

The Science And Practice Of Change: Engage Star Model For Measurable Organizational Change

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Abstract - Organizational change remains the critical nexus between strategic intent and realized value, yet a significant proportion of transformations fail to achieve sustained benefits due to inadequate management of the human element. This paper introduces the ENGAGE Star Model, an integrated and measurable framework designed to systematically guide organizations through the complexities of behavioral and structural transition. Built upon a synthesis of established process standards and psychological adoption models, the ENGAGE Star Model operationalizes change management by focusing on six distinct stages of individual commitment and mastery: Enlighten, Nurture, Guide, Activate, Grow, and Embed.

The model's core contribution is its ability to translate abstract change principles into actionable, data-driven interventions. This research posits that by applying the iterative and human-centric ENGAGE framework, organizations can significantly improve adoption rates, mitigate resistance, and accelerate the realization of strategic benefits. The findings offer a practical and academically rigorous methodology for practitioners seeking to master the science and practice of measurable organizational change.

Keywords: Organizational Change Management, Change Model, Behavioral Change, Adoption, Strategic Execution, ENGAGE

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective organizational change is the ultimate multiplier of strategic success. Whether the impetus is digital transformation, process optimization, or market realignment, an organization's ability to transition its people from a current state to a future state to achieve expected benefits is the defining factor for realizing value. Despite its critical nature, change remains inherently difficult. Behavioral inertia, individual discomfort, and the complexity of aligning roles, processes, and technology often lead to resistance, slow adoption, and ultimately, high failure rates for otherwise sound initiatives.

The Imperative for a Human-Centric, Structured Approach

Organizations invest heavily in new systems and strategies (the "technical side of the change") but frequently overlook the equally vital "people side of the change". This oversight creates a consistent gap, as organizational change can only truly happen through fundamental individual change. To ensure change success, it must be managed proactively as a transitional process, deliberately moving stakeholders from a comfortable known state to a productive new one. This process requires a structured approach, utilizing consistent management across projects, clear leadership, and a focus on adoption. This necessity for structure is typically met by process-oriented standards (e.g., the globally recognized ACMP® Standard for Change Management); however, these standards

deliberately leave the mechanism of people's adoption open to the practitioner, thus creating a gap addressed by this research.

However, the field often presents a variety of theoretical models—some prioritizing mindsets, others focusing on strategic vision, and still others detailing iterative frameworks. Practitioners managing complex, real-world transformations require a single, integrated methodology—a dynamic compass—that is robust, easy to apply, and explicitly maps out the people's journey through change. This framework must also be sufficiently flexible to address the unique context and diverse aspects (technological, cultural, process) of every single change initiative.

This paper contributes to the professional literature by presenting a comprehensive and measurable model for change that explicitly guides the practitioner through the people aspects of a transformation. It demonstrates how to integrate the three critical pillars of change success which are Leadership/Sponsorship, Project Management, and Change Management; using the ENGAGE phases as a unifying lens. The model ensures that efforts are focused on the realization of benefits, managed through robust planning, and sustained into the organization's new operational normal. The remaining sections will detail the theoretical structure and practical toolset of the ENGAGE Star Model, illustrating its power to secure commitment, accelerate adoption, and ensure that strategic change is successful and measurable.

II. METHODS

This study employs a conceptual framework approach to develop a change management model grounded in the collective practical experience of the research team. Unlike empirical methods that rely on formal data collection and statistical analysis, this methodology synthesizes insights drawn from fellows CCMP®s (Certified Change Management Practitioner) and change practitioners with over 50 years of combined field experience in change management, supported by critical reflection and comparative analysis of existing models such as ADKAR and Kotter's 8 Steps. This approach aims to provide a transparent and systematic guideline that reflects real-world applications and challenges, offering a practical yet structured perspective on change management. The model's development process includes iterative discussions, validation through team consensus, and alignment with established theoretical principles, ensuring rigor despite its practice-based origin. This conceptual framework method serves to address practical problems and expand understanding beyond current academic models by integrating seasoned practitioner judgment with scholarly knowledge.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lewin (1951) change model has become the foundation model for other models. It is a three-stage theory for managing organizational change, consisting of Unfreeze, Change, and Refreeze. The "Unfreeze" stage prepares people for change by showing the need for it, "Change" involves implementing new behaviors and processes, and "Refreeze" secures the new state by making it the new normal. The model uses the analogy of melting ice to mold it into a new shape and then solidifying it.

