10 TIPS FOR BUILDING READINESS FOR CHANGE
Accelerating Your Projects to Sustained Adoption and Value Realization

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Why Invest in Building Readiness?

At this very moment, your organization likely has a very full plate of organizational changes. Whether these are “routine” or “transformational” in scope and complexity, you are faced with two options:

You can either invest in readiness now, or spend your resources managing resistance later. There is no other alternative, and there isn’t a “no payment” option.

So given the reality of this choice, why invest in building readiness?

Frankly, it’s easier and cheaper. And the risks on the flip-side are significant... sub-optimized structures, sub-optimized processes, sub-optimized systems. No sustained adoption, and little or no value realization.
Readiness or Resistance? Where are You?

Think about your changes being on a continuum from full resistance to full readiness. While you can never achieve full and complete, 100% readiness, there are specific actions you can take to move toward the readiness goal.

Resistance is a function of the level of disruption of your change— the amount of disruption from the perception of the people who are impacted, not by how disruptive executives view the change.

In the following pages, we’ll share some simple and practical tips you can follow to build readiness for your changes.
5 Metrics for Implementation Success

- ON TIME
- ON BUDGET
- TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES MET
- BUSINESS OBJECTIVES MET
- HUMAN OBJECTIVES MET
The Journey to Readiness: Defining Implementation Success

How you actually define “success” has a big impact on your ability to build readiness for your change. The five metrics—on time, on budget, all business, technical, and human objectives met—are all critical!

If you want to build readiness, if you want to achieve value realization, you will need to identify the “human objectives” for your change. In other words, what will people be actually doing differently as a result of your change, and how will you “know it when you see it?”

This becomes critical because “behavior” is the only thing you can measure on a daily basis.

Even if you have business measures identified like improvements in productivity, or reduced waste, or improved quality, you can’t actually achieve these without some type of behavior change.

“Implementation” can only be gained when we define the behaviors associated with the change! Then we need to apply reinforcements that encourage these new behaviors, and discourage the old.

Execution accelerates when these new behaviors are identified and immediately reinforced!
## The C.A.S.T. of Characters on the Journey to Readiness

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<th>C</th>
<th>Champions</th>
<th>Believe in the change and attempt to obtain commitment and resources for it</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Agents</td>
<td>Implement change. Performance is evaluated based on implementation success</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Sponsors</td>
<td>Authorize, legitimize and demonstrate ownership for the change (Authorize and Reinforce)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Targets</td>
<td>Change behavior, processes, knowledge, perceptions, etc.</td>
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**Sponsorship is the single most important factor in ensuring fast and successful implementation.**
Four Factors Affect Your Ability to Implement at Speed

There are four major inputs to building organizational readiness for implementing your change:

1. **Sponsor Capacity:** The single most important factor. This is the commitment of key management as demonstrated by both their words and behaviors, every day. It’s like in bacon and eggs... the chicken is involved, but the pig is committed.

   **Sponsorship is a very active condition!**

2. **Target Readiness:** Resistance to your change is inevitable—but the question is how much resistance will you face, and how will you manage it?

3. **Cultural Fit:** How well does this change fit with the culture of your organization? Consider that your culture is ideally a strategic asset that can set you apart from your competition. At the same time, your organization’s strength can also be seen in the types of resistance you can anticipate. For example, if your organization is “analytical” the resistance will sound analytical and data-based too!

4. **Agent Capacity:** Your Change Agents must have the right skills, traits, and knowledge required to be effective. This is the least impactful factor, unless your Agents have the capability to orchestrate the other three factors.

Your organizational readiness and the organizational climate are the key accelerators for implementing at a faster pace.
Target Your Resources Early

Implementation consumes a ferocious amount of resources. If you want to build readiness faster, commit more resources to readiness-building activities earlier!

The faster you want to go, the more resources you will need!

