Changefirst



Why People-Centred data is pivotal for successful transformation

A Power of Data research update from Changefirst

Some context for the ebook

This e-book is designed to give anyone leading or planning major organisational change an insight into how the use of practical people risk assessment tools can provide powerful change data and analytics to:

- bolster change intuition
- sharpen decision-making
- ultimately improve change adoption and ROI

It includes data sourced from Changefirst's digital Change Management platform Roadmap Pro® and summarises what more than **55,000 people** and almost **900,000 Change Management data points** can tell you about successful change implementation.

And is part of a regular series of data reports that Changefirst publishes on the topic.

I hope you get value from it.



Audra Proctor

CEO, Changefirst

Gathering and assessing data around change is in our DNA



For over 25 years, our substantial global Change Management database – one of the largest in the world, with almost 900,000 data points – has helped organisations:

- identify key **change management risks** and enablers
- adjusting change plans **based on real-time data**
- **leverage essential people analytics** for more informed and faster decision-making
- enable their change agents to **increase their productivity during rapid roll-outs**

As part of this process a global “army” of change agents are actively utilising nine powerful and intuitive planning, diagnostic and tracking tools on our innovative digital Change Management platform - **Roadmap Pro®**. Accelerating and advancing their Change Management planning and deployment. And leveraging the platform’s automated survey and data gathering capability

Which makes it easy to access the types of data insights and risk information - that are crucial to making poor change implementation a thing of the past.

There are **two key questions** at the heart of the report and that we explore:

- Is your organisation **collecting and analysing the right kind of data**, to plan and deliver changes more effectively?
- Can this data **shape implementation decisions** and make a real difference to your change & transformation program performance?

Firstly - some key findings and considerations based on our research

76% of people say they are **overwhelmed by change** programmes in their organisations

Only **1/3rd** of people feel that there is **sufficient Adaptive capacity** for transformational changes

Analysis of past projects has enabled us to highlight **5 key People Change Risks** that can cause lower commitment to projects

What more than **55,000 people and almost 900,000 data points** in the Changefirst database tell us about successful change implementation

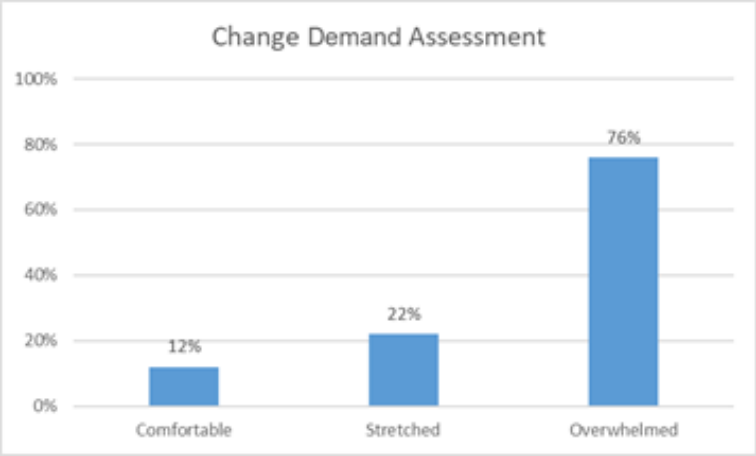
Very small drops in people-change risk bring **substantial shifts in commitment**

Commitment to change **can be built** through effective Change Management – the **challenge is sustaining it**

More than 70% of people say they are overwhelmed by Change programmes

Our data strongly suggests that people continue to be overwhelmed by the sheer cumulative demand and speed of change in their organisations. As of January 2022, our Change Demand Assessment has been responded to by just over 2,000 people across a range of industries. It shows that **more than 70% of people** (76%) feel that their organisation is **overwhelmed by too much change**. And lack the focus and bandwidth to get business critical projects delivered in a sustainable way.

This figure has jumped **up an incredible 28% since 2019**.



Source: Changefirst Change Demand Assessment 2022
(2,137 responses from 19 organisations)

And it's perhaps not surprising that the monthly figures for March 2021 **saw the number jump up to 98%** - no doubt impacted by the pandemic and resulting disruption.

