



Are the changes you lead positioned to succeed? It's a simple question to ask, but it is more complex to answer. A unique web of interwoven factors determines your likelihood of seeing change through to long term sustained results. To find simplicity and clarity, we've asked participants in our benchmarking research studies the same simple question every two years since 1998:

**“What has been the single greatest contributor to the success of your change management program?”**

Collectively and consistently, participants' responses point to seven straightforward factors that impact the results of a change initiative. These are the seven top contributors to change success.

Does your project have what it takes to succeed? Compare and contrast these with your own change initiatives to see how they align with best practices.

### SEVEN TOP CONTRIBUTORS TO SUCCESS

1. Active and visible executive sponsorship
2. Structured change management approach
3. Dedicated change management resources
4. Integration and engagement with project management
5. Employee engagement and participation
6. Frequent and open communication
7. Engagement with middle managers

Research participants who identified these contributors were experienced practitioners, project leaders, executives and consultants. Over 70% of participants in the 2016 edition of Best Practices in Change Management had more than four years of involvement in applying change management, and almost a third had more than twelve years. Contributors to success include specific practice areas (such as sponsorship) and structural elements (like dedicated resources).

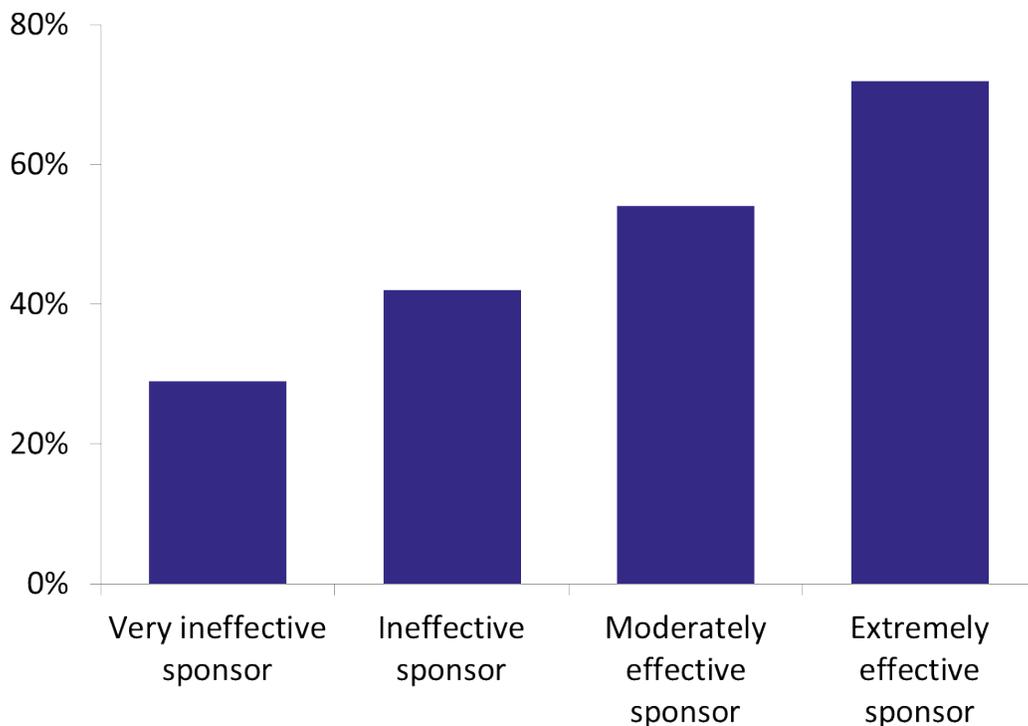
## 1. Active and visible executive sponsorship

A positive leader who actively guides the organization through change and participates visibly throughout the transition is the greatest predictor of success. The importance of sponsorship was cited over three times more frequently than the next contributor. Participants consistently used the key words “active and visible” to describe this top contributor. “Active and visible” sponsorship means that the sponsor is:

- Supporting the change by giving consistent attention to the change and the need for change management
- Championing the change by leading and motivating others in the organization
- Making effective and influential decisions regarding the change, including the ability to align priorities among other leaders in the organization
- Maintaining direct communication with the project management and change management teams and being accessible during the change

Another key study finding reinforces the impact of quality sponsorship on achieving outcomes. The graph below shows that with extremely effective sponsorship, projects were almost 3.5 times more likely to meet or exceed project objectives than projects with very ineffective sponsorship.

