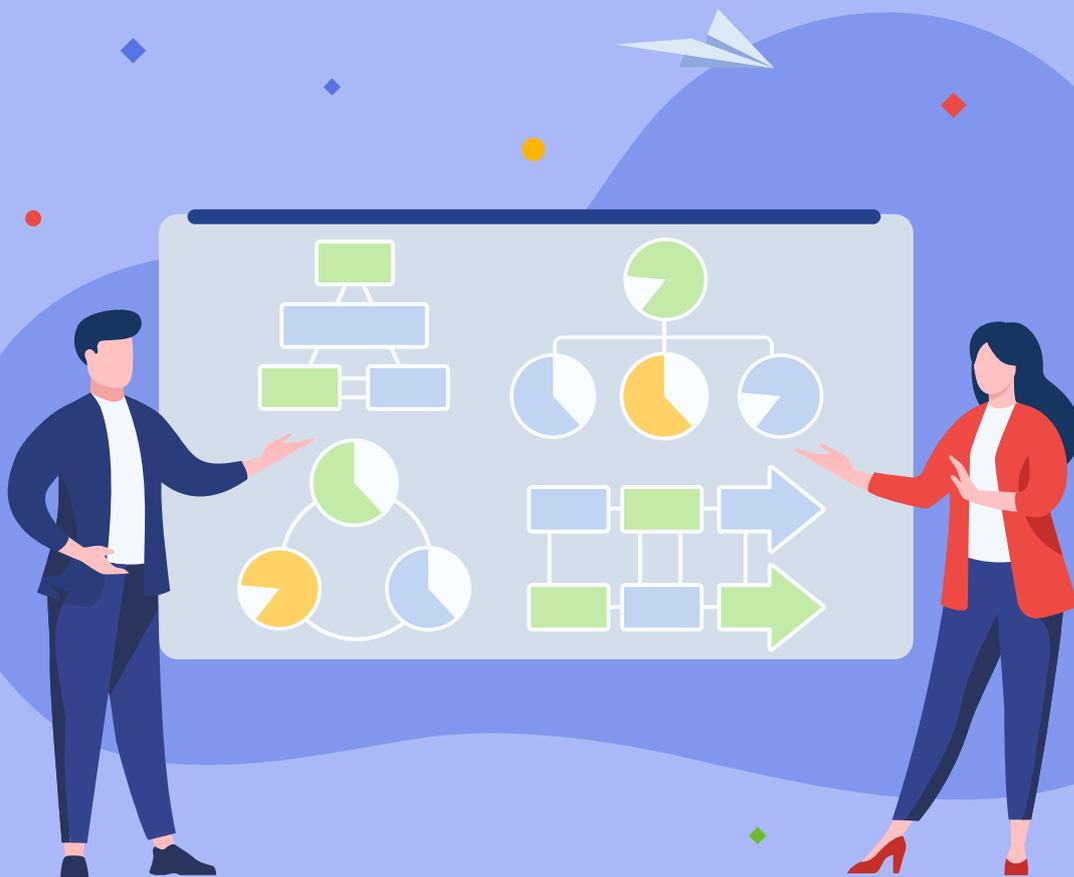
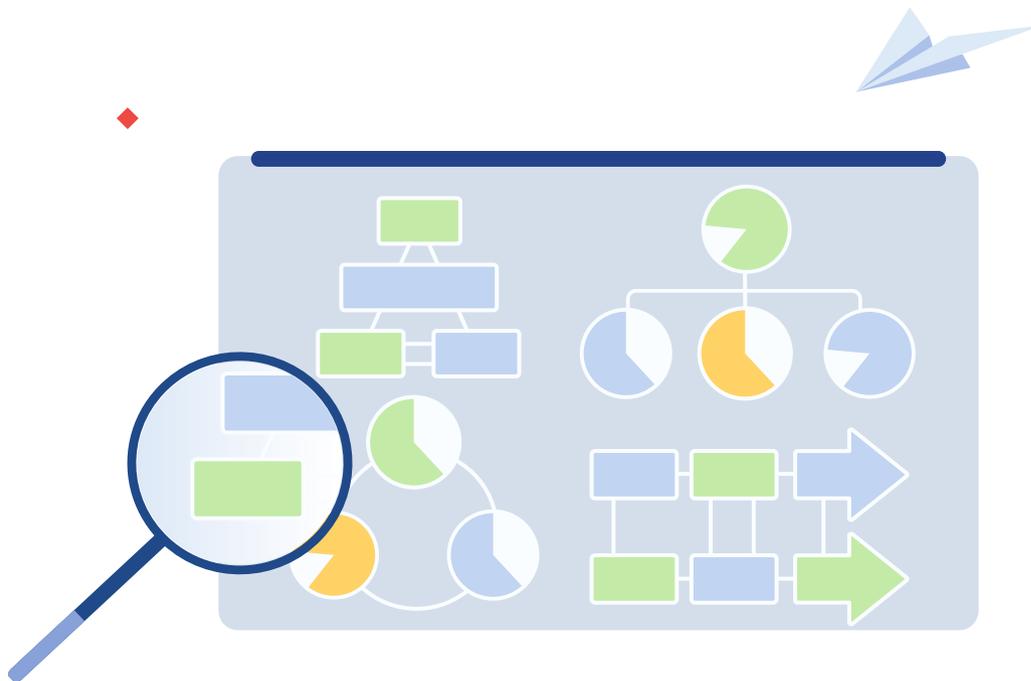