Some practical considerations here:

- It's important that leaders understand **how employees perceive and experience the demand for change.** Sponsors tend to see the demand for change as the few key strategic themes are announced. For employees, themes become portfolios, portfolios become programmes and programmes become projects. All of this is in addition to local improvement projects and their natural rhythm of work. This difference is key to understanding and addressing change loading demand across an organisation.

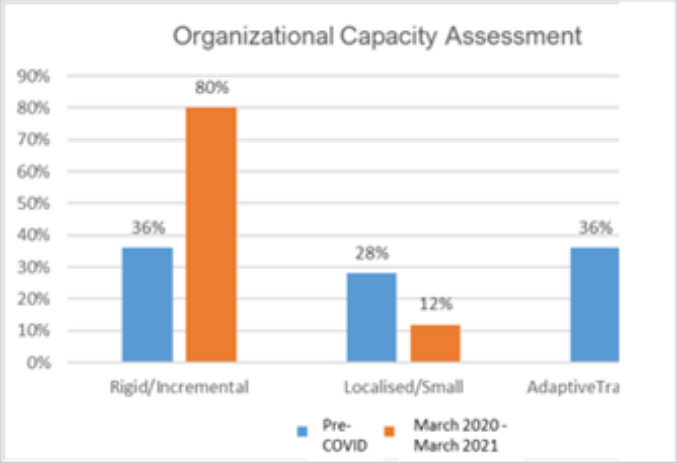
- Leaders who want their organisations to transform successfully, need to be able **to actively manage the number and sequencing of changes, in view of the combined load** throughout the organisation. Rather than simply focusing on the changes they personally initiate.

- Executives also need **to understand the organisation's change maturity -** and the capabilities and capacity of the workforce to assimilate the change load. As well as be ready to reduce the number of changes and/or increase change capacity quickly to succeed.

But what does the data tell us about organisational capacity for change? We take a closer look in the next section.

Only 1/3rd of people feel that there is sufficient Adaptive capacity for Transformational changes

A similar percentage of people believe that their organisation's capacity is rigid and is only sufficient for incremental changes – perhaps unsurprisingly, this percentage jumped to 80% in the period March 20 to March 21 during COVID-19.



Source: Changefirst Organisational Capacity Assessment 2021 (2,010 responses from 24 organisations)

5 Key reasons why Capacity is insufficient for the Change Load in organisations

We typically see a lack of capacity caused by people 'hanging back' and even resisting change because of:

1. Cynicism - based on past experiences, people being cynical about the likely success of new change initiatives

2. Anticipated impact - based on past experiences, people expecting that there will be insufficient consideration of the impact of change initiative at a personal level

3. Inadequate training - new skills, methods and tools provided during organisational change are unavailable, inaccessible and insufficient. For teaching people how to plan, implement and navigate change effectively

4. Lack of systematic learning - a lack of systematic information capturing and sharing. As well as learning from past change successes and failures

5. Poor performance management - objective setting, feedback and reward systems are not aligned with transformation goals so they fail to motivate people

Some practical considerations here

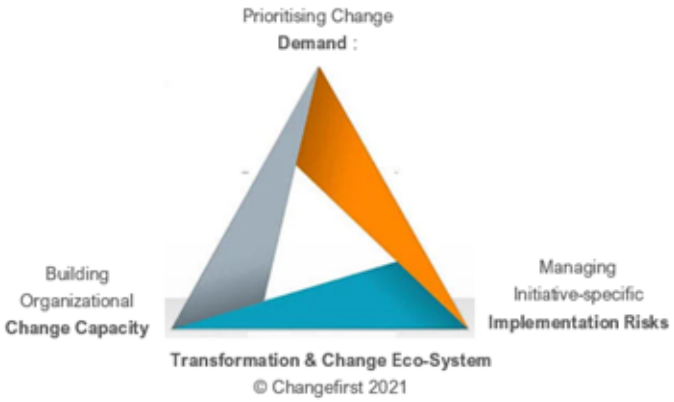
- Identify quick wins that demonstrate to people **how change will be planned and delivered differently** compared to the past.
- Change Leaders need to **identify where and when specific capacity and change skills** are most needed**.** To build readiness for change ahead of execution.
- **Early learning for key stakeholders and Line Managers** on how to implement change, build commitment and manage local resistance effectively will also help strengthen and accelerate deployment.