Creasey, Tim (2021) *The Importance of Integrating Individual and Organizational Change*, explains that organizational change is the collective result of individual change. Thus there is no successful organization change without individual change.

Hiatt, Jeffrey M (2006) *ADKAR: A model for change in business, government and our community*, outlines five specific and sequential outcomes an individual must achieve for a change to be successful:

- Awareness: The person understands the why behind the change—the business reasons for it and the risks of not changing.
- Desire: The person has the personal motivation to support and participate in the change. This involves addressing the "what's in it for me?" question for each individual.
- Knowledge: The person has the information and training on how to change and how to perform their job in the new way.

- Ability: The person is able to actually perform the new skills and behaviors required for the change. This takes knowledge and puts it into action.
- Reinforcement: The change is sustained over the long term. This involves actions like recognition, rewards, and feedback to ensure people don't revert to old habits.

In practicality of organizational change, often organizations do change piloting first before it is expanded to the whole organization, and this kind of approach is not yet described in the ADKAR model. Therefore there is needs to do remodeling on a change model to accommodate the fact of change piloting.

Kotter, John P (2014) Accelerate : building strategic agility for a faster-moving world, explain that there are eight accelerators in leading change, there are:

- Create a sense of urgency around a Big Opportunity
- Build and evolve a guiding coalition
- Form a change vision and strategic initiatives
- Enlist a volunteer army
- Enable action by removing barriers
- Generate (and celebrate) short-term wins
- Sustain acceleration
- Institute change

While ADKAR focuses on sequential individual readiness, Kotter's 8 Steps assumes linearity of leadership momentum. The ENGAGE model, in contrast, reframes adoption as cyclical, not sequential — thus challenging the linear-change paradigm

Prosci (2024) Change Management Process, explain that there are 3 phases in Change Management Process; Prepare Approach, Manage Change and Sustain Outcomes. Each phases has activities as follows:

- Prepare Approach:
 - Define Success – to define what the outcomes of the change
 - Define Impact – to define who has to do their jobs differently and how?
 - Define Approach – to define what will it take to achieve success?
- Manage Change:
 - Plan and Act – to prepare what an organization will do to prepare, equip and support people and execute the plan.
 - Track Performance – to track the execution performance
 - Adapt Actions – to define adjustment needed to achieve the outcome as defined
- Sustain Outcomes
 - Review Performance – to review whether the outcome has been achieved
 - Activate Sustainment – activities in ensuring the change would be sustain
 - Transfer Ownership – transferring ownership and responsibilities in sustaining the outcomes to operations (Business as usuals)

Bridges, W. (2004) offers Bridges Transition Model that outlines the psychological and emotional journey people experience during change, differentiating between change (the external event) and transition (the internal process). It consists of three stages: Endings, where people let go of the old ways; the Neutral Zone, a period of uncertainty where new ways have not yet taken hold; and New Beginnings, where individuals start to embrace and integrate the new routines and mindsets.

Association of Change Management Professionals (2025) do not offer a change model in their change management standard. Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP) only have a change management process which becomes 5 domains of change practitioner's capabilities. The 5 Domains of ACMP Change Management Standard are:

- Evaluate Change Impact
- Formulate Change Management Strategy
- Develop Change Management Plan
- Execute Change Management Plan
- Complete Change Management Effort

Theoretical Integration and Positioning

While existing models such as ADKAR (Hiatt, 2006) and Kotter's 8 Steps (Kotter, 2014) provide valuable frameworks for understanding individual readiness and leadership-driven change momentum, they operate under a predominantly linear paradigm. This linearity assumes that individuals and organizations progress through discrete stages of awareness, desire, knowledge, and reinforcement in a largely sequential manner.

In contrast, the ENGAGE Star Model redefines change adoption as cyclical and iterative, recognizing that people's adoption fluctuates in intensity and consistency across time. It integrates Lewin's (1951) dynamic equilibrium theory—that change is a continuous process of movement between stability and renewal—with Bridges' (2004) psychological transition perspective, emphasizing emotional transitions over procedural steps.

By fusing these perspectives into a single construct, the ENGAGE Star Model transcends the traditional dichotomy between individual and organizational change. It operationalizes people's adoption as a measurable continuum embedded within structured project governance, thus positioning itself as a bridging framework between behavioral science and process discipline.

This integration not only advances theoretical discourse but also provides a new lens for understanding change velocity, adoption maturity, and resistance predictability within transformation initiatives.

