

Leading Complexities of Change

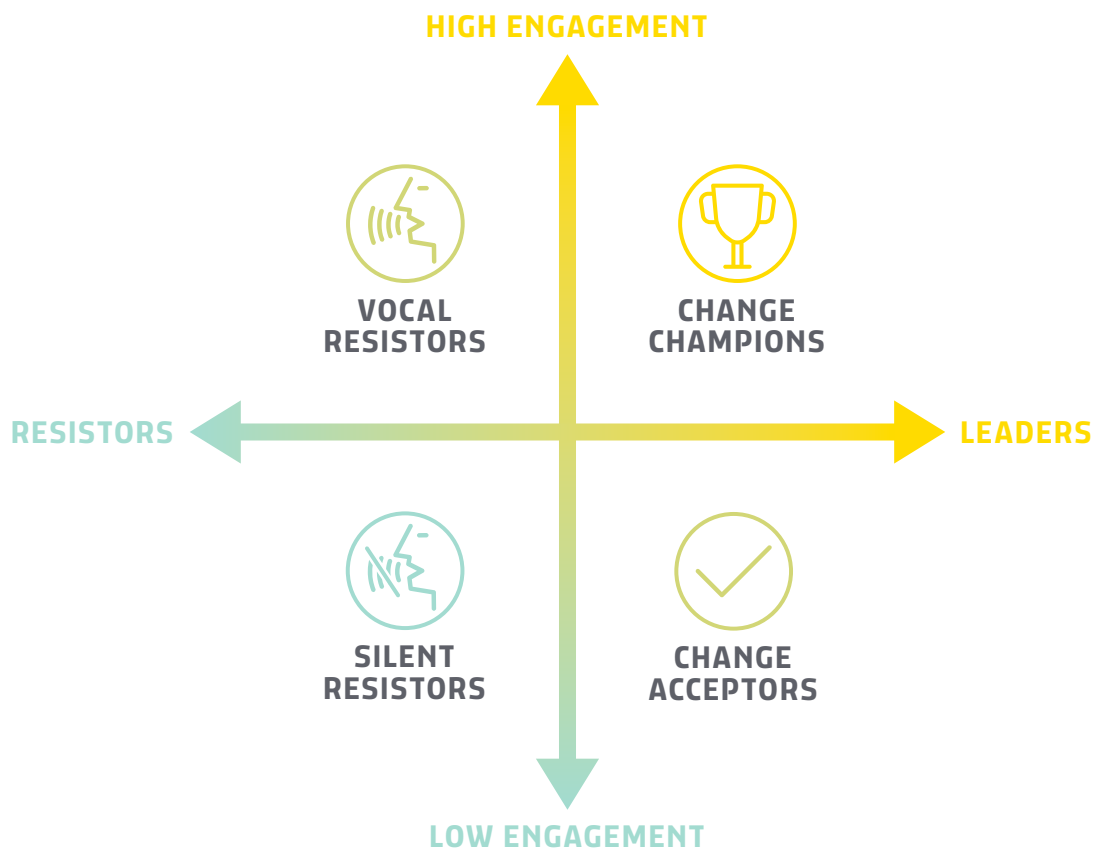
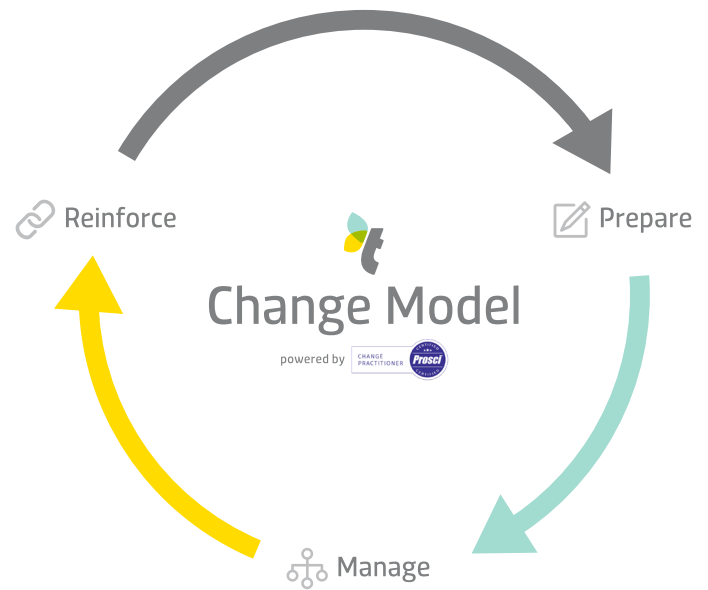
Understanding the process of change is one thing but acknowledging how people respond to change and tips for leading your people *through* change is an important skillset to learn.

