the personal and organisational benefits. By understanding what motivates stakeholders and addressing their concerns, you can instill a sense of ownership and commitment to the change initiative.

Prosci ADKAR Model

In the discovery phase, identify the knowledge gaps and training needs that will need to be addressed later in the planning phase. Assess the current skill levels and knowledge base of employees in relation to the new processes, technologies, and ways of working that the transformation will introduce. Conducting a skills assessment and gathering information on existing training programs helps in understanding what knowledge and skills are lacking. Identify key areas where training will be required and outline a high-level training plan. By highlighting gaps early, the planning phase can include training programs that prepare employees for the upcoming changes.





Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

During the discovery phase, apply relevant steps from Kotter's model to lay the foundation for a successful transformation.

The first step is to create a sense of urgency around the need for change. Identify and communicate key risks and opportunities that drive the transformation. Tools like uncertainty matrices can highlight critical risks and impacts, particularly focusing on how these risks could affect core business functions, market competitiveness, or regulatory compliance. Clearly articulate these to make a compelling case for immediate action. Engage stakeholders through meetings, presentations, and workshops, leveraging industry benchmarks or case studies to demonstrate the potential consequences of inaction.

Next, form a powerful guiding coalition by identifying key stakeholders and leaders to champion the transformation. Build a team of influential individuals who have decision-making authority and the respect of their peers. A diverse group from various functions—such as finance, operations, and IT—ensures broader support and minimises resistance. Involving leaders who have successfully navigated previous change efforts can add credibility and build confidence in the initiative.

Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

Develop an initial vision and strategy for the transformation. This vision should outline the future state and the benefits for the organisation, focusing on tangible outcomes like cost savings, process efficiency, or market share growth. The vision serves as the guiding focus for all change activities. While detailed planning occurs in the next phase, begin formulating the vision during discovery to align the organisation in a specific direction. The vision should be clear, inspiring, and communicated through internal channels like town halls, newsletters, and digital platforms to maintain momentum and ensure consistent messaging.





McKinsey 7-S Framework

During the discovery phase, we will apply the relevant components of the McKinsey 7-S Framework to set a solid foundation for transformation.

Shared values are at the core of the McKinsey 7-S Framework and form the foundation upon which all other elements are built. During the discovery phase, assess the current organisational values and how they align with the proposed transformation. Integrate a values assessment into the stakeholder engagement and communication efforts. Engage with key stakeholders to understand the existing cultural values and how they are perceived across different levels of the organisation. Identify any misalignments between the current values and those required to support the transformation. This assessment will help in developing a strategy to realign or reinforce values that support the desired change.

Begin identifying strategic goals that will drive the transformation. This sets the stage for detailed planning in the subsequent phases. Conduct workshops and discussions with senior leadership and key stakeholders to outline the strategic objectives that the transformation aims to achieve. These goals should be aligned with the overall vision for change and address the identified risks and opportunities. The strategy development at this stage provides a high-level roadmap that guides the direction of the transformation efforts.

McKinsey 7-S Framework

Conduct a high-level assessment of current organisational structures and systems to identify areas that need change. Map out the existing organisational hierarchy, reporting lines, and key processes. Evaluate how these structures and systems support or hinder the current operations and the proposed transformation. Identify inefficiencies, redundancies, and bottlenecks that may need to be addressed. This assessment helps in understanding the scale of structural and systemic changes required to support the transformation.

Evaluate the existing skills, leadership styles, and staff capabilities to understand the readiness for change and identify gaps that need to be addressed. Conduct a skills inventory to determine the current competencies of the workforce and compare them with the skills needed for the future state. Assess the leadership styles prevalent within the organisation and how they align with the desired culture and values. Identify key staff members who will be critical in driving the transformation and those who may need additional support or training. This evaluation provides insights into the human resources aspect of the transformation, highlighting areas for development and training.





Lippitt-Knoster model

During the discovery phase, apply the Lippitt-Knoster Model to establish a foundation for effective change management.

Develop a clear vision for the transformation and align key stakeholders. Engage stakeholders through meetings, workshops, and surveys to build consensus around the transformation objectives. Use these insights to shape a vision that resonates with the organisation's goals and values. Communicate this vision effectively at all levels, creating a shared sense of purpose. Alignment among stakeholders is crucial to ensure everyone is committed to the transformation journey.

Identify the skills and resources needed for the transformation, to be further detailed in the planning phase. Conduct a preliminary skills assessment to understand current workforce capabilities and highlight any gaps. This will inform targeted training initiatives and resource allocation planning. Evaluate the availability of financial, technological, and human resources to support the transformation. This creates awareness of the organisation's capabilities and limitations.

Lippitt-Knoster model

Discuss potential incentives to encourage participation and support for the transformation. Identify what motivates different stakeholder groups and align incentives with transformation goals. This could include performance bonuses, recognition programs, or career development opportunities.

Establish feedback loops during the discovery phase to regularly gather input from stakeholders. This allows for adjustments to the vision, resources, and incentives, ensuring the approach remains aligned with evolving organisational needs and challenges. Regular feedback helps maintain momentum and engagement throughout the transformation.

Uncertainty matrices

During the discovery phase, use uncertainty matrices to understand and prioritise potential risks, laying the foundation for effective risk mitigation strategies in later phases.

The first step is to identify and categorise potential risks by examining the organisation's current state and the proposed transformation.

Once identified, prioritise risks based on their potential impact. High-priority risks require immediate attention. The risk assessment and identification section will cover this in detail, providing a systematic approach to evaluating the severity and likelihood of each risk. This process ensures that attention and resources are focused on managing the most pressing risks proactively.

Leverage historical data and industry benchmarks to assess risks in the known-unknown and knowable-unknown categories. This data can help refine predictions, provide context for potential outcomes, and guide the formulation of more accurate mitigation strategies. Using data-driven insights reduces subjectivity and enhances the organisation's ability to anticipate challenges.

Uncertainty matrices

Formulate preliminary mitigation strategies for high-priority risks in the discovery phase, which will be further detailed in the planning phase. For each high-priority risk, outline actions that could mitigate its impact, such as developing contingency plans, allocating resources, or implementing early warning systems.

By starting this process in the discovery phase, you can address these risks as the transformation progresses. The aim is to move risks from less favourable categories (like unknowable-unknowns) to more manageable ones (like known-knowns), reducing uncertainty and increasing control.



Stakeholder analysis and engagement



The people in the organisation are the main consideration in any transformation. Understanding their needs, hopes, and concerns lays the foundation for a well-informed and inclusive process. Prosci's ADKAR model helps address individual and collective needs throughout this journey.

Stakeholder mapping techniques, such as influence-interest grids, are commonly used to identify key players. Categorise stakeholders based on their level of influence and interest in the transformation. High-influence, high-interest stakeholders, such as project sponsors, should be engaged early and consistently. Low-influence, high-interest stakeholders, like operational teams, provide valuable insights into day-to-day processes and are key to achieving practical, ground-level improvements. By mapping stakeholders, you can prioritise engagement efforts and tailor your communication approach to their level of influence and interest.

If you're new to the organisation or an external consultant, building your network is vital. Start with existing contacts and seek introductions widely. Don't limit yourself to finding only relevant people—valuable insights often come from unexpected sources. This phase is key to understanding the organisational culture, identifying key influencers, and grasping the dynamics at play. Early stakeholder engagement and relationship building improve collaboration, build rapport, and can help secure buy-in later, improving the chances of a successful transformation.

Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Discovery is about listening, understanding, and sharing best practices. At this stage, avoid trying to create contextualised solutions, but know and share what **good** looks like in the industry so you can compare it to the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation's current state. Approach this diplomatically and empathetically, recognising the pride teams may have in their achievements, even if they don't fully meet ideal standards yet.

Acknowledge the team's successes and frame the conversation in terms of building on what is already working well. For example, you might say, *"Your team has clearly made significant progress in streamlining operations, and we're keen to understand how those strengths can help shape future improvements"*. This approach helps to reduce defensiveness and encourages an open dialogue about potential areas for growth. Asking questions like, *"What do you think has been working well, and where do you feel there are still challenges?"*, suggests collaboration and gives teams ownership of the improvement process. When sharing and comparing best practices, identify potential gaps and seek to understand the reasons behind each gap. It could be that it is not relevant, that they didn't know about it, or that they knew but were unable to implement it yet. These insights can offer valuable context for the planning phase.

At the same time, begin to form a sense of the desired future state without diving into detailed planning. Consider cultural nuances, competencies, industry regulations, and resources to define a realistic and achievable future. Avoid setting overly ambitious goals, which can be demoralising; instead, aim for incremental improvements to build confidence and momentum over time.

Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Identifying key stakeholders

Successful transformation efforts rely on understanding who has strong opinions about the transformation and who can influence its success or present a blocker. Recognise formal and informal leaders within the organisation who could impact one or more transformation initiatives.

Leverage your network to identify potential stakeholders. Use introductions from colleagues, mentors, and team members to connect with individuals who play pivotal roles within the organisation. Grow your network to gain insights into the organisational culture and identify influential figures who may not always hold formal leadership positions but still shape opinions and decisions.

To effectively engage stakeholders, first understand their day-to-day responsibilities and priorities. Know what is important to them, what currently makes their lives easier, and where their pain points lie. This knowledge allows you to empathise with their situation and tailor your engagement strategy to meet their specific needs and concerns. Aim to make the transformation a solution to their challenges, whether those are operational inefficiencies, regulatory pressures, or resource constraints.

Identify supporters and potential resisters. Supporters can become champions for the transformation, helping to drive momentum and create organisational buy-in. Resisters need targeted engagement to address their specific concerns. Understanding their reservations early on allows you to mitigate risks by providing reassurance or alternative solutions.

Understand what the transformation will improve for each stakeholder and what challenges it might present for them. For example, changes to roles and responsibilities (RACI) may require additional competencies or training. Being upfront about these shifts and offering a clear path for development helps stakeholders feel supported during the transition.

Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Identifying key stakeholders

Keep in mind that people want to be seen as heroes in their roles, especially when a transformation initiative impacts their team. By positioning the initiative in a way that aligns with their desire for recognition, it becomes more appealing. Make the end benefits clear and involve them closely, giving them ownership and the opportunity to claim credit for successes. Share identified risks and how you will avoid or mitigate them to demonstrate that you are well prepared.

When possible, let them know you will take responsibility for any setbacks. This improves trust, and by sharing that you are willing to shield them from failure, you can build stronger allies. Keep the bigger picture in mind—an engaged group of stakeholders collaborating on the transformation will significantly boost its chance of success.

Part of engaging stakeholders is educating them on best practices and what good looks like post-transformation. Use the McKinsey 7-S framework to explain how different elements of the organisation—strategy, structure, skills, and more—will align to support the transformation. Help them understand how these changes will positively impact the organisation and their team members with relevant examples.

Establish regular check-ins with key stakeholders to maintain communication and involvement throughout the transformation process. These check-ins provide an opportunity to address concerns, share progress, and adjust plans based on feedback. Tailor your communication to fit the needs of different groups, ensuring that messages are aligned with their interests.

Understand and actively engage stakeholders to lay a strong foundation for the relationship. This builds trust, improves buy-in, and aligns the transformation with the needs of those critical to its success.

Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Stakeholder NPS for transformation

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) indicates stakeholder sentiment towards an organisation or project. In the context of transformation, NPS helps identify promoters, passives, and detractors among stakeholders, enabling targeted engagement strategies to maximise support and reduce resistance.

Use surveys to gather initial data on stakeholder sentiment. Ask questions to determine whether stakeholders are promoters, passives, or detractors. Include questions about their understanding of the transformation goals, perceived benefits, and any concerns.

Conduct interviews and focus groups to explore the feedback from surveys more deeply. This helps to understand stakeholders' perspectives and allows them to express their views in greater detail.

Observe stakeholder behaviour in meetings, emails, and interactions. Promoters often offer constructive suggestions, while detractors may frequently raise concerns and show less interest in solutions.

Promoters are enthusiastic stakeholders who advocate for the transformation. They see the benefits and are willing to promote the initiative within the organisation. To maintain their support, recognise their contributions and involve them in decision-making. Highlight their successes publicly to reinforce their positive stance and encourage continued advocacy.

Passives are neutral stakeholders. They may see some benefits but aren't fully convinced or willing to engage. These individuals need to be shown how the transformation will positively impact them personally. Clear, tailored communication about the benefits and tangible outcomes of the change can help convert passives into active supporters.

Detractors are resistant stakeholders. They may fear the change, feel threatened by it, or disagree with the direction. Identifying detractors early allows you to address their concerns before they escalate. The goal is to make them at least Passives to mitigate the potential risks to morale and progress posed by active detractors.

Tailor your approach to different personalities and roles. Sceptical leaders may respond to data-driven insights and case studies from similar transformations, while concerned team members might benefit from seeing how the change will improve their daily tasks and that they are not at risk of redundancy. Uncertain managers may need clarity on the training and support available to help them and their team succeed in the new environment.

Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Transformation discussions and communication

Effective transformation discussions are about creating meaningful dialogue that builds trust, sparks creativity, and inspires enthusiasm. This requires using communication skills to tailor conversations to the audience's personality and style, ensuring that the discussion remains productive and positive.

Start with a friendly tone to build rapport and create a comfortable environment where stakeholders feel valued and heard. Once the connection is established, shift focus to understanding the specific issues relevant to them. Where possible, explain how these problems have been addressed with initiatives in similar organisations. This grounds the conversation in their daily realities and demonstrates the potential transformation value relevant to them.

Highlight topics they care about and explain how addressing them fits into the larger transformation strategy. Then, expand the discussion to the bigger picture, showing how their contributions align with organisational goals. Use case studies and examples of best practices to inspire creativity and help them visualise the potential benefits.

Tailor your communication to the audience's preferences. Adjusting your style to their personality ensures the message resonates and is received positively. For example, when communicating with stakeholders such as analysts or financial officers, use detailed reports, graphs, and performance metrics to support your points. For creative teams and visionary leaders, you might rely more on visual presentations, storytelling, and case studies to paint a compelling picture of the transformation's potential impact.



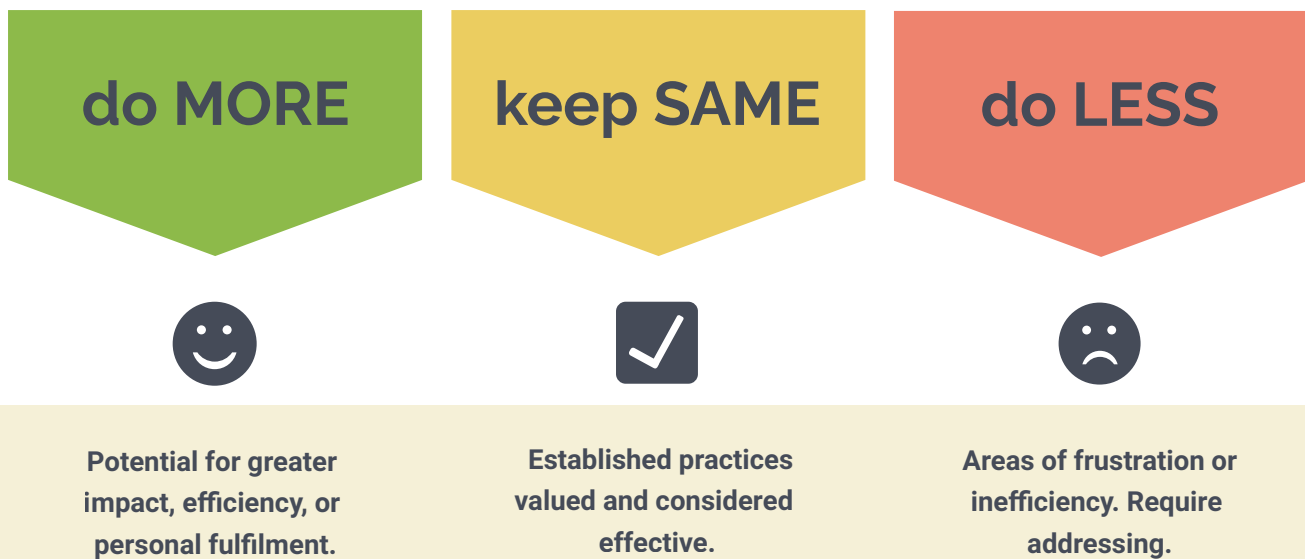
Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Transformation discussions and communication

Incorporating interactive methods, such as brainstorming sessions or innovation workshops, can further stimulate creativity and participation. These sessions provide a structured yet open environment for stakeholders to share and develop ideas, encouraging collaborative problem-solving. Techniques such as **mind mapping** or **Six Thinking Hats** can guide discussions, helping teams explore challenges and solutions from different perspectives.

Throughout discussions, provide concrete examples and best practices that align with their interests. Show them case studies or success stories from other teams or organisations that have achieved similar goals through targeted transformation initiatives. This connects their personal motivations to the broader organisational vision, tying the transformation to their aspirations and winning their engagement and support.

Asking stakeholders to consider what they'd like to **do more**, **keep the same**, or **do less** provides a simple method for identifying desires and pain points.



Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Transformation discussions and communication

When a stakeholder expresses a desire to **do more** of something, it usually signals an area where they see the potential for greater impact, efficiency, or personal fulfilment. For example, if a department head wants to do more collaborative work, it indicates a preference for cross-functional projects. You can then show them best practices, such as adopting collaborative tools or agile team structures that enhance team communication and project success, connecting these approaches to the transformation.

Things stakeholders wish to **keep the same**, often reflect established practices they value or believe are effective. This reveals which aspects of their roles they see as integral to their work, such as a specific customer service approach or a successful sales technique. By acknowledging and preserving these elements within the transformation, you gain their trust and sustain and highlight effective practices. These areas may be good candidates to use as examples or best practices for standardisation across other teams.

If they want to **do less** of a particular task, it usually points to areas of frustration or inefficiency, such as repetitive manual work or time-consuming administrative tasks. Leveraging automation, process re-engineering, or better resource allocation to address these tasks demonstrates that the transformation is geared toward making their work easier and more productive.



Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Engaging senior leadership

While support at the operational level is essential for the success of any transformation, significant and impactful changes within an organisation typically stem from a top-down approach. Senior leadership has the authority and perspective necessary to drive large-scale transformation initiatives. They also control the resources required to implement them, making their buy-in indispensable.

Senior leaders require a clear understanding of the big picture and end goals to support transformative changes. These initiatives often demand considerable investment in time, money, and human resources, which must be justified through well-supported proposals. How you communicate your plans will strongly influence their acceptance.

Focus on what matters most to senior leadership, which typically includes metrics such as the bottom line, revenue, EBIT, NPS, productivity, security/compliance. The specific priorities will depend on each leader's role.

Bottom Line

The company's net profit after expenses. Important to senior leadership as it directly reflects profitability and financial health, informing growth and sustainability.

Revenue

The total income from sales before expenses. Used by senior roles to measure business growth and the success of sales and marketing efforts.

Earnings Before Interest and Taxes (EBIT)

Shows profitability from core operations, excluding interest and taxes. Informs on a business' operational efficiency, especially for the CFO and COO.

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Measures customer loyalty and satisfaction. Higher scores indicate stronger customer retention and potential business growth.

Productivity

Measures how efficiently outputs are generated. Leaders focus on it to improve operational efficiency, reduce costs, and increase profitability.

Security/Compliance

Assesses adherence to regulators and policy. CTO/CIO/CISO prioritises this to protect data and maintain trust.

Stakeholder analysis and engagement

Engaging senior leadership

To help secure the support of senior leadership, consider the following.



Tailor metrics/data to audience priorities

Each senior leader will have different priorities. For example, a CFO will focus on financial metrics like revenue, costs, and EBIT, while a CEO might prioritise customer satisfaction and NPS. Research these priorities to ensure your message aligns with their concerns.



Articulate the vision and goals

Clearly explain how the transformation aligns with the objectives and long-term plans. Highlight benefits beyond operational improvements, showing how the changes support broader organisational goals.



Use data to support proposals

Senior leaders base decisions on evidence. Present concise, well-researched data demonstrating the transformation's potential impact on key metrics like revenue growth, cost savings, customer satisfaction, and productivity.



Tailor the message to the audience

Adapt your message to resonate with each senior leader's specific interests. For a CTO, focus on security benefits and operating cost reduction. For an HR lead, emphasise employee enablement and productivity.



Address risks and mitigation strategies

Senior leaders are concerned about risks. Acknowledge potential risks and present mitigation strategies. This shows that you have thoroughly considered the challenges and are prepared to address them.



Provide examples of successes

Whenever possible, present quick wins from initial transformation efforts/experiments or third-party case studies. This builds confidence in the proposed plans and demonstrates that tangible benefits are achievable.



Maintain regular communication

Establish recurring communication with senior leaders to update them on progress, challenges, and achievements. This helps ongoing alignment and maintains their support throughout the transformation process.

Change readiness assessment

A change readiness assessment evaluates the organisation's preparedness for transformation by examining factors such as employee attitudes, current capabilities, and organisational culture. This assessment identifies gaps that may hinder the change process and highlights areas needing further development.

Surveys and questionnaires can collect quantitative data on employees' understanding, attitudes, and concerns about upcoming changes. These tools should capture insights into how employees view the transformation, their readiness to adopt new behaviours, and any resistance they may have.

In addition to surveys, conduct interviews and focus groups to gather qualitative data. These methods allow for in-depth discussions, providing employees with a platform to express their thoughts and feelings. Engaging employees in this way can uncover underlying issues and offer valuable context to the survey results.

Based on the assessment results, list high-level ideas to address readiness gaps and build capacity for change. This can include targeted interventions like training, communication efforts, and leadership development. For example, if the assessment shows a lack of understanding about the transformation's benefits, note down a communication campaign to clarify the vision and objectives.

In the planning phase, the change readiness assessment will be integrated into the broader transformation. The insights from the assessment will be used to guide the development of training programmes, communication plans, and support systems.



Compliance mapping and policy review



Compliance mapping and policy review are key parts of any transformation, particularly when adopting new technologies like cloud services or AI. These activities help align new and existing environments and processes with organisational policies, maintaining compliance throughout the transition.

While my own focus has mostly been on policies related to cloud adoption and data practices, the principles of compliance mapping apply to broader transformation efforts. Aligning new operating models with policies helps mitigate risks, maintain regulatory adherence, and streamline processes. This supports a secure transformation, improving trust and resilience.



Collecting all relevant policies and guidelines

Collect all relevant policies and guidelines from various sources. This could potentially be thousands of policies across the organisation, including internal policies, regulatory requirements, international standards, and other guidelines. Beyond security, think holistically to include financial policies, codes of conduct, quality practices, and sustainability goals. Collaborate with departments such as HR, legal, IT, and operations to ensure no policy areas are overlooked. A comprehensive collection provides a stronger compliance framework that addresses all necessary domains.

Standardise policies into a consistent format to simplify processing and analysis and make it easier to consistently enforce them in later phases of the transformation. While a spreadsheet can work for hundreds of policies, when scaling to manage thousands, compliance management software or governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) platforms can streamline the process. These tools offer automated tracking, policy comparison, and risk mapping. Key details to track for each policy include the following.

Source

The origin of the policy or guideline (e.g., internal document, regulatory body).

External reference

Any external documents or standards referenced.

Area

The domain it pertains to (e.g., finance, technology, security).

Policy reference

A unique identifier or reference number for the policy.

Name

The title of the policy or guideline.

Details

A description and the main points of the policy.

Owner/Team responsible

The person or team responsible for the policy.

Collecting all relevant policies and guidelines

Policy or guideline

Whether it is a mandatory policy or an advisory guideline.

Reach

The geographic country, region, or global scope and relevance of the policy.

Applicability limits

Specific conditions or limitations for the policy's application.

Associated risks

Risks the policy addresses or mitigates (reference risk register IDs)

Known challenges

Challenges related to implementing the policy.

Automatable

Whether the policy can be automated or requires manual processes. Note that this is usually not knowable during this phase and is better left for the planning phase.

Create a well-structured and complete central source of policies, allowing for more efficient management, tracking, and reporting. This centralised policy database helps identify gaps, overlaps, redundancy, and education needs.

Cleaning and optimising

Once all relevant policies and guidelines have been collected and organised, clean and optimise the information. Create a streamlined, accurate compliance knowledge base that acts as the organisation's single source of truth, supports operational needs and aligns with the organisation's future state. It will guide the organisation through the transformation, helping to maintain compliance and mitigate risks.

1

Remove duplicates

Identify and remove duplicate policies and guidelines. Consolidate them into a single entry in your tracker, while maintaining references to the original sources for traceability. This avoids confusion and preserves necessary documentation.

2

Assess relevance

Evaluate each policy for its relevance in the new target state. For example, when adopting cloud services, policies related to physical data centre access may become less applicable as those responsibilities shift to the cloud provider. However, they will still apply to any remaining in-house data centres. Categorise policies as entirely relevant, contextually relevant, or no longer relevant.

3

Flag and resolve conflicts

Identify any conflicts between policies. For example, one policy may mandate strict data retention for audit purposes, while another requires data deletion after a set period to meet privacy regulations. Engage with policy owners to resolve these conflicts, which may involve updating, merging, or retiring policies to ensure consistency.

4

Create a compliance source of truth

After cleaning and optimising the policies, compile them into a cohesive compliance framework. This source of truth should be well-documented, accessible to stakeholders, and aligned with the organisation's future state. Aim to automate where possible to reduce manual effort and improve consistency.

5

Maintain the source of truth

Establish processes to monitor regulator and internal policy changes. Ensure any new, modified, or retired policies are quickly reflected in the source of truth. Regularly review and audit this repository to maintain accuracy and relevance, involving relevant departments to capture changes effectively.

Identifying compliance gaps

Identifying compliance gaps is an important activity that has more focus during the planning stage when the organisation's future state becomes more clear. However, if you have some insight into the intended future state, you can start flagging potential gaps early.