IV. RESULT & DISCUSSION

This section presents the conceptual architecture of the ENGAGE Star Model and interprets its systematic structure within the context of established organizational change processes. The discussion justifies how the deliberate structure of the six ENGAGE phases (Enlighten, Nurture, Guide, Activate, Grow, and Embed) directly enables the adoption trajectory, resistance mitigation, and strategic benefit realization.

The ENGAGE Star model is developed as a complement to ACMP standard, so in each process change practitioner can adopt the model, understanding all the how the change occurs. While according to Prosci, ADKAR is a model for individual change, The ENGAGE Star model is a change model that could be used for individual change to organizational change .

The ENGAGE Star Model is a cyclical framework designed to integrate human-centric adoption strategies with the structural rigor required for organizational change management. It is conceptualized around five primary phases of change work, mirroring established industry standards, and embeds the core concept of ENGAGE, the heart of individual and organizational motivation, at its center.

Structure of the Model

The model is divided into five sequential Process Groups (Evaluate, Formulate, Develop, Execute, and Complete), each of which encompasses specific change management activities and outputs:

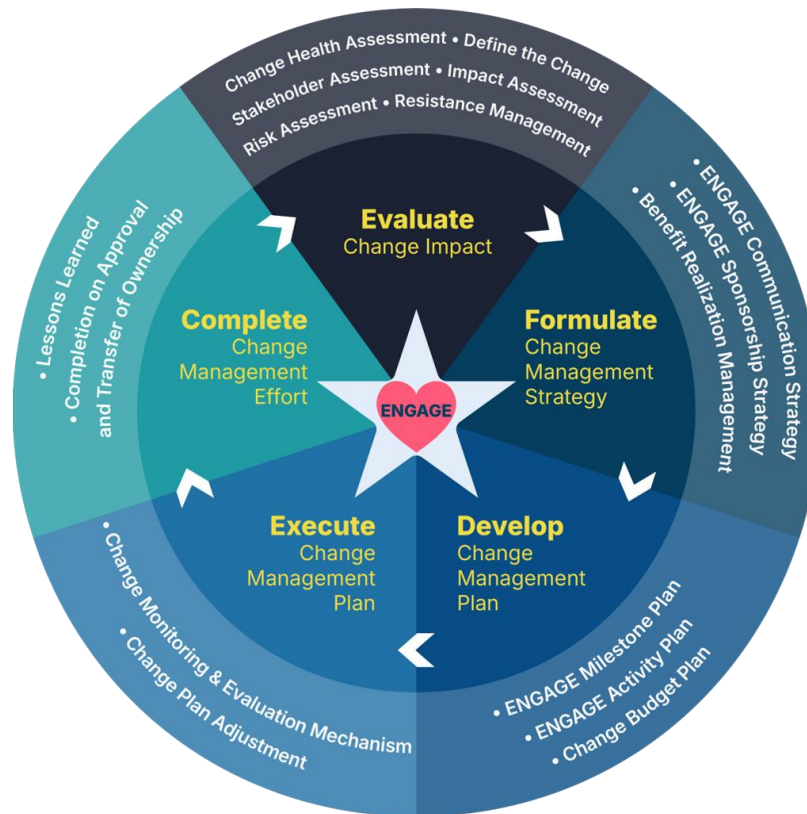


Figure 1 : ENGAGE Star Change Model is a compliment for ACMP Standard of Change Management

1. Evaluate Change Impact

This initial phase focuses on diagnosing the current state and defining the parameters for the change initiative. The core activities in this phase include:

- **Change Health Assessment:** A critical diagnostic to visualize the readiness and health of the change initiative by assessing the balance and strength of three critical roles: Sponsorship, Project Management, and Change Management.
- **Define the Change:** Clearly articulating the project, its purpose, and its objective.
- **Stakeholder Assessment:** Identifying and evaluating stakeholders' potential support for or resistance to the change.
- **Impact Assessment:** Analyzing the consequences of the change on people, processes, and systems.
- **Risk Assessment:** Identifying potential transition challenges and organizational readiness concerns to guide mitigation efforts..
- **Resistance Management:** Identifying and pre-empting potential areas of resistance.

2. Formulate Change Management Strategy

This phase translates the diagnostic information from the evaluation phase into a high-level strategic approach. The key outputs are strategic frameworks derived from the insights of the prior assessments:

- **ENGAGE Communication Strategy:** Defining how to convey the why and how of the change to affected people in each phase of E-N-G-A-G-E. .