# A Step to Successful Change Implementation: How to Choose a Change Management Model



## CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODELS' OVERVIEW

The need for organizational change leaves no room for doubt, so every company should determine the way it's going to embrace it. Different approaches to managing change are reflected in change management models (frameworks) that divide this process into clear and achievable steps as well as give an insight into the stages people go through when embracing change.



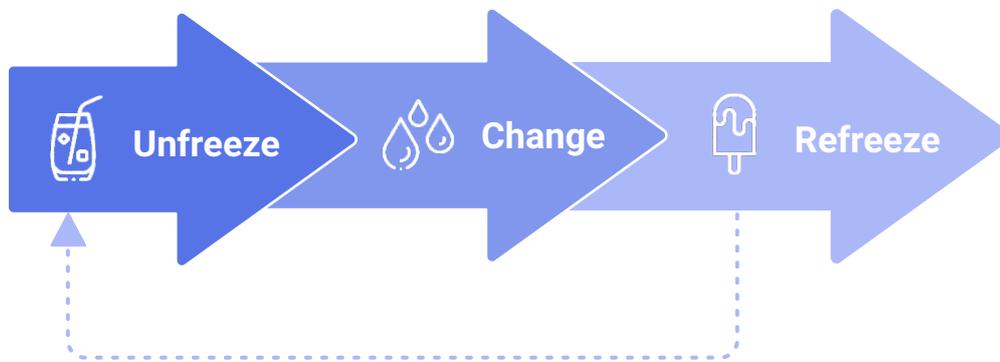
These models can be grouped into three categories depending on their main focus:

- ▶ models that describe the process of change,
- ▶ models that draw attention to the important elements of change,
- ▶ models that address people's perception of change.

Let's explore them in more detail.

## Models Focusing on the Process of Change

### 1. Lewin's Change Management Model



This model was developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1950s. It's rather simple and divides the change process into three major stages.

**Unfreeze** (pre-change). At this stage, you should:

- ▶ analyze the current state of things and what areas need change,
- ▶ substantiate the need for change to your employees so that they know what to expect.

**Change**. This is when you put the change into action and help your employees embrace it. Communication, education, and support are three pillars of this stage.

**Refreeze** (post-change). This stage involves the following steps:

- ▶ stabilization of change,
- ▶ integration of change into routine processes,
- ▶ developing ways to sustain the change,
- ▶ reviewing how the new processes work. [1]

The simplicity of this model is its advantage and disadvantage at the same time. On the one hand, it's easy to understand and implement. But on the other hand, it's not detailed enough, and its stages can be interpreted in different ways, which makes it somewhat ambiguous.

## 2. Kotter's 8-Step Change Management Model



This theory is mainly focused on the steps people involved in the change implementation should go through. It aims to turn possibly resistant employees into receptive change participants by means of teamwork, trust, and transparency. The model is implemented in eight stages.