For example, if the organisation plans to adopt cloud services, cloud-specific regulations will become relevant. As you identify potential gaps, add them to your list of policies and guidelines to expand your compliance source of truth.

By identifying compliance gaps early, you can better prepare for the planning stage. This creates awareness of all relevant requirements, systematically reducing the risk of non-compliance and improving readiness for the future state.

1

Review future state plans

Evaluate the intended future state, particularly changes such as adopting cloud and AI or other new technologies, or expanding operations into new regions.

2

Compare current policies with future requirements

Compare existing policies with the anticipated requirements of the future state. Identify areas where current policies may no longer be applicable or sufficient.

3

Research relevant regulations and standards

Stay updated with the latest regulatory developments and industry standards relevant to the future state. Identify new compliance requirements that will need to be addressed.

4

Flag potential gaps

Highlight areas where existing policies may not meet future requirements. Note any new regulations or guidelines that have not yet been adopted but will be necessary.

5

Expand the compliance source of truth

Add new regulatory requirements and guidelines to your compliance framework, documenting their source, applicability, and actions needed to achieve compliance.

Initial risk assessment and uncertainty matrices



During the discovery phase, the focus is on identifying risks, not planning detailed mitigations. Understanding risks early lays the groundwork for developing strong mitigation strategies in the planning phase. Using uncertainty matrices helps categorise and prioritise risks, preparing you to address key challenges as the transformation progresses. It also helps in providing different viewpoints to consider, leading to the identification of more potential risks. Once prioritised, the risks can be added to a risk register for ongoing management and tracking in the following phases.

Categorising risks during discovery helps outline a preliminary risk management strategy. The goal is to move risks from less favourable quadrants such as **Unknowable-unknowns** to the more manageable **Known-knowns**, reducing uncertainty and increasing control. This early categorisation builds the foundation for more detailed risk management strategies in the planning phase.



Identifying potential risks

Most teams will have some form of risk register in place. As with policies, centralise these registers while maintaining traceability to their sources and relevance. Centralisation can reveal overlapping risks across departments and highlight areas and unconsidered interactions that siloed teams may have missed. This aggregated risk register forms the foundation for identifying gaps and new risks that may arise during the transformation and in the target state.

Once known risks are centralised, potential gaps can be evaluated, and new risks specific to the transformation can be identified. For example, moving to a target state with a more open culture could introduce new security risks. While these risks shouldn't block progress towards a more positive state, they must be understood and mitigated.

Consider risks related to new technology adoption, regulatory changes, and shifts in organisational structures. These might include potential data privacy issues, compliance with new or changing regulations, integration with legacy systems, or employees struggling to adapt to the new way of working.

By identifying potential risks early in the discovery phase, you can incorporate them into the planning stage. This proactive approach allows for the development of timely mitigation strategies, supporting a smoother, more secure transformation.



Using SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a strategic tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats associated with a business or project. In transformation, a SWOT analysis provides an overview of internal and external factors that can affect the transformation's success, highlighting potential risks and other challenges for consideration. This analysis can generate valuable insights during the discovery phase that can shape the planning and execution of the transformation.

Strengths

Internal attributes and resources that support a successful outcome. Identifying strengths helps leverage existing capabilities during the transformation.

Weaknesses

Internal limitations that could hinder progress. Recognising weaknesses enables us to create mitigations to address them.

Opportunities

External factors or situations the organisation can use. Identifying these can align the transformation with favourable market conditions or trends.

Threats

External risks that could negatively impact the transformation. Recognising threats enables preparation and defensive strategies.

Conducting SWOT workshops

Conducting SWOT workshops engages stakeholders and gathers diverse perspectives on the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Below are guidelines for running these workshops.

Preparation

- State the objectives and how the SWOT workshop will inform the transformation process.
- Invite diverse stakeholders, leaders and employees who understand the organisation
- Collect relevant data, performance reports, market research, competitor analyses, etc.

Setting the scene

- Start with an overview of SWOT analysis, explaining its relevance to the transformation.
- Present the workshop agenda and structure, outlining activities and expected outcomes.

SWOT analysis

- Ask participants to identify internal strengths. Use questions to encourage discussion.
- Facilitate an open, non-judgemental discussion on internal weaknesses.
- Discuss market trends, emerging technologies, and other potential impacts.
- Identify external threats, such as competitive pressures and regulatory changes.

Documenting insights

- Use whiteboards or digital tools to record inputs in each SWOT category.
- Summarise key insights from each category, ensuring all perspectives are included.

Discussion and prioritisation:

- Lead a group discussion to explore the identified SWOTs in more detail.
- Work with participants to prioritise the most important points in each category.

Next steps

- Outline next steps. Keep in mind that detailed planning is done in the next phase.
- Delegate follow-up tasks to relevant stakeholders to further explore and validate points.

Analysing internal and external factors

During the discovery phase, analysing internal and external factors using SWOT analysis helps develop a comprehensive understanding of the organisation's current state. The focus is on gathering insights, with detailed plans to follow in the planning phase.

Internal factors (strengths and weaknesses)

- Evaluate the organisation's resources, including human, technological, and financial. Identify strengths to leverage and areas needing improvement.
- Assess the efficiency of current processes and systems. Highlight strengths that can be used and weaknesses requiring attention.
- Examine the organisational culture and its alignment with transformation goals. Identify cultural strengths that support change and areas where shifts may be needed.

External factors (opportunities and threats)

- Analyse market trends and industry developments. Consider shifting customer preferences, technological advancements, and economic conditions that could present opportunities or threats.
- Evaluate key competitors, identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Determine how the organisation can differentiate itself and seize market opportunities.
- Review current regulations and identify any upcoming changes that may impact the transformation.
- Assess emerging technologies and their potential impact. Identify opportunities to adopt new technologies and threats posed by technological disruptions.

Understanding these internal and external factors during discovery provides valuable insights for detailed planning and strategy development in the next phase. This ensures the transformation is grounded in a realistic assessment of both the organisation's current state and the external environment, setting the stage for successful implementation.

One practical example that I have seen a few people recently implement is using AI to monitor competitors' websites. An agent can be created to scan a website once a week and analyse it for changes compared to the previous week. The AI can summarise the changes and email you a report on them keeping you up to date with new articles, services, and other interests of your competitors. The AI can even do a cross-site comparison, looking for trends that multiple competitors are showing activity in.

Effort estimation

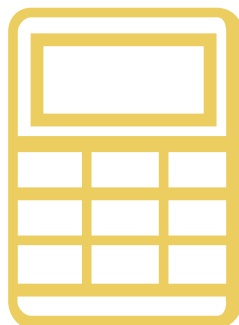


Effort estimation during the discovery phase is intended to provide a rough indication of the scope, complexity, and potential costs of a project. This stage is not about delivering precise statements of work but rather offering an early assessment that informs decision-makers about potential resource allocation and timelines.

Collect the inputs required for a high-level cost-benefit analysis and do a preliminary budget plan and prioritisation. This rough estimate helps identify key areas of focus, uncover possible bottlenecks, and prepare for a more detailed breakdown in the planning phase.

Break the project into high-level components and use agile techniques like T-shirt sizing or story points to align expectations and reduce surprises later in the project. The process also allows for iterative refinement as more information becomes available, ensuring flexibility without locking into early assumptions.

I explain this topic in more detail in my whitepaper, "*Managing expectations in large-scale enterprise projects*".



Effort estimation

Decomposing the project

Decompose the project by establishing streams and epics. Streams are broad focus areas that include multiple initiatives and have dedicated teams assigned to them with the relevant skills and expertise to plan and execute the initiatives.

Streams and teams

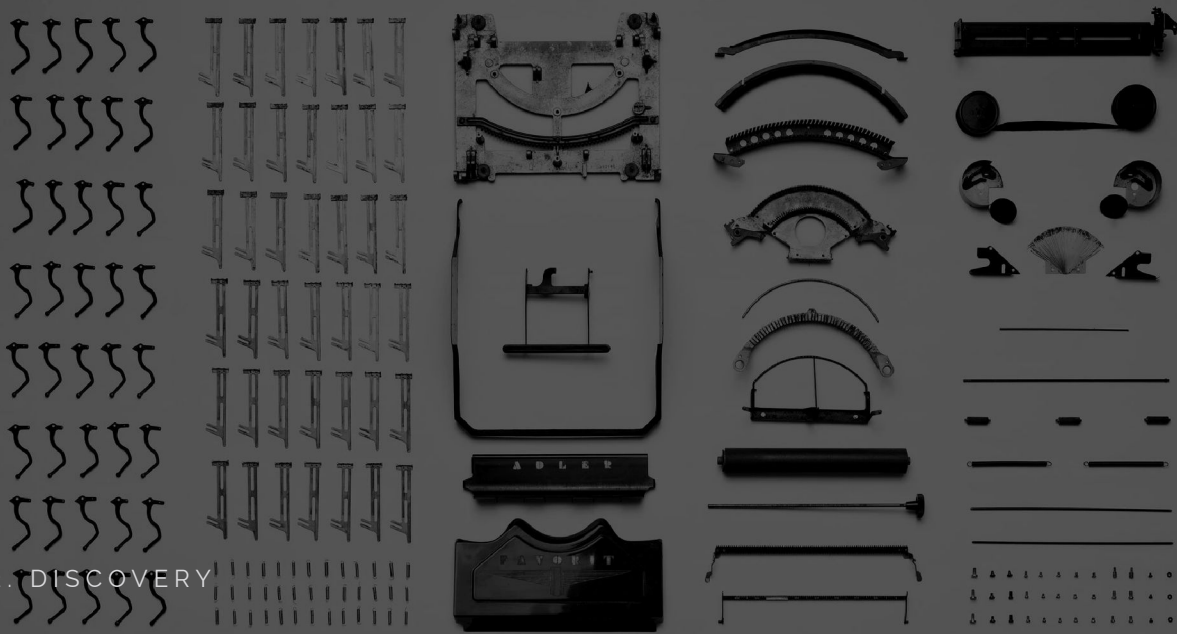
Define the main streams for the transformation, such as governance, enablement, process, technology, and compliance. Assign leads and teams to each stream, either ensuring members have the relevant skills and experience or providing education or support.

Epics

Within each stream, identify high-level initiatives (epics) that can be broken down into smaller tasks in later phases. Provide rough estimates for each epic to understand an indicative size of the work involved.

Understanding risks

Assess the risks linked to each stream and epic. High-impact risks require more attention during discovery to better understand their scope and the resources needed to mitigate them. Conduct a preliminary risk assessment for each epic to identify challenges and ballpark the effort required to address these risks.



Estimation techniques and validation

During discovery, focus on high-level estimation techniques that can be refined and validated as the project progresses. Useful agile techniques include:

- Use T-shirt sizing categories like small, medium, large, and extra-large to quickly estimate the size and complexity of each epic.
- Assign story points to each epic based on perceived effort and complexity, creating a relative scale for future refinement.
- Engage the team in a collaborative estimation process using planning poker to reach a consensus on effort estimates.

Validation process

- Use the expertise of senior team members and subject matter experts to validate initial estimates and provide insights for refinement.
- Refer to data from previous projects within the organisation to inform estimates. This can help set benchmarks and adjust estimates based on contextual past experiences.

Ongoing feedback and refinement of estimates, as more information becomes available, will continue in the planning stage.

This high level approach provides sufficient understanding of the project's scope and complexity to inform decisions while remaining agile and allowing for changes as new information emerges.

03. Planning & design



03. Planning & design

The planning and design phase bridges the gap between learning and doing. Translate your discovery insights into actionable plans and achieve alignment across resources, timelines, and stakeholder expectations. Effective planning balances strategic vision with operational feasibility, breaking down aspirational targets into manageable steps while maintaining the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen challenges.

Develop mitigation strategies for risks identified during discovery and remain vigilant for new risks that will inevitably emerge during planning. Scenario planning can be a valuable tool to prepare the organisation to pivot quickly if major risks materialise.

Another important aspect is resource allocation. Teams must have the skills, time, and tools to succeed, requiring careful coordination to avoid bottlenecks and unaligned prioritisation. Pro-active cross-functional collaboration helps all streams—whether technological, operational, or cultural—move in sync.

Keep in mind that not all tasks need to be solved in-house. For certain one-off activities, outsourcing might be more practical than training internal staff. However, knowledge transfer should be included in any outsourced work scope.



03. Planning & design

Use iterative agile planning techniques to remain flexible. A high-level structured roadmap provides guidance while you monitor, adjust, and refine plans as new information and challenges arise. This maintains momentum and responsiveness, though it may require managing expectations for stakeholders accustomed to a more rigid, waterfall-style process. High-level roadmaps and milestone planning can help bridge this gap while avoiding over-commitment to an inflexible plan.

Even the most well-constructed plans can falter without strong stakeholder buy-in. Effective communication and engagement are especially critical in the planning phase. Stakeholders must feel involved and invested in the transformation from the outset to improve shared ownership and responsibility for its success. Go beyond simply informing them about progress and actively involve them in decision-making processes and demonstrate how the transformation aligns with their priorities and concerns.

Tailor communication strategies to the preferences of different stakeholder groups. Executive leadership focuses on strategic alignment and high-level outcomes, while operational teams must understand how their day-to-day work will be impacted. Creating regular touchpoints, such as workshops, town halls, and one-on-one meetings, enables open dialogue and allows concerns to be addressed early. Additionally, leveraging collaborative tools and project dashboards that display frequently updated transformation KPIs provides transparency and helps everyone stay aligned.



Applying the frameworks to this phase



In the planning phase, continue to apply the frameworks and models introduced in discovery. Each of the frameworks (Prosci ADKAR Model, Kotter's 8-Step Process, McKinsey 7-S, Lippitt-Knostrer Model and Uncertainty Matrices) offers distinct strengths and perspectives, which, when combined, creates a well-rounded planning process.

The Prosci ADKAR Model focuses on individual readiness and motivation for change, ensuring employees are prepared. It complements Kotter's 8-Step Process, which guides strategic actions and leadership to maintain momentum. Aligning ADKAR's Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement with Kotter's steps of creating and communicating a vision and empowering employees addresses many of the individual and organisational needs.

The McKinsey 7-S Framework helps create alignment across strategy, teams, systems, shared values, skills, style, and staff. It works well with the Lippitt-Knostrer Model, which focuses on vision, alignment, skills, incentives, resources, and action plans, offering a structured approach to managing complex change. Together, they address both human and organisational aspects of transformation.

Uncertainty Matrices add a structured approach to risk management by categorising and prioritising risks. Integrating risk mitigation, scenario analysis, and continuous monitoring into the planning phase prepares the organisation for uncertainties and adapting to changing conditions.

Prosci ADKAR Model

Build **Awareness** during the planning phase by outlining a communication strategy to convey the transformation's purpose and relevance to each role. Identify key messages that explain why the transformation is necessary and align these with both individual and organisational goals. Plan targeted messaging that details specific changes employees will experience, helping establish early buy-in.

Create **Desire** by including opportunities for employee engagement in the planning process. Schedule workshops where employees can discuss how the changes will impact them and provide input on training needs. Plan incentives tied to transformation goals, such as recognition and role progression, to encourage enthusiasm and support.

To improve **Knowledge**, map out learning paths to address skill gaps identified during discovery. Plan for a mix of self-paced modules, hands-on workshops, and instructor-led sessions. Schedule training delivery according to transformation milestones, ensuring employees gain the necessary skills as they transition into new roles and responsibilities. If new technologies are part of the change, ensure foundational technical training is scheduled early.

Prosci ADKAR Model

Outline plans for **Ability** by incorporating practical application opportunities into training. Design simulations, role-playing, or sandbox environments for employees to safely practise new skills. Create role-specific competency frameworks to clarify the skills and behaviours required in each position, aligned with performance management systems. This will guide employees on their expected development paths.

Establish **Reinforcement** strategies that will sustain skill and behavioural changes post-training. Outline a system of follow-up evaluations, regular feedback sessions, and recognition mechanisms. Plan for periodic performance reviews tied to transformation-related KPIs and consider setting up communities of practice, allowing employees to share experiences and maintain a culture of continuous improvement.





Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

Refine the transformation's vision and strategy based on insights from the discovery phase. Develop a clear, compelling vision that reflects the organisation's goals, addressing specific challenges and opportunities identified earlier. The vision should resonate with all levels of the organisation, providing a cohesive sense of purpose and a clear picture of the desired future state. This clarity builds a unified direction and energises employees by showing the tangible benefits of change.

Design a communication plan for sharing the vision and strategic goals with all stakeholders. Specify key messages, delivery methods, and frequency. Tailor messaging to the needs and interests of different audience groups, using platforms like newsletters, town halls, and internal channels to convey updates consistently. Aim for transparency and regularity in communication to build trust, address concerns, and reinforce the organisation's commitment to the transformation.

Create a sense of urgency by identifying key drivers for change, such as market shifts, competitive pressures, or new regulatory requirements. Use data points gathered during discovery to underline why the transformation is necessary now. Include these points in your communication plan to highlight potential risks of inaction and the long-term benefits of prompt, decisive change.

Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

Form a guiding coalition by identifying and engaging influential individuals across various levels and departments. Involve these individuals early on, creating a core team that embodies the vision and is equipped to lead others. These coalition members should serve as advocates, helping to drive engagement and enthusiasm across the organisation. Plan for their ongoing involvement to keep the momentum steady and consistent throughout the transformation.

Empower employees to act and identify potential barriers. Outline strategies to address these obstacles, whether they involve outdated processes, insufficient tools, or rigid structures. Plan for targeted training and resource allocation to enable employees to participate effectively. Streamline workflows where possible, and encourage a culture of collaboration by incorporating team-based initiatives that align with the vision. This empowerment gives employees the tools and authority to make decisions within their roles, creating a sense of ownership.

Plan for quick wins by identifying areas where small but added-value quick successes can demonstrate the transformation's value. Outline goals achievable early in the transformation to build momentum. These wins should be meaningful, clearly tied to the vision, and visible across the organisation. As they're achieved, leverage them as proof points in communications to reinforce progress and maintain enthusiasm.





McKinsey 7-S Framework

Develop action plans that align with the strategic objectives established during the discovery phase. For each department, outline specific actions, timelines, resource allocations, and performance metrics. This planning should include scenario planning and cost-benefit analysis to assess the feasibility of various initiatives. A clear, department-specific action plan ensures each area is contributing effectively to the transformation and alignment with overall strategy maintains unity across the organisation.

Design an organisational structure that supports the transformation by mapping out roles, reporting lines, and key functional areas. This structure should eliminate redundancies and encourage cross-functional collaboration while streamlining decision-making processes to improve agility. Define clear roles and responsibilities, ensuring accountability without overlaps. Creating an efficient structure that supports the new ways of working will facilitate a smoother transition to the transformed state and reinforce the organisation's strategic goals.

McKinsey 7-S Framework

Plan for systems and processes to support the transformation's operational needs. Develop an IT strategy that aligns with transformation objectives, optimises resources, and integrates systems that enhance productivity. Detail the steps for selecting, developing, testing, and deploying these systems, ensuring scalability and usability. Consider factors such as data integration, system compatibility, and cybersecurity requirements. These systems should enable efficient workflows, reduce costs, and support the evolving needs of the organisation as it progresses through the transformation.

Define the required skills and competencies to build a capable workforce ready for the transformation. Plan training programmes targeting both soft and hard skills relevant to new roles and responsibilities, aligning these with the organisation's career frameworks. This alignment offers employees clear development paths while addressing the skills necessary for future success.

Additionally, outline **leadership development** to align with the desired culture, focusing on supportive, collaborative, and innovation-driven leadership styles. Equipping the workforce with the right skills and building a culture of ongoing learning supports the organisation's long-term goals and adaptability.





Lippitt-Knoster model

Engage with key stakeholders through workshops and meetings to refine and validate the transformation's **Vision**. Plan for consistent communication that reinforces the vision, emphasising how it aligns with organisational values and goals. Achieve **Alignment** of this vision across all levels to improve commitment and unity. This collaborative planning process also enables early identification of potential areas of resistance, allowing for engagement and alignment.

Outline the **Skills** required to achieve the transformation, based on gaps identified during the discovery phase. Define the learning paths and development plans needed to equip employees with these skills. Align training plans with career progression so that employees see the transformation as integral to their growth within the organisation.

Plan **Incentives** that encourage engagement and support transformation objectives. Link incentives to measurable performance milestones tied to the transformation's goals. Consider a combination of monetary rewards, career advancement opportunities, and public recognition to motivate employees. Outline how these incentives will be communicated and ensure they are consistent with organisational values, reinforcing the behaviours and outcomes necessary for sustainable change.

Lippitt-Knoster model

Identify and outline the **Resources**—budget, technology, personnel—needed to support the transformation. Assign roles and responsibilities within each team, creating detailed action plans that address gaps, timelines, and dependencies. Establish a RACI matrix (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) for each major initiative to clarify expectations, promote accountability, and streamline decision-making. This approach enables cross-functional collaboration and reduces potential misunderstandings as the transformation progresses.

Create an agile **Action Plan** by outlining the major transformation milestones and high-level deliverables. Break these down into epics, then further into actionable tasks for the initial sprints. Prioritise tasks based on impact and dependencies, ensuring that critical activities are addressed first. To maintain flexibility, avoid over-planning beyond the first couple of months—designate high-level milestones instead, allowing room for adjustments as the transformation progresses. Ensure each milestone is linked to measurable outcomes so that progress can be assessed regularly and adjustments can be made as needed.

Uncertainty matrices

In the planning phase, develop risk mitigation for the identified risks. Use uncertainty matrices to prioritise risks and shift risks from less favourable quadrants, such as **unknown-unknowns**, to the more manageable **known-knowns**. Research, bring in subject matter experts, implement monitoring, and design mitigations for each high-priority risk, outlining actions, responsible parties, timelines, and the effort involved. Integrate these strategies into the action plans, making risk management a scheduled part of the transformation effort. Systematically address critical risks to reduce uncertainty and increase organisational resilience.

Scenario planning is a valuable tool for evaluating potential outcomes of decisions and developing robust contingency plans. Create various scenarios based on identified risks and assess their impact on the transformation. Simulating different conditions and responses helps understand the range of possible outcomes and prepares the organisation for various challenges. Scenario planning identifies the ideal strategies to avoid or mitigate risks, helping the organisation to adapt quickly and effectively to unexpected situations.

Uncertainty matrices

Establish **continuous monitoring** and review mechanisms to ensure risk management strategies remain effective. Set up regular risk review meetings, integrate risk tracking into project management tools, and use automated systems to monitor key risk indicators. Continuous monitoring allows early identification of new risks and assesses the effectiveness of existing strategies. It also ensures that changes in the organisational environment or transformation scope are addressed promptly. Maintaining a dynamic risk management process keeps the organisation aligned with transformation goals and ready to adjust strategies as needed.



Change management strategy

A person wearing a dark, hooded garment, possibly a mask or a hood, is shown in a dark setting. A white arrow points downwards from the center of the image.

Change management addresses the human and cultural elements that can make or break organisational transformation. A well-designed change management plan aligns with the organisation's values, proactively engages all levels, and mitigates resistance.

Effective change management demands a sense of shared direction and prepares the organisation for challenges that can stem from a variety of sources. Identify and manage these challenges early to help mitigate risks and address the specific needs of the organisation.

Change management requires strong engagement with stakeholders. After introducing the changes, maintain momentum and enthusiasm throughout the process. Ensure that communication is ongoing, transparent, and adaptable to different audience groups. Regular feedback loops and open dialogue with employees at all levels help validate the strategy, allowing for swift realignment where necessary.

A common pitfall to avoid is depending on an aspirational strategy without translating it into practical, day-to-day activities that bring teams from the current state to the desired state. Move from what the change looks like to actionable plans with clearly defined achievable initiatives, roles, and milestones that will be tracked and measured through quantifiable KPIs.

Values and purpose

Meaningful change comes from having the right values and purpose to align behaviours to. These principles form the foundation of a successful transformation, influencing every decision and action within the organisation. The right values and purpose are understood, actionable, and can be demonstrated in the daily behaviour of leaders and teams.

Identifying core values must be inclusive, engaging all levels of the organisation. This helps the values resonate and be understood and accepted by all staff. Values must be clear and specific enough to guide behaviour and decision-making. They should align with the organisation's long-term vision and strategic goals, supporting the desired future state.

To make values actionable, clearly define how each one translates into specific behaviours. For example, if **integrity** is a core value, describe what that looks like in everyday work situations. Leaders play a key role in demonstrating these values through their actions, setting the tone for the rest of the organisation. Plan to teach leaders how to demonstrate desired behaviours. It is a pitfall to assume leadership training will automatically trickle down to their teams.

Consistent communication is vital to ensure everyone understands and embraces the values. Plan to use various channels to share the values and prepare stories, examples, and recognition to show how they can be lived in the organisation. Plan and outline training programmes, workshops and role-playing scenarios to help employees embody the values in their work.

Prepare feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, to monitor how well values are being lived within the organisation. Continuous reinforcement through communication, leadership actions, and recognition will help keep the values in mind.

Integrating values into organisational processes—such as hiring, performance evaluations, and recognition programmes—reinforces them. Embed values into career frameworks, KPIs, SLAs, branding, sales scripts, talent acquisition efforts, and customer and partner interaction guidelines. This positions values to influence internal behaviour and shape the organisation's reputation and relationships with customers and partners.

Change management strategy

Change management plan

Create an actionable change management plan by considering several guidelines. The values and purpose will guide the direction, ensuring alignment and coherence throughout the transformation.



Clearly articulate the transformation's vision and objectives. The vision should be inspiring, aligned with strategic goals, and provide a clear picture of the desired future state. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). A well-defined vision and clear objectives serve as a North Star, aligning all efforts and ensuring everyone understands the intended direction and outcomes.



