

Assessing your readiness for change

Before you implement the change, use a change readiness assessment to check that stakeholders are ready. This critical step ensures the change will be embraced, embedded and used.

An assessment is typically carried out after the initial change activities are complete but before implementation. It can be a survey for larger projects or a series of informal discussions for smaller projects.

It assesses if the need for change is clear to people, the process is understood and that individuals are positive.

A successful change readiness assessment will alert you to any adjustments before implementation and help you manage the risk of failure.



Templates to help with change readiness
[Change readiness assessment](#)

How to do it

The change readiness assessment should include the following stakeholders:

- end users who will need to adopt the change
- their direct managers and those above
- those who can influence the success, or otherwise, of the change.

A survey tool for the assessment should be adapted to suit your particular change and group of stakeholders.

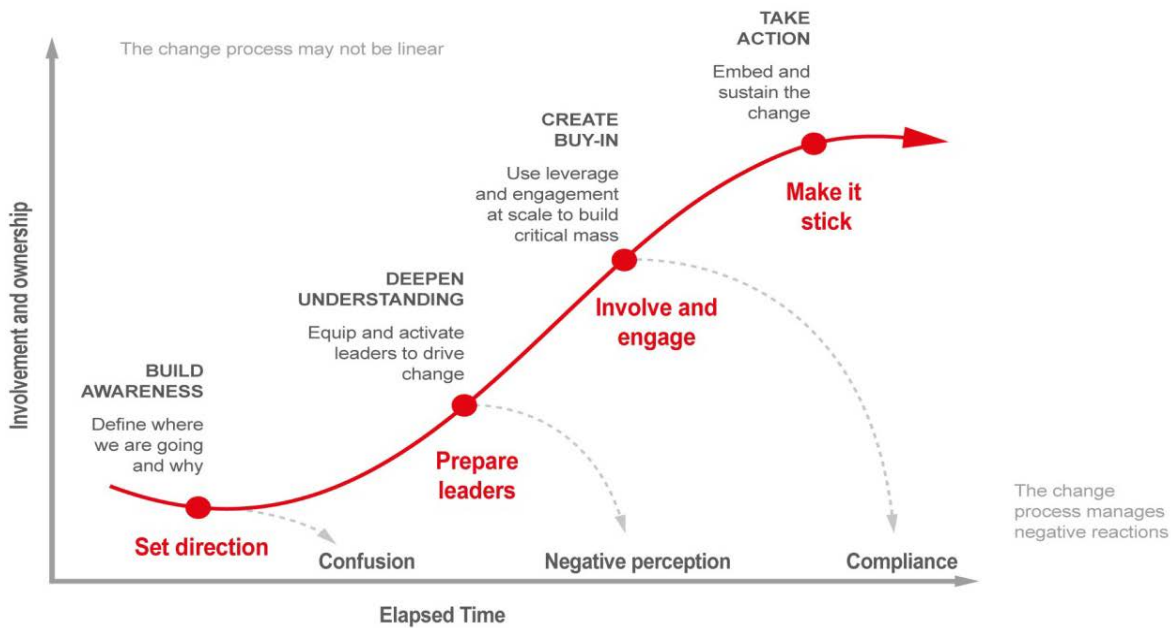
For smaller changes you can use less rigorous methods to determine the degree of stakeholder buy-in, such as informal meetings with stakeholders. The general questions to ask include:

- are you aware of the program?
- do you understand its purpose?
- do you believe the program will make a positive difference?
- do you feel you have had the opportunity to provide feedback and express your concerns?
- are you confident that the program is on track?
- Do you believe the outcomes will be achieved?

For larger or more complex changes, use the change readiness assessment to determine where stakeholders sit on the change commitment curve.



Change commitment curve



If stakeholders are not committed you significantly increase the likelihood of failure¹. For that reason use the change readiness assessment to inform your 'go/no go' decision and consider delaying implementation.

If you roll-out your change with a low degree of change readiness there is a risk of low uptake. Your change readiness assessment will measure the success of engagement activities at various points throughout implementation and highlight issues that need addressing. Depending on the degree of change, feedback channels such as social media, blogs and contact centres can also be used to measure the success of your stakeholder engagement.

Adjust for scale

| Scale of change | Guidance on how to apply this process |
|--|--|
| Small: Improving and refining methods, policies and procedures; the future state is not very different to the current ways of working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For small projects the change readiness assessment can be a quick and informal process. |
| Medium: Distinct modifications to strategies, structures and management processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a medium project the change readiness assessment can be conducted just on impacted staff. |
| Large: Substantial realignment, restructuring and transformation of all or part of the organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a large project involving a wide set of stakeholders, conduct a formal change readiness survey at on-going intervals. If the change is agency or department wide, the assessment can be undertaken online to reach a geographically dispersed workforce. |

¹ Conner, D (1992) 'Five views of change' *Training & Development*, March.

