



Navigating Change: Lessons Learned from Implementing a Change Management Plan to Improve Team Performance

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ABSTRACT

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In today's competitive business landscape, Winston Churchill's words, "To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often", resonate profoundly. Amidst challenges hampering employee potential, low team performance is critical, casting a shadow over organisational effectiveness, profitability, and success.

Effectively addressing this challenge underscores the importance of adept change management. Organisations must navigate this terrain to overcome efficiency barriers and uplift team performance. Strategic alignment is pivotal, as pursuing enhanced performance intersects seamlessly with change management. Engaging employees and leaders in a conducive work environment aligns with adept change management, fostering open communication, skill advancement, and growth.

This study dissects a 9-month change management plan to enhance low team performance. It integrates change management, leadership, and organisational learning theories into a multidimensional framework. This analytical approach unveils the connection between strategic planning, effective leadership, and learning in driving change initiative outcomes. It offers insights into foundational implementation by examining core components, objectives, and strategies.

An in-depth analysis of plan execution's impact on employee performance provides insights into change management's efficacy. The study highlights implementation challenges and suggests strategies for future initiatives, distilling key lessons and extending practical recommendations.

Contextualising the impact of the change management initiative on team performance, this research delves into its dimensions. Stakeholder insights and data construct a coherent narrative—interviews with the change leader and employee feedback illuminate experiences. Thematic and content analysis techniques synthesise data sources, offering a meticulous methodology that enriches our understanding of effective change navigation and performance enhancement.

In this study, six key themes emerged, including Leadership Misalignment, Managerial Support and Consistency, and Organizational Culture. These themes were validated through multiple data collection methods, enhancing their reliability and validity. The study found that leadership misalignment and

inconsistent managerial support significantly impacted the effectiveness of the change management initiative. Moreover, the existing organisational culture acted as a pervasive barrier to change, highlighting the need for a more holistic, multi-level approach to change management. Challenges such as Organizational Silence, Lack of Full Managerial Support, and Inconsistency in Change Implementation further complicated the change process. Lessons learned encompass the importance of leadership alignment, transparent feedback, and the need for meticulous planning and sustained follow-through. These findings offer practical recommendations for organisations aiming to navigate change effectively.

Keywords: change management, team performance, organisational performance, continuous performance measurement, employee engagement, leadership, change initiatives, organisational learning theory

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1 INTRODUCTION

Winston Churchill's words, "To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often", encapsulate the urgent need for adaptive strategies in today's volatile business landscape. Despite many advances in the field, a pressing challenge is low team productivity, a critical issue with ripple effects on organisational efficiency and profitability.

To tackle this ubiquitous problem, adept change management becomes indispensable. This case study embarks on a 9-month journey through a change management plan designed to uplift a low-performing team. I adopt a multidimensional theoretical framework, integrating Change Management, Leadership, and Organisational Learning theories, to shed light on the complexities involved in effectively initiating, managing, and sustaining change.

This research aims to address several pivotal questions:

1. How does a change management plan impact teams struggling with low performance?
2. What influences employees' reactions to the change plan?
3. What challenges commonly surface during such initiatives?
4. How can these insights inform future change management endeavours?

By scrutinising these aspects, this case study strives to bridge a noticeable gap in the existing literature that often needs to integrate multi-theoretical frameworks for a holistic understanding of change initiatives. The methodology includes interviews, surveys, and performance metrics analysis, offering qualitative and quantitative data.

Specifically targeted at managers, team leaders, and HR professionals, this research aims to provide actionable insights and evidence-based methodologies for navigating change. The ultimate aspiration is to empower organisations to confront productivity challenges head-on, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the theoretical foundations that guide this study, focusing on Change Management, Leadership, and Organisational Learning theories. It outlines fundamental principles, models, and strategies within