Use insights from the discovery phase to understand stakeholder needs, concerns, and potential resistance points. Tailor the change management approach to address these effectively, mitigating resistance and building support. Engaging stakeholders in collaborative planning improves ownership and commitment to the transformation.



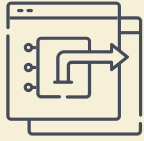
Develop a communication plan outlining how information about the transformation will be shared. Include key messages, communication channels, frequency, and responsible parties. Effective communication ensures transparency and keeps stakeholders informed and engaged. Use multiple channels such as emails, town halls, newsletters, and dashboards to reach different audiences and maintain consistent messaging.



Plan training and development programmes to equip employees with the skills and knowledge needed for new ways of working. Identify training needs, plan a curriculum, and schedule training sessions. Continuous learning opportunities support ongoing skill development. This investment will reduce anxiety and build competence and confidence in new roles and responsibilities.

Change management strategy

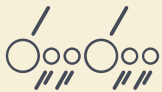
Change management plan



Establish support systems to help employees navigate the change. This can include help desks, mentoring programmes, and online resources. Providing support alleviates concerns and builds confidence in new processes. Accessible support ensures employees receive assistance when needed, promoting a smoother transition.



Prepare feedback mechanisms to gather input and monitor the progress of the change initiative. Use surveys, focus groups, and regular check-ins with stakeholders. Feedback identifies issues early, allowing for timely adjustments to the strategy. Regular feedback and sharing of the resulting actions and outcomes show a commitment to employees' needs.



Integrate change management activities with project management processes. Align change management milestones with project timelines, coordinate with project managers, and use modern project management tools to track progress. This streamlines efforts and makes change management embedded and transparent throughout the transformation.



Develop metrics to measure the effectiveness of the change management strategy. Track key performance indicators (KPIs) related to employee engagement, training completion, adoption of new processes, and overall satisfaction. Plan to review metrics to gauge progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to refine the plan.

Change management strategy

Stakeholder validation

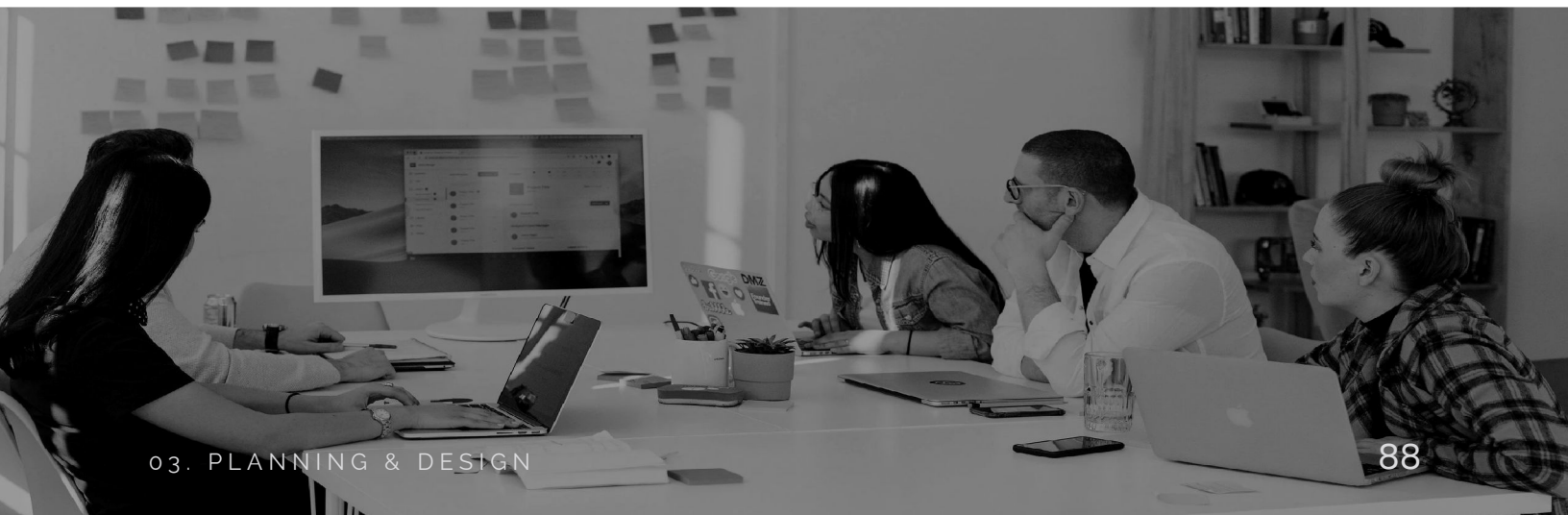
Validate plans with stakeholders to ensure the change management initiatives align with the needs and expectations of those impacted. Engaging stakeholders in the validation process improves ownership and commitment, reducing resistance and improving the plans' chances of success.

Engage stakeholders through workshops, meetings, and informal discussions to present the plans and gather feedback. Use these interactions to address concerns, clarify misunderstandings, and refine the approach. Close collaboration helps stakeholders' on-the-ground experience to be leveraged and helps them feel heard and valued, increasing their support for the transformation. It also helps identify potential challenges and resistance early, allowing for proactive management.

Where possible, implement pilot programmes to test the change management approach on a smaller scale before rolling it out across the organisation. Observing the change in a controlled setting allows you to gather data on what works and what needs adjustment.

Based on feedback and pilot results, adjust the change management plans as needed. This iterative approach ensures the initiatives remain relevant and effective, evolving as needed with the transformation. Regular refinement based on real-world results creates a more resilient and adaptive strategy that can manage challenges and seize opportunities.

Maintain ongoing communication with stakeholders throughout the planning phase. Keep them informed of changes, progress, and upcoming milestones. Regular updates and transparent communication build trust and keep stakeholders aligned with the transformation goals. This ongoing dialogue also provides a platform for stakeholders to share concerns and contribute ideas, creating a collaborative transformation process.





Cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit analysis systematically evaluates financial, time, and other required resources against the potential benefits and value. Generally, the goal is to see that the value exceeds the cost and that a point in time can be calculated that is achieved—called the return on investment (ROI).

Sometimes, no clear ROI can be calculated when the value lies in more intangible or harder-to-measure areas, such as brand reputation or employee morale. Despite these exceptions, ROI is typically a key factor in resource allocation and prioritisation. Cost-benefit analysis supports informed decision-making and helps reduce the risk of investing in initiatives that may not deliver value.

During the planning phase, cost-benefit analysis should be used as a financial exercise and a planning tool. It highlights immediate returns as well as the long-term impact on the organisation's resilience, agility, and market positioning. By looking beyond just financial metrics, leaders can uncover hidden benefits—such as improved compliance or stronger employee engagement—that are harder to quantify but still contribute to success.

When conducting a cost-benefit analysis, I consider potential risk exposure as part of the cost. These risks may include unforeseen technical challenges, operational disruptions, public perception, and security incidents. Factoring these uncertainties into the analysis as costs allows organisations to create more accurate representations of the cost versus value, and it incentivises planning mitigation strategies to reduce costs and achieve ROI.

Cost-benefit analysis

Identifying costs and value

Identifying the costs and value of a transformation initiative requires the evaluation of tangible and intangible factors to provide a complete view of the initiative's impact.

Assess **direct** costs, including financial short-term and one-off expenses like software and hardware purchases, consulting fees, training programmes, and implementation/integration costs, which might also involve assessment and certification costs. These are often the easiest to quantify and form a core part of the analysis.

Assess **recurring** expenses like software subscription fees, ongoing support and maintenance, and recurring training or onboarding efforts. Recurring costs are especially important when comparing different approaches or solutions to a given problem. These costs may appear smaller but can accumulate over time, affecting the sustainability and long-term success of new systems.

Assess **indirect** costs such as the time and effort required from employees, potential operational disruptions, and the opportunity cost of diverting resources from other projects. These factors are harder to quantify but necessary for creating an accurate picture of resource allocation.

The **risk exposure** attached to each of these costs adds a further layer of complexity, providing a more comprehensive view of what the initiative could cost beyond just the obvious expenses. For example, an organisation could face significant reputational damage if a critical system upgrade disrupts customer services, leading to reduced customer trust and potential revenue losses. Risk exposure quantifies this uncertainty enabling you to develop mitigations. Assigning risk exposure as a cost allows it to be factored into the overall assessment and weighed against the anticipated value.

The combination of direct costs, recurring expenses, indirect costs, and risk exposure produces a comprehensive cost score that reflects the true total cost of a given initiative, enabling fair comparison, informed decision-making, and incentivising risk mitigation.

Cost-benefit analysis

Identifying costs and value

On the value side, both direct and indirect value must be assessed. Direct value includes measurable improvements to KPIs, such as directly linked increased revenue, cost savings, or operational efficiencies. For example, automating a manual process can remove process bottlenecks, reducing time-to-completion and freeing up time and resources for higher-value activities. These gains are clear and often serve as the foundation of the business case for transformation.

Indirect value is harder to quantify but usually contributes to long-term success. This might include enhanced customer satisfaction, improved employee engagement and retention, stronger compliance, increased scalability, and more effective risk management. These factors contribute to organisational resilience and competitive advantage, but they are hard to measure and tie to a specific cause. For example, increased employee engagement can lead to lower turnover rates, which indirectly saves hiring and training costs while improving productivity. Improved scalability can reduce bottlenecks, enable increased productivity without significantly increasing cost, and reduce downtime. While these outcomes may not show up in the financial ledger immediately, they still represent significant and noticeable long-term value for the organisation.

When direct ROI is harder to calculate, such as when pursuing strategic value like market positioning or long-term growth, consensus-building becomes key. In these cases, decision-makers must agree on the value of intangible benefits based on the available evidence, industry trends, case studies, and collective experience. For example, if an initiative intends to improve the organisation's ability to enter new markets or gain a competitive edge, the collective belief that these strategic moves will drive long-term growth can justify the investment despite the lack of an immediately measurable ROI.

Bringing these elements together creates a value score that captures the measurable financial gains and the harder-to-quantify strategic and cultural benefits. Comparing this value score against the cost score provides a good view of whether the transformation offers a sufficient return on investment to implement and where it might be prioritised against other initiatives.

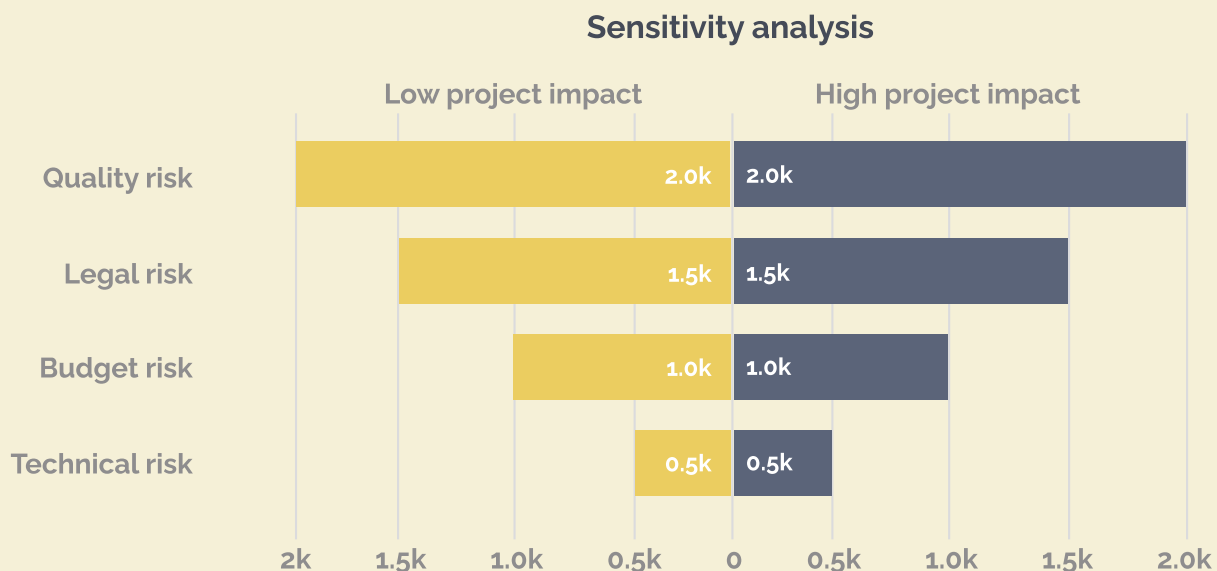
Cost-benefit analysis

Advanced cost-benefit analysis techniques

Cost-benefit analyses can be further enhanced with advanced techniques such as sensitivity analysis and benefit realisation planning. These methods provide deeper insights but also require more time for research and planning; remember to balance this with the realities of timelines and budgets.

Sensitivity analysis examines how changes in key assumptions affect the results. By adjusting inputs such as cost estimates and benefit projections, you can identify which variables have the greatest impact. This helps you understand the range of possible outcomes and reveals where accurate estimation is most important.

A benefits realisation plan ensures that projected benefits are achieved. This plan sets specific benefit targets, assigns ownership, and defines clear measurement criteria. It outlines the steps needed to realise the benefits and includes regular monitoring and reporting.



Cost-benefit analysis

Performing scenario analysis

Scenario analysis helps evaluate potential outcomes of decisions under different conditions, enabling you to prepare for uncertainties. In transformation, scenario analysis can be helpful in assessing the potential fallout of initiatives and the effectiveness of risk mitigations.

Typically, we consider three scenarios. A **Best-case scenario** assumes everything goes according to plan, leading to maximum benefits and minimal costs. A **Worst-case scenario** outlines significant challenges that increase costs and reduce benefits. A **Most likely scenario** reflects the most realistic outcome based on current knowledge and assumptions.

Assess each scenario's impact on the transformation. Begin with the cost-benefit and the ROI for each scenario. This helps evaluate the economic feasibility of the initiative and compare potential returns against the cost.

Evaluate the operational impact by assessing how each scenario affects daily operations. Consider potential disruptions, changes to workflow, and effects on productivity. This operational assessment identifies challenges and informs plans for a smooth transition with minimal disruption to business processes.

Additionally, assess the long-term strategic implications by examining how each scenario aligns with the organisation's goals and supports long-term objectives and sustainable growth.

Compare and analyse the scenarios and different options to make informed decisions. When comparing scenarios of a single initiative, the purpose is to make sure you are prepared for the worst case, potentially identifying new risks that can be mitigated.

When comparing different options, the purpose is to find the one with the best and most likely risk/effort or cost/benefit outcome. Assess which option offers the best balance of risks and rewards between worst and best-case scenarios, aligning with the organisation's risk appetite and strategic objectives.

Make sure to involve key stakeholders in reviewing the scenario analysis to validate assumptions, gather feedback, and ensure all perspectives are considered.

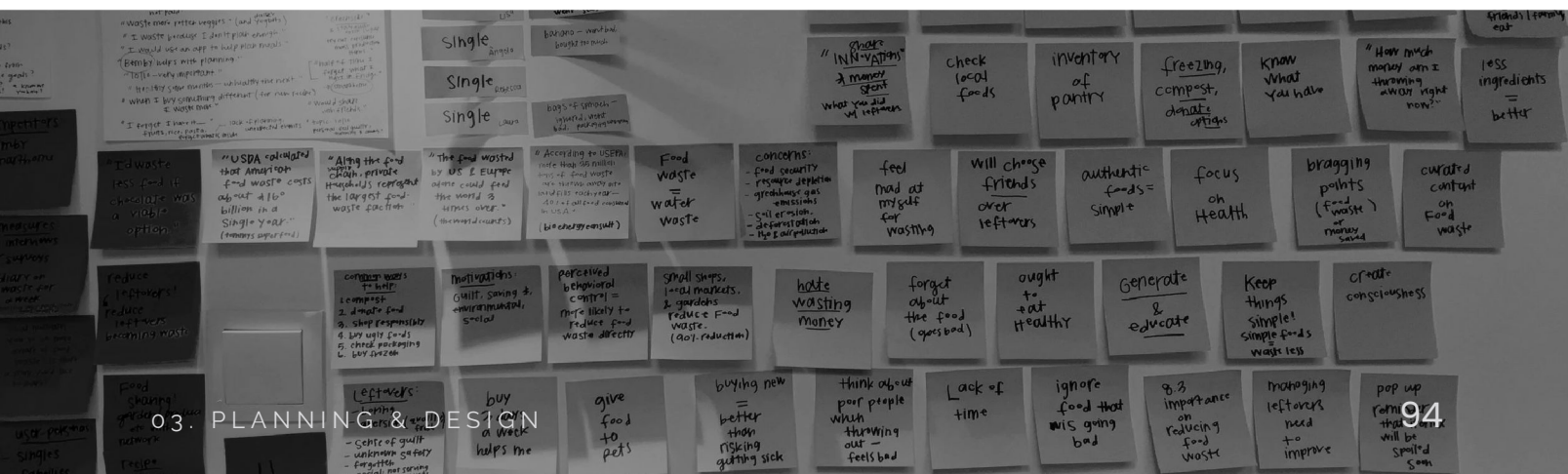
Action plan development



An action plan translates the strategy into clear, actionable steps that guide the organisation through execution while maintaining alignment with the vision, objectives, and target state. During the planning phase, we expand on the gap analysis and high-level plan from discovery, breaking down streams and epics into specific tasks. Tasks need owners, ensuring that each department understands its role and responsibilities within the broader transformation effort.

The Lippitt-Knostrer Model provides structure to reduce the risk of gaps between planning and execution. Each task is aligned with strategic goals, backed by clearly defined timelines, resources, and accountability, allowing for consistent progress tracking.

An effective action plan must outline the practical initiatives and activities that bring the transformation to life. This means enabling teams to execute well-defined, pragmatic tasks with clarity and confidence. The plan also addresses potential risks, dependencies, and adjustments to keep the transformation agile and adaptable as new challenges or opportunities arise. A clear, well-coordinated action plan avoids confusion, maintains momentum, and aligns efforts with the organisation's overall vision.



Action plan development

Breaking down into departmental plans

Departmental plans help each unit understand its role in the transformation and contribute effectively to the objectives. Engage department heads to discuss the transformation goals, their perceived challenges, and their expected contribution. This sets expectations and improves ownership, aiding buy-in from department leaders.

Establish a quantified baseline of the current state. This baseline can come from existing KPIs, SLAs, or other metrics. If such metrics are unavailable, manual baselining will be needed. A baseline defines where the organisation currently stands and provides a far better reference than generic industrial benchmarks for setting targets. Contextualised targets will be more achievable and realistic for your organisation, ensuring that the transformation drives measurable improvements without overwhelming teams. Once initial targets are met, the next milestone will aim for further enhancements, promoting continuous improvement.

Collaborate with departments to develop tailored plans. Understand current processes, identify necessary changes, and determine required resources. Breaking down high-level initiatives (epics) into specific tasks and activities helps ensure that every task is actionable and aligned with the department's capabilities. Clearly define responsibilities and outline the resources required, including personnel, budget, and technology, to ensure that departments are well-equipped to execute their tasks.

Identify low-hanging fruit that provides value, not just tasks that are easy to accomplish. Use an effort-value quadrant to identify low-effort, high-value initiatives that deliver visible impact. This approach helps departments build momentum early in the transformation, showing quick wins and creating a positive foundation. Once these are achieved, departments can shift focus to more complex, high-effort, high-value initiatives that drive long-term, sustainable change.

Set realistic timelines and milestones for each task to track progress and keep the transformation on schedule. Timelines provide structure, while milestones mark significant achievements and act as checkpoints for assessing progress. Conduct a risk assessment for each department's plan, identifying potential challenges and developing mitigation strategies to address them.

Keep an eye out for any cross-departmental dependencies and opportunities to combine multiple departments' efforts towards the same or similar initiative. Once identified, facilitate discussions between the relevant teams and help them pool their resources.

Action plan development

Aligning with strategic goals

Aligning departmental plans with the organisation's strategic goals helps transformation efforts contribute to the broader vision and objectives. This alignment helps maintain focus and coherence, maximising the transformation's impact.

Communicate the organisation's vision and strategic objectives to all departments, helping them understand the broader context and how their work contributes to the big picture. In a subsequent communication directed to each department, contextualise the objectives to the challenges, KPIs, and other aspects of each department. This helps them see how the objectives will help them and how the organisation and their needs are aligned.

Design KPIs to measure success at the departmental and organisational levels. KPIs should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) to provide clear benchmarks. Regularly review these KPIs to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. Where possible, create a dashboard that maintains the latest status of the KPIs for all to see. Consistent and transparent measurement ensures the organisation stays on track to achieve its strategic goals.

Establish continuous feedback and learning mechanisms to sustain progress. Encourage departments to share successes and challenges, using this information to refine strategies and improve performance. This culture of continuous improvement keeps the organisation agile and responsive to changing circumstances. Plan to regularly revisit and adjust initiatives to respond to new information or challenges and maintain alignment with the objectives.

Regularly communicate progress to stakeholders as it helps to maintain their support. Highlight how transformation efforts continue to align to reinforce their ongoing commitment. Engage stakeholders in planning and review processes to incorporate their insights and feedback into plans, enhancing both relevance and effectiveness while improving ownership and involvement.

Risk management

In the planning phase, the focus shifts from identifying risks to developing a robust plan for mitigating and managing them. Understand each risk's nature and impact and devise practical steps to minimise potential negative effects. For example, if a significant risk involves a potential regulatory change, the plan needs to include regularly monitoring updates, engaging legal experts, and creating adaptable policies.

For high-impact risks, develop contingency plans that outline specific actions to take if a risk materialises despite implemented mitigations. Identify critical risks, determine the triggers for activating the plan, and assign roles for executing the response. For example, a contingency plan for a major IT system failure might involve activating backup systems, communicating with stakeholders, and restoring operations quickly.

Set up continuous monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure risk management strategies stay effective and relevant. This includes regular reviews of the risk landscape, updating the risk register, and adjusting mitigation strategies. Use tools such as dashboards and real-time reporting systems to track risk indicators and provide timely information to decision-makers.

Integrating risk management with the overall transformation plan ensures it's embedded in daily operations, not treated as a separate activity. This means incorporating risk management tasks into project timelines, scoping mitigations like any other project, assigning responsibilities for risk-related activities, and factoring risk considerations into major decisions. Regular risk status updates should be included in progress reports to senior leadership and stakeholders.

Engage stakeholders in the risk management process to incorporate their insights and concerns. This collaborative approach results in more comprehensive and practical strategies, with stakeholders offering valuable perspectives on potential risks and suggesting mitigation measures based on their experience.

Resource allocation

Effective resource allocation ensures departments have the necessary financial and human resources to execute their plans.

Develop a budget that supports the known transformation initiatives and margins for potential unknowns. Identify funding requirements for each department's activities, such as technology investments, training programmes, and process improvements. Engage finance teams early to align the budget with strategic priorities. Keep the budget flexible enough to accommodate unforeseen expenses. Regular budget reviews and adjustments ensure financial resources stay aligned with evolving needs.

Allocating personnel and expertise involves assessing current workforce capabilities and identifying gaps that need to be addressed through talent acquisition, training, reassigning staff, or hiring vendors. Collaborate with HR to create a staffing plan that aligns with transformation goals, ensuring critical projects are appropriately staffed. Consider forming cross-functional teams to leverage diverse expertise and enhance collaboration across departments. Clear communication of roles and responsibilities prevents overlaps and ensures all team members are aligned with transformation objectives.

It is not uncommon for existing staff without prior transformation experience to be assigned to support or even lead transformational activities. The assumption is that they are familiar with their area of work, so they should also be capable of transforming it. However, while their on-the-ground experience is invaluable, the skills required for the **business-as-usual** of an area of work are quite different from the skills required for **transforming** an area of work.

To help mitigate this, provide a foundational transformation course covering common frameworks, transformation techniques, relevant soft skills, and the tools being used. Platforms like Udemy offer general courses but supplement these with modules tailored to your organisation's specific processes and tools. This ensures that staff understand how transformation applies within your organisation's unique context.

Additional role-specific training will be needed for roles that differ from their original responsibilities. Identify these needs early and work with HR to provide appropriate training, helping staff to transition more smoothly into their new roles and increasing their effectiveness in supporting the transformation.

Cross-departmental collaboration

Many transformation initiatives require coordinated efforts across multiple functions to achieve strategic goals.

Establish mechanisms for coordination, such as regular inter-departmental meetings, task forces, or working groups. These forums allow departments to share progress, address dependencies, and resolve issues collaboratively. Use project management tools to track inter-departmental tasks and keep all stakeholders informed and engaged. Clear communication channels maintain alignment and create a collaborative culture.

Ensure each department's high-level plans and work in progress are transparently available somewhere that at least the department leads can access. This can help departments identify opportunities for collaboration and pooling of resources towards similar initiatives.

Set shared objectives and KPIs to encourage collaboration and mutual support. Develop performance metrics that reflect contributions from multiple departments towards common goals. For example, improving customer satisfaction might require input from marketing, sales, and customer service. Regularly review these shared objectives and KPIs to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed. Recognising and rewarding collaborative efforts reinforces the value of working together towards the organisation's strategic goals.

To further enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing, organise monthly presentations where each department shares lessons learned with the wider organisation. These presentations allow departments to showcase effective strategies, tools, or processes that may benefit others. These sessions also encourage cross-departmental learning and innovation by making insights and experiences broadly available.

Record all presentations and store them in a centralised knowledge bank, allowing easy access for future reference. Modern knowledge management systems, especially those enhanced with AI capabilities, can make this content easily searchable. Employees can use natural language queries to retrieve information quickly, helping them find relevant lessons or solutions without combing through vast amounts of documentation and videos. This supports the desired culture of continuous improvement and learning.

Training and career development

In the planning stage, use the discovery insights to identify the skills and competencies required for successful transformation and establish how training will be delivered and measured. Align these efforts with the transformation objectives, the HR team, and any existing learning and development team. Outline the key topics to be covered by training content, such as new technologies, process changes, cultural shifts, and soft skills that support collaboration and adaptability, and align career frameworks, KPIs, and other incentives to the desired outcomes of the transformation.