1. **Creating a sense of urgency** to motivate people.
2. **Putting together a guiding coalition** to lead, coordinate, and communicate the activities related to change implementation.
3. **Forming a strategic vision** of what you expect to accomplish.
4. **Communicating this vision to everyone** involved in the change management process to get their buy-in and make sure that everyone is on the same page.
5. **Identifying and removing roadblocks** (e.g. inefficient processes).
6. **Generating short-term wins** (goals) that will break the change management process into achievable steps and help people recognize their positive results.
7. **Sustaining acceleration** throughout the change implementation process.
8. **Instituting change** and making sure that the new processes and behaviors are strong enough to replace the old ones. [2]

The advantages of this model are obvious: it focuses on getting employees' buy-in that is extremely important for the success of change initiatives and offers clear and detailed steps to guide organizations through the change process. However, it doesn't provide any recommendations on how to sustain change, which can be considered as the model's disadvantage.

### 3. Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Model



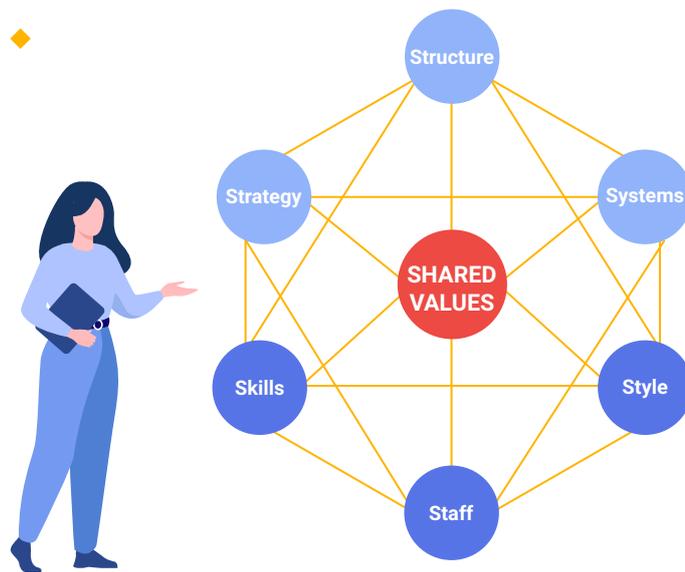
This model is also known as the Deming Wheel. It describes a cyclical and iterative process of continuous change and improvement. What is special about this framework is that it makes it possible to make small but incremental changes and assess each of them before moving to the other one. As time goes on, these small changes can lead to a large transformation. Let's explore the main steps of the PDSA Model.

- 1. Plan:** set an objective, plan the experiment, and predict outcomes.
- 2. Do:** do the experiment and collect the results.
- 3. Study:** review the results and compare them with those predicted.
- 4. Act:** if the results are satisfactory, implement the new standard. [3]

What is good about this model is that it allows organizations to “eat the elephant one bite at a time” and implies continuous improvement. In addition, it's a versatile solution that can be used to improve both products and processes. The most significant weak point of the model is that it may take too long to implement a large-scale change with such an approach.

## Models Describing Important Elements of Change

### 4. McKinsey 7-S Framework



This framework was developed in the late 1970s by the experts of McKinsey consultancy Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman. It embraces seven fundamental elements of an organization that should be taken into account during change implementation. These elements are grouped into the hard ones (those that are easy to identify and control) and the soft ones (that are subjective and are more difficult to change).

**Hard elements:**  
strategy,  
structure,  
system.

**Soft elements:**  
shared values,  
staff,  
style,  
skills.

[4]

The strength of this model is that it focuses on all the important components of an organization that are affected by change and takes into account both people and processes. However, it doesn't provide any roadmap to follow, which makes it rather a checklist to assess the state of your organization.

## 5. ADKAR Change Management Model



For successful change implementation, it's critical for employees to have a clear understanding of what will be changed, why, and how. The ADKAR model consists of five building blocks of change. They are as follows:

### 1. Awareness.

Developing employees' awareness involves sharing the nature of change with them, explaining why change is necessary, and describing the risk of not changing.

### 2. Desire.

It's about people's willingness to be a part of change. This element is considered to be the most difficult to achieve as it should be a personal decision that cannot be under direct control from the outside.