Keep in mind, though, that no matter how much planning you do, the most impactful interventions will likely be those that are unplanned! The challenge is for you to be guided in what actions you need to take, right now, based on what is happening at that moment. This is why the principle-based Accelerating Implementation Methodology (AIM) is so useful—it guides you to what to do based on real circumstances.
Don’t Under-Estimate the Fear of the Unknown

There is an old saying that “the pain of uncertainty is greater than the certainty of pain.” This is true when it comes to change readiness—and therefore it is very useful to “soften the transition” to the new ways (the desired state.) It’s the first few steps into the future that are the most frightening!

You can do this through the use of pilot projects, practice sessions, and other opportunities for Targets to start to test the new ways. Let them stick their toe in the water without having to jump in the deep end!

Keep in mind this important principle:

“Readiness” is based on the perceptions of Targets, not on the perceptions of Sponsors or Agents!

And a word of caution on pilot projects: Be careful about the use of the term “pilot project” because you certainly don’t want to communicate that there is a chance that the change will be abandoned if the pilot project doesn’t go exactly as planned.

The more you tell people that “you can’t go home again” to the old ways, the more resistance you will have.
You Can’t Communicate Your Way to Readiness

Since resistance is inevitable, and it isn’t logical, no amount of communication will overcome resistance. You can’t explain your way to readiness!

If “logic” were enough, no one would smoke or drink and everyone would be at the perfect weight.

So don’t just depend on using communication to build readiness for your change.

When you are communicating, it’s essential to have a way to collect information back from Targets to identify potential sources of resistance. You will need different vehicles for surfacing the resistance and you will need to do this over and over again.

Managing resistance is a cyclical and iterative process!
Communication and Context Must Be Translated Into Targets’ Frames of Reference

It makes sense that if readiness is based on the perceptions of Targets, then communication must be directed to influencing these perceptions. If you only communicate from the “50,000 foot corporate level” you will not be addressing the three things that every Target really cares about:

1. What’s in it for me?
2. What does it mean to me?
3. How does it all fit?

Every Sponsor should be equipped to answer these three questions for his or her direct reports. These questions will need to be answered many times over the course of the implementation.
Use Multiple Communication Methods to Surface Resistance

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Third party interviews
- Blogs
- Social network media
- FAQ sheets
- Focus groups
- Hot lines
- Voicemail
- E-mail
- “All hands” meeting/town forum
- Team meetings
- Q&A sheets
- Webcasts
Your Communication Methods Must Symbolize What You Are Trying to Create

Your communication must provide “psychological cues” for what the future state looks like. For example, if you are doing transformational change, your communication must be transformational too!

If you use the same vehicles and methods you have used before you aren’t letting people know that this change is different.
Your Targets Must Be “Willing” Before Training Will Be Effective

While training is an essential component of building readiness, your skill-building efforts and investment won’t pay off unless the individuals are motivated to learn. You won’t fix motivational issues with training. Training only addresses skills and knowledge.

Instead focus on helping to create willingness to learn by giving Targets information about:

- What success will look like
- How this change solves a problem for them (not for the company)
- What the rewards and consequences are for making the change

People need to be clear about expectations for their performance, and how that performance will be measured.
Practice and Immediate Feedback on Performance Are Essential

The quality of training you provide your Target groups makes a great difference in the level of readiness they will have on Day One.

Readiness is built when:
1. Training **matches real world job performance requirements and conditions**
2. The **learning environment is “safe”** and allows learners to practice new skills
3. Training **provides repetition and sufficient opportunities for practice**
4. Learners get **immediate feedback** on their performance (That’s why we will often position super-users right in the Target group in our change management consulting work as a model.)
Own the Past to Build Confidence for the Present

Your current projects are not being implemented “in isolation.” The implementation is happening in the context of your past history, and the other projects that are competing for resources.

Your organization has learned lessons from your past history, and they may not be the lessons you intended or wanted taught!

Unless you understand and acknowledge your past history, Targets, Agents, and even Sponsors will likely lack “trust.” Trust isn’t soft stuff; the confidence your organization has in the ability to succeed is directly related to levels of trust.