Percent of Respondents That Met or Exceeded Objectives



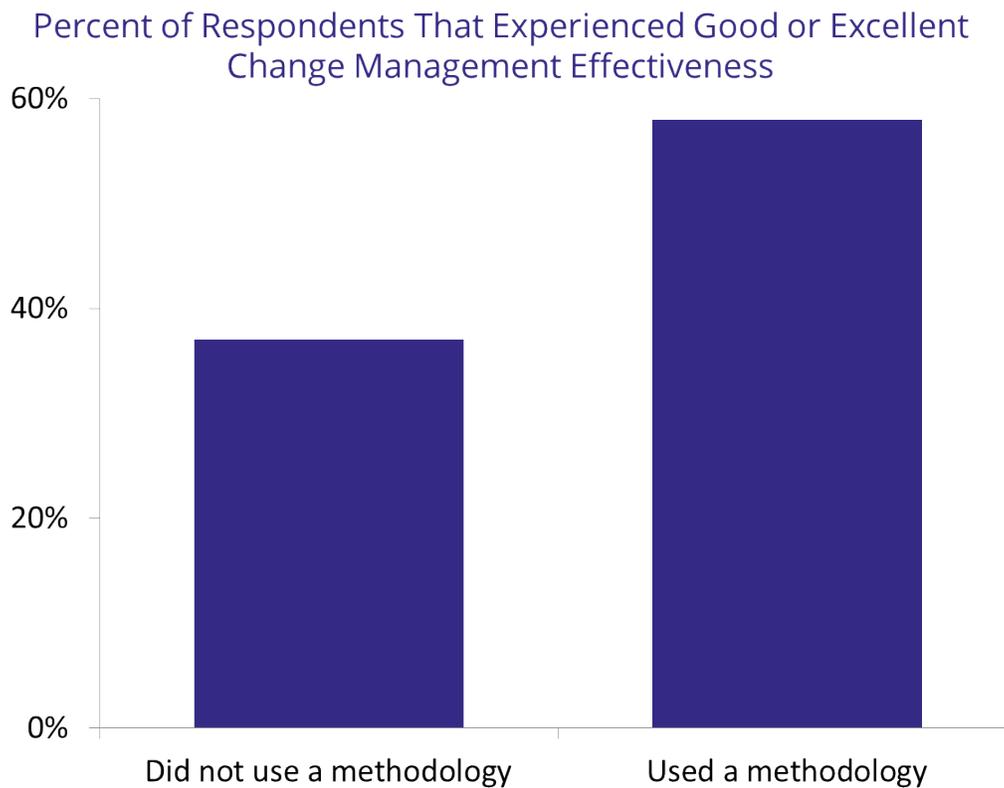
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## 2. Structured change management approach

An intentional and defined approach to managing change provides the structure necessary to stay on track. It makes sure time is spent on meaningful activities and allows space to identify and address gaps throughout the project lifecycle. Using a formal approach also makes processes repeatable for consistent application of change management on more initiatives throughout the organization. Key words that came up when participants described this top contributor included:

- Established
- Customizable
- Scalable
- Easy to implement across multiple changes
- Easy to apply at every phase of the project

The number of organizations using a specific methodology continues to grow. In 2003, fewer than 35% of participants used a change management methodology. In 2015, over 70% of participants used a methodology.