### 3. Knowledge.

This element is only effective when people understand the need for change and want to participate in it. To build employees' knowledge, you should provide them with training and coaching, various educational resources, as well as address their skill gaps so that everyone knows how to accomplish their part of change.

### 4. Ability.

In addition to training, people should receive sufficient tools (e.g. support from coaches, networking etc.) to develop their own abilities to accomplish their part of change.

### 5. Reinforcement.

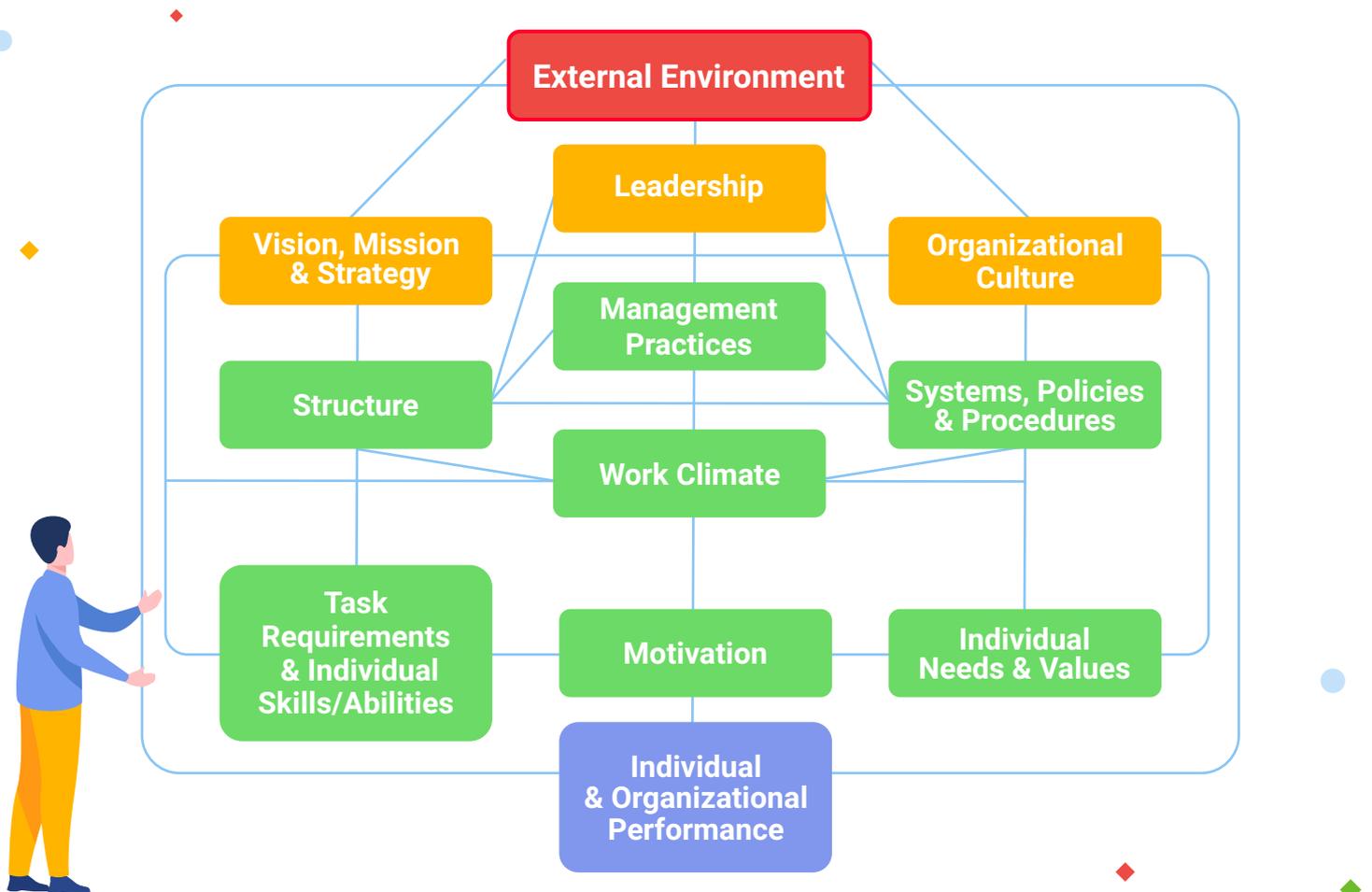
Sustaining change is even more difficult than its implementation, which makes reinforcement a critical component of successful change. So, go on working with employees and stakeholders to make sure they stick to the new processes and behavior. [5]

The model has the following benefits:

- ▶ It's a ready-made solution, so organizations won't have to reinvent the wheel.
- ▶ It provides a lot of training and support.
- ▶ It focuses on achieving real results.