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Giving Targets a Sense of Control Will Increase Readiness

You can create a sense of control and reduce resistance by giving people opportunities for the “3 I’s” -

Influence        Input        Involvement

Resistance is generated by both the CONTENT of the change and the METHODS and processes used to implement the change.

If you want maximum resistance, just tell people what they have to do and how they need to do it! You are guaranteed to generate resistance.

Instead, use involvement techniques to create a sense of control. That does not mean that your change is up for a vote. It does not mean that people need to like your change.

But if you give people a chance to be involved in how the change gets implemented you will be rewarded by having lower levels of resistance. And that means you will be able to go faster.
You Have to Build Readiness in the Project Team First!

Don’t assume that your project team doesn’t have members who have their own resistance. Unless you come to grips with that, and surface and manage that resistance, you can’t expect that these individuals will be able to manage other peoples’ resistance.

It’s helpful for Change Agents to “de-personalize” resistance they experience in others. This resistance is not about you, or your project per se, or your competence. Don’t set yourself up to expect that you will get everyone to like your change.

Resistance is just a way for people to protect themselves against changes in behaviors, reinforcement, work characteristics, power, and/or status.

The questions to ask are:

• How much resistance will we have?
• How will we manage it?
• How will we pay for it? (whether these costs are overt or covert)
Remember the 10 Tips for Building Readiness to Change

1. Target your resources early
2. Don’t under-estimate the fear of the unknown
3. You can’t communicate your way to readiness
4. Communication and context must be translated into the Targets’ Frames of Reference
5. Your communication methods must symbolize what you are trying to create
6. You must have willingness before training will be effective
7. Effective training requires practice and immediate feedback
8. Own your past history to build confidence for the present
9. Use involvement to give your Targets a sense of control
10. You have to build readiness in the project team first
AIM Drives Value Realization at an Accelerated Pace

The *Accelerating Implementation Methodology (AIM)* is a practical, business-driven structured framework that guides you on where to target and apply your resources for maximum impact in the shortest amount of time.

AIM is a set of strategies, tactics, principles, and tools that can be applied to any change, including transformational change. It provides the same level of rigor and business discipline to the human elements of change as are applied to operational and financial areas of the business.

**AIM provides multiple benefits as the framework for your project implementations:**

1. A standard language and approach for implementation is more efficient and drives speed

2. The methodology and its measurement tools serve as a risk dashboard that informs the leadership team where finite resources are best applied (Your organization will never have the level of resources you need for your portfolio of change)

3. The methodology is extremely practical and operationally focused on securing the desired business outcomes; we like to say it is not “a group hug”

4. The methodology is both systemic and systematic—it provides a unifying foundation for managing the change across organizational boundaries, cultures, and geographies
Learn More about AIM and Transformational Change

1. **Get Real About Transformational Change: What Works, What Doesn't:** a free eBook on how you can avoid common barriers to transformational change

2. **Leading People Through Business Changes:** a white paper describing the *Accelerating Implementation Methodology (AIM)* from an application perspective

3. **Is There a Sponsor in the House?** eBook to download and share on the role of Sponsors

4. **To schedule a private web meeting on AIM and how we can help build readiness for your strategic changes, including transformational change,** contact info@imaworldwide.com

Visit our blog for practical tips on implementing change
IMA is an international consulting firm that guides organizations through all types of large-scale change and implementations. Since 1989, our proprietary and systematic *Accelerating Implementation Methodology (AIM)* has been used extensively for the successful implementation of a wide variety of business-critical change projects.

We work with clients in four major ways:

- **Action Learning Programs**, designed to train your people in the principles, tools, and deliverables of *AIM*
- **Consulting**, where we work with your project teams to mentor them in application of *AIM*
- **Measurement**, using our toolkit of validated diagnostic assessments
- **Methodology Transfer**, our Accreditation process for building internal *AIM* Practitioners

For more information, contact info@imaworldwide.com or call 800.752.9254 or +1.303.996.7777