Develop strategies for different employee groups, ensuring each team receives training relevant for their target roles and responsibilities. Planning must also account for the timing and structure of training delivery, balancing immediate needs with long-term development goals. Similarly, training should be aligned with the timeline of new technologies and updated processes. Training teams **before** they can use their new skills or training them too **late** can negatively impact the adoption of the new technologies and processes.

Aligning training with transformation objectives means that employee development supports the organisation's strategic goals. When training is purposefully tied to transformation outcomes, employees will be equipped to handle immediate changes and better positioned for long-term growth within the organisation. This approach improves engagement and motivation, as employees can see how their personal development contributes to their own and broader organisational success.

Behaviours, then soft skills, then hard skills

Training planning in a transformation must address behaviours, soft skills, and hard skills, ensuring they work together effectively.

Identify and define behaviours aligned with the organisation's values and purpose. Include behaviours that demonstrate transparency, accountability, and collaboration, which form the foundation of a culture that supports change. When planning behavioural training, set the expectation for leadership to model these behaviours, leading by example and encouraging a culture that aligns with the vision.

Soft or core skills build the interpersonal and communication capabilities required during the transformation and in the desired future state. Identify key soft skills for each role that align with the transformation objectives, such as adaptability, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. At this point, just focus on **which** soft skills need to be developed. **How** they will be developed will be addressed later.

Hard skills are often introduced later in the transformation process before employees take on their new roles and responsibilities. These abilities are tied to the specific processes, tools, and systems that will be part of the transformed organisation. Identify the hard skills that will be needed for each role, such as proficiency in specific software solutions, agile project management, or new compliance procedures. These skills can often be developed through third-party training, certification, and practical exercises.

Develop high-level learning paths that show the progression from behaviours to soft skills to hard skills, focusing on what is needed without delving into how it will be done yet. Creating paths for each role is accurate but very labour-intensive. Instead, consider ways to design paths so they are applicable to multiple roles. For example, you might have a foundational learning path that applies to all staff. Then a domain-specific path for all staff of a particular department. And finally some short advanced paths specific to just a few roles. This will be far easier to manage and schedule later.

Define the scope

Based on the findings of the discovery phase, define the scope of the training required to support the transformation. Identify the specific skills gaps and knowledge deficits that need to be addressed for the successful adoption of new processes, technologies, and cultural changes. This requires a clear understanding of the current state of employee skills and the desired future state. If the time spent on education during Discovery was limited or if you did not yet have someone with enablement experience, you may need to gather further detail during the planning phase to more accurately determine and map the education needs.

Use gap analysis tools, surveys, and interviews to gather information about current capabilities. Engage representatives from various departments and levels of the organisation to gain a complete picture of training requirements. Collaboration with HR and Learning & Development teams is key to aligning with existing frameworks, identifying synergies, and potentially leveraging existing resources. This can also help identify cost-saving opportunities by reusing training materials and platforms that are already in place.

Define clear learning objectives for each program that are tied to transformation goals. When training outcomes are visibly tied to the transformation's success, employees better understand the importance and value of their personal development. Clearly communicate this connection to boost engagement and motivation, emphasising the impact training has on individual growth and organisational progress.

Identify high-urgency areas that are critical for early success, such as teams first impacted by new technologies or immediate process changes. Consider also people who will be involved in transformation initiatives early (or may already be involved in planning). Determine the impact by considering the importance of the skill to the transformation and the number of employees that need training in that skill.

Together, urgency and impact will help prioritise the paths and guide the curation, design, and development of training content during the execution phase. Keep in mind that items lower in priority might not make it to development if you run out of resources. This will require careful management of expectations, and some training may need to be simplified to avoid knowledge gaps.

Define the scope

Create a roadmap for curating or developing the learning modules, workshops, labs, and other deliverables. Cater to different learning styles and preferences by offering self-paced and in-person options and 1:1 mentoring where applicable. Keep the roadmap flexible, revisiting and updating it as the transformation evolves. Plan to collect input from participants about the effectiveness of training and refine the roadmap as needed.

While curating existing content is cost-effective, some custom content contextualised to your organisation will often be required. Off-the-shelf third-party training provides general knowledge but lacks specific relevance to your organisational limits and processes. Custom content bridges this gap with entire courses or with modules that augment the third-party content. These modules can cover specific processes, culture, and limitations and align more closely with your transformation objectives. This improves understanding and helps staff apply what they have learned more easily within the organisational context.

Developing custom training can be resource-intensive, as it involves gathering input from subject matter experts, aligning with department-specific processes, and creating materials that resonate with employees across various roles. Depending on the scope, this can include e-learning modules, live workshops, self-paced videos, and interactive labs. As an example from my own experience, developing one hour of recorded presentation content suitable for internal education can easily take a month of writing, designing, video editing, and iteration. Therefore, allocate sufficient time and budget in your plan for the design, development, and testing of these custom modules during the execution phase.

Plan enablement for known changes

Additional changes will inevitably come up during execution, but plan enablement initiatives for the known process and tool changes to support a smooth transition and successful adoption. This requires close collaboration with the process and technology stream leads.

Training efforts should precede all changes that may impact individuals or teams, with clear announcements informing relevant stakeholders of what's coming. These announcements are a key part of the overall communications plan.

Announce the change by providing clear, detailed information on what is changing, why it is necessary, and how it will impact employees. Early, proactive communication helps manage expectations and reduce resistance, ensuring that employees are prepared. Announcements should give employees enough time to digest the changes and get ready for the transition.

Prepare training in advance of the change. The depth of training will depend on the scale of the change. For minimal changes, a simple email outlining the new process and necessary actions may suffice. For more significant changes, provide detailed documentation explaining the new procedures, the reasons behind them, and any compliance requirements.

For large-scale changes like introducing a new tool or process, develop a dedicated educational path. This can include online modules, workshops, webinars, and hands-on training sessions. The goal is to ensure employees fully understand the change and feel confident in applying it. Incorporating interactive elements, such as Q&A sessions and practical exercises, can improve comprehension and retention.

Integrating career frameworks

Integrating career frameworks with transformation objectives aligns individual growth with organisational goals. As the organisation transitions to the target state, define the new roles that will emerge, outlining their responsibilities and career progression paths. This helps staff understand their role within the transformation and provides clarity on how they can grow within the new organisational structure.

Each role should have clearly defined responsibilities that align with the organisation's strategic objectives. These responsibilities should balance hard skills—such as technical expertise or process management—with soft skills, including communication, leadership, and adaptability. It's also important to ensure that the role reflects the organisation's values, ensuring that both cultural and performance expectations are embedded.

For each role, establish a career framework that illustrates the progression from junior to senior levels. Typically, junior roles are more focused on execution and the development of hard skills, while senior roles demonstrate more leadership and soft skills, with an emphasis on mentoring, decision-making, and strategic influence. Define clear responsibilities at each level, setting quantifiable KPIs that provide measurable targets for employees to meet as they advance.

Associating structured learning paths to each role lets employees know exactly how to develop the skills necessary for progression. Each seniority level should have corresponding training programmes, certifications, or experiential learning opportunities that help staff upskill and gain the experience needed to advance. By providing this clear learning pathway, employees are more motivated to pursue training that aligns with their career aspirations, and the organisation can build a more capable and adaptable workforce.

Linking learning and career progression incentivises employees to support changes and highlights the relevance of transformation efforts to their personal and professional growth. This approach helps training to be seen as an opportunity for career advancement rather than another corporate obligation. This reinforces the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement and adaptability while empowering employees to take ownership of their development.

Setting incentives

The right incentives help drive cultural change and encourage participation in training programmes. Design incentives aligned with organisational values and transformation objectives to reward desired behaviours and achieve new ways of working. For example, if increased collaboration is an objective, reward teamwork and collective achievements. Recognition and rewards can significantly influence employee engagement and performance. Create a recognition programme that highlights employees' efforts to complete training and apply new skills. This could include public acknowledgement, certificates, bonuses, or a contribution to career progression. Public recognition motivates the individual and encourages others to pursue their own learning and development, helping to create a culture of continuous improvement.

Offering incentives at key milestones in the training path helps sustain motivation. For example, employees might receive a certificate for completing a foundational course, while more advanced modules could lead to tangible rewards like bonuses and career objectives. Milestone-based incentives encourage continued progress and provide clear rewards for achievements. Leaderboards can gamify certification achievements, creating some friendly competition between individuals and teams.

To maintain long-term development, training programmes and incentives should be regularly updated. A culture of continuous learning can be nurtured by offering ongoing opportunities for development and recognising employees' commitment to self-improvement. Rewarding this dedication keeps employees engaged and creates a mindset focused on continuous growth.



Technology integration planning



Technology integration planning supports the adoption of new technologies into the organisation's existing infrastructure or, in some cases, establishing a completely new environment. This phase requires aligning the IT strategy with broader organisational goals, showing that technology investments will support long-term objectives while enhancing efficiency and improving innovation. Effective planning considers the immediate technical requirements and future scalability, ongoing support, and potential risks such as security, compliance, and vendor lock-in.

A technology integration plan must balance the need for operational continuity with the demands of transformation, ensuring minimal disruption to day-to-day activities. Manage dependencies between systems, identify legacy systems that need upgrading or replacement, and ensure that all integrations contribute to the organisation's strategic vision. Additionally, early-stage collaboration between IT, business units, and external partners helps technical decisions to be well-informed and aligned with current needs and growth plans.

Risk management must also have a role in technology integration, with challenges such as cybersecurity threats, regulatory compliance, and technical failures being key areas of concern. By anticipating these risks and incorporating mitigation strategies, organisations can minimise disruptions. Scenario planning and continuous feedback loops help keep the integration process flexible and adaptive, allowing the organisation to respond effectively to unforeseen issues or changes in the technological landscape.

IT strategy

IT strategy aligns technology initiatives with business and transformation objectives to deliver maximum value. Start by defining the IT vision and objectives in line with the organisation's broader strategic goals. Clearly articulate how technology will enable and support these goals, ensuring the IT strategy is designed to enhance operational efficiency, drive innovation, and support the organisation's mission.

Governance helps oversee IT projects and drive alignment with strategic priorities. Establish IT steering committees comprising key stakeholders from both IT and business departments to guide decisions and integrate technology initiatives with organisational strategy. Define decision-making processes and establish clear lines of accountability to achieve effective governance.

Expand on the initial discovery insights with a deeper assessment of the organisation's infrastructure landscape to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This should include an evaluation of existing technologies, systems, and processes, as well as the organisation's overall IT capabilities. Understanding the current state will help identify areas for improvement, opportunities to leverage new technologies in support of the transformation objectives, and help plan workload migrations, modernisations, and replacements.

Define the desired future state of the IT environment, envisioning the technologies, architectures, and capabilities required to achieve transformation goals. This future state should be ambitious but realistic, considering available resources and strategic objectives. It should also align with industry best practices and emerging technology trends, positioning the organisation to remain competitive and innovative. Many organisations need help with understanding new technologies, and getting unbiased opinions can be a major challenge. Vendors each want their solution or approach to be considered the best. Consultants may be aligned with a particular partner more than others. Useful public reviews may not exist if the technology is new enough or evolving too fast. One approach is to get different perspectives and look for commonalities and outright conflicts. Then try and do internal proof of concepts to learn more and see how the technology should be contextualised to your needs.

With all of these insights, develop an implementation plan with the steps required to transition from the current state to the desired future state. This plan should include timelines, milestones, and resource requirements, providing a clear roadmap for execution. Additionally, identify any new potential risks and develop mitigation strategies to address them. Regularly review and update the roadmap to adapt to changes in the business environment and technological advances.

License, open source, and SAAS optimisation

Optimising software licensing, evaluating open-source options, and making strategic decisions around Software as a Service (SaaS) help achieve a cost-effective and flexible technology integration.

Start with a full audit of existing software licenses. Identify underutilised or redundant licenses to eliminate unnecessary costs. This audit can uncover opportunities for savings by pinpointing areas where the organisation is paying for more than it needs.

Following the audit, negotiate with vendors to improve terms. Explore volume discounts or enterprise agreements that consolidate licenses across the organisation, streamlining management and reducing costs. It's vital that licensing terms match both current usage and projected future needs to prevent over-commitment or under-provisioning.

Open-source software can offer significant savings and flexibility. When considering open-source tools, assess their suitability based on the organisation's technical requirements, security needs, and available community or vendor support. Open-source solutions can lower costs, but ensuring adequate maintenance, updates, and troubleshooting plans is critical to maintaining reliability and security. When adopting open-source tools, ensure there is a strategy for long-term support. Options include partnering with vendors that offer commercial support or relying on the open-source community. This approach safeguards stability while benefiting from open-source flexibility.

Evaluating SaaS options involves considering scalability, security, ease of integration, and total cost of ownership. SaaS can lower upfront costs and simplify maintenance, but it's crucial to select solutions that align with IT strategy and long-term business objectives.

Once SaaS solutions are selected, create an adoption strategy. This includes selecting vendors, planning data migration, training teams, and providing integration with existing systems. Address potential risks, such as vendor lock-in and compliance issues, by establishing clear criteria for vendor selection and a solid implementation plan. This is especially important for SaaS solutions that are involved in large volumes of data creation, storage, or processing, as data tends to outlast solutions. If you need to change the tool in the future, ensure you can still access and use the potentially high-value data.

Optimising common tools and systems

Optimising common tools and systems enhances organisational efficiency by streamlining operations and ensuring maximum value from technology investments. Standardisation and integration efforts can improve the effectiveness of IT.

Start with tool standardisation, selecting preferred tools for project management, communication, collaboration, and development. This reduces complexity, improves efficiency, and ensures consistency across teams. Standardising tools also simplifies training, as employees become familiar with a uniform set of applications and workflows. Make sure to involve the actual users of these tools in reviewing and determining (or at least short-listing) suitable options.

Develop best practices for using these common tools. Provide sufficient training and support, including user guides, workshops, and online resources. This helps employees integrate tools into their daily tasks, improving productivity and ensuring that everyone follows efficient and effective methods. Common tool vendors often have training materials and courses that can be leveraged. Depending on the size of your account and location, you may be able to get in-person training sessions to support you. Work with the education stream to align the training materials with the appropriate learning paths and roles.

System integration enables data flow between different tools and systems. Prefer solutions with APIs and other integration features to connect disparate systems, ensuring they communicate effectively. This reduces manual data entry, minimises errors, and improves the accuracy and timeliness of information.

Adopt robust data management practices to support these integration efforts. Establish standards and governance roles for data quality, consistency, and accessibility to ensure reliable, actionable data across the organisation. This includes implementing security policies, data quality checks, and easy authorised access to data for those who need it. Effective data management supports better decision-making and operational efficiency, laying the groundwork for advanced analytics and reporting.

DevOps and automation

DevOps and automation increase agility, improve quality, and accelerate delivery. These initiatives encourage collaboration and continuous improvement, enabling organisations to respond quickly to changing business needs.

Build a DevOps culture that promotes collaboration between development and operations teams. Emphasise practices like continuous integration (CI), continuous delivery (CD), and infrastructure as code (IaC). These practices streamline development processes, break down silos, and encourage shared responsibility, helping teams work more effectively towards common goals.

Select and implement a DevOps toolchain that supports automation, monitoring, and collaboration. Include tools for version control, CI/CD pipelines, configuration management, and monitoring. Automating workflows, tracking changes, and maintaining high code quality becomes easier with the right toolchain. For example, integrating version control with CI/CD pipelines automates testing and deployment, reducing release times and improving reliability. DevOps tools and processes must be centralised and standardised across the organisation to simplify education, support scalability, ensure consistent compliance, and make operations more efficient.

Automate repetitive and manual processes to boost efficiency and minimise errors. Automation can be applied to tasks like testing, deployment, and infrastructure provisioning. Automated testing ensures that code changes are validated before deployment, reducing bugs and improving software quality. This is an area seeing a lot of impact from AI solutions, capable of creating and running tests autonomously. Automated deployments streamline the release process, enabling faster and more consistent updates.

Scalability is a key driver and factor when implementing automation. As the organisation grows, it is difficult to scale manual processes, which can become increasingly error-prone. Automation and its associated tools and processes will improve manual processes, but automation must also be designed to handle increased demand as the organisation continues to grow. Scalable solutions must support automatic horizontal scaling, leverage cloud resources, and be easily extended through adaptable scripts and configurations.

Technology integration planning

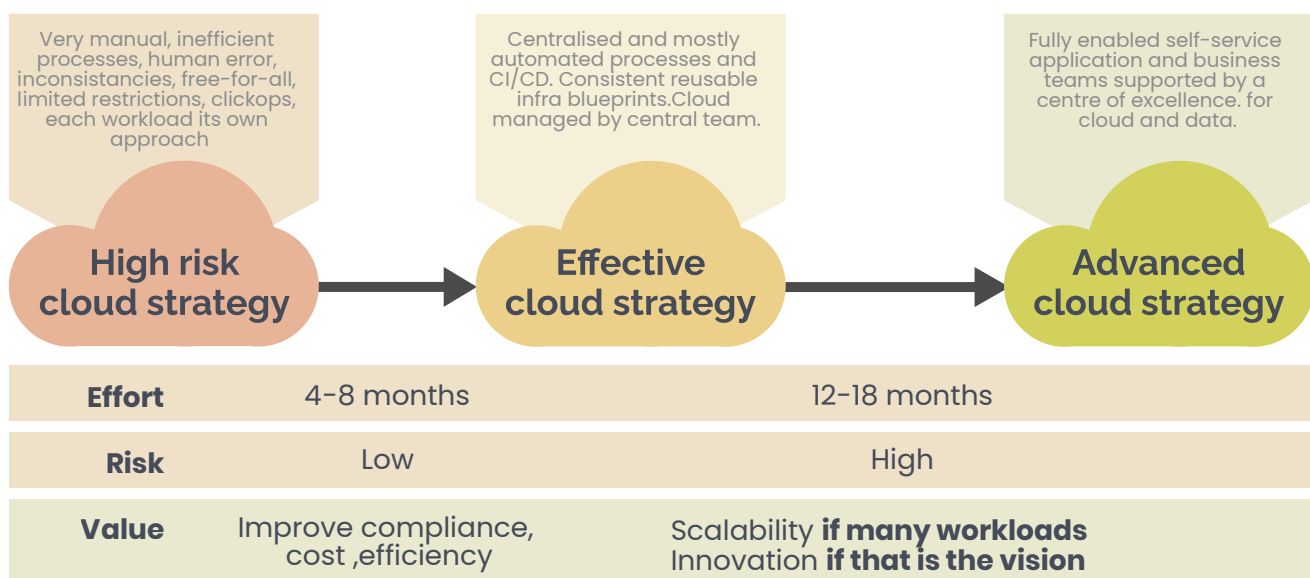
Cloud adoption planning

Cloud adoption is a common objective of technology transformation, providing scalability, flexibility, cost efficiency, and the foundations for data and AI. I have written much on this topic in my blog and whitepapers but the following overview provides some high-level guidance for this transformation process.

Understand organisational readiness for the cloud by expanding on discovery for current infrastructure, applications, and data to determine what can be migrated, what needs re-architecting, and what should be replaced. Consider organisational culture, cloud skills, and talent in your region, as these factors will influence your cloud adoption strategy.

Decide on the right cloud deployment model—public, private, or hybrid. Public clouds offer scalability and cost advantages, private clouds provide more control and security, while hybrid models blend these benefits at the cost of increased complexity. Evaluate cloud providers based on their alignment with your organisation's needs and capabilities.

The operating model that I recommend, and one that most large enterprises opt for, is to take a centralised platform approach to the public cloud rather than a decentralised or workload approach. It's a steeper learning curve but significantly better for compliance, operational efficiency, innovation, and quality consistency. A central team can remain responsible for resource provisioning or you can enable the application teams to self-service. If there are many workloads, enabling teams will be required to achieve scale. If you want to increase innovation, then enablement will create the flexibility to do so.



Cloud adoption planning

Enablement requires significant education and change management. Separate those who will operate and manage the cloud environment from those who will use the cloud, such as application teams, as the training needs and goals will usually differ. Application teams are not typically used to being responsible for infrastructure, so there will be a learning curve.

A platform operating model requires building the foundations first. These include centralised shared services such as networking, Ci/CD, logging, and IAM. A library of IaC modules to support the cloud services is required and blueprints for common application architectures can be helpful to speed up migrations. Self-service capabilities add further requirements. Once the foundations are in place, your workloads can be migrated or built.

Establish governance frameworks to manage cloud resources effectively, ensure compliance, and control costs. Apply compliance mapping to define policies for cloud usage, establish roles and responsibilities, and implement tools to monitor and manage the cloud environment.

Implement identity and access management (typically integrated with enterprise user ID systems), enforce encryption for data at rest and in transit, and monitor systems to detect and respond to security threats. Preventative controls are best for compliance. In a platform approach, these can be built into the CI/CD pipeline and IaC modules to prevent non-compliant configurations and resources from being deployed.

Establish cost management policies, also called FinOps. Use cost management tools to monitor usage and spend. These tools can help identify potential savings by providing insights into resource consumption. Policies such as shutting down unused instances and required lifecycle policies on logs and backups help control costs. Ensure that all cloud resources are tagged, as it is essential for financial and security operations. Tagging should be enforced in the CI/CD pipeline before any resources are provisioned, as doing it after the fact is far more difficult.

Maintaining performance in the cloud requires continuous monitoring. Implement performance monitoring tools to track the health of cloud resources and applications and establish performance benchmarks to review regularly. When performance issues arise, address them by scaling resources, optimising configurations, or working with cloud service providers. This is also called right-sizing.

Data and AI adoption planning

Data and AI adoption builds on cloud foundations, enabling data-driven decision-making, operational efficiencies, and innovation through machine learning and artificial intelligence. A mature cloud environment supports the scalability and flexibility needed for handling large volumes of data and for integrating analytics and AI capabilities and a platform approach to cloud should already contain many of the security policies required for protecting data.

Map where data currently resides within your organisation, its formats, accessibility, and what can be centralised and cleaned for analytics and AI use. Implement a data governance framework to manage data quality, security, and compliance. This framework should cover data classification, ownership, stewardship roles, and tagging/labelling terminology that is consistent across the organisation. Effective governance supports compliance and streamlines data management as the organisation grows.

Design a scalable data platform capable of processing both structured and unstructured data to support analytics and AI workloads. Cloud-based data lakes and warehouses often fit this need, providing cost-effective storage and processing power. Such platforms can be created using cloud services or by using third-party solutions. Centralise data from various sources, enabling real-time or near-real-time access for analytics. Use automated ETL (extract, transform, load) pipelines to streamline data ingestion and preparation, with consistent tagging and labelling for reliable data access and processing.

Establish a data catalogue for discoverability, documenting available data sources, quality, and access controls. A well-maintained catalogue enables analysts, data scientists, and business users to locate data efficiently, encouraging self-service and reducing IT dependency. Implement data-sharing policies to balance accessibility with security, allowing controlled access while protecting sensitive information.

Identify AI use cases that align with strategic objectives and solve tangible business problems or develop new revenue streams. Define clear objectives for each AI project, such as improving customer satisfaction, reducing costs, or developing predictive capabilities. Avoid AI projects without a clear purpose; instead, focus on where AI can add real value.

Data and AI adoption planning

Develop an AI-ready infrastructure with MLOps (Machine Learning Operations) to standardise ML model development, deployment, and monitoring. MLOps helps models stay updated as data changes, enabling reliable and scalable AI solutions. Separate roles for data engineers, data scientists, and ML engineers, distinguishing platform management from analytics and modelling, to optimise workflows and maximise expertise.

Equip business users with intuitive data access, reporting tools, dashboards, and zero-code analytics solutions to facilitate independent, data-driven decision-making. Self-service analytics reduce reliance on technical teams for routine reporting, allowing data specialists to focus on higher-impact work.

As maturity in this area increases, explore data monetisation by treating data as a product. Create secure, compliant methods for external data sharing, enabling revenue generation through anonymised data sets, insights, or predictive models.

Design thinking for transformation



Design thinking aligns closely with the transformation frameworks covered and is a great tool during the planning phase to get to the next level of depth and understanding. Its human-centred focus helps bridge the gap between organisational goals and stakeholder needs, ensuring that the transformation is efficient but also empathetic and adaptive to real-world challenges. In transformation, design thinking can aid collaboration across departments, encouraging iterative problem-solving and rapid adaptation.

An advantage of using design thinking in transformation is its ability to proactively address uncertainties and complexities inherent in large-scale change. By engaging with stakeholders early through the Empathise phase, organisations can identify and mitigate potential resistance. Furthermore, the iterative nature of design thinking, through phases like Ideation and Prototyping, ensures flexibility, allowing for course corrections in response to feedback or unforeseen challenges. This agility supports continuous alignment with strategic objectives and allows for ongoing risk mitigation.

By considering end-user needs and the transformation objectives, design thinking helps initiatives remain relevant and impactful, blending creative innovation with planning and execution.

Design thinking for transformation

Empathise and define

The **Empathise** and **Define** phases help to understand the problems and needs of an initiative's stakeholders in a transformation. These stages ensure that solutions are based on real insights and address the core issues effectively.

Conducting user research through interviews, surveys, observations, and focus groups. The aim is to gain deep insights into stakeholder experiences, revealing pain points, desires, and challenges. This understanding helps pinpoint the actual issues that need addressing by the proposed initiative.

Create personas representing different user segments. These personas humanise the data, helping focus on end-user needs throughout the process. Each persona should include demographics, behaviours, goals, pain points, and motivations, ensuring the solutions cater to diverse stakeholder needs. Use empathy maps to visualise what users say, think, feel, and do, further synthesising the findings. These maps allow teams to grasp users' experiences holistically, identifying emotional and rational drivers.