However, this model can be unsuitable for some businesses, as it doesn't provide any long-term vision and a step-by-step strategy.

## 6. Burke-Litwin Model of Organizational Change and Performance



The Burke-Litwin Model was developed by organizational change consultants. It demonstrates various drivers of change in an organization and ranks them according to their importance: the most critical ones are placed at the top, while the lower layers are believed to be less important.

At the same time, all of these elements are integrated and influence each other. Here is an overview of them ranked from the most influential ones to the least and divided into 4 categories.

### 1. Input: External environment.

It involves economic factors, social trends, market conditions, etc. – the factors that create the need for change.

### 2. Throughput: Transformational Factors.

These elements make up the fundamental structure of an organization and are the key to its performance:

- ▶ mission and strategy (the purpose for an organization's existence),
- ▶ leadership (behaviors, attitudes, and values of senior management),
- ▶ organizational culture (norms of behavior and values accepted and expected in an organization).

### 3. Throughput: Transactional Factors

These elements of a company are changed more easily, but don't have such an impact on an organization's performance as the transformational ones. They include:

- ▶ structure (involves roles and functions, communication, lines of authority, and decision-making);
- ▶ systems (processes and procedures that support operations);
- ▶ management practices (the way managers execute the strategy day-to-day);
- ▶ work climate (employees' prevailing attitude and morale);
- ▶ task requirements and individual skills (matching the skills required for completing a task with the skills possessed by an employee completing this task);
- ▶ individual needs and values (employees' satisfaction with the processes and systems within an organization);
- ▶ motivation (internal and external factors that motivate people to perform well).

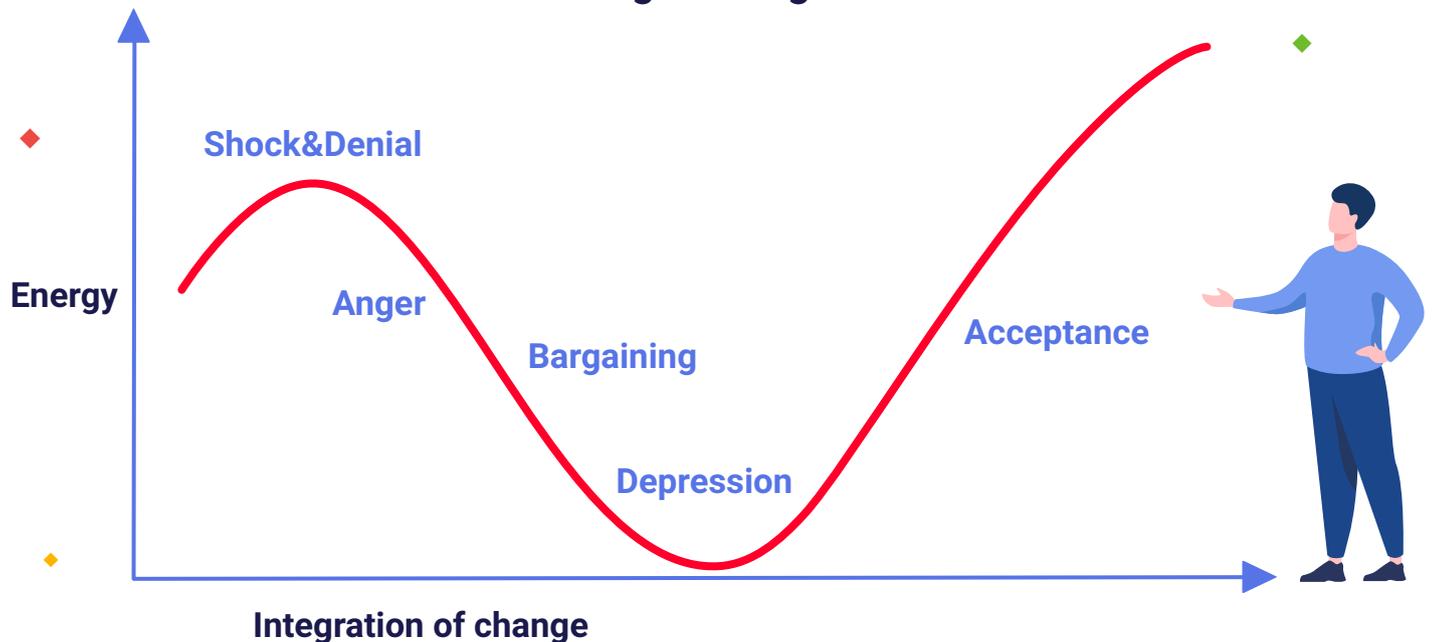
### 4. Output: Individual and Organizational Performance