- **ENGAGE Sponsorship Strategy:** A plan to prepare and leverage sponsors to actively lead the change initiative.
- **Benefit Realization Management:** Establishing a connection between the change effort and measurable organizational outcomes/benefits.

3. Develop Change Management Plan

This phase details the actionable plans and resources required to implement the strategy. It involves breaking down the strategic approach into tactical components integrated with the overall project plan:

- **ENGAGE Milestone Plan:** Defining target dates for achieving key stages of individual and organizational adoption.
- **ENGAGE Activity Plan:** Detailing the specific activities, roles, and resources for the communication, coaching, training, and resistance management efforts.
- **Change Budget Plan:** Allocating necessary financial resources across essential budget aspects such as training, communication, materials, and consultation.

4. Execute Change Management Plan

Execution is the phase where the developed plan is put into action, monitored, and adjusted in an iterative manner. This reflects an adaptive approach, leveraging continuous feedback:

- **Change Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanism:** Tools to periodically track the progress of activities and assess the level of change adoption.
- **Change Plan Adjustment:** Modifying activities based on real-time feedback and monitoring results to ensure alignment with adoption goals.

5. Complete Change Management Effort

The final phase focuses on formally closing the change initiative and ensuring long-term sustainment. This secures the investment and embeds the new way of working as the organizational norm:

- **Lessons Learned:** A formal review to document what went well, what went wrong, and to establish best practices for future change initiatives..
- **Completion and Transfer of Ownership:** Gaining formal approval for change completion, transferring the ownership of new processes and systems to operational resources, and releasing change resources.

The Core Concept: ENGAGE

The central ENGAGE star represents the unifying people dimension, emphasizing that all activities within the five external phases are intended to drive the six stages of individual and organizational adoption: Enlighten, Nurture, Guide, Activate, Grow, and Embed. This focus on the behavioral lifecycle ensures that the change is not merely implemented technically but is fully utilized and sustained by the affected individuals.

In practicality of organizational change, often organizations do change piloting first before it is expanded to the whole organization, and this kind of approach is not yet described in the ADKAR model. Therefore we add a Grow phase in our ENGAGE model.

The ENGAGE model is a six-phase framework designed to provide a structured, human-centric methodology for driving and sustaining individual adoption during organizational change. It serves as a complementary tool to macro-level change standards, detailing the specific behaviors, motivations, and support activities required to move individuals from initial awareness to mastery and institutionalization.

Phase	Core Concept	Objective
Enlighten	Build awareness and urgency of change	To build awareness and urgency for change.
Nurture	Cultivate interests', motivations and needs	To cultivate interests', motivations and needs.
Guide	Coach, support, and enable adoption	To coach, support, and enable adoption.
Activate	Initiate new behaviors and process	To initiate new behaviors and processes.

Grow	Improve and expand impact	To improve and expand impact.
Embed	Institutionalize and sustain change	To institutionalize and sustain change.

Table 1 : ENGAGE model in detail

Detailed Explanation of the Phases:

Enlighten Phase. This phase focuses on intellectual comprehension of the change. The primary objective is establishing a compelling business case, explaining the why and why now to create a sense of urgency and necessity. Without this foundation, efforts in later phases will encounter significant resistance, rooted in a lack of understanding or perceived relevance.

Nurture Phase Moving beyond mere awareness, the Nurture phase targets the emotional and motivational aspects of change. The objective is to foster personal desire and commitment by clearly articulating the "what's in it for me" (WIIFM) at the individual level. This engagement is crucial for reducing skepticism and cultivating an active desire to participate, often involving visible sponsorship and the empowerment of early adopters.

Guide Phase. The Guide phase addresses the knowledge and ability gap required for the future state. This is achieved through structured learning and development activities, including targeted training programs and establishing coaching/mentoring support. The successful output of this phase is ensuring that individuals know how to perform the new tasks and navigate the new processes.

Activate Phase. Activation is the crucial transition point where individuals begin performing the new behaviors and using new processes in their day-to-day roles. This involves the integration of the change into standard operating procedures and providing immediate, ongoing coaching and feedback to address initial difficulties and struggles.

Grow Phase. Once activated, the objective shifts to driving proficiency and continuous improvement. This phase focuses on maximizing performance and expanding the positive impact of the change. Activities include encouraging peer-to-peer learning, rewarding consistent use of new practices, and empowering employees to identify further improvements.