In the **Define** phase, use these insights to formulate specific, user-focused problem statements that are actionable. A clear problem statement, such as *"Young professionals need a way to manage their work-life balance because they feel overwhelmed"*, provides a focused starting point for ideation. Developing a point of view (POV) statement combines the user, their need, and an insight, framing the problem succinctly: *"User X needs a way to achieve Y because of insight Z"*.

Design thinking for transformation

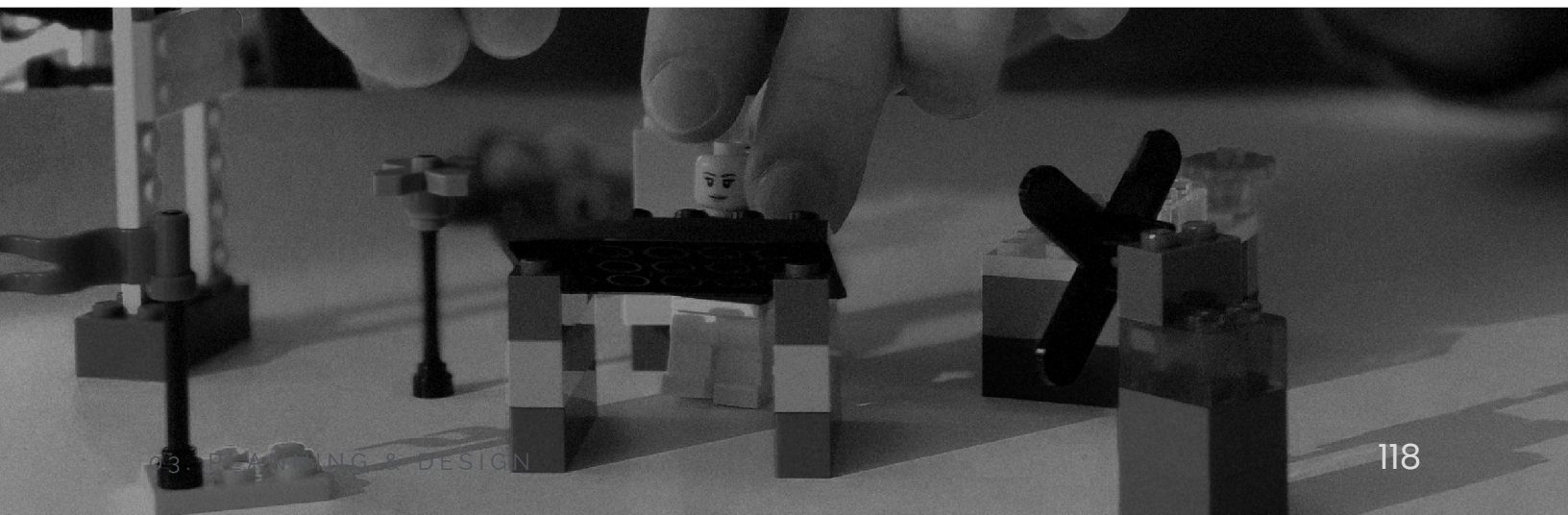
Ideate, Prototype, and Test

The **Ideate**, **Prototype**, and **Test** phases are about generating solutions, building prototypes, and refining them through testing and feedback. This iterative approach encourages experimentation and rapid iteration, leading to effective solutions that meet user needs.

In the **Ideate** phase, use brainstorming sessions to generate a wide range of ideas. Techniques like mind mapping and SCAMPER stimulate creative thinking, with a focus on quantity over quality at this stage. Once a broad set of ideas is generated, evaluate them for feasibility, viability, and desirability. Prioritise those with the greatest potential for impact.

Rapid **Prototyping** follows. Create low-fidelity models or mock-ups of the selected ideas. Prototypes help translate ideas into tangible solutions that can be tested with users. Through iterative development, prototypes evolve as feedback is gathered, increasing their fidelity over time.

Testing is essentially user trials and discussions to observe how people interact with the prototypes. Note any challenges or confusion, and use this feedback to refine the prototypes. Establish feedback loops to gather and incorporate user input, ensuring the solutions remain aligned with stakeholder needs. Regular refinement based on this feedback helps improve usability and functionality, driving the prototypes toward more effective, user-centred outcomes.



04. Execution



04. Execution

The execution phase turns transformation plans into tangible deliverables. Initiatives are rolled out, technologies are deployed, training is delivered, and progress is closely monitored. As new information and challenges inevitably come to light, adjustments are made, and new tasks are planned to keep the transformation aligned with the vision and objectives.

Each stream—whether related to enablement, processes, technology, or compliance—must work in sync, ensuring that efforts are coordinated and support each other. Communication between streams and strong collaboration oversight from the governance team help manage interdependencies and reduce the risks of misalignment and miscommunication.

There will be more focus on implementing risk mitigations, but managing risks remains relevant throughout this phase. While risks were identified earlier, new ones can emerge as plans get more detailed and initiatives are implemented. Regular reviews, feedback loops, and continuous monitoring tools help identify and address issues before they escalate. Scenario planning should also remain active, preparing for potential issues that could affect progress.



04. Execution

Sustaining engagement and momentum among employees is important as the transformation progresses. It's natural for enthusiasm to wane as the difficult realities of implementation set in and setbacks occur. Clear communication, recognition of progress, seeing failures as learning opportunities, and consistent optimistic leadership can help maintain focus and motivation. Continue to reinforce the vision, keeping employees connected to the desired transformation outcomes and what's in it for them.

Change management efforts are amplified during execution. As behaviours, processes, and systems shift, ongoing support is needed to help employees adjust. Applying Prosci ADKAR and Kotter's 8-Step Process helps embed new ways of working and supports the transition to the new processes and tools as they are rolled out.

Remain flexible. Even with planning and risk mitigations, unexpected challenges can and will arise. The ability to adjust initiatives and make real-time changes to the plans based on feedback and data is essential for maintaining progress in the right direction. Execution is not a *fixed* process but an *adaptive* one, where continuous improvement and responsiveness will drive success.



Applying the frameworks to this phase



In the execution phase, use the Prosci ADKAR Model, Kotter's 8-Step Process, McKinsey 7-S Framework, Lippitt-Knostrer Model, and Uncertainty Matrices to ensure adaptive, structured progress that stays aligned with objectives.

The ADKAR Model focuses on supporting employees as they build new skills. Provide targeted training and reinforcement mechanisms, like real-time feedback and recognition, to sustain these new behaviours. This keeps employees motivated and competent in their roles as the transformation unfolds.

Kotter's 8-Step Process maintains momentum by empowering teams and celebrating short-term wins. Use these wins to boost morale and solidify gains. Remove barriers proactively, keeping focus sharp and enabling employees to see tangible results from their efforts.

The McKinsey 7-S Framework aligns organisational elements, ensuring that structures, systems, and resources support the action plan. Continuously adjust roles, skills, and tools to maintain a unified approach to execution, ensuring that all functions are directed towards shared goals.

The Lippitt-Knostrer Model helps manage change through structured regular updates. Incentive programmes and continuous skill development keep teams engaged as they implement and adapt to each initiative.

Uncertainty Matrices focus on identifying and responding to risks during execution. Conduct regular risk assessments and use feedback loops to monitor emerging risks, adjusting action plans as needed. This keeps the organisation resilient and responsive to both expected and unexpected challenges.

Prosci ADKAR Model

The execution phase focuses on developing employees' ability to adapt to new systems, processes, and ways of working. Implement targeted training programs based on the specific needs confirmed in the planning phase. These should include hands-on training sessions, allowing employees to practice new skills in a controlled setting, and mentoring systems where experienced colleagues offer guidance. Additionally, resources such as manuals, video tutorials, and access to subject matter experts must be readily available to support the practical application of new skills. This ensures that employees are informed and capable of applying the changes in their daily roles.

Sustain change with reinforcement activities to embed new behaviours into the organisational culture. Performance management systems set clear expectations and assess progress against transformation goals. Recognition programs that celebrate individual and team achievements in adopting new practices will further reinforce desired behaviours. Continuous feedback loops, through regular check-ins, surveys, and feedback sessions, help maintain momentum. These mechanisms allow employees to share concerns and successes, enabling the organisation to adjust its approach and provide additional support where necessary.

Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

Kotter's 8-Step Process helps change initiatives to be effectively implemented while keeping the organisation focused and motivated. During this phase, the primary focus is on empowering action, generating short-term value-added wins, and consolidating gains to propel further change.

Compliance and quality standards must be maintained, but challenge and reduce barriers that impact progress such as unnecessary bureaucracy. Streamline processes through automation and clear decision-making protocols. Empowering employees with access to the right tools and information, combined with trusted autonomy, creates a sense of accountability and accelerates progress.

Identify and celebrate short-term wins to build momentum. These offer tangible proof that the transformation is on track and helps maintain engagement among employees and stakeholders. Ensure that these achievements add value and are directly linked to the overall transformation objectives. Communicating successes widely boosts morale and reinforces the value of the efforts, motivating teams to continue pushing forward.

Building on the momentum from short-term wins helps drive further change. The credibility gained from early successes should be used to tackle larger, more challenging initiatives. Use the momentum to expand and reinforce the initial changes, ensuring they become embedded in the organisational culture. Regularly evaluate progress and adjust where necessary.





McKinsey 7-S Framework

Execute the action plans from the planning phase. Regularly review progress and update plans as needed to address emerging challenges or changes in the business environment. This continuous monitoring helps remain efficient and maintains alignment between the strategic objectives and the day-to-day execution.

Implement the new organisational structure and systems, including technology deployments and process refinements. Ensure that the new structure promotes communication, collaboration, and decision-making while systems are deployed in a way that minimises disruption and maximises efficiency. Provide employees with the necessary tools and knowledge to perform effectively within their new roles.

Deploy curated and contextualised training and development programs to build the required skills. Ensure that these programs address the needs identified in the planning phase and equip employees to work within the new processes and technologies. Clearly define roles and responsibilities to help staff understand their expected contribution to the transformation. Provide ongoing support and coaching to ensure a smooth transition and maintain performance levels.

Lippitt-Knoster model

During execution, communicate the vision, objectives, and progress of the transformation through regular updates, town hall meetings, and internal communications. Reinforce strategic objectives and maintain stakeholder alignment. Leadership should be highly visible, actively demonstrating commitment, leading by example, and encouraging alignment at all levels.

Provide ongoing training and support, including hands-on sessions and workshops, to address emerging skill gaps. Regularly assess training needs and adapt resources to ensure employees have the tools and knowledge required for their roles, maintaining productivity and engagement throughout the transformation.

Implement the incentive programs developed during the planning phase to motivate and engage employees. Align these incentives with organisational values and strategic goals and regularly review them for effectiveness. Review and adjust action plans to respond to challenges or changes, ensuring flexibility and adaptability while keeping the transformation on track.

Uncertainty matrices

In the execution phase, identify new risks, monitor known risks, and track their status and priority. Provide regular updates as new information arises and circumstances evolve. This ongoing process helps the risk profile remain up to date, enabling consistent identification and mitigation of high-priority risks.

Based on their categorisation within the matrices, implement the planned mitigations to reduce their likelihood or impact. In addition, robust contingency plans must be in place to respond effectively to unforeseen challenges. These plans should outline steps for resource allocation, communication protocols, and recovery actions to be taken in the event of a risk materialising.

Continuous feedback loops gather input from stakeholders to adjust risk management strategies. Regular feedback sessions, surveys, and meetings provide valuable insights into emerging risks and the effectiveness of current mitigation efforts. Incorporating this feedback into the process ensures risk management strategies remain relevant and effective.



Governance stream

The governance stream keeps the transformation aligned with strategic objectives and ensures consistent progress tracking and adjustments. Led by the transformation lead and supported by change management specialists and scrum masters in each stream, the team coordinates efforts across streams and maintains communication with C-level sponsors.

This team engages regularly with all stream leads to ensure continued alignment with the broader vision and objectives. The team handles coordination, communication, risk management, and feedback loops. They establish processes for transparency, accountability, and responsiveness and provide escalation points and direction when misalignments or delays occur. An agile model with regular review cycles keeps the organisation responsive to changes.

Governance is responsible for clear role definitions, open communication, and visible leadership to guide each team's contributions. This team must balance leadership involvement with team autonomy. They offer support, resources, and accountability without micromanaging, allowing teams flexibility while maintaining alignment. Continuous feedback loops and progress tracking are utilised to identify issues early and intervene promptly.

This team revisits and refines execution plans regularly to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. They must reinforce a culture of transparency and implement strong communication, project management, and risk monitoring practices. They are responsible for risk contingency plans with decision trees and predefined responses for high-risk scenarios. Regular rehearsals of mitigation strategies keep the team ready.

Governance stream

As the transformation grows in complexity, governance must adopt a scalable and adaptable structure. Modular governance allows streams to adjust while staying aligned with overall objectives. For example, the assigned scrum masters should be governance ambassadors in each stream. For larger teams, dedicated governance leads can be assigned to each stream.

These team members act as a bridge between their respective streams and the central governance team. This structure enables streams to operate with increased autonomy, making decisions tailored to their specific challenges while remaining accountable to the broader goals of the transformation.

For example, the technology stream might need to adopt new cloud security measures that weren't part of the initial plan. In a modular governance model, the technology stream governance lead could initiate those changes without waiting for the entire governance body to meet. They would simply escalate key decisions and impact reports to the central team, keeping the transformation on track while adjusting to new requirements.

Change management and leadership

While individual streams manage their respective areas, overall accountability rests with the transformation and governance leadership. The governance team provides the direction necessary to maintain alignment, ensure smooth execution, and cultivate a culture that embraces change.

Leaders, including the transformation lead and senior team members, must be visible and actively involved throughout the transformation. Their engagement leads by example, demonstrating commitment, building trust, and ensuring alignment across all streams. Regular communication of the transformation's vision, goals, and progress is essential. Use multiple channels, such as town hall meetings, newsletters, and intranet updates, to keep all stakeholders informed and motivated.

Create a culture of innovation to drive creative problem-solving. Create an environment where team members feel safe to experiment and take calculated risks, encouraging innovation and resilience. Emphasise that mistakes are learning opportunities, not grounds for punishment. Acknowledge that errors are inevitable in any transformation, allowing the team to extract valuable lessons, improve, and share their learnings with the broader organisation. Sandboxes, guardrails, and processes for unproven technologies or activities can help limit the fallout of mistakes while still providing the flexibility to experiment. This approach builds a team capable of adapting and improving as opposed to a culture that fears change and avoids accountability.

Transparency and openness support successful transformation. Promote an environment where team members feel comfortable raising concerns, challenging your decisions, and discussing approaches. By addressing issues openly and promptly, the organisation can improve trust and focus on continuous improvement.

Effective processes and strong risk management practices help identify and mitigate or avoid potential problems. Encourage proactive reporting of risks and challenges, ensuring that they are addressed before they escalate. Regular risk reviews and updates to mitigation strategies ensure that the team remains agile and prepared for potential issues.

Governance stream

RACI

A RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) is a tool for defining and assigning roles in a project or process, aiding accountability and efficiency in decision-making and task execution. It helps eliminate confusion by clearly outlining who is responsible for each task and decision.

It is often seen as a consulting or management tool, and there are those who question its value. However, I can't stress enough how important a good RACI is for role clarity, ensuring all tasks have someone responsible for them, and creating accountability transparency.

Its implementation is basically a table with activities on one axis and names of individuals or teams on the other. Which way round does not really matter, though the activities are often on the vertical axis. In each cell, R, A, C, or I are used to indicate that person's role in that activity. If that person has no role in it, then leave the cell empty.

	Person A	Person B	Person C
Activity 1	R	A	I
Activity 2		A	C
Activity 3	A		R

Responsible (R)

The individual(s) tasked with completing the work. They are directly responsible for executing and delivering the task.

Accountable (A)

The person who owns the outcome and is ultimately answerable for the task's success. They must sign off on the task, ensuring it meets the requirements.

Consulted (C)

Subject matter experts or stakeholders who provide input and advice. Their feedback helps shape decisions, but they are not responsible for their execution.

Informed (I)

Those who are kept updated on progress and decisions. They do not contribute directly but need to stay informed to maintain alignment.

This is the simplest example, but more advanced implementations with categories, heat mapping, and other features are also possible.

Governance stream

RACI

The governance team is responsible for creating a clear RACI for the overall transformation, starting with leadership roles. They then collaborate with stream leads to define a RACI for each stream, ensuring clear role allocation across the project. At a high level, the following steps should be considered when planning, designing, and implementing a RACI.

- Identify the known tasks and decision points in the transformation process. This provides the structure for role assignment.
- For each task, define who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed. This prevents ambiguity and ensures all tasks are clearly assigned.
- Review role assignments to avoid conflicting responsibilities. Adjust as needed to ensure smooth task management and role clarity.
- All individuals must understand their assigned roles and be able to meet the responsibilities. Regular communication and documentation help this clarity.
- Track progress to hold individuals accountable for their tasks. Provide feedback where necessary to keep the project on course.
- Regularly revisit and update the RACI matrix as the transformation evolves, adapting to changes in scope, team dynamics, or other factors.
- Avoid assigning the same person to both Responsible and Accountable roles for a particular action, as this creates a conflict of interest.

One final point to consider is to distribute critical responsibilities among multiple individuals or teams to ensure redundancy. Cross-train employees and establish backup roles for key positions, reducing reliance on any single person to avoid bottlenecks or disruptions if they are unavailable. However, when doing this, it is important to clearly establish who the primary and the backup are to avoid each of them assuming the other is handling a given task.

Under normal circumstances, when the primary is available, the backup should not be handling the responsibilities unless the primary specifically delegates a task to them. When the primary is unavailable, all assigned tasks to them should be reassigned to the backup. This can be automated in some project management tools if integrated with the HR leave system.

Communication plan

A communication plan keeps stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the transformation. The governance team is responsible for establishing and maintaining this plan, ensuring clear, consistent, and regular updates tailored to different audiences. Effective communication builds trust, reduces resistance to change, and improves collaboration.

Informing team members about changes requires more than just relaying information; it must address potential concerns, be transparent about the expected timeline and impact, highlight benefits, share the risks and planned mitigations, and provide links to the relevant documentation and training materials. For those that still have questions, offer support and provide a contact.

Avoid vague marketing speak and, if possible, depending on the audience and communication channel, try to be specific about what benefits it will bring them. For example, instead of saying, "*The automation will free you up to do more interesting things*", say something relevant to them, such as "*The automation will free you up to develop that dashboard idea that you had*".

For steering committees and sponsors, updates should be concise, structured, and focused on key aspects of the transformation. Regular progress reports should summarise achievements, ongoing activities, and any deviations from the plan. Monthly newsletters might highlight completed milestones, upcoming goals, and risks with their planned mitigations. Quarterly presentations can provide data-driven insights and performance metrics, ensuring senior leaders are well-informed and able to provide timely guidance.

Regular updates keep stakeholders engaged and up to date on progress. Weekly status reports for project teams and department heads can summarise short-term goals and immediate tasks, highlighting accomplishments, plans for the next week, and any unresolved issues. Monthly newsletters can provide a broader perspective, sharing significant achievements, ongoing projects, and upcoming events. These should be distributed company-wide to ensure that all levels of the organisation, from frontline employees to senior management, stay updated on the transformation's progress.

Communication plan

Encouraging two-way communication is vital for addressing stakeholder concerns and gathering feedback. Town hall meetings offer an open platform where employees can ask questions and engage directly with leadership. For example, after announcing a major change, a town hall meeting allows employees to voice questions and receive immediate responses. Q&A sessions, both in person and online, support ongoing dialogue, while feedback surveys gather input on specific aspects of the transformation, such as new processes or tools. This feedback can guide necessary adjustments.

Clear messaging is essential to avoid confusion and ensure that communication is easily understood. Tailor the language to suit different audiences, avoiding technical jargon where unnecessary. For example, technical teams may need detailed, specific communication, while non-technical staff require simpler language focused on broader impacts and benefits. Providing context and explaining the rationale behind decisions helps stakeholders understand the value of changes and how they support the organisation's strategic goals.



Project management

Effective project management helps each stream within the transformation operate efficiently and meet its objectives. The governance team adopts agile project management practices to maintain accountability, track progress, and ensure timelines are met. Agile methodologies offer a flexible, iterative approach that enables swift response to new information and the unpredictable nature of human change.

Agile uses iterative progress and continuous feedback. Work is broken down into short, time-boxed sprints, typically lasting two weeks. During sprint planning, tasks are prioritised based on impact and urgency. This approach helps manage workloads and allows for regular reassessment of priorities, keeping the transformation aligned with the vision.

Daily stand-ups are brief meetings that review progress, identify blockers, and keep the team aligned. Team members share updates on their tasks, discuss challenges, and seek help if needed. For example, if a developer encounters a technical issue causing delays, they can raise it during the stand-up, enabling the team to find solutions or escalate the problem. This regular communication maintains momentum and prevents delays.

Use Agile-friendly project management tools like JIRA to track progress, manage tasks, and maintain visibility on each initiative. These tools will usually enable teams to assign tasks, set deadlines, and monitor progress through various stages of completion. They also provide a centralised platform, simplifying coordination across streams. For example, a project manager can monitor the progress of a development task, view dependencies, and ensure it aligns with the transformation's overall timeline.

Establish clear escalation procedures that outline the steps to follow when issues arise that cannot be resolved within the team. For example, if a technical problem occurs that the team cannot resolve, it should be escalated to higher management or a specialised support team. Predefined escalation paths ensure issues are dealt with swiftly and do not impede progress. This structure gives team members confidence in addressing obstacles and keeps the project on track.

Continuous monitoring and adjustment

Continuous monitoring and adjustment help steer the transformation initiative effectively. The governance team must collect, analyse, and act on data to make informed decisions. This process allows the team to respond to developments, address issues promptly, and keep the initiative on track.

Data collection forms the backbone of continuous monitoring. Implement automated tracking systems to gather near-real-time data, providing accurate insights into the transformation's progress. For example, project management software can automatically update task statuses and log time spent, offering visibility into timelines and budget adherence. Good data takes work, which is why I recommend a dedicated role to take responsibility for data governance, collection, and hygiene in the transformation team.

Collaborate with each stream to identify the most relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics. Each stream has unique priorities, so tailor metrics to consider their priorities while maintaining alignment with the transformation objectives. For example, the technology stream might focus on system reliability, with KPIs like system uptime and incident resolution time, while the HR stream tracks employee engagement, onboarding success rates, and skills development. Both streams, though focusing on different areas, contribute to the shared goal of improving organisational efficiency and readiness for future growth. This tailored approach ensures that progress in each area is accurately measured and relevant while staying aligned with the overarching objectives.

Both quantitative and qualitative metrics are necessary. Quantitative metrics provide clear, objective data such as task completion rates, project milestones, and budget adherence. For example, comparing tasks completed within a sprint to those planned helps highlight productivity levels and bottlenecks. Monitoring budget adherence ensures costs remain within estimates, allowing timely interventions.

Qualitative metrics offer insights into subjective factors like employee satisfaction, cultural shifts, and the effectiveness of new processes. After a training program, qualitative feedback through surveys and focus groups can reveal how well employees are adapting to new skills. Additionally, observing changes in team dynamics and morale helps gauge the broader impact of the transformation.

By regularly analysing these data points, the governance team can spot trends and potential issues early, enabling timely adjustments. For example, if a training program isn't yielding expected results, the team can investigate further, modifying content and delivery methods or offering additional support.

Reviews and feedback mechanisms

Reviews and feedback mechanisms keep the transformation initiative aligned with stakeholder needs and improve continuous improvement. Gathering structured, regular feedback helps the governance team identify areas for improvement and respond effectively to concerns.

Surveys and discussions are common methods for collecting feedback. Regular surveys—both anonymous and identified—offer insights into stakeholder perceptions. Anonymous surveys encourage honest feedback, reducing fear of judgment. These surveys can cover areas such as communication clarity, training effectiveness, resource adequacy, and overall progress.

Focus group discussions provide deeper insights into specific issues. Facilitated by governance team members or external consultants, these discussions allow team members to express concerns, share experiences, and suggest improvements. For example, a focus group might reveal department-specific challenges in implementing new processes, offering valuable input for adjustments.

Once feedback is gathered, analyse it to identify trends and common concerns. Sentiment analysis helps gauge the organisation's overall morale and can be performed using readily available AI tools. Recurring themes, such as concerns over unclear communication, signal areas that need immediate attention.

Sharing feedback with relevant stakeholders ensures transparency. Summarising key findings and presenting them to leadership and other teams creates a shared understanding of the challenges and progress being made.

Responding to feedback requires concrete actions to address identified issues. The governance team should prioritise and oversee the implementation of validated and approved changes. For example, if employees feel unprepared for new responsibilities, additional training or resources must be provided.

The goal of feedback is to drive continuous improvement throughout the execution phase. By using feedback to refine processes, adjust communication, and reallocate resources, the governance team can evolve the initiative to meet new challenges. Regularly updating stakeholders on how their feedback has influenced changes builds trust and demonstrates a commitment to listening and acting on their input.

Education and enablement stream



Education and enablement help employees navigate and adapt to the changes brought about by transformation. In my opinion, if education is not the most important driver of transformation, then it's certainly in the top three. Despite that, it is often undervalued. Possibly, this is because it's quite difficult to do right. Successful education requires professionals with a deep understanding of adult learning principles and the ability to collaborate with teams leading process optimisation and technology implementation. They must grasp the to-be state even before it fully takes shape and understand where and what type of education will likely be needed—beyond the hard skills, which are usually apparent from the role.

In this phase, the focus shifts to the practical execution of the education and enablement plan created earlier. Given the time required to develop and deliver good training, a common challenge is allowing enough flexibility to adjust for new information and implementing and delivering changes to content without delaying the initiatives that depend on it.