In the end, change is considered to be effective if it has a positive impact on performance of employees and an organization as a whole. In turn, it will impact the external environment triggering the change mechanism again. [6]

The advantage of this model is that it's comprehensive, covers important factors that drive change, and explains why change is happening. However, it doesn't provide any strategy on how to implement it. The other disadvantage is that it puts external environment factors on the top as the primary driver of change, which is considered as a matter of argument.

## Models Addressing People's Perception of Change

### 7. Kübler-Ross Change Management Framework



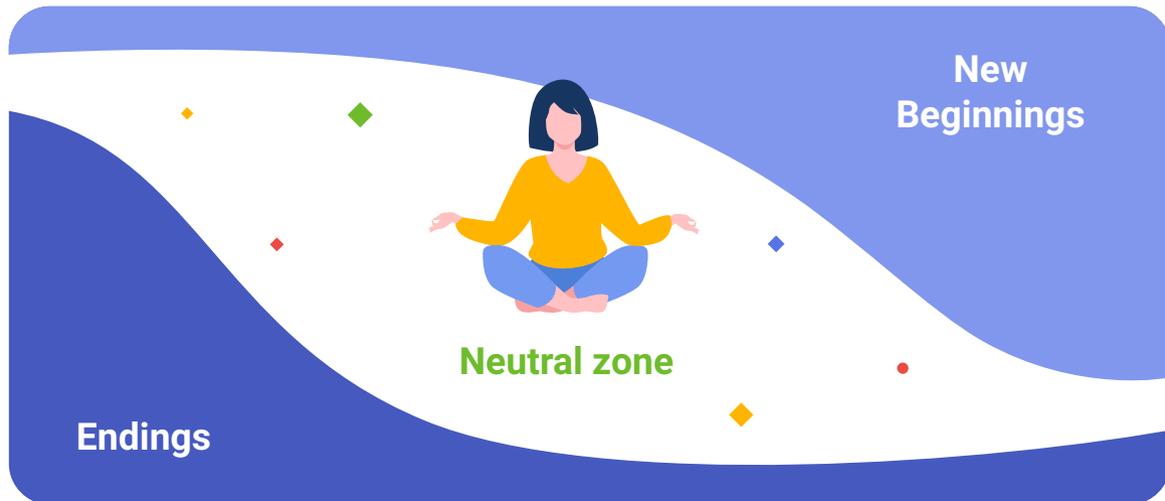
This framework was developed by the psychiatrist Elizabeth Kübler-Ross to describe people's experience of grief. As long as the mechanism is similar to experiencing change, this model can also be used to describe what people in an organization feel about it. It's also known as the Change Curve. Here are the stages people go through on the way to accepting change.

1. **Denial** is the first reaction to change. This stage can be rather short-term, but can affect productivity and a person's behavior in general.
2. **Anger** (frustration) – this stage is characterized by searching for a scapegoat to lay the blame on.
3. **Bargaining** is characterized by attempts to postpone the changes that are going to happen.
4. **Depression** is the lowest point of the curve, which is also characterized by apathy, isolation, disengagement, and low performance.
5. **Acceptance** means that the change is not only fully accepted by a person, but new behaviors and processes are implemented into work.