Embed Phase is the final phase, Embed, ensures the sustainability of the change, making it the new cultural norm. Institutionalization involves aligning organizational structures, such as performance management and reward systems, to reinforce the new behaviors and mindsets, thereby preventing a regression to the old ways of working.

Research and Practical Implications

This section discusses the broader implications of the ENGAGE Star Model for both academic research and professional change management practice.

Research Implications

The ENGAGE Star Model contributes to the change management body of knowledge by addressing the need for a unified, behavioral-focused framework that complements existing process standards.

Bridging the Process-Behavior Gap: The model systematically integrates the six stages of individual adoption (ENGAGE) with the high-level process groups defined by industry best practices. This synthesis allows for the testing of hypotheses regarding the timing and efficacy of specific behavioral interventions within defined process phases (e.g., Formulate Strategy).

Advancing Measurement and Diagnostics: By integrating quantifiable assessment tools, such as the Change Health Assessment and the Stakeholder Assessment's ENGAGE scoring, this research provides fertile ground for quantitative studies. Future researchers can validate the correlations between low scores in specific ENGAGE phases (e.g., Guide or Activate) and eventual project outcomes (e.g., adoption rates, benefit realization), thereby enhancing the predictive power of change diagnostics.

Sponsorship Efficacy Research: The model explicitly embeds Sponsorship as a critical pillar and links it to specific behaviors (e.g., actively building a coalition) and strategic outcomes (e.g., Benefit Realization Management). This structure offers a clear pathway to conduct empirical research on the impact of sponsor engagement over the entire change lifecycle, moving beyond anecdotal support for its importance.

Practical Implications

The ENGAGE Star Model offers several direct, actionable benefits for change management practitioners, organizational leaders, and Project Management Offices (PMOs).

Targeted and Efficient Interventions: By utilizing the behavioral indicators ("What You Hear," "Other Indicators") mapped to each ENGAGE phase, practitioners can move away from generic, one-size-fits-all strategies. Instead, resources can be efficiently allocated to the exact phase where a stakeholder group requires intervention (e.g., focusing on Guide activities only when knowledge and skill gaps are detected, rather than perpetually repeating Enlighten communications).

Structured Resistance Management: The model institutionalizes resistance management, treating it not as an unexpected crisis, but as a predictable phenomenon linked to specific deficiencies in the change process (e.g., lack of clarity in Enlighten or insufficient training in Guide). This proactive approach encourages the use of targeted tactics relevant to the adoption phase (e.g., "Create Hope" in Enlighten versus "Remove Barriers" in Guide).

Sponsor Accountability and Coaching: The model provides a clear roadmap for articulating and coaching the required actions of sponsors, moving them from passive authorizers to active, visible leaders. This structured expectation, coupled with the Change Health Assessment, enables the Change Lead to have data-driven conversations with leadership regarding their performance and necessary course correction.

Benefit-Driven Execution: By mandating the definition and tracking of benefits and outcomes via the Benefit Realization Management strategy and subsequent execution phase, the model ensures that the technical completion of the project is intrinsically linked to the sustained adoption and new ways of working needed to realize value for the organization.

V. CONCLUSION

The persistent challenge of translating strategic vision into sustained organizational outcomes mandates a rigorous yet adaptable approach to change management. This study has introduced the ENGAGE Star Model as an integrated framework that addresses the critical need for a human-centric methodology within structured change initiatives. By embedding the six-phase ENGAGE adoption cycle—from Enlighten to Embed—at the core of the change process, the model provides practitioners with a dynamic lens to diagnose people readiness, tailor communication, mitigate resistance, and drive proficiency.

The utility of this model lies in its ability to transform abstract concepts into measurable, actionable steps. The application of tools such as the Change Health Assessment and stakeholder scoring mechanisms quantifies the often-overlooked people side of change, demonstrating that successful transformation relies equally on the technical project, active sponsorship, and dedicated change management efforts.

In closing, the ENGAGE Star Model serves not merely as a sequential guide, but as a circular system for continuous adaptation and learning. It confirms that the ultimate success of any strategic initiative is realized only when new behaviors are fully adopted and institutionalized. This work contributes to the advancement of change management as a professional discipline by providing a complete, practical framework that reliably shepherds organizations and their people through the challenging yet essential journey to the future state.

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