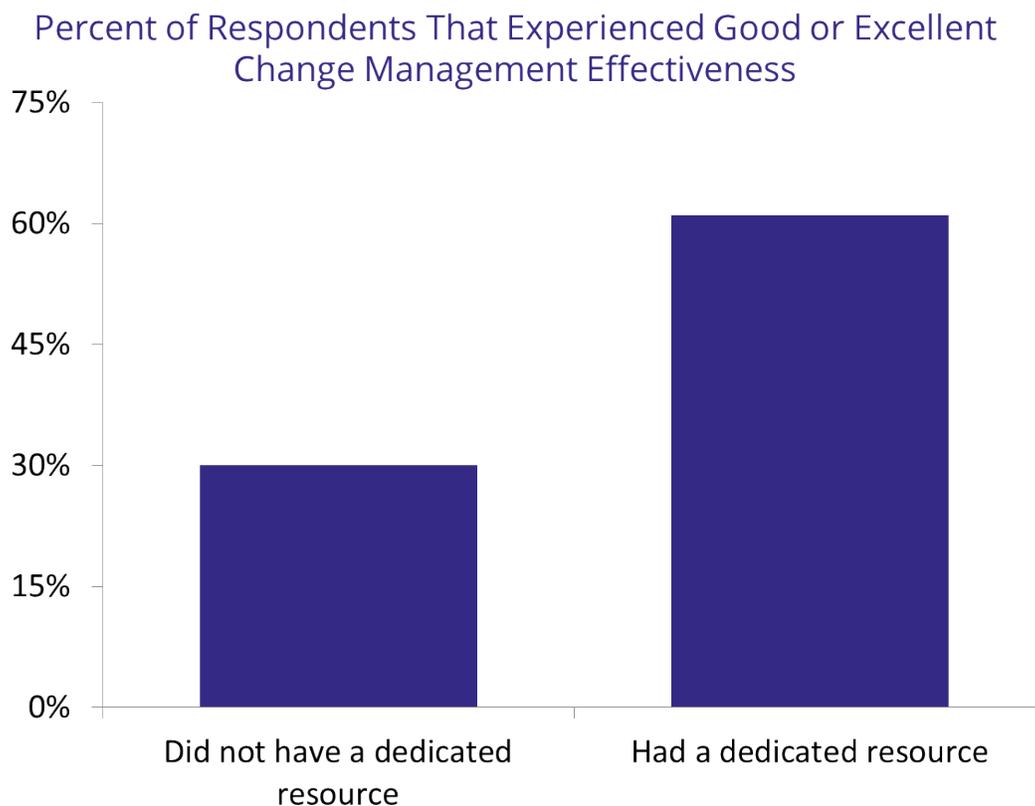
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### 3. Dedicated change management resources

Having a structured approach is critical, but initiatives and projects also need dedicated resources and funding to get the actual change management work done. To further understand what participants meant when they identified dedicated change management resources as a top contributor, consider the following summaries of their responses. Dedicated change management resources and funding means having access to:

- The appropriate amount of funding and resources
- Dedicated resources with change management experience
- A change team or community of flexible, ambitious, decisive, collaborative individuals

One participant provided this insightful comment: "If it isn't someone's job, then it's no one's job." To realize the benefits of change management, someone must be responsible for it and have access to an appropriate amount of funding. In analyzing the data, we identified a positive and meaningful correlation between having a dedicated resource (person) and overall change management effectiveness. Participants that had dedicated resources were significantly more likely to have good or excellent change management effectiveness than those without a dedicated resource.



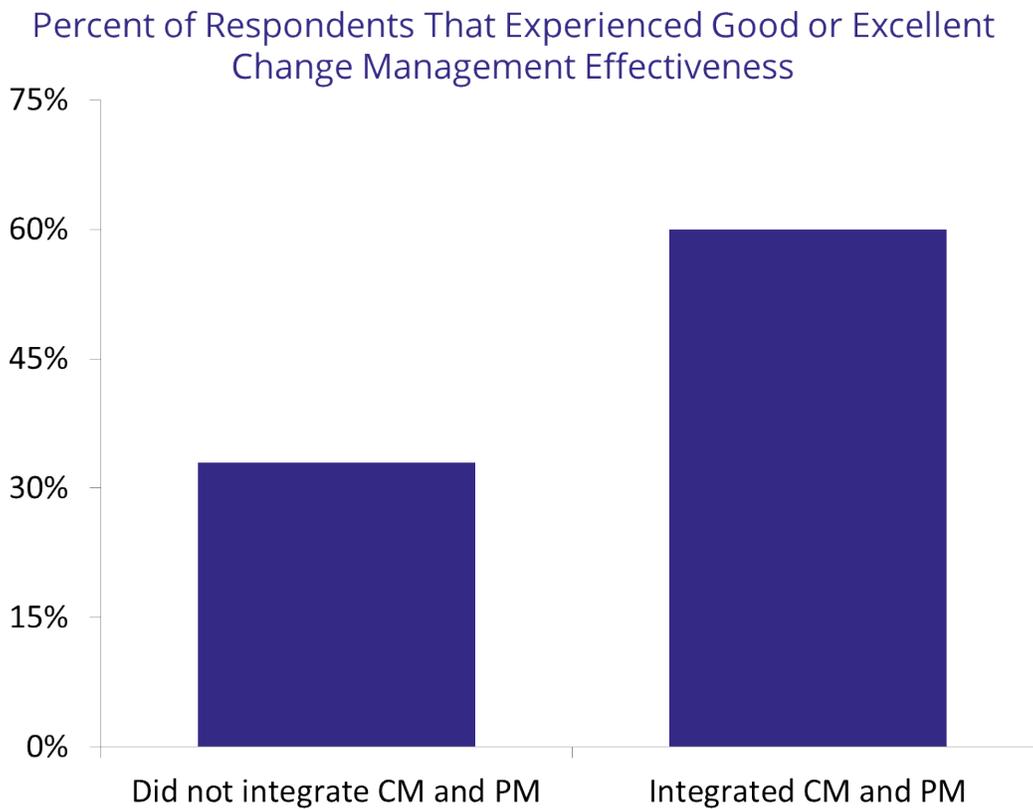
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#### 4. Integration and engagement with project management