Notably, each person's reaction to change is different, so not all of the employees will experience all of these stages. Also, some people may be stuck in a particular state longer than others. [7]

The strength of this model is that it focuses on employees' feelings, concerns, and needs. Organizations that make efforts to understand them are more likely to overcome the barriers when implementing change. However, it's rather a supplementary model to support your change management strategy than a self-sufficient change management approach: it doesn't provide any actionable steps to follow.

## 8. Bridges Transition Model



The model was created by a change consultant William Bridges. Its main focus is on the emotional transition people go through when experiencing and accepting change. According to this model, change will only be successful when organizations address this transition and support people through it. The Bridges' model distinguishes three stages of transition.

### ► Endings.

This is the first transition phase when people understand that they are losing something (e.g. processes, team members, relationships, locations) and learn how to manage their losses.

### ► Neutral zone.

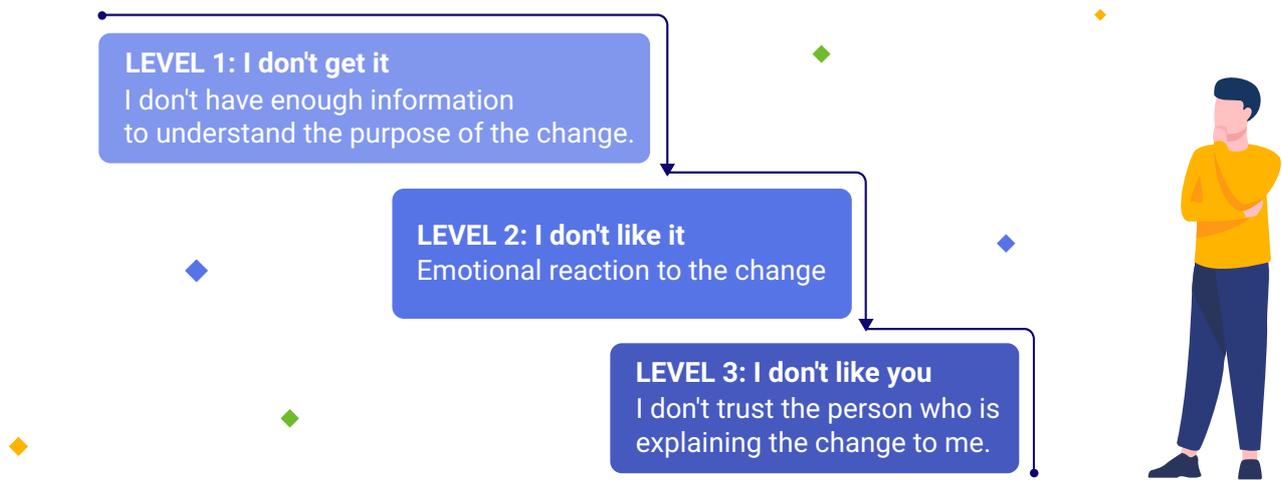
This phase is the core of the transition process and the basis for new beginnings. Employees are mastering new processes and learning to cope with their new roles.

### ► New beginnings.

New beginnings involve new values and attitudes. When the transition has been properly managed, people will not only accept their new roles, but feel comfortable about change, realize their contribution and effectively participate in new processes. [8]

The advantage of this model is that it addresses the very transition state which is an integral part of change. At the same time, it doesn't provide any clear strategic framework and may be interpreted in different ways. Similarly to Kübler-Ross Change Curve, Bridges Transition Model can be used to supplement a more actionable change management framework.

## 9. Maurer's 3 Levels of Resistance Model



The model was developed by the change management expert Rick Maurer. It's focused on employees' resistance to change and ways to handle it. He identified three levels of resistance.

### **Level 1. I don't get it.**

This level is rational: a person doesn't have enough information to understand the purpose of change, which causes their resistance. To support employees at this level, the author suggests making the case for change in the most comprehensive way possible.

### **Level 2. I don't like it.**

This is the emotional level of resistance, when rational arguments don't work. At this level, your people will need more empathy; it's a good idea to show them some positive sides of the change and engage them in the processes related to it.