Collaboration between the transformation team, learning and development, HR, and other relevant stakeholders is crucial for smooth execution. Managing resources such as budget, time, and personnel is equally important to ensure training is delivered effectively and efficiently. A phased rollout with continuous feedback loops will help adjust the training content and approach as needed, ensuring it stays relevant and impactful throughout the transformation journey.

Changing values and purpose

The foundation of cultural change lies in having clear and impactful values and purpose. These should resonate with employees across all levels, guiding their actions and decisions. When values and purpose are deeply embedded into the organisation, they drive behaviour and decision-making, creating a culture that supports sustainable transformation.

However, it is important to recognise that redefining the organisation's values and purpose, alongside coaching staff to find their personal values and purpose, may result in some employees resigning. This happens when individuals realise their personal values don't align with those of the organisation. I don't believe this is a negative outcome. From an individual perspective, aligning your job with your personal values contributes to well-being and job satisfaction. From an organisational standpoint, having staff whose values align with the company's makes it easier to build and maintain the desired culture, driving transformation with a more cohesive team.

There are two effective approaches to identifying organisational and personal values and purpose, and the right one will depend on your existing culture and the personalities of your staff. **From Purpose to Impact** is a formal, well-known approach often used by large enterprises. It's facilitated by consultants globally and has a structured methodology proven to align values with large organisations. However, this approach may feel fluffy or overly conceptual in cultures that value direct, pragmatic methods.

An alternative approach is found in **The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck**, which, as the title indicates, offers a more direct, no-nonsense method. While less formal, the core outcomes mirror From Purpose to Impact: understanding personal purpose, identifying values that resonate, and finding alignment between the individual and the organisation.

PASSION LED US HERE

Education and enablement stream

Values and purpose

From purpose to impact

This is a comprehensive framework designed to help organisations and individuals define and live their purpose. More information about this approach can be found in the book *Leading from Purpose* by Nick Craig:

<https://www.amazon.com/Leading-Purpose-Clarity-confidence-matters/dp/1473693268>

The book and the framework help organisations articulate their purpose in a way that resonates with employees, customers, and stakeholders. It provides tools and methodologies to map values to specific actions, ensuring that the purpose is not just a statement but a lived experience within the organisation.

The approach involves a detailed process of discovery, alignment, and implementation. Facilitators work with organisations to uncover their core values, align them with their strategic goals, and embed them into the daily practices of the organisation. This process includes workshops, training sessions, and continuous support to ensure that the purpose is fully integrated into the organisational culture.

The organisation's values must be clearly defined and communicated. Create a concise and compelling narrative that explains why these values are important and how they relate to the organisation's purpose. Clear articulation ensures that every employee, regardless of their role, understands what the organisation stands for and strives towards.

To bring values to life, develop a framework that maps these values to specific behaviours and actions. For example, if integrity is a core value, illustrate what integrity looks like in various work contexts, such as honesty in reporting, ethical decision-making, and accountability in actions. This mapping helps employees see the practical application of values and encourages them to integrate these principles into their daily work.

There are consultants globally who are trained to deliver the framework to organisations of all sizes. These experts bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, helping organisations navigate the complexities of defining and living their purpose.

Education and enablement stream

Values and purpose

The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck

This is a popular book by Mark Manson, available for purchase on Amazon here:

<https://www.amazon.com/Subtle-Art-Not-Giving-Counterintuitive-ebook/dp/B019MMUA8S>.

This book takes a straightforward, no-nonsense approach to understanding and prioritising what truly matters in life and work.

The book teaches readers how to focus on what truly matters by embracing their values and purpose and letting go of everything else. Manson argues that by caring less about unimportant things, individuals can concentrate on what genuinely makes a difference. He suggests prioritising meaningful tasks, eliminating distractions, and embracing authenticity. Manson provides practical tips and real-life examples to illustrate how this approach can lead to a more fulfilling and productive life.

From that description, it should be apparent that this is more of a self-help book intended for individuals. It is not an organisational programme. However, the lessons can be utilised for businesses that might respond better to his style than that of Purpose to Impact.

Encourage a culture where employees are empowered to focus on what truly matters. Recognise and eliminate efforts that do not contribute to the core objectives of the organisation. By aligning actions with the organisation's values and purpose, employees can concentrate on meaningful tasks that drive real impact. This approach helps to cultivate a work environment where efforts are streamlined, and productivity increases.

Train employees to prioritise their tasks and responsibilities based on the organisation's values. This means making deliberate choices about where to invest time and resources, focusing on activities that align with strategic goals, and letting go of tasks that do not add significant value. By doing so, the organisation creates a culture of efficiency and effectiveness, where employees are encouraged to contribute their best work to initiatives that matter most.

A COUNTERINTUITIVE APPROACH TO LIVING A GOOD LIFE

Implementing behaviours and skills

The execution of behavioural training involves workshops and coaching sessions that apply the desired behaviours in real-world situations. These sessions often include role-playing exercises and scenario-based discussions, showing how to exhibit key behaviours in different contexts. Leadership training covers techniques for providing feedback, improving collaboration, and managing conflicts empathetically. Leaders should consistently embody the organisation's values and create a unified culture across all levels.

Delivering behavioural training before skills training ensures that values and behaviours are ingrained and consistently practised across the organisation. This builds a cultural foundation that supports transformation and aligns with the broader goals. Soft skills training typically includes workshops, role-playing, and interactive sessions focusing on real-life scenarios. For example, a communication workshop might feature exercises in active listening, conflict resolution, and providing feedback. The goal is to help employees build the interpersonal skills necessary to navigate workplace dynamics and complex interactions. Soft skills serve as the foundation for absorbing and contextualising hard skills, ensuring they are applied in ways that align with organisational values, such as quality or customer experience.

Success in soft skills training is tracked through qualitative metrics such as feedback and observed behaviour changes. Regular check-ins and coaching reinforce progress.

Hard skills training focuses on role-specific technical abilities using structured modules, certifications, and hands-on exercises. For example, project management training may include methodologies like Agile or Scrum, along with practical labs and projects that help the students apply the techniques they have learned.

Success in hard skills training is measured using quantitative metrics such as test scores, certifications, and job performance data. For example, employees' proficiency in new software tools can be gauged through assessments and their practical application in real-world projects.

Soft and hard skills differ in terms of acquisition and dependency. Soft skills, which are often linked to personality, require continuous development and reinforcement. These skills evolve through ongoing experience and feedback. Hard skills, on the other hand, are more straightforward to acquire and improve through structured programmes and practical application, making them experience-dependent.

Curating and developing training content

Building on the skills gaps and priorities identified in the planning phase, develop adaptive learning programmes using varied formats, such as videos, interactive modules, and hands-on exercises. This provides employees with access to relevant, flexible, and effective training. Programmes should be self-paced, supplemented by optional in-person sessions and mandatory hands-on workshops where appropriate. Track both quantitative and qualitative KPIs to measure training progress and impact.

Maximise efficiency by leveraging existing internal resources, such as e-learning modules, workshops, and documentation. Review these materials to confirm they are up-to-date and aligned with transformation objectives. Incorporate external resources, including industry certifications and online courses, but carefully evaluate their credibility and relevance to ensure alignment with your organisation's goals. Select materials that address identified skills gaps and fit the organisation's specific context.

Custom training is essential for addressing unique organisational needs, processes, and tools. After using as much existing content as possible, identify remaining gaps that require custom content. Prioritise content development in areas with the greatest impact on transformation success. Collaborate with subject matter experts to write accurate, relevant content. Develop modular content (5–10 minutes per segment) that can be combined into longer courses (1–3 hours) or comprehensive learning paths (30+ hours), supporting flexibility for diverse learning styles and schedules.

Develop PowerPoint slides with step-by-step animations to minimise distraction from the spoken content. Convert the written content to speaking notes and include them on each slide. This keeps all training content together and others will be able to pick up the deck to deliver it. Break down complex graphics and walk students through them in stages to help understanding. Ensure consistency in language, tone, and formatting by following a style guide across all materials. Incorporate diverse learning content—case studies, quizzes, simulations, and interactive exercises—to increase engagement and improve knowledge retention.

Record trainers delivering the content, or use AI avatars if appropriate. Edit recordings for clarity and style, adding optional intros or jingles. Once finalised, structure the modules and learning paths in your chosen LMS (learning management system).

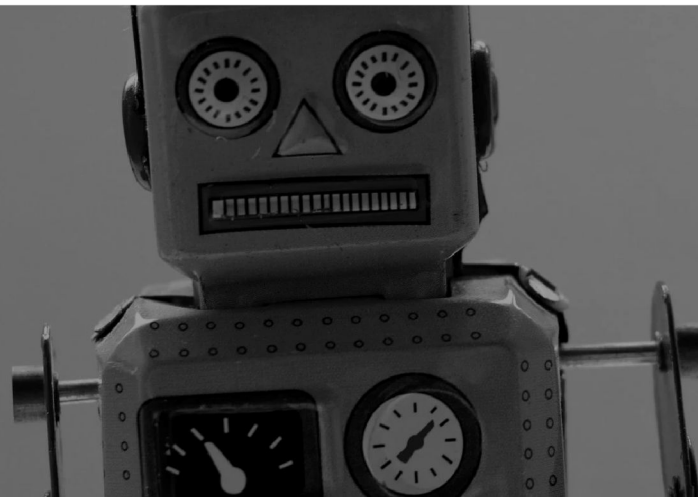
AI in education

Beyond AI avatars, AI tools can significantly boost productivity in developing educational content. For example, AI can assist in converting subject notes into structured video scripts, speeding up content creation. AI can generate quizzes, assessments, and even provide feedback on your first drafts. For organisations that produce large volumes of educational content, AI can automate the creation of learning paths tailored to different roles, skill levels, or objectives. This allows for more personalised content delivery, reducing the manual workload involved in creating individualised training materials.

AI-driven content generation often begins with feeding the AI raw data, such as SME notes, presentations, or training outlines. The AI tool can then refine this data into more cohesive scripts, instructional texts, or quizzes. AI can help translate content into multiple formats—turning text into interactive lessons or transforming video transcripts into searchable knowledge databases. To make the most of these tools, organisations should stay updated on the latest AI advancements, as this is a rapidly evolving area.

AI can also transform the student learning experience. AI-powered learning recommendation systems can analyse user interactions, quiz results, and learning behaviours to suggest tailored content that fills knowledge gaps or builds upon prior learning. For example, if an employee struggles with a particular concept, the system can recommend targeted learning modules or supplementary material to improve understanding. This personalisation boosts engagement and enhances learning outcomes.

AI can facilitate real-time question-and-answer functionality within educational platforms. Students can ask natural language questions about course material and receive accurate, context-driven responses. Integrating AI with the organisation's knowledge base can further enhance these capabilities, turning every piece of content—whether training material or process or tool documentation—into an accessible learning resource.



Pilot testing and roll-out

With the first version of the training content ready, conduct pilot tests with 2-4 small groups of employees representing different departments or roles. These pilots allow you to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the training materials. Work with teams that will be directly affected by the transformation but are manageable in size, ensuring a range of perspectives. After gathering initial feedback, identify any gaps and refine the training modules and delivery methods.

Following pilot testing, implement a phased rollout of the training programmes. Start with groups most impacted by early changes in the transformation, ensuring they receive the necessary skills first. This phased approach allows for early feedback, which can be used to iteratively improve the training content and delivery methods. Communicate the rollout plan and timeline clearly to all participants and stakeholders, setting expectations and improving engagement. Prioritise live training sessions and workshops based on the urgency and impact of the skills being taught, addressing high-priority skills first to minimise disruption to ongoing operations.

Provide logistical support, such as access to the necessary training facilities, equipment, or online platforms, ensuring that all participants can engage with the content without technical or scheduling difficulties. Establish feedback mechanisms during each phase of the rollout to measure and improve the effectiveness of the training. Use tools like surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews to capture feedback directly after course delivery while the material is still fresh in participants' minds. For self-paced content, set up automatic alerts when a student completes a course so that feedback can be gathered promptly.

Analyse the feedback to identify areas for improvement in both content and delivery. Adjust future iterations of the training programmes based on this analysis, ensuring that they remain effective and relevant. Share feedback results with trainers and content developers to guide further revisions and improvements.

Schedule a follow-up approximately one month after the training to review how employees are applying the skills in their roles. During this check-in, focus on any challenges they encountered when putting the training into practice, such as unclear processes or features that weren't sufficiently covered. Use this information to refine further and support continuous learning across the organisation.

Measuring training effectiveness

During the execution phase, training effectiveness is measured to fine-tune the developed content and delivery methods. By assessing training outcomes, you can identify areas for improvement, make necessary adjustments, and demonstrate the ROI of initiatives. A widely used method for evaluating effectiveness is Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation.

Kirkpatrick's Level 1: Reaction

Start by gathering participant feedback after each training session. Use surveys, questionnaires, and informal discussions to assess their reactions to the content, delivery, and overall experience. This immediate feedback helps identify any initial issues with content engagement or clarity and provides an early sense of how well the material was received.

Kirkpatrick's Level 2: Learning

Assess whether the participants have absorbed the intended knowledge and skills. Use tests, quizzes, and practical assessments to gauge their understanding of the material and their readiness to apply it. This helps to highlight any areas where the content may need further clarification or where additional resources may be required to reinforce learning outcomes.

Kirkpatrick's Level 3: Behaviour

Establish feedback loops to gather input on how well employees integrate the new skills after training. At this stage, look for short-term feedback from managers and peers rather than long-term behavioural change. Identify any immediate knowledge gaps that remain after training, indicating that the training is potentially incomplete.

Kirkpatrick's Level 4: Results

Broader organisational impact will be measured in the long term after execution. For now, focus on metrics such as mid-term productivity improvements, quality of work, and sustained feedback from customers or internal stakeholders. This helps validate that the training is driving the intended outcomes in real-world contexts.

HR collaboration

Collaboration with HR is essential to align the organisational structure, career frameworks, and training efforts with the end state of the transformation. This ensures that all aspects of the organisation support and reinforce the desired cultural change.

Organisational structure changes

Adjusting the organisational structure to support new ways of working is often necessary during transformation. However, these changes must be carefully planned to avoid transformation fatigue among employees. Disruptive changes, if not managed properly, can lead to disengagement and resistance. A clear vision and a well-defined target state must be established before implementing any structural changes.

When planning for a new organisational structure, consider the following.

Avoid creating silos, as they hinder knowledge sharing and collaboration. The new structure should promote cross-functional collaboration, ensuring that information flows across the organisation. For example, in a multi-cloud organisation, rather than having separate teams for each cloud provider, which could operate in isolation, a structure based on functional domains like observability or testing requires collaboration and promotes knowledge sharing.

Minimise blockers in critical workflows by reducing manual steps and approvals. Streamline processes to eliminate unnecessary tasks, particularly in workflows that require multiple team inputs or approvals. This approach increases efficiency and reduces delays.

Consider benchmarking against organisations with successful structures, adapting best practices that suit your context. The structure must also remain flexible to accommodate future changes, whether due to new technologies or evolving business needs.

Involve employees in the planning process by seeking input from different levels of the organisation. This approach addresses real challenges and needs while improving buy-in and support for the changes. Clear, transparent communication about the reasons for structural changes and their benefits to employees helps build trust and reduces anxiety.

HR collaboration

Career frameworks

Integrate education programs into the career frameworks to provide a clear path for employees to advance their careers while acquiring the necessary skills and behaviours. This integration helps employees to develop in ways that support the transformation and they are more likely to be motivated to engage in education.

Update the RACI matrix based on the new career framework. This ensures that all roles are clearly defined, and responsibilities are well understood. A well-defined RACI matrix helps avoid overlaps and gaps in responsibilities, promoting accountability and clarity.

Incentives and KPIs

Align incentives and KPIs with the target state to motivate employees to adopt the desired behaviours and achieve transformation goals. Offer bonuses or recognition for demonstrating these behaviours and achieving KPIs. Leadership must align with these KPIs, consistently demonstrating the desired behaviours across the organisation.

Incentives should support both soft and hard skill development. Soft skills like communication and problem-solving are crucial for team performance and innovation, while hard skills ensure technical proficiency. Establish KPIs for both soft and hard skills to create a balanced approach to performance measurement. For example, measure communication through peer feedback, while technical skills can be assessed by task completion and proficiency. Always keep Goodhart's Law in mind when designing KPIs.

Balancing soft and hard skill KPIs helps to avoid imbalances that can hinder performance. For example, solely incentivising hard skills might result in technically proficient employees who struggle with teamwork, while focusing only on soft skills might lead to a harmonious workplace but insufficient technical capability.



Process stream

The process stream focuses on optimising and re-engineering the organisation's workflows. It works closely with the technology stream to leverage automation and digital tools that can reduce inefficiencies. By streamlining processes, teams are freed from repetitive tasks, enabling them to focus on more strategic, creative, and value-adding activities.

The process stream standardises processes where possible to reduce complexity, improve consistency, and enhance reliability. Streamlined workflows reduce costs, minimise bottlenecks, and increase scalability, leading to improved operational performance.

Processes must also be optimised or created to align with the objectives of the transformation. Processes need to be flexible, enabling the organisation to respond swiftly to market shifts and emerging opportunities. The focus is on creating a responsive, adaptable system that supports long-term growth and maximises value.

Another challenge in process optimisation is balancing standardisation with flexibility. While standardisation brings consistency, some processes need to remain adaptable to accommodate unique department needs or customer requirements. Finding this balance is key to ensuring that process improvements don't stifle innovation or responsiveness.

As processes evolve, staff and metrics must identify inefficiencies and suggest improvements, creating a feedback loop that keeps operations aligned with business goals. Encouraging ownership and engagement from all levels can accelerate the adoption of new processes and make improvements more sustainable over time.

Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)

BPR can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organisational processes. In BPR you assess and propose redesigns to processes in order to achieve improvements in key performance areas such as quality, output, cost, and speed. BPR helps streamline operations and increase agility. By eliminating redundancies and inefficiencies, organisations can respond more effectively to market demands.



Identify key processes

Identify the processes that have the most significant impact on organisational performance. Prioritise those linked to strategic goals and known risks. Focus on areas where changes will have the greatest effect on improving overall performance.



Document current processes

Obtain or create documentation of existing processes, identifying all steps, inputs, outputs, and stakeholders. Use process mapping tools to visualise workflows, allowing for easier assessment.



Evaluate for inefficiencies

Analyse the documented processes to uncover bottlenecks, redundancies, and areas for improvement. Techniques like flowcharting and value stream mapping can provide valuable insights into where processes fall short.



Develop new process designs

Redesign processes to remove inefficiencies and improve effectiveness. Focus on simplification, standardisation, and automation where appropriate. Aim to eliminate unnecessary steps, standardise procedures, and incorporate technology to automate repetitive tasks.

Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)



Consider AI capabilities

AI offers transformative potential in BPR by automating tasks, enhancing decision-making, and emulating human responses. In workflows, AI agents can take over repetitive tasks like data entry, approval routing, and basic customer support, reducing manual errors and speeding up operations. AI-powered tools can also analyse vast datasets to identify patterns, predict bottlenecks, and recommend process optimisations. For example, in a customer support workflow, AI chatbots can handle routine inquiries, freeing human agents to focus on more complex problems.



Pilot or trial each new or updated process

Before full-scale implementation, test the redesigned process with a single team or department to assess its effectiveness. This allows for real-world feedback on how the process works in practice, highlighting any unforeseen challenges or inefficiencies. Gather insights from the pilot and make any necessary adjustments, helping the final rollout to be more seamless.



Implement redesigned processes

Ensure stakeholders are informed and trained. Close collaboration with the technology and enablement streams is essential for automation and training. Clear communication and training improve adoption success.



Monitor and adjust

Monitor the performance of the new processes. Collect feedback from stakeholders and use performance data to make ongoing adjustments. This helps a continuous improvement cycle where processes are refined.

Transformation collaboration

The process stream requires strong cross-stream collaboration to create processes that will support the roll-out and use of new capabilities in the desired target state. Existing processes used by different teams and organisational units must be identified and optimised through close collaboration with each team involved or impacted by the transformation.

For example, the process stream creates project workflows connecting the technology stream's automation initiatives with the communication lead and the enablement stream. As the technology stream develops a new tool, the communication lead is brought in to understand and communicate the changes to those impacted. The enablement team works on documentation and educational materials for the new tool, scheduling delivery to the relevant team members just before the technology stream deploys the initiative. This ensures that as new technologies are introduced, employees are duly informed and receive the necessary training to use them effectively. These processes enable open communication, timely updates, and shared progress reports, preventing siloed efforts and promoting joint ownership of transformation outcomes.

Collaborate with procurement to design systems for onboarding external vendors, aligning them with the organisation's new operational standards. Vendors, while expected to possess common industry skills, need to be trained in the organisation's specific processes, security protocols, and proprietary systems. A vendor onboarding program improves the chances for third-party collaborators to integrate into the organisation's way of working, enhancing security and operational consistency.

Align processes with updated career frameworks. Collaborate with HR to implement new recruitment and onboarding processes to ensure that new hires are assessed against the competencies and behaviours required for the desired state. This alignment helps secure the right talent, creating a workforce that supports long-term success.

Technology stream



The technology stream focuses on executing the IT strategy by translating plans into actionable tasks. This stream ensures that the technology infrastructure is scalable, aligned with organisational goals, and capable of driving transformation. During execution, the primary objectives are to integrate new technologies with existing systems, optimise tools, implement DevOps, automation, and execute cloud and data strategies. This requires close collaboration between teams, continuous monitoring, and regular adjustment to stay aligned with business goals.

Key challenges during execution often involve managing dependencies between legacy systems and new technologies, ensuring that upgrades and integrations do not disrupt ongoing operations. Careful sequencing and communication across streams help mitigate these risks. Additionally, managing resource allocation—both in terms of technology and personnel—can be complex. Maintaining alignment between technical capabilities and the broader business strategy ensures that resources are used efficiently.

Execution is typically phased, allowing for feedback and course corrections before moving on to larger, more complex tasks. For example, starting with non-critical systems enables the identification of potential challenges early on, minimising risks to essential services. Regular checkpoints and performance reviews help track progress and make timely adjustments.

Phased implementation of DevOps and automation

Phased implementation of DevOps and automation allows for gradual adoption and continuous improvement, ensuring smooth transitions with minimal disruption while maximising benefits.

The first phase focuses on establishing the foundational DevOps infrastructure. Implement version control systems, continuous integration/continuous delivery (CI/CD) pipelines, and configuration management tools. These tools automate code integration, testing, and deployment, facilitating collaboration between development and operations teams. This foundational setup lays the groundwork for efficient automation processes.

Next, run pilot projects to test DevOps practices and automation tools. Select a few projects to implement these practices, gathering feedback from the teams involved. Document lessons learned and identify areas for improvement, making necessary adjustments to tools and processes based on real-world experiences. This phase is crucial for refining the approach before broader adoption.

Once the pilot phase has been assessed and optimised, expand DevOps practices to more projects and teams. Provide training and support to ensure smooth transitions, offering workshops, hands-on sessions, and ongoing assistance. Cultivate a collaborative culture that encourages open feedback and rewards continuous improvement, helping teams adapt and integrate these practices effectively.

The final phase is the full integration of DevOps and automation across the organisation. By this stage, teams should be proficient in using the tools and processes, with established practices supporting all development and operations activities. Continuously monitor performance metrics to assess effectiveness and conduct regular reviews to incorporate new advancements, addressing challenges and further optimising the approach.



Adopt the cloud

Establish the foundational cloud infrastructure by provisioning the cloud environments, setting up security protocols, and aligning resources with organisational goals. Begin by deploying the selected cloud platform—whether public, private, or hybrid—ensuring that they are designed for scalability and security. Establish secure network connectivity, define identity and access management (IAM) protocols, and automate the application of policies across cloud environments to prevent misconfigurations and compliance inconsistencies.

While the cloud foundations are being developed, work on operational readiness in parallel. Integrate governance mechanisms such as cost management tools and monitoring systems to track resource utilisation and ensure the organisation remains within budget. Automate cost monitoring and resource scaling to avoid unnecessary expenses and optimise performance. Use these tools to identify areas where resources can be better allocated, such as shutting down idle instances or adjusting capacity based on demand.

Implement encryption for data in transit and at rest and configure automated monitoring to detect potential threats in real-time. Set up regular security assessments to identify and mitigate risks, ensuring the cloud environment remains compliant with regulatory requirements. Automation of routine tasks like patching and backups frees up internal teams to focus on improvement and risk mitigation activities.

Cross-stream collaboration is key during execution. The technology stream must work closely with other streams to deliver training and support for the new systems. Technical teams need technical training for cloud-specific tools and functional training to align with new workflows. Schedule regular feedback sessions to review the effectiveness of the training and ensure all relevant employees can productively use the cloud environment as it becomes part of daily operations.

With the cloud infrastructure established, continuous monitoring and adjustment are necessary to maintain alignment with business goals. Use performance metrics to assess how the cloud environment supports organisational needs and adjust resources as necessary. As new tools and services become available, integrate them into the environment to optimise performance and drive innovation, maintaining flexibility as the cloud evolves.

Migration and modernisation

Migration and modernisation strategies transition suitable workloads to the cloud while optimising them for maximum performance and efficiency. This begins with implementing the high-level migration plan developed during the planning phase. Set up migration tools, establish secure data transfer mechanisms, and sequence workloads to minimise disruption. Carefully manage dependencies between systems, ensure connectivity between migrated workloads and those still on-prem where relevant, and maintain regular communication between stakeholders to ensure coordination. The objective is to migrate workloads in a way that avoids business interruptions, ensuring continuity for customers throughout.