Prosci's research has underscored the common trend of integrating change management work with the activities in the discipline of project management. These complementary disciplines naturally cross paths throughout the life of an initiative. In the latest study, 77% of participants integrated project management work and change management work to some degree. When they identified this as a top contributor to success, they gave examples of how they achieved integration:

- Fully integrating the change management and project management approaches
- Integrating change management activities into gate requirements
- Supporting collaboration between project and change management teams to develop the overall project plan

More and more organizations are realizing the value of integrating project management and change management. Participants who integrated these two disciplines were 16% more likely to meet or exceed project objectives than those who did not integrate.



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## 5. Employee engagement and participation

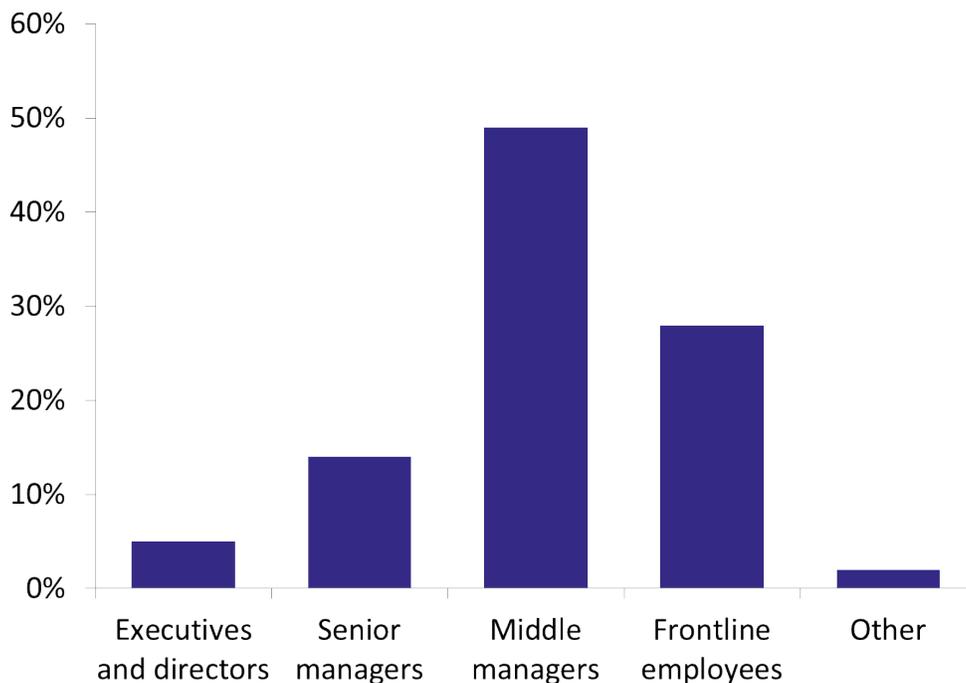
The reason we apply change management is to drive employee adoption and usage, which in turn generates organizational results and outcomes. Because of this objective, it's clear why employee engagement and participation was identified as a top contributor to success. Tactics to increase engagement in change include:

- Making employees aware of the need for change
- Conducting training
- Involving employees in the project design
- Hosting special events that promote the change

The goal of these efforts is to build an employee base that demonstrates a willingness to participate in the change and collaborates with the people administering the change.