Analysis of past projects highlights 5 key people-change risks that can lower commitment

For Change Leaders and their specialist teams needing to gear up quickly to deliver change, it is not enough just to manage the risk of perpetual loading. Or ensure that sufficient Change capacity is available - and can be released - to deliver business-critical changes.

They also need to:

- **understand implementation risks** associated with individual change projects and initiatives
- use people data to plan and execute individual initiatives **right the first time**.



To deliver promised results our change projects must both land and hold

Data from the Changefirst Initiative Legacy Assessment - averaged from over 12,000 respondents across 111 different organisations - tells us that, 6 to 9 months after Change Leaders 'declare a success':

- there is a '**stubborn' 22-27% of resistant capacity** going forward into future transformations that can be distracting
- any early energy and commitment to change can fall back to **as low as 17%**
- Change Leaders should be spending more time working with people who are 'Accepting' the change and **help them transition to 'Commitment'**

Our Top 5 Considerations

The data also points to key reasons why commitment needed for transformation success is hard to sustain as follows:

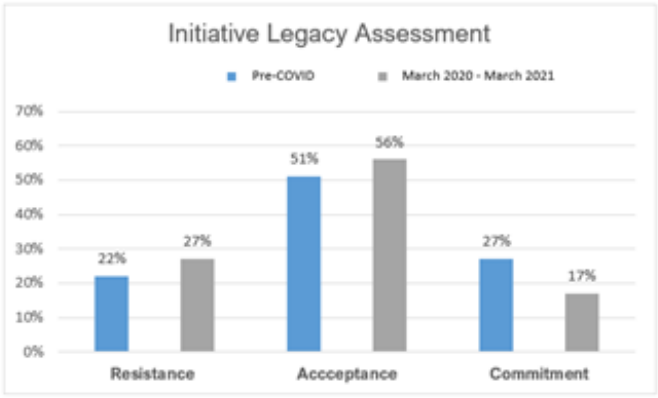
1. Lack of involvement - people feeling insufficiently involved in design and planning of changes to feel a sense of ownership for them

2. Poor recognition & rewards - people feeling that their extra efforts for change together with BAU is not adequately recognised or rewarded enough in order to effectively sustain their efforts

3. Lack of informal influence - people feeling that there is insufficient support from key influential people to sustain the change

4. **Local Role Modelling** - Local Sponsors not demonstrating the behaviour required for the change.

5. **Personal Imperative** - If people are failing to develop a feeling of urgency and connection for change



Source: Changefirst Initiative Legacy Assessment 2022

(12,016 responses from 111 organisations)

So, what level of commitment can we **actually attain with good Change Management**? We take a look in the next section.

Very small drops in people-change risk bring substantial shifts in commitment

The data below from our Initiative Legacy Assessment tool which is available in Roadmap Pro® shows how it is possible to track Change risks over time and to address risks as a means to build commitment.

No.	Dimension	Risk Score March 2018	Risk Score March 2021	Pandemic subset	Critical Success Factors
1	Future State Vision	40	39	45	Shared Change Purpose
2	Organisational Imperative	34	35	35	
3	Solution Visibility	44	42	47	
4	Sponsor Behaviour	38	37	42	Effective Change Leadership
5	Confidence in Agents	41	39	44	
6	Informal Influence	48	48	44	
7	Scope of Involvement	52	51	46	Powerful Engagement Processes
8	Training and Education	37	36	38	
9	Rewards and Recognition	43	51	55	
10	Communicating the Plan	44	42	48	
11	Local Role Modelling	45	46	46	Committed Local Sponsors
12	Local Managers' Support	37	36	39	
13	Personal Imperative	46	46	50	Strong Personal Connection
14	Solution Viability	35	34	37	
15	Being Successful	29	30	31	
16	Future Security	38	38	38	Sustained Personal Performance
17	Financial Impact	28	29	26	
18	Work Relationships	35	35	37	
19	Levels of Responsibility	36	37	35	
20	Learning Curve	41	41	40	
	AVERAGE	40	40	41	

Source: Changefirst Initiative Legacy Assessment 2022 (12,016 responses from 111 organisations)

So, for example, it is clear from an aggregate look at Rewards and Recognition that the risk around this has increased fairly significantly since 2018. Perhaps not unsurprisingly as people have experienced fundamental changes in working conditions during the pandemic. So, this is an area for leaders to address. Conversely, the risks around involvement have decreased in the same time period, potentially as the need to react quickly during COVID-19 has seen more involvement up and down the organisation.