As migration progresses, modernisation should be applied wherever possible. Rather than performing a direct lift-and-shift, explore opportunities to refactor applications and services to take advantage of cloud-native features. This can include re-architecting applications to improve scalability, performance, and cost-efficiency, or incorporating advanced cloud services like AI, data analytics, or serverless architecture to enhance functionality. Modernising during migration optimises applications, reduces technical debt, and achieves long-term cloud adoption value.

Avoid falling into the "Migrate first, modernise later" trap as usually this becomes "modernise never". Instead, use the benefits of modernising to the new cloud environment, such as improved availability SLAs and reduced recurring costs, to secure budget from the product owners to perform cloud modernisation on their applications. The ROI should be measurable and convincing when comparing the recurring costs between unoptimised and optimised applications. If there is no ROI, then the application might not be suitable for cloud migration.

Like all transformation initiatives, migration and modernisation are not static activities but require iterative adjustment. Execution is phased, starting with low-risk, non-critical workloads to test the foundations, refine processes, and resolve challenges. Early migrations provide valuable feedback for optimising the approach for larger, mission-critical systems and mass migrations. During this phase, monitor and track performance metrics to assess how well workloads adapt to the cloud environment. Regular checkpoints throughout the process must confirm that workloads perform as expected or trigger processes to identify and address the issues. Remember to configure cloud spend monitoring and automated alerts for all workloads and foundational systems.

Compliance stream



The compliance stream ensures that transformation initiatives adhere to all relevant regulations, policies, and standards, minimising risks while supporting the broader goals of the organisation. This stream operates independently to maintain objectivity and consistency, working across all functions to embed compliance into daily operations. By collaborating closely with other streams, the compliance team ensures that regulatory requirements are not siloed but integrated into workflows and decision-making processes, creating a proactive rather than reactive approach to compliance.

During the execution phase, align operational processes with compliance requirements and automate routine compliance checks as much as possible. One of the challenges in this stream is the dynamic nature of regulations—laws and standards frequently change, and compliance requirements must be continuously updated. To manage this, the compliance team should implement a system for real-time monitoring and regular updates, allowing for rapid adjustments to new regulations. Another challenge is ensuring that compliance doesn't slow down innovation or operational efficiency; mitigating this requires collaboration with technology and process streams to automate compliance tasks, reduce manual oversight, and streamline regulatory reporting.

Regular communication and training help teams understand their compliance responsibilities. In particular, ongoing education around regulatory changes helps maintain compliance without compromising the transformation's momentum. This stream's success depends on its ability to integrate seamlessly with other streams, ensuring compliance is maintained without becoming a bottleneck.

Compliance mapping

The central compliance source of truth should have been fully established during the discovery and planning phases. In this phase, create specific subsets of compliance requirements tailored to different departments, teams, and environments. These subsets ensure that each function, whether in cloud operations, finance, or human resources, understands the compliance requirements that apply to their work. For example, the cloud team may focus on data security and privacy regulations, while the finance team prioritises compliance with financial reporting standards. Tailoring the compliance items for each team makes them more relevant and actionable, encouraging teams to integrate these requirements into their daily processes.

Maintaining consistency across the organisation requires that each team-specific subset is carefully mapped back to the central source of truth. This provides an end-to-end map from regulatory rule to implemented technical control and ensures that all teams adhere to the same principal standards.

As regulations evolve, the compliance team must review and update the relevant subsets, working closely with each team to ensure that any changes are implemented swiftly and effectively. Ideally, a system should be used that can provide a list of impacted mapped controls whenever a principal policy is changed, effectively providing a roadmap of impacted areas that can be addressed.

Compliance stream

Compliance and policy integration

Collaborate and integrate compliance and policy with other transformation streams to ensure that their activities adhere to regulatory and internal standards while maintaining alignment with transformation goals.

Work with the enablement stream to integrate compliance training into employee development programs. These modules educate staff on the importance of compliance, relevant regulations, and how to apply these standards in their daily roles. By incorporating compliance into regular training initiatives, the organisation raises awareness and embeds a culture of security and quality across the workforce, making adherence to standards a natural part of operations.

Collaboration with the technology stream ensures that new systems and tools are configured to meet compliance requirements from the outset. The compliance team works with technology specialists to ensure that data security, privacy, and regulatory standards are fully integrated into technology deployments. For example, during the implementation of new platforms, compliance protocols are embedded to prevent security risks such as data breaches or unauthorised access. This proactive integration of compliance guardrails reduces risks and supports a secure digital environment.

The compliance team partners with the process stream to integrate compliance checks into core business processes. This includes embedding compliance assessments into vendor evaluations, procurement decisions, and other critical operations. For example, before engaging with a new vendor, the compliance team ensures that the vendor meets all necessary regulatory requirements, verifying compliance as part of the selection process. This integration helps ensure that compliance is not an afterthought but a key component of decision-making and implementation, reducing the risk of non-compliance and associated penalties.



DON'T RUN



NO DRINK



NO LITTERING



NO PETS



NO DIVING



NO FOOD



NO PEEING IN POOL



NO FLOTATION
DEVICES



NO ROUGH PLAY



NO SUNGLASSES
AND CLOTHES
ON SLIDES

Other streams



Other streams may be necessary to ensure the transformation addresses all critical areas of the organisation. To identify these streams, focus on areas that pose significant dependencies, such as key functions that are integral to the delivery of products or services. Another way to think of it is any area that would cause significant challenges if it failed or became misaligned with the rest of the organisation.

For example, supply chain operations may require a dedicated stream if disruptions would directly impact the organisation's ability to deliver its offerings. Similarly, streams should be created for areas responsible for a large portion of the organisation's revenue, such as customer-facing departments or core product teams, where inefficiencies could directly affect the bottom line. Additionally, consider areas that consume a significant share of resources, such as manufacturing operations, where inefficiencies or misalignment could lead to increased costs or operational breakdowns.

The following sections highlight common additional streams, but consider each one's relevance and tailor as needed based on your specific dependencies, risks, and priorities identified during the discovery phase.

Other streams

Vendor management stream

The vendor management stream ensures that all vendors support and align with the organisation's transformation goals. This stream focuses on managing vendor contracts and SLAs (Service Level Agreements) and ensuring compliance with the organisation's evolving operational standards.

Review and update vendor contracts to reflect new expectations. Contracts should include terms that encourage collaboration, flexibility, and alignment with the transformation objectives. SLAs must be updated and enforced, clearly outlining performance benchmarks and consequences for non-compliance. This ensures vendors are held accountable to the organisation's updated operational standards. Do keep Goodhart's Law in mind when designing SLAs and KPIs.

Regular communication and joint planning sessions with vendors help maintain strong relationships and ensure that vendors are committed to the transformation. These sessions provide an opportunity to discuss alignment, resolve potential issues, and strengthen collaboration. The vendor management stream must monitor vendor performance against agreed SLAs, using data to track and address any areas of concern promptly. This proactive approach helps maintain high performance and strong partnerships throughout the transformation process.

To improve transparency and continuous improvement, consider a near-real-time dashboard that displays the Red/Amber/Green status of all SLAs. Internally, you can view the SLAs for all vendors, and each vendor can see their own SLAs. Where possible, this should be automated by pulling relevant data systems such as ServiceNow or Jira. Manual inputs require a process to ensure regular updates and validated data.



Other streams

International alignment stream

Large international organisations may benefit from a dedicated stream focused on aligning different countries with the new way of working. This stream contextualises the transformation initiatives to cultural nuances and local regulations, avoiding region-specific obstacles to transformation.

Understand and address cultural differences across regions to develop strategies that incorporate these nuances while promoting a unified, adaptable transformation approach. Ensuring compliance with local regulations requires staying updated on regulatory changes and integrating them into transformation plans early.

Coordinate effectively between regional teams and the central transformation office by establishing regular communication, feedback loops, and regional representation in decision-making processes. Aim for overall consistency but allow for managed flexibility to meet local requirements, preventing regional blockers and facilitating smoother implementation across countries.

Other streams

Customer experience stream

A customer experience stream enhances customer interactions and ensures the transformation improves overall customer satisfaction. This stream focuses on redesigning customer-facing processes, implementing new technologies to improve service delivery, and gathering and acting on customer feedback.

Map the customer journey to identify pain points and opportunities for improvement and then develop initiatives to address these areas. This stream works closely with other streams to ensure any relevant changes positively impact customer experience. Regularly integrating customer feedback into the transformation helps drive ongoing improvements and ensures that the organisation remains customer-focused throughout the process.

One collaboration in particular that this team should consider is with the compliance stream. One consideration is to address public concerns about data privacy. The customer experience team must understand and share a high-level view of how the organisation protects user's data and ethically leverages AI.

Another consideration is achieving a balance between security and customer experience. While security is important, uncontrolled security limitations can be negative for the customer experience. There are often different ways to achieve compliance with a particular policy, and some are more user-friendly than others. This collaboration ensures that security initiatives are given due consideration from different perspectives to try and achieve a balance that meets compliance with minimal negative impact to customer experience.



Other streams

Sustainability stream

The sustainability stream integrates sustainability goals into the transformation, ensuring the organisation operates in a more environmentally friendly and socially responsible manner. This stream focuses on reducing the environmental impact of business activities, promoting sustainable practices, and aligning with regulatory requirements and industry standards.

Key activities include conducting sustainability assessments to identify areas for improvement, developing and implementing initiatives to reduce energy consumption, waste, and carbon emissions, and monitoring progress against sustainability targets. The stream collaborates with other streams to embed sustainable practices into business processes and decision-making, ensuring that sustainability becomes an integral part of the organisation's operations.

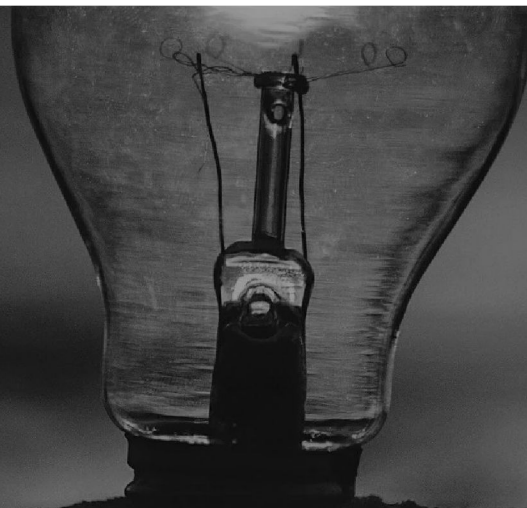
Other streams

Innovation stream

The innovation stream supports a culture of exploration and problem-solving, positioning it as a driver of continuous improvement. It collaborates with business units and other teams to identify challenges, share ideas, and create solutions aligned with organisational goals. By offering a safe space for experimentation within set boundaries, the stream encourages teams to explore new ideas and technologies without the pressure of immediate success. This approach allows quick learning from failures, refining concepts that can later be scaled or applied to practical situations.

Innovation should be aligned with organisational objectives, solving specific challenges, mitigating risks, improving KPIs, or developing new revenue streams. Avoid innovation for its own sake; focus on initiatives that offer measurable value. This ensures innovation contributes to business outcomes, helping the organisation remain agile, competitive, and relevant.

The stream engages with teams to uncover opportunities, offers resources for idea generation and testing, and creates feedback loops to share successful innovations. It also communicates proven ideas across the organisation, enabling teams to apply them to real business problems. In this way, the innovation stream supports experimentation while embedding successful approaches into the transformation journey.



05. Continuous improvement



05. Continuous improvement

Transformation is a journey, not a destination; while the execution phase focuses on catching up to the latest state, continuous improvement is about staying ahead, ensuring the organisation evolves in pace with emerging challenges and opportunities. You are now better positioned to integrate newer advancements thanks to the cultural shifts, enhanced capabilities, and optimised processes that were established. The challenge of lagging behind, as outlined at the start of this journey, has been addressed by embedding a culture of continuous learning and adaptability. However, to remain competitive, the focus must stay on further refining these capabilities.

This phase keeps the organisation adaptable and responsive by routinely reviewing processes, collecting feedback, and making timely adjustments to stay aligned with both internal priorities and external market shifts.

Continuous improvement requires moving beyond a project-based mentality to a product mindset and a commitment that recognises transformation as ongoing. Establish mechanisms for regularly reflecting on current practices and anticipate future inefficiencies. Rigorously monitor performance metrics and gather feedback from employees, customers, and other stakeholders to identify areas for enhancement.



05. Continuous improvement

Balance standardisation with innovation to avoid stagnation. Refine processes and workflows to improve efficiency and scalability, but at the same time, actively seek opportunities to innovate. Small, controlled experiments—whether testing new technologies or trialling different working methods—provide valuable insights without risking major disruption. Teams must have the freedom and resources to experiment but also the responsibility to share lessons learned so successful strategies can be quickly scaled across the organisation.

Effective continuous improvement ensures that performance reviews and KPIs evolve alongside the organisation's transformation goals. As objectives shift and the business environment changes, adjust KPIs to maintain their relevance and keep employees working toward goals that reflect the organisation's evolving direction. Regularly revisit the compliance map, particularly in industries where regulations frequently change, so that the organisation remains compliant and competitive.

I am a strong believer in learning and development as a key driver for transformation and I think it is just as important for continuous improvement. Encourage employees to build new skills, especially soft skills, and stay up to date with industry developments, creating a culture of growth and innovation. Leaders play a crucial role here, setting the tone by championing continuous learning and providing opportunities and time for employees to develop the competencies that will be needed for future challenges.



Applying the frameworks to this phase



The Prosci ADKAR Model helps employees stay prepared and adapt to evolving processes. Reinforcing knowledge and abilities keeps individuals aligned with organisational growth. Kotter's 8-Step Process embeds these changes into the culture, helping leadership maintain momentum and drive ongoing innovation.

The McKinsey 7-S Framework helps keep systems and people aligned as the organisation matures. It supports the replacement of legacy systems with modern solutions, such as transitioning from mainframes to cloud architectures, ensuring smooth adaptation while phasing out redundant processes.

The Lippitt-Knoster Model provides a structured way to manage ongoing changes, ensuring resources and leadership are in place as new technologies and methodologies are adopted. It aids in the gradual replacement of outdated systems and the introduction of more advanced capabilities.

Uncertainty Matrices remain useful for evaluating risks as the organisation continues to modernise. They help manage risks proactively, replacing risk-prone processes with more efficient ones and staying agile in response to emerging challenges.

The McKinsey transformation report has great insights on the topic of continuous improvement after the initial transformation, *"Once initiatives are fully implemented, the change effort does not end; almost 40% of respondents say they wish they had spent more time thinking about how their organizations would continue to improve"*, and, *"When organizations plan for continuous improvement after a transformation, the likelihood of success increases"*.

Prosci ADKAR Model

The Prosci ADKAR Model supports sustaining individual change by reinforcing new behaviours and practices. In the continuous improvement phase, it is important to create systems that maintain these behaviours over time. Provide ongoing training, implement performance management systems, and establish recognition programs that celebrate success and reinforce positive change.

Training should include regular refreshers and advanced sessions to keep skills relevant and ensure employees remain confident in their roles, adapting to any new tools or developments. Recognition programs should highlight employees who demonstrate the desired behaviours and contribute to ongoing improvement, creating a culture of excellence and dedication.

Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change

Kotter's 8-Step Process guides the integration of new practices into the organisational culture and sustains momentum for ongoing improvements. After the initial transformation, use the credibility gained from early successes to identify and implement improvements and new capabilities.

Embed new practices into the culture as the organisation matures and competency increases to the point that teams can take on more advanced versions of existing capabilities. Regularly review systems and processes to spot additional areas for improvement, maintaining flexibility and a forward-thinking mindset. Align policies and operational practices with these changes to embed them into daily operations and reinforce the long-term cultural shift.





McKinsey 7-S Framework

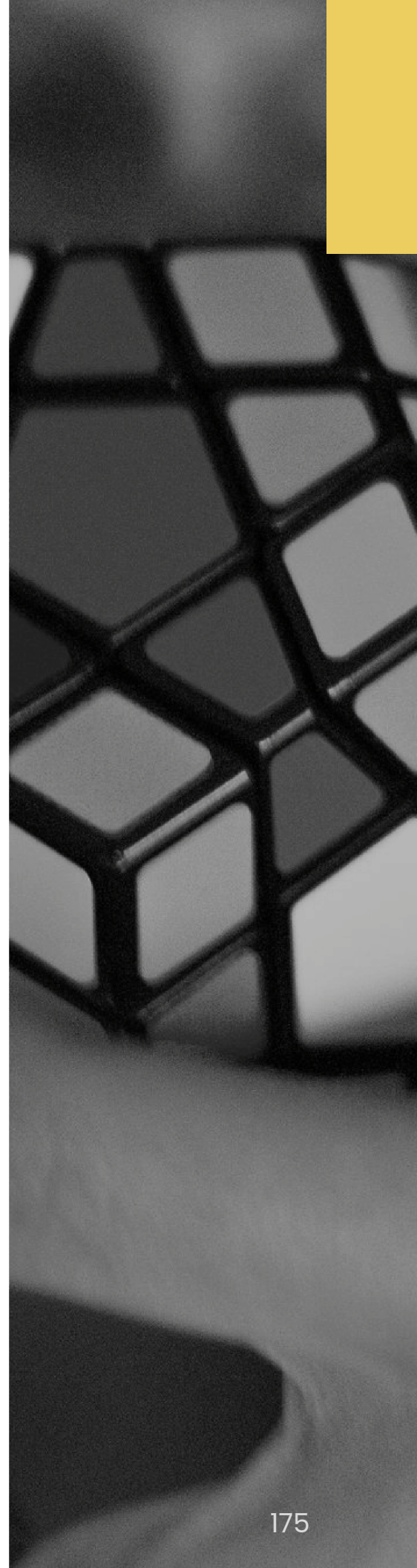
The McKinsey 7-S Framework helps keep all elements of the organisation aligned during the continuous improvement phase. Ongoing refinement of the organisational strategy is necessary to adapt to changing market conditions and internal developments. The strategy should remain in sync with long-term goals while addressing emerging challenges and opportunities.

Evaluate the organisational structure, systems, and skills regularly to ensure they support continuous improvement. This includes strategic reviews and adjustments to stay on course. Prioritise the development of new skills and capabilities within the workforce, ensuring the organisation remains agile and ready to adapt to future demands.

Lippitt-Knoster model

Continue to communicate the vision and goals to maintain focus and motivation across the organisation. As new insights emerge and the next milestone is defined, review and update the vision and objectives to keep them relevant and aligned with ongoing developments.

Providing continuous training and resources ensures employees maintain the necessary skills and support to drive improvements. Regularly assess the allocation of resources to make sure they are effectively supporting improvement initiatives.



Uncertainty matrices

Uncertainty matrices continue to support risk management during the continuous improvement phase. Track identified risks regularly and use the matrices to re-evaluate and re-prioritise risks as new information becomes available and new milestones bring potential new risks.

Continue to develop strategies that adapt to emerging risks and ensure the organisation remains responsive and resilient. Frequently review and update risk registers and matrices to reflect changes in the risk landscape. Implement new adaptive strategies to address new risks effectively, helping the organisation maintain stability and agility in navigating uncertainties.

Continuing feedback mechanisms



As the organisation transitions from a one-time transformation initiative to an ongoing journey, feedback mechanisms must evolve from ad-hoc inputs to structured, recurring processes embedded within the culture. Feedback remains a critical tool for evaluating how well the ongoing transformation aligns with strategic goals and for identifying areas that need refinement. The focus shifts from gathering input to test and improve deliverables to establishing long-term feedback cycles that keep the organisation adaptive and responsive to new challenges and opportunities.

To sustain engagement, you must prevent feedback fatigue, where employees and stakeholders become disengaged if their input doesn't lead to visible changes. Transparency is key to this, so have an internal space or dashboard available to all where feedback and the resulting actions in response to that feedback are tracked and shared.

To keep feedback interesting, vary the methods used for feedback collection, alternating between anonymous surveys, focus groups, and digital pulse checks. Rotating the topics covered in each feedback cycle—for example, focusing on operational efficiency one quarter and employee engagement the next—also helps maintain interest and relevance and avoids overwhelming staff by asking for feedback on too many diverse topics at once.

Regularly reviewing and refining the feedback process itself is part of the continuous improvement mindset. By seeking input on the feedback mechanisms, you can keep the process relevant and impactful. This approach reinforces the idea that feedback actively shapes decisions and supports ongoing improvement.

Continuing feedback mechanisms

Schedule regular feedback sessions, such as quarterly or twice-yearly feedback cycles. Unlike the more immediate, project-specific feedback collected during execution, these ongoing sessions should cover broader organisational themes, like process optimisation, employee satisfaction, and customer experience.

Actionable insights must be drawn from the feedback collected. Analyse the input, implement changes, communicate these adjustments back to participants, and share the impact the changes have had once sufficient data has been collected—whether the impact was positive or negative. This also strengthens trust in leadership by demonstrating that the organisation values and acts on the insights provided.

Surveys and feedback platforms are great for scale, enabling you to collect input from across the organisation. However, to encourage meaningful two-way dialogue, include group workshops and private one-on-one sessions in your methods. Rotating the questions and topics helps keep sessions relevant and engaging.



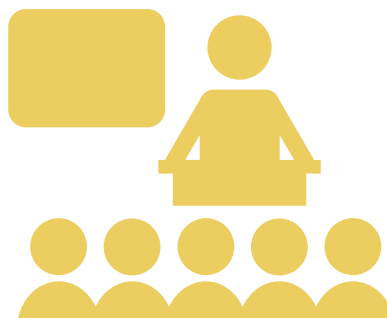
Ongoing training and development



In the continuous improvement phase, transition from a one-time initiative to ongoing, structured training and onboarding programmes that continue to build and support the desired culture of the organisation. Establish a scalable, repeatable learning process that keeps employees up-to-date with evolving skills, industry trends, and organisational changes.

In this phase, continue improving and adding to the existing training content and approaches, keeping them adaptable and responsive to individual and organisational needs. There can be a challenge in balancing standardisation with personalisation. While all employees must be equipped with core competencies, training should also cater to the specific needs of various departments and roles. Regular feedback loops and assessment keeps training relevant and effective.

Another common challenge in ongoing training is preventing stagnation. As employees become accustomed to certain systems, they may resist new methods of learning or see training as routine. To mitigate this, organisations can introduce periodic content updates, integrate emerging technologies, and maintain a blend of self-paced and interactive in-person sessions.



Ongoing training and development

Continuous learning programmes

Continuous learning programmes offer ongoing development opportunities and should be scalable, accessible, and aligned with career progression and incentives. To maximise accessibility, offer all training materials in a self-paced format, allowing employees to learn at their own convenience and revisit content as needed. Implement monitoring systems to track progress and completion, and where justified, make certain courses mandatory.

Integrate training with the organisation's career frameworks, clearly outlining how completing modules supports career advancement and performance improvement. This motivates employees to engage with learning opportunities and highlights the importance of ongoing development in their professional growth.

While self-paced training forms the foundation, in-person sessions remain valuable for addressing specific challenges and complex problem-solving. To support equal access, make all materials from in-person sessions available with guidance on how to facilitate the session. Where possible record the sessions. This can enable teams to run local sessions at different times, improving employee access to education.

Create a centralised online portal for all training resources, featuring tracking and reporting tools to monitor progress. This portal simplifies access to learning materials and provides visibility into employees' learning journeys.

Link training completion to the HR system so that it automatically updates career progression and performance review records. This helps employees' efforts to be recognised and rewarded, reinforcing the role of continuous learning in career growth.



Ongoing training and development

Leadership and specialised training

Ongoing leadership and specialised training help embed the desired culture and behaviours across the organisation. This training should be part of the onboarding process for new hires and a continuous development pathway for existing staff. Incorporating behavioural training into the onboarding process helps new hires, especially leaders, understand and adopt the organisation's values and cultural norms. This training should highlight expected behaviours, promoting alignment with the organisation's ethos and helping set the tone for performance and engagement.

New leaders require immersive training that fully integrates them into the organisation's culture. Hands-on experiences, simulations, and interactive sessions can be used to help leaders internalise the values and behaviours they are expected to model. This approach prepares them for leadership roles and deepens their connection to the organisation's vision and purpose.

Include mentoring and coaching opportunities to support leaders' ongoing development. Regularly update the curriculum with the latest best practices to keep leadership skills relevant and forward-looking.

Specialised training is equally important for technical roles and departments. These programmes cover specific skills, industry knowledge, and advanced techniques required for each role established during execution. Tailored training ensures that employees are well-prepared for the organisational context. Collaborate with subject matter experts to design content for each specialised area.



Ongoing training and development

Continuous Improvement

Regularly evaluate training effectiveness to determine whether objectives are being met, how well employees apply new skills, and the overall impact on performance. Your assessment should consider quantitative data, such as completion rates and test scores, and qualitative feedback from participants, offering a complete view of each course's effectiveness.

Encourage employees to provide input on training content and delivery to identify gaps and improve the relevance of training. Employees can offer valuable feedback on what works and what can be refined, suggesting new topics or adjustments to the delivery style that better aligns with their learning preferences.

Have open and ongoing feedback in place to gather employee insights. Surveys, focus groups, suggestion boxes, and informal discussions provide multiple avenues for feedback. Actively seek out and implement employee suggestions to show commitment to their professional growth and keep training programmes relevant and effective.

Update training content based on evaluations to align with current organisational requirements. This might include adding new modules, revising outdated materials, or integrating new technologies to enhance learning. By making regular updates, you ensure training programmes continue to meet both employee and business needs, creating a culture of continuous learning and development.

Process standardisation



As organisations transition from a one-time transformation initiative to a continuous improvement journey, standardising processes helps to sustain gains and drive future efficiency. In the continuous improvement phase, process standardisation creates consistency across departments, aligning efforts with best practices to create predictable and measurable outcomes.