Change requires individuals to do their jobs differently. For this reason, it is especially important to make an intentional change plan for the frontline employees whose jobs are changing. If you miss this step, you can expect resistance from this group. Study participants identified frontline employees as the second most resistant group. However, over 50% of participants believed at least half of this resistance could have been avoided with better change management.

Most Change-Resistant Group



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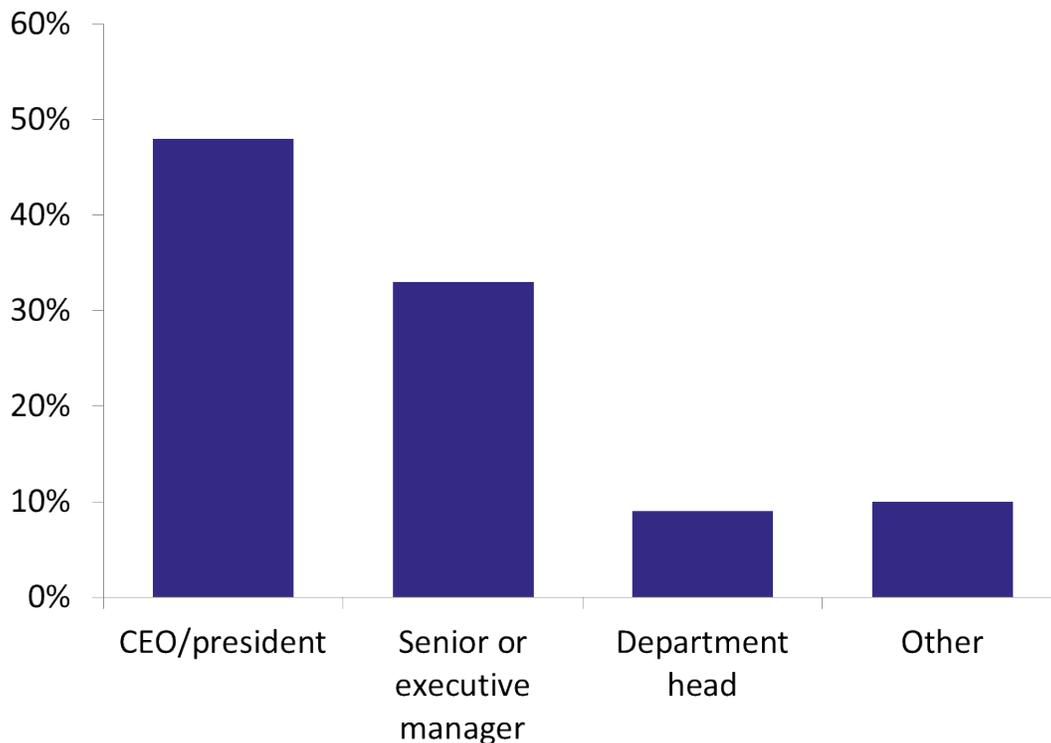
## 6. Frequent and open communication

Change management practitioners often struggle against the misconception that change management is “just communications.” Although it is much more than that, effective communications are critical to leading change successfully. As the sixth greatest contributor to success, frequent and open communications include:

- Delivering change messages in a timely and transparent manner
- Using effective channels and communicating frequently
- Tailoring messages for the intended audience
- Including clear and compelling reasons for the change and the implications of not changing

While the change practitioner is responsible for creating the communications plan and making sure it is carried out, rarely should the practitioner be the one doing the communicating. Participants identified the groups that employees prefer to hear change messages from:

