Change Management Maturity

SEVEN CONSULTING | CHANGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

Since its launch at the June 2023 Delivery Summit, Seven Consulting's Change Management Practice has swiftly delivered transformative outcomes for our clients across diverse industries, setting a solid foundation for growth and innovation in the space of change delivery and advisory services.

It has been a natural progression for Seven Consulting to expand its service offering to include Change Management as projects inevitably create organisational change, and this change needs to be directed as carefully and proactively as any part of the build and release cycle if benefits are to be realised and – just as importantly – sustained. Strong Change Management is critical to achieve project benefits.

Our Change Management team operates from Sydney and Melbourne with a mix of junior to senior talent with a solid history of delivering complex change ranging from a large to small scale. Our Change Management Framework and quality standards reflect the strong practices in place across our Delivery and PMO teams.

Seven Consulting's approach embeds change as a value-adding function from the start of a project to help ensure the drivers and outcomes of projects are built into execution and metrics. This approach lowers risk, maximises the opportunity to realise benefits over the long term, and delivers the vital last leg of post implementation value that is fundamental to the majority of business cases.

Change Management Maturity

Maturing your in-house Change Management function can reduce variability and improve consistency and results. This paper outlines the components that make up Change maturity, as well as provides a practical approach for undertaking a Change maturity uplift. Given this paper is written from real experiences, lessons learned are also shared to help guide your approach and efforts with this work.

Defining Change Management Maturity

Change Management maturity can be understood through four interconnected components: **Culture**, **Comprehension**, **Capability**, and **Capacity**. An in-house Change function should operate in alignment with the broader organisation. Even with strong frameworks, capable practitioners and all 'the right' tools, the Change function isn't likely to fully mature if the broader organisation isn't ready. Real maturity happens when the Change function grows in step with the organisation.

Culture

In the context of Change maturity, Culture refers to how the organisation views and responds to change on a daily basis. (This is not a reference to overall organisational culture in this instance.) This is shaped by how change is socialised or shared through the business, the collective mindset towards change (whether growth/fixed or positive/negative), and the readiness or speed at which the organisation is able to implement change. A mature change culture is characterised by observable behaviours that reflect a proactive approach to enabling change rather than resisting or passively accepting it.

Comprehension

Comprehension represents the level of knowledge, understanding and appreciation there is for Change Management across the organisation. It encompasses the perspectives of leaders, stakeholders involved in transformation, and Change Management practitioners, as well as related specialists. A mature organisation demonstrates a consistent and shared understanding of the purpose and value of Change Management in delivering organisational outcomes.

Capability

Capability describes the organisation's ability to perform effectively during periods of change. It is reflected in the strength of talent management practices and the organisation's focus on growth and development during periods of change, as well as the presence of fit-for-purpose standards that guide how change is planned and executed. The Capability component ensures that the organisation can continue to deliver and evolve even as it undergoes change.

Capacity

Capacity defines the organisation's limits on how much change it can absorb and enable while continuing to meet business-as-usual commitments. This includes having clear approaches to the prioritisation of change initiatives, undertaking role capacity analysis to understand where individuals and teams have bandwidth for change-related activities, and leveraging tools and technology to identify constraints and assist with the embedment of change.

How to Uplift Change Management

Uplifting Change Management maturity can follow a four-step process:

1 Discovery

Collect data and insights through interviews, observation, surveys and a review of existing Delivery and Change Management artefacts to build a clear picture of current maturity levels. This provides the evidence base for identifying where strengths and gaps exist.

2 Analysis and Theming

Evaluate the data to identify themes and acknowledge strengths and opportunities. This stage highlights areas requiring attention and ensures alignment with business priorities.

3 Recommendation and Business Case

Develop a roadmap for the maturity uplift and present it alongside a business case. The business case should demonstrate how uplifting maturity will contribute to more consistent and improved results, as well as delivery of objectives, outputs and outcomes (O3) for the function.

4 Implementation

Plan and execute the agreed uplift initiatives across the Change function and the broader organisation. This should be managed like a project with an active and visible sponsor, appropriate governance, and oversight to track progress.

Sample Focus Areas During Implementation

- **Culture:** The focus is not on changing the entire organisational culture. The suggestion is design for behaviours that enable change, and that can be achieved with improved governance, for example.

- **Comprehension:** Integrate learning on Change Management into the organisation's leadership and development programs to ensure that knowledge and appreciation of change principles are reinforced consistently.

- **Capability:** Focus on fit-for-purpose standards, but aim to strengthen the calibre of Change Management practitioners before introducing new frameworks or standards. Practitioner expertise forms a foundation for maturity uplift.

- **Capacity:** Establish clear criteria and constraints to inform project prioritisation decisions. This ensures that initiatives are aligned with the organisation's ability to absorb and sustain change.

Lessons Learned

1 Most importantly, a Change maturity uplift should be treated as a formal project, with appropriate governance, a sponsor and well-defined O3. Endorsement and support across the organisation are critical for success as isolated efforts will not deliver sustainable uplift.

2 When addressing Culture, the emphasis should be on designing for the future (think *ways of working* and *governance*) rather than attempting to "fix" existing culture (which can be a much bigger endeavour).

3 In practice, uplift initiatives often place disproportionate focus on Capability (particularly standards) and Comprehension (within the Change Management team). While these are important, they are insufficient on their own. True maturity requires coordinated attention across all four components of Culture, Comprehension, Capability and Capacity.

4 Capacity frequently emerges as one of the most significant obstacles to achieving maturity. While Culture is often perceived as the more complex challenge, Capacity issues can prove difficult to navigate as the pace and volume of change continue to increase.

Notes:

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