A common challenge in this phase is striking a balance between standardisation and adaptability. Over-standardising can lead to inflexibility, stifling innovation or making it difficult to respond to new market demands. To mitigate this, adopt a modular approach to process design, allowing for core elements to remain consistent while enabling customisation where necessary. This approach allows teams to maintain a high degree of operational alignment while still being agile enough to adapt processes to specific requirements or local contexts.

Another consideration is scalability. As the organisation grows, processes must scale without becoming cumbersome or inefficient. This requires a forward-thinking process design that anticipates future needs, ensuring that workflows can handle increased volume or complexity without introducing bottlenecks. Collaboration with different teams during the process creation stage helps identify potential scalability issues early on.

Process standardisation

Evaluating, updating, and creating processes

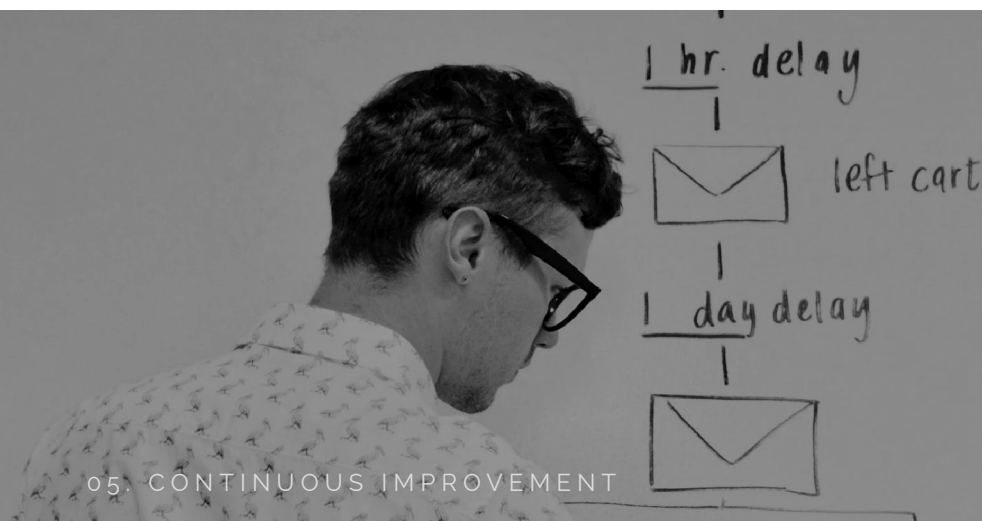
Establish clear, documented procedures for ongoing evaluation, updating, and creation of processes. These procedures should be structured to manage the entire lifecycle of processes, ensuring alignment with organisational goals and consistent application across the organisation.

Regularly review current processes to confirm they remain effective and aligned with objectives. Gather performance data, identify where processes are falling short, and obtain feedback from the employees who use them daily. Review cycles should be scheduled, and key metrics defined to objectively assess process performance, enabling timely identification of inefficiencies or areas for improvement.

When updating processes, plan changes carefully. Define the scope, identify stakeholders, and outline steps for implementation. Document each update to ensure clarity and prevent any disruption in operations. Regular updates should account for evolving business needs and external conditions, keeping processes relevant and effective.

Creating new processes requires a thorough understanding of the needs and objectives. Design processes that are efficient, scalable, and user-friendly. Before full-scale implementation, test processes and refine them to ensure they meet the intended objectives without introducing unnecessary complexity or unmitigated new risks. Trial runs and pilot programmes are useful for fine-tuning before a broader rollout.

Feedback is essential for effective process optimisation. Analysing feedback helps identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies. Collect feedback through surveys, focus groups, or observations to gain insights into areas that need improvement. For example, a step that consistently causes delays could be automated or simplified to enhance workflow efficiency.



Process standardisation

Implementing lean methodologies

Implement lean methodologies to optimise workflows and eliminate waste to create more value for customers without increasing costs. While these principles originated in manufacturing, they have been successfully adapted across industries by contextualising them to fit the unique culture and environment of each organisation.

Lean has five core principles: defining value from the customer's perspective, mapping the value stream to identify inefficiencies, ensuring smooth workflow without interruptions, adopting pull systems that respond to demand, and continuously striving for perfection by regularly refining processes. Training should cover the basics of lean thinking and provide practical and contextualised techniques for identifying and eliminating waste, helping employees understand how their work can be streamlined and how this benefits them.

Conducting value stream mapping workshops is a practical way to visualise current processes and identify waste within the workflow. This exercise provides insight into the flow of materials and information through the process, highlighting areas where inefficiencies exist. For example, different types of contextualised forms of waste should be examined to develop strategies for reducing or eliminating them.

Process redesign is another important element of lean implementation. Ensuring a smooth flow of work may involve rearranging workstations, standardising procedures, or introducing automation where possible. Lean encourages shifting from push systems, where work is scheduled and produced without considering real-time demand, to pull systems, where work is initiated based on actual demand. This shift helps reduce overproduction and lower inventory costs while improving overall responsiveness.

Lean requires a culture of continuous improvement where employees are encouraged to suggest and implement improvements. Reviewing processes frequently helps maintain efficiency and effectiveness. Customising lean methodologies to fit the organisation's specific needs and culture is essential. For example, a collaborative work culture may benefit from team-based lean activities, while a data-driven organisation might emphasise performance metrics.

Encouraging participation in waste identification and process improvement promotes ownership and accountability. Recognising and rewarding contributions reinforce this culture, motivating employees to continuously seek ways to enhance workflows and eliminate inefficiencies.

Performance and KPI reviews



In the continuous improvement phase, the performance and KPI review process shifts from tracking short-term transformation goals to maintaining long-term alignment with evolving organisational objectives. Regularly assess performance data, adjust metrics, and refine KPIs to reflect changing business needs, employee development, and market dynamics. Instead of static targets, KPIs must now be adaptable and responsive, ensuring they continue to drive growth and support the organisation's broader strategy as it evolves.

Ensure that KPIs and performance metrics remain aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation, even as that direction shifts. Be dynamic in performance management, frequently reassessing, adjusting, or replacing KPIs to reflect new priorities or changing conditions. For example, metrics that were central during the execution phase may no longer be relevant once the organisation shifts its focus from implementing changes to sustaining and scaling them.



Peer reviews

While manager reviews effectively assess hard skills, they often miss the nuances of soft skills. Peer reviews, which gather feedback from colleagues and team members across departments, offer a more comprehensive evaluation. By incorporating multiple perspectives, peer reviews provide a deeper understanding of how an employee demonstrates soft skills like communication, teamwork, empathy, and leadership.

Manager reviews tend to focus on measurable outcomes and technical abilities, which are straightforward to assess. However, soft skills are more subjective and context-dependent, making them harder for managers to observe in every situation. Peer reviews fill this gap by drawing on insights from those who work closely with the employee, giving a more complete picture of their interpersonal effectiveness and adaptability.

The broader perspective of peer reviews helps capture a wide range of interactions, offering a holistic view of how employees collaborate, communicate, and engage. This feedback is crucial for evaluating an employee's overall contribution to team dynamics. Moreover, knowing that their peers will review them encourages employees to uphold high standards in their daily interactions, promoting a culture of accountability.

To make peer reviews effective, establish clear criteria for the soft skills being assessed. This ensures consistency and clarity across all evaluations. Offering training on how to give and receive feedback constructively helps employees understand the value of feedback in their professional growth. Additionally, implementing digital tools to guide the peer review process can standardise the feedback, making it easier to collect and analyse.

Scheduling regular peer review cycles aligned with performance reviews formalises the process, ensuring that peer feedback becomes a key part of overall performance assessments. This approach strengthens team cohesion and supports an environment of continuous feedback and development.

Performance and KPI reviews

Regular KPI reviews

Regular KPI reviews maintain alignment with organisational goals and drive continuous improvement. Monitor key performance metrics to ensure they reflect the organisation's current priorities and performance standards. While continuous assessment is ideal, it can be challenging to implement across larger organisations, although modern HR tools can help streamline this process and make it more feasible. As a practical alternative, aim for quarterly or twice-yearly reviews. Either way, Communicate the schedule and expectations clearly to all stakeholders to ensure adequate preparation and engagement.

Before each review, gather and analyse relevant performance data, aggregating it from multiple sources and conducting trend analysis to identify deviations from targets. Data visualisation tools can help present this information clearly and concisely. Involve stakeholders, such as department heads and team leaders, in the review process to ensure good insights and informed decision-making.

Frequent KPI assessment enables quick identification of trends, issues, and opportunities. This helps with swift adjustments and optimisations to keep KPIs aligned with the evolving objectives of the organisation. Real-time monitoring is supported by advanced analytics tools and automated reporting systems, which provide ongoing insights without requiring constant manual oversight.

Less frequent reviews may delay the identification of performance issues, so consider implementing interim check-ins or automated alerts to catch significant deviations. Infrequent reviews can reduce adaptability, so remain flexible and conduct ad-hoc assessments when necessary. To prevent misalignment between KPIs and strategic goals, maintain ongoing communication with stakeholders and conduct periodic check-ins.

Based on the review findings, update and refine KPIs as necessary. Set new targets, adjust metrics, or introduce new KPIs to reflect emerging priorities. Communicate these changes effectively and integrate them into the performance management system to ensure alignment across the organisation.

As always with KPI strategy, look for any signs of Goodhart's Law and counter it by pairing the abused KPI with one that enforces balance. Often, this means adding a quality KPI to a quantity KPI.

Performance and KPI reviews

Adjusting metrics based on performance

As organisations evolve, their objectives, processes, and environments change, making it necessary to regularly review and adjust performance metrics to ensure they reflect current priorities.

Sticking to outdated metrics can lead to misplaced efforts, as employees may focus on targets that no longer drive value. Adjusting metrics keeps the organisation agile and focused on what matters most in a dynamic environment.

Conduct a review of current performance data to assess whether existing metrics still align with strategic goals and provide actionable insights. Key considerations include:

Relevance

Do the metrics still reflect current business objectives and operational priorities?

Effectiveness

Are they measuring performance accurately and providing meaningful insights?

Strategic alignment

Do the metrics support the organisation's overall direction?

Engage key stakeholders—such as department heads and team leaders—in this review process. Their input helps identify which metrics need adjustment and ensures changes reflect operational realities across different areas of the organisation. Collaborative discussions can uncover gaps, redundancies, or areas for improvement that may not be evident from data alone.

Performance and KPI reviews

Adjusting metrics based on performance

Once the review is complete, develop new or adjusted metrics that better align with current objectives. This process involves the following.

Objective



Clearly define the specific objectives the new metrics will measure.

Target



Set realistic yet challenging, targets that align with strategic goals.

Measure



Ensure metrics are measurable, with reliable data collection & analysis.

Implement the new or adjusted metrics supported by effective communication to ensure that employees understand the changes, why they're happening, and how they will be measured. Use multiple channels, such as meetings, emails, and internal platforms, to ensure this information reaches all levels of the organisation.

Provide any necessary training to help employees adapt to the new metrics and understand their role in meeting updated targets. Ensuring that everyone is aligned reduces confusion and promotes engagement with the new goals.

Once the metrics are in place, monitor their effectiveness and impact. Regularly collect and analyse performance data to assess whether the adjusted metrics are driving the desired outcomes. Be ready to make further refinements based on ongoing feedback and performance analysis.

Establish a continuous improvement cycle where metrics are periodically reviewed and updated to keep pace with changing organisational needs and external factors. This approach ensures that the performance measurement system remains dynamic, supporting sustained alignment with strategic goals and operational excellence.

Enduring innovation



Transformation initiatives have a clear start, but the journey of innovation and improvement must continue indefinitely. During this phase move beyond short-term changes, focusing on building a sustainable innovation culture that remains aligned with company strategy. The objective is not to create innovation for the sake of being trendy but to support impactful, strategic ideas that can be rapidly tested, refined, and scaled to drive long-term business success. For this to work, innovation must be ingrained in daily operations, with processes and mindsets that allow the organisation to adapt to evolving market conditions and emerging technologies.

A challenge in this phase is ensuring that innovation stays aligned with core business objectives rather than drifting into gimmicks or unrelated initiatives. Ensure that new ideas are closely tied to the company's mission and have measurable outcomes. Innovation must consistently move the needle on key business drivers, whether through improved customer experiences, more efficient operations, or new revenue streams. Leaders can use tools such as innovation roadmaps and clear success metrics to keep efforts focused and aligned with company goals.

The organisation needs to remain flexible and avoid falling into stagnation over time. A culture of experimentation, supported by mechanisms such as sandbox environments and structured ideation sessions, supports ongoing innovation. Leaders should encourage employees to experiment in low-risk environments where ideas can be tested and iterated quickly. This iterative process ensures that only viable innovations move forward, allowing the company to learn from both successes and failures while maintaining agility.

Enduring innovation

Leaders must create a safe space

Leaders must create a safe space where employees are empowered to experiment and take calculated risks without fear of negative consequences. This is crucial for supporting creativity and innovation, as fear of failure can stifle new ideas and limit progress. Establish a culture that encourages managed risk-taking and supports learning from mistakes so that employees are more willing to propose and test unconventional solutions. Creating this safe space is about supporting creativity and positioning the organisation to remain adaptable and forward-thinking in a rapidly changing environment.

Providing sandbox environments is an effective way to facilitate experimentation. In these controlled settings, employees can explore new approaches without the risk of disrupting live operations. Sandbox environments reduce the stakes of failure, enabling employees to learn and iterate quickly. This approach encourages employees to refine their ideas and eventually contribute more innovative, polished solutions to real-world challenges.

Leaders should also allocate dedicated time for employees to pursue their ideas. When employees are constantly focused on daily tasks, there is little room for creative thinking or exploring new possibilities. By setting aside innovation hours or running creative sprints, organisations signal that innovation is valued. This boosts morale and inspires employees to think beyond immediate challenges, potentially leading to breakthrough ideas that push the organisation forward.



Encouraging innovative thinking

Encouraging innovative thinking requires more than just promoting creativity; it involves equipping employees with the tools and knowledge to think beyond conventional boundaries. Training programs focused on innovation and creativity can cultivate this mindset. These programs can teach methodologies like design thinking, which takes a human-centred approach to solving complex problems, and problem-solving techniques that encourage lateral thinking. By providing this training, leaders empower employees to approach challenges from multiple angles, increasing the chances of discovering breakthrough solutions. This proactive approach can mitigate the risk of stagnation, where teams default to tried-and-tested methods without considering new approaches.

Offering exposure to emerging technologies is another way to improve innovation. Keeping employees informed about the latest technological advancements ensures they stay ahead of industry trends and can leverage new tools to improve processes and develop novel solutions. This also reduces the risk of the organisation falling behind competitors who may be quicker to adopt and apply cutting-edge technologies.

Organising site visits to other industries is an effective way to expose employees to different practices and ideas. Seeing how other sectors tackle similar challenges can spark creativity and lead to cross-industry innovations. For example, a healthcare organisation visiting a tech company could gain insights into how agile methodologies streamline processes and consider applying those principles to healthcare delivery. Exposure to diverse environments broadens employees' perspectives and mitigates the risk of insular thinking, where solutions are limited by the norms of a single industry.

To integrate these practices, establish regular innovation workshops, encourage cross-functional collaborations, and set up knowledge-sharing sessions where employees present insights from industry visits or conferences. These initiatives create a feedback loop where learning continuously drives innovation.

Supporting a culture of continuous improvement

Create an environment where learning and adaptation are ongoing processes. This culture mitigates stagnation and complacency, ensuring the organisation remains agile and responsive to both internal and external changes. Provide access to the right tools, content, and feedback mechanisms that enable employees to refine skills and processes.

Promoting the use of post-mortem reviews and assessments helps identify areas for improvement. These evaluations help teams understand the root causes of successes and failures, providing actionable insights for future projects. Teams can pinpoint inefficiencies, missed opportunities, and factors that contributed to success, allowing them to refine their approaches. Embed these practices into the project lifecycle, making post-mortems a routine part of every significant initiative. This improves the immediate team's performance and creates a knowledge base that the entire organisation can leverage.

Access to industry reports, best practices, and case studies helps employees stay informed about trends and emerging opportunities. Tools that facilitate collaboration, such as project management software or knowledge-sharing platforms, allow teams to work together more effectively and maintain alignment on goals. These tools should be integrated into daily workflows to make continuous improvement a natural part of operations rather than an added task.

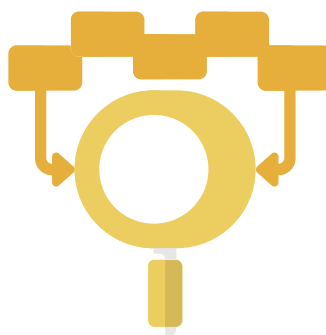
Reinforce continuous improvement by encouraging knowledge sharing across the organisation. Hosting internal presentations where teams discuss their findings from post-mortem reviews promotes transparency and supports a culture of learning. When employees see that their efforts to reflect on and improve processes are valued, it creates a positive feedback loop that encourages further innovation and improvement. Sharing lessons learned also ensures that the entire organisation benefits from individual team insights, preventing silos of knowledge.

Regularly evaluate the tools and content provided to ensure they remain relevant and effective in supporting continuous improvement. Gathering feedback from employees helps identify gaps in resources and informs decisions about what new content or tools might be necessary to support evolving organisational goals.

Annual strategic review

Transformation is an ongoing journey, and conducting an annual strategic review ensures that the organisation stays on course while remaining responsive to changing conditions. The review allows you to assess the progress made since the execution phase, identify gaps, and realign strategies to current realities. By regularly reflecting on both successes and challenges, you can ensure that it continues to evolve in line with its long-term goals rather than becoming stagnant or misaligned with market shifts and falling behind the curve.

An effective strategic review looks at progress so far, but it is also a forward-looking process. This annual exercise should take into account external factors, such as market dynamics, competitor behaviour, regulatory changes, and emerging technologies, which might impact the business. Re-evaluate internal processes to keep KPIs, objectives, capabilities, and operational needs aligned with the desired outcomes. By identifying areas where the organisation may be falling behind or where new opportunities are arising, you can proactively adjust plans to maintain momentum and relevance in the marketplace.



Adjusting strategies annually

Update milestones, refine goals, and, where necessary, define new targets to remain agile and responsive to changes such as market conditions, technology advancements, and evolving customer expectations.

A flexible, adaptive approach is key to this process. Be prepared to pivot as required, reprioritising initiatives, reallocating resources, and updating success metrics. By being responsive, you continue to transform and grow. Adjustments may be driven by external changes, like a shift in market demand, or internal factors, such as improvements in operational capacity.

To make these adjustments effectively, the organisation should follow a similar iterative process to the initial transformation phases: discovery, design, and execution. During the discovery phase, gather updated information on key trends, customer behaviour, and internal performance. In the design phase, translate this data into actionable plans, clearly defining how revised goals will be met. Finally, in the execution phase, implement the strategies, closely tracking progress and making ongoing adjustments as required.

Setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) milestones helps track progress and provide accountability. These milestones give clarity on what needs to be accomplished at each stage, ensuring that progress can be measured and successes can be celebrated. They also help to maintain momentum by breaking the broader goals into more manageable steps.

In some cases, the review may indicate the need for more significant changes in strategic direction, such as entering new markets or redefining the desired state of the organisation. These larger shifts require a structured and well-coordinated approach, utilising the same frameworks that guided the initial transformation. This ensures that any major changes are planned and executed effectively without losing sight of the overarching goals.

06. Conclusion



06. Conclusion

This whitepaper has explored the various phases of organisational transformation, from discovery to continuous improvement. I began by outlining the importance of a structured approach, integrating frameworks such as Prosci ADKAR, Kotter's 8-Step Process, the McKinsey 7-S Framework, the Lippitt-Knoster Model, and Uncertainty Matrices. These frameworks provided a comprehensive foundation for managing change at both the individual and organisational levels.

Throughout the document, I highlighted the significance of stakeholder engagement, continuous learning, compliance, and aligning processes with technology. Each phase of the transformation was explained, emphasising important steps that help achieve a smooth transition.





Benefits of a comprehensive approach



A comprehensive approach to organisational transformation helps all components to work in harmony, creating a system where each element supports and strengthens the others. By integrating multiple frameworks, organisations can address the varied challenges and opportunities that inevitably arise throughout transformation.

One of the key benefits is achieving alignment across all organisational elements, ensuring that strategies, processes, and behaviours are consistent and mutually reinforcing. This approach also allows for proactive risk identification and mitigation, as the structured frameworks provide a roadmap for anticipating and addressing potential issues before they become significant problems.

Additionally, the ongoing evaluation and refinement inherent in this approach help the organisation adapt to evolving needs, enabling continuous improvement. Building trust across all levels of the organisation becomes more achievable, as the transparency and structure provided by this method improve buy-in from stakeholders.

This comprehensive approach makes processes scalable, allowing them to grow and evolve as the organisation and external environment change over time.

Summary of frameworks



A truly effective transformation leverages the strengths of each framework, creating a synergistic approach that addresses all facets of change. The following table provides a concise overview for integrating these frameworks throughout each transformation phase.

Framework	Discovery	Planning & Design	Execution	Continuous Improvement
Prosci ADKAR model	Awareness, Desire, Knowledge	Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement	Ability, Reinforcement	Reinforcement
Kotter's 8-Step Process	Create Urgency, Guiding Coalition	Vision & Strategy, Communicate Vision	Empower Action, Short-term Wins	Consolidate Gains, Anchor New Approaches
McKinsey 7-S framework	Shared Values, Strategy	Structure, Systems, Skills	Structure, Systems, Skills	Style, Staff
Lippitt-Knoster model	Vision, Alignment, Skills	Alignment, Skill gaps, Resources, Action Plan	Action Plan, Skills, Incentives, Resources	Feedback, Adjustment
Uncertainty Matrices	Identify & Categorize Risks	Mitigation Strategies, Risk Monitoring	Risk Monitoring, Implement Mitigations	Ongoing Monitoring & Updates
Overlapping actions	Stakeholder Analysis, Vision, Objectives, Listen, Learn, and Understand	Planning, Risk Assessment, Communication, Engagement	Action, Change Management, Communication, Progress Tracking, Measuring and Feedback	Monitoring, Continuous Improvement, Reviews, Adjustments, Feedback

Next steps for your implementation



To begin implementing the strategies outlined in this whitepaper, the first essential action is to conduct a thorough assessment of your organisation's current state. This initial step, based on the discovery phase guidelines, involves identifying key stakeholders, examining current processes, and evaluating potential risks that could hinder transformation. It's important to gather input from all levels of the organisation to ensure a comprehensive understanding of where things stand and what areas need immediate attention.

Once the assessment is complete, the next phase is to develop a detailed action plan that incorporates the frameworks discussed throughout this document. This plan should align closely with your long-term goals and strategic vision, ensuring that each initiative supports the broader objectives of the organisation. At this stage, it's critical to engage stakeholders early. Clear and transparent communication about the transformation's vision, the intended outcomes, and how it will benefit the organisation will help build trust and reduce resistance. Stakeholder analysis tools can be used to map and manage involvement effectively, ensuring that each stakeholder understands their role in the process.

To mitigate risks and fine-tune your approach, start with pilot projects. These smaller-scale implementations allow you to test new processes and technologies in a controlled environment, gather feedback, and make necessary adjustments. Pilots serve as a valuable learning experience, helping you identify what works and what needs improvement before you scale up the transformation to the broader organisation. Regular feedback loops will provide ongoing insights, enabling you to continuously refine your approach based on real-world outcomes.

Next steps for your implementation

To go beyond the initial enthusiasm that often accompanies transformation initiatives, a long-term commitment to continuous improvement and adaptability is required. While the frameworks and strategies outlined in this whitepaper will help you get the journey started, the challenge lies in embedding new practices into the organisational culture and ensuring they become part of daily operations. Leaders at all levels must demonstrate ongoing commitment to the transformation by setting an example and reinforcing new behaviours. This leadership commitment signals to the rest of the organisation that this is not temporary but an organisational evolution.

Empowering employees plays a crucial role in sustaining change. Provide the necessary resources, training, and support to help employees adapt and thrive in the new environment. Promoting a culture of innovation and learning encourages employees to take ownership of the transformation and contribute to ongoing improvements. Regularly assessing and revising training programs to align with evolving needs will ensure that employees remain skilled and engaged as the organisation grows and adapts.

Ongoing success also depends on regular strategic reviews. These reviews should be conducted to assess progress, address any new challenges, and seize emerging opportunities. By maintaining a cycle of review and adaptation, the organisation stays flexible and responsive to external changes and internal developments. Recognising and celebrating achievements throughout the transformation process helps maintain morale and motivation, showing employees how their contributions make a tangible difference. Celebrating both small and large successes creates a positive atmosphere and encourages continued effort and engagement.

The true mastery of transformation comes from practice and adaptation. As you continue on this journey, contextualise and refine your approach and recognise that progress comes from continuous learning.

About the author



Thomas Smart has been actively involved with digital projects since 2003. His experience crosses many industries and types and sizes of organisations, giving him a wealth of experience and knowledge to draw upon as part of his consulting services. Since 2020, he has been helping large, regulated enterprises design and implement scalable cloud, enablement, process optimisation, security, and other transformational strategies.

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Making transformation actionable

Organisational transformation is not a one-time initiative, it's an ongoing journey that benefits from a structured approach, continuous learning, and adaptability to ever-evolving technology advancements. In this whitepaper, leaders, project managers, and internal transformation teams can gain insights into change management frameworks such as Prosci ADKAR, Kotter's 8-Step Process, and the McKinsey 7-S Framework. These frameworks are broken down into practical, actionable steps that integrate the human and operational sides of transformation.

By learning how to engage stakeholders, manage risks, align technology with processes, and create a culture of continuous improvement, readers will be better equipped to lead transformation efforts that are successful and sustainable. Whether you're looking to kickstart a transformation or fine-tune your approach, this whitepaper offers the tools and knowledge to make a lasting impact.