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MASTERING CHANGE MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY
TO SUCCESSFUL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

# Mastering Change Management Is the Key to Successful Digital Transformation

The vision of a world of seamlessly enabled digital technology that enhances, improves and builds upon human effort for maximum competitive advantage is a goal post for the future of virtually every industry. This is called Digital Transformation and is defined by MIT's Sloan School of management as the ability to use technology to expand the performance and reach[1] of organizations as driven by dynamic, intelligent applications that empower business functions at the enterprise level and maximize user engagement across channels.

But, according to Andrew Rymes, Microsoft Dynamics 365 practice lead for SADA Systems, a business and IT consultancy —to effectively integrate and maximize these technologies fully toward total digital transformation, is a process that depends upon change management.

"Having a vision for the future is critical, but just as important is understanding where you, as an organization, are starting from. Don't ignore your organization's existing capabilities and ability to absorb and manage change," says Rymes.

"A lot of organizations will recognize the importance of training when deploying a new technology but just as important is focusing on adoption as a critical post-implementation step, which is essential for long-term success and continued adoption." CRM projects are notorious for failing in the adoption phase. Having a plan to get people onboard and using the application is crucial to long term success.

Change management isn't just lasting adoption and acceptance but ongoing management through the change process has long been a concern for business projects for business projects regardless of whether they're technological, process or behavioral based. According to a study by McKinsey & Company quoted by the Harvard Business Review, sixty to seventy percent of organizational changes fail at managing change—a rate that has been consistent from the 1970s through today.[2]  Worse yet, Graziadio School of Business at Pepperdine University found that organizations stand to lose 65% of their investment when big projects have little or no change management support.

[1]The Nine Elements of Digital Transformation, MIT Sloan Review

To ensure successful client implementations, SADA has dedicated time to studying change management--including commissioning a survey of IT professionals from large and mid-market organizations earlier this year. The survey revealed a general consensus that organizations recognize that they need to change, especially if they want to digitally transform. However, even when technology has been deployed successfully they've failed to realize the benefits due to limited executive support, lack of training, and poor alignment around goals.[1]

Armed with this information—and anecdotal evidence from hundreds of clients for whom SADA has successfully implemented cloud-based solutions—the company has set about creating protocols to ensure successful change management and maximum ROI.

According to Rymes the first step is working with an organization to assess where it would like to be in three to five years. This is achieved in a series of immersive sessions called Value Envisioning Workshops to help stakeholders put together a roadmap to achieve that--and a mission-critical step toward solving business challenges and enabling digital transformation.

"We evaluate current toolsets, how they're being used and by whom. This helps an organization not only inform the tech project itself but change management and adoption strategies as well," he says.

Once that vision is painted, SADA helps the organization flesh out its most immediate business requirements, followed by longer-term goals. Then design and implementation occurs. During this phase it's critical to identify the people in the organization who understand the long-term vision. These are the likely early adopters who can become change champions--and they are invaluable to have on board.

"If you can demonstrate that there are people within an organization who understand the long-term vision and are readily adopting the tools that suggests to stakeholders that any change management hurdles are not because of technology but because of human behavior," says Rymes. "The goal is to empower employees through a proper roll out process and ongoing training, regardless of where they are on the adoption spectrum."

The SADA approach is to assure stakeholders and employees that as trusted advisors they are in it with them for the long haul because it's critical to continue engagement after implementation. SADA works with clients to collect data that reveals where adoption might be slow and to determine what employees really need to feel supported and enabled to adopt the technology, that drives long-term business transformation.

[2] Change Management Needs To Change, Harvard Business Review

## The 4 Ds of Change Management

**1** DISCOVERY draft a vision statement project goals and success criteria with prioritized solutions, all based on an immersive understanding of stakeholder's business challenges.

**2** DESIGN a system of adoption, communication, sponsorship, champions and data collection hand in hand with the technology design phase itself.

**3** DELIVERY is not just about a rollout but a culturally-attuned "roadshow" that helps employees understand and get excited about the new deployment.

**4** DEDICATION to employee satisfaction is only achieved through long term data collection and analysis that informs adoption labs, success dashboards, lunch and learn sessions, and other ongoing training to ensure employees are not only new technology adopters but evangelists.

And, because the company knows that maintaining an intense focus on empowering organizational change will be key toward moving organizations toward better business processes that propel positive change in the digital age. SADA is constantly evolving new approaches to successful change management like developing initiatives such as the Maturity Model Framework. The Framework will show organizations where they fit on an adoption curve in order to help them pursue creative methods to boost acceptance and implementation. One example might be pairing a slower adopter with someone who is more excited about technology.

"We also plan things like office hours to check in and provide support for those champions themselves-- making sure they are armed with tools to communicate and properly support the implementation on an ongoing basis," says Rymes.

Since ongoing technological advancement makes achieving digital transformation an ever-evolutionary process, even after a specific project is complete and fully adopted, SADA continues to work on change management well into the maturity of a build.

SADA recently completed a Dynamics CRM implementation with an organization that like many others, relied on paper processes and Excel worksheets, and has a predominantly mature workforce who are not "Digital Natives".  Management recognized the benefits of deploying CRM for process automation, tracking and visibility, and reporting and analytics, and the need for these tools to be in place to support future growth.  However, simply putting these tools in the hands of the workforce is not enough. Luckily, this organization recognized that Digital Transformation is a marathon and not a sprint, and that for them, effecting lasting organizational and behavioral change would take a combination of: internal marketing, training (remote and in-person), a peer "Champions" Program, and ongoing and continuous support for end users. This has allowed them to transform a remote workforce from paper and clipboards to a connected workforce that uses tablets to provide the business with real-time insights.

For SADA ensuring successful change management is also about remembering that the human element is key especially since ongoing technological advancements makes successfully operating in the digital age an ever-evolutionary process that requires stakeholders' adopters' full support. As such, SADA considers the true indication of a successful project or implementation not only to be whether business processes are transformed but whether employees are transformed into power adopters, maximizing the tools at their disposal for ultimate and lasting business advantage.

## About SADA Systems

SADA Systems, Inc. is a privately-held global leader in providing business and technology consulting services that transform organizations through cloud-based solutions. SADA Systems has a proven track record in enterprise consulting, cloud platform migration, custom application development, managed services, user adoption and change management. With a certified team of Microsoft Partner Professionals (P-Sellers), SADA successfully delivers on all Microsoft cloud solutions, including Microsoft 365, Office 365, SharePoint Online, Skype for Business, Teams, Power BI, Dynamics 365, Enterprise Mobility + Security, and Azure. To learn more, visit https://sadasystems.com.