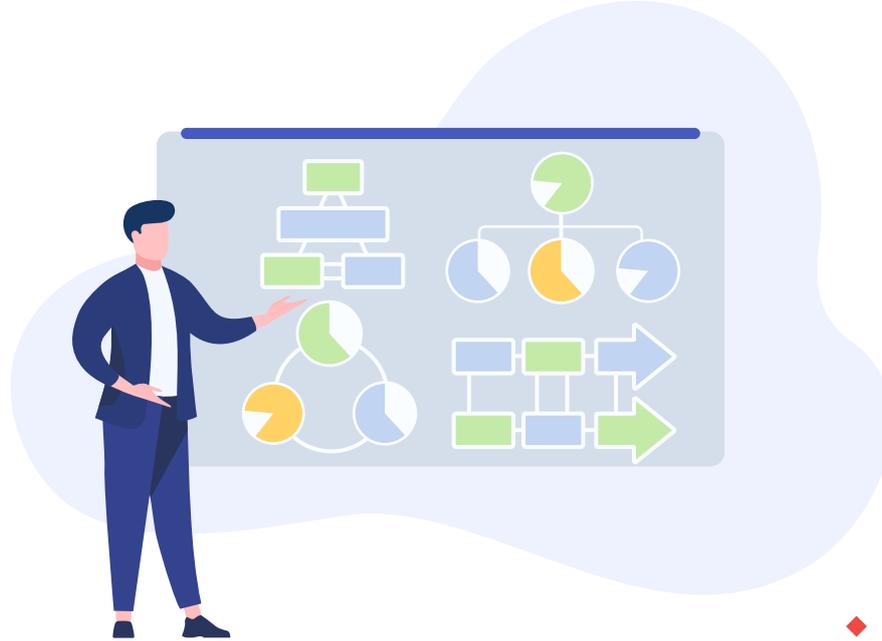
### **Level 3. I don't like you.**

It's about losing trust in the person/people who are trying to implement change, while the attitude to change itself may remain positive. To overcome this level of resistance, the author recommends taking some steps that will rebuild the damaged relationships with those who implement change. [9]

The good about this model is that it addresses employees' feelings about change. But in some cases it may be not enough as it lacks any functional steps of the very process of change implementation.

The diversity change management approaches makes it rather difficult to choose the most effective one. What should be taken into account when selecting the right model to implement change?

## SELECTING A CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODEL: 5 POINTS TO CONSIDER



### 1. The goals you're trying to achieve.

You should start with specifying the goals you want to achieve as a result of change implementation, which will give you an insight into what areas/processes of your organization need change. For example, if you see that the change will greatly impact your employees' daily routines, they will probably need more support, which should be taken into consideration when selecting a change management framework.

### 2. The scope of changes to be implemented.

It will have a big impact on the choice of the change management approach: the wider the scope of transformation, the more detailed model you will need to embrace it.

### 3. Types of changes to be introduced.

We can distinguish several types of change: organization-wide, transformational, personnel, remedial, and unplanned, which may require different approaches. For example, replacing a third of your workforce with machines and doubling your workforce

as a result of expanding operations are completely opposite changes, so approaches to their management should be different (e.g. Kübler-Ross Change Curve vs Kotter's Change Management Theory).

#### **4. Employees' reaction to changes.**

First, remember how your people reacted to changes implemented some time ago. If they demonstrated expressed resistance, you'd better choose a model that focuses on people's support. If you don't have any experience to compare, you can try and introduce a small change (e.g. like offered by the PDCA model) and see how your employees will react. Second, it's a good idea to look at the change from your employees' standpoint to understand how the new processes affect them.

#### **5. Simplicity/complexity of a model itself.**

It's up to you to decide, whether your organization needs a detailed description of the change process to follow or stating the most significant landmarks of this way will be quite enough.

You're free to combine models if you see that one of them doesn't cover all the aspects that you need to take into account: e.g. the ADKAR Model can be supplemented with the Kübler-Ross Change Curve to provide better results.

Finally, remember that there's no one-size-fits-all solution; each model comes with its advantages and disadvantages and focuses on different sides of change. So, your goal should not be to find a perfect approach, but to find the one (or several ones) that will provide the most utility for your organization.



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