Preferred Senders for Business Messages



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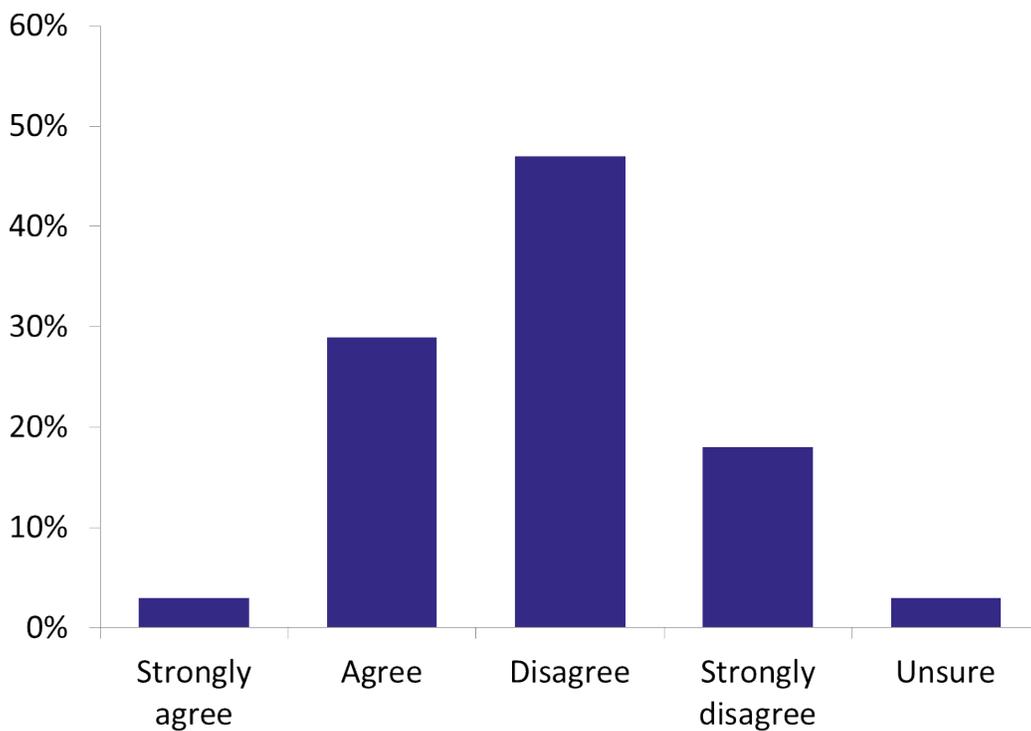
## 7. Engagement with middle managers

Managers can become a change practitioner's greatest ally in times of change because they are closest to employees impacted by change. Participants explained this top contributor as:

- Gaining the buy-in and involvement of middle management (to ensure positive interactions with frontline employees)
- Frequent meetings and one-on-one communication (to ensure managers' continued support)
- Training and coaching managers on their roles (to prepare them to be effective change leaders)

Middle managers were considered to be the most resistant group in Prosci's study. Similar to employee resistance, most participants believed a majority of the resistance experienced by managers could have been avoided. This is not surprising as the study also found that 65% of participants said their organizations did not adequately prepare managers to lead change.

### Managers and Supervisors Were Adequately Prepared



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## WHAT THIS RESEARCH MEANS TO YOU

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Prosci's benchmarking report presents data from more than 4,500 change leaders from 65 countries. The [real-world research](#) data provides insight and actionable input that you can apply to changes underway in your organization.

Use this list of top contributors to change success to evaluate your own change management work. Some of these top contributors to change management success have stood the test of time. Sponsorship has been identified as the greatest top contributor to change management success in every Prosci study since 1998. Do you give sponsorship the attention the research says it requires?

Make strategic and intentional plans to incorporate best practices into your change management planning. Have you experienced resistance from managers at similar levels as these study participants? If so, what more could you do make sure those leading impacted teams are adequately prepared for their role?

Use these top contributors to keep growing and learning. The newest top contributor joined the list in 2014: integration and engagement with project management. If this is not something your organization currently does, use the intelligence of what others are doing as a springboard for actions you can consider taking. Above all, identify ways you can add value to your organization by improving and expanding the impact of your change management practice.

# BUILD YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE CAPABILITY WITH PROSCI

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Over 80% of Fortune 100 companies have worked with Prosci to build their change capability. Our research-based, results-driven methodology is easy to apply. We can equip your organization with the tools to out-change others, remain agile and thrive during bigger, faster and more complex change.

## SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION WITH A PROSCI SOLUTION ARCHITECT

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Your no-cost consultation will:

- Define your organization's goals
- Assess your current state of change management maturity
- Review your change capability development strategy
- Provide actionable insights to drive your organization forward

[SCHEDULE MY CONSULTATION](#)

The People Side of Change

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