The key aspect to stress here is that **it doesn't take huge reductions in risks levels to increase commitment levels on change initiatives** - and actively tracking the changes is key to your success.

Commitment to change can be built - the challenge is sustaining it

Hearteningly, the data in our database indicates that with effective Change Management – including focused resources and the use of people data to inform and guide project planning and execution - commitment to change, can be built. To a point where change is considered to be implemented and handed off to BAU. As our table below shows.

Stage of change program	Resistance	Acceptance	Commitment
Change is announced	15%	51%	34%
Early implementation	14%	58%	28%
Mid-way through implementation	12%	47%	41%
End of implementation	14%	25%	61%

Source: Changefirst Initiative Risk Assessment 2022 (8,830 responses from 82 organisations)

But, as shown earlier 6, 9, 12 or 18 months later, commitment can significantly tail off.

Some practical considerations here

- Instincts and experience are always valuable commodities in delivering change programs. However, **complementing this with data insights from past change implementations** helps to build trust, strengthen sponsor credibility and increase people's receptiveness to change.

- In fact, the data shows that **tracking and identifying new risks, and persevering with small improvements** to reduce specific risks, contributes to substantial shifts from 'Acceptance' and towards 'Commitment'. Change Leaders should be spending more time working with people who are 'Accepting' the change and **help them transition to 'Commitment' to build critical mass**.

Regular people-risk tracking is vital for delivering change programmes successfully



As Change Management plans are communicated, tested and deployed new risks will emerge to threaten early commitment. And this makes measuring and tracking people change risks at different stages of a change project crucial to implementation success.

It is this regular analysis that shows how people commit to change and user adoption levels shift. There is one caveat here - we have **no experience that reaching 100% commitment is possible.**

But what we do know is that:

- establishing **measurement tools and tracking processes**
- and **bringing transparency** to new or recurring people risk dimensions

Will improve your change implementation performance.

Some practical considerations here

- Remember to take a baseline measure at the start of your engagement with the change. Look backwards and ask about Legacy

- Consider **tracking change at these 4 stages**:

    - Change Announced
    - Start of Implementation
    - Middle of the Implementation
    - Near End of Implementation > BAU

Of course, leaders may identify the need for more regular data collection depending on the project. So, treat this as a baseline requirement only.

- 3. Reasons for a 'tail-off' in responses are important considerations for Change Leaders. As it may indicate **difficulties with sustaining change benefits**. And highlight the need to re-double efforts to keep people invested in change success. In particular, you should be mindful of:

    - **Project success being declared too soon**, and leaders' attention being diverted elsewhere
    - End of year performance reviews and bonuses **not adequately reflecting change efforts**
    - **Implementation stalling elsewhere** which means early adopters lose interest in pursuing the project and change goals

Take a closer look at Roadmap Pro®



If your plan is to put data at the heart of your organisational change strategy. Then talk to us about how Roadmap Pro, our digital Change Management platform, can:

- help you get more change delivered, right first time
- enable you with an agile, scalable capability that includes method, skills and tools
- strengthen your decision-making with people-data analysis and comparative insights
- engage more people in fast-paced change
- bring greater transparency and productivity to your Change Management process

All in all an easy to use, highly cost-effective solution that is available 24/7/365. And including 9 powerful digital diagnostic tools with database benchmarking insights and built-in risk mitigation actions

Get in touch

To **schedule a demo** where you can find out more about how Roadmap Pro can help your organisation

Join our **Change Practitioner Virtual Programme** to:

- **learn** and onboard to Roadmap Pro
- immediately **apply** digital tools and process to your change projects
- get a 6-month / 12 month **licence**
- and gain a **Certification** in the process

CONTACT US

About Changefirst

At Changefirst we help organisations, consulting firms, technology providers and individual Change professionals build agile, adaptive capabilities for change.

Our "digital first" solutions combine the power of our globally recognised PCI® Change Management methodology with role-relevant training, expert coaching and consulting and a comprehensive data analytics toolkit.

Flexible and innovative use of digital technology means we can also help you scale your Change Management initiatives. In 48 hours. Not 48 days.

For more information on our solutions visit www.changefirst.com or contact us.

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