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE PERSONALITIES

People's experience with change is fluid, not static. They will often start and end in different places of the change journey, especially when led by change champions.

There are three types of change personalities and leaders must have a plan to manage different change personalities on their team.

1. Change Champions
2. Change Acceptors
3. Change Resistors (silent or vocal)



Leading Complexities of Change

HOW TO MANAGE THROUGH CHANGE

Below are a few tips for managing your team's various personalities throughout the change process. Remember: since people's response to change may be fluid, you will need to adjust and adapt your managing of the process accordingly.

FUEL FUTURE PERFORMANCE

Establish a sense of urgency for the change and be intentional about managing your team's performance throughout the change process. Focus on accurate, timely and future-focused performance conversations. Consider the following:

- Set clear expectations
- Review priorities
- Be present and acknowledge performance
- Reward desired performance
- Celebrate the small and big wins

INSPIRE THROUGH MESSAGING

Use strategic messaging to inspire and drive change. Keep your purpose in the forefront of why you are changing and identify what will motivate your people to adopt the change. Consider the following:

- **Address the important questions first in face-to-face communications.**

Face-to-face communications (forums, team huddles, 1:1 connection) are identified as the most effective form of communication and messaging about the change must resonate with those affected. To gain people's support, provide a compelling case for why the change is occurring, how they will be better off, and what they get out of engaging in the change. Address these questions first:

- Why is this change happening?
- What is the risk of not changing?
- What's in it for me?

- **Identify all audiences and find effective ways to repeat key messages.**

Who needs to hear this message of change? Be certain to identify all audiences that need to be communicated with and remember that the first time a change is announced, people often wonder how it directly impacts them and they often miss details of the change itself. Identify and use your change champions to help communicate the need for change.

A holistic, creative communication plan uses numerous channels to repeat key messages and ensures that what you want to communicate is heard. Be creative in how you communicate and share messages more often than you think you need to.

Leading Complexities of Change

Some suggested channels are:

- Newsletters
- Screen Saver Messages
- Presentations
- 1:1 Conversations
- Lunch & Learns

- **Create opportunities for two-way communication and assess communication effectiveness.**

Craft a plan for two-way communication to give people the opportunity to share their concerns, provide feedback and ask questions. Two-way communication also helps to create buy-in, provide real-time answers, and ensure correct interpretation of the messaging. Change communications cannot be viewed as “one and done” but must be assessed and refined as needed.

Consider the following questions to develop your plan:

- What audiences need to hear the change message?
- What two-way communication vehicles will you implement to ensure opportunities for questions, feedback, and clarification?
- What should the cadence of communications be and who should deliver?

It is also worthwhile to provide an anonymous avenue for people to communicate their feedback regarding the change process. Surveys and suggestion boxes are common ways to allow for confidential, anonymous input.

EMPOWER OTHERS TO ACTION

Change does not happen in isolation and typically impacts the whole organization. Use psychological leadership to understand where your people are on the change journey emotionally and tactically and address them there.

An effective training plan provides an organized, thoughtful approach to encourage everyone affected to adapt and embrace change. Emerging leaders will collaborate with their training organization in conducting needs assessment and gap analysis to develop and deliver effective internal and external training opportunities.

Consider two pathways for change management training:

- **Change management training**

Addresses how best to handle the challenges of the change curve (shock, fear, resistance, adoption) and may be needed on several levels but is especially important for change champions. It may be helpful to review tools (ADKAR, Reinforcing Change, etc.) as you move through the change process.

Leading Complexities of Change

- **Project-specific training**

Targets the skills and abilities required to successfully operate the change. Be sure to consider all groups affected by the change (systems, operations, customer service...) and determine what current training tools are available to employ and what tools may need to be developed.

For example: If the change involves your IT systems, you may consider the following questions as you plan for the project-specific training:

- How will the change affect daily operations?
- What new system steps will be required?
- What changes/additions must be made to the technical manual?
- Which operators, service providers, or external contacts will be affected and how will the system changes be communicated and trained?
- What FAQs would be helpful for those most affected by the change?

As a front-line leader, you are critical to the successful implementation of change in your organization. When you choose to be an early adopter and champion of the change, you empower people at the point of execution and positively affect the outcome of the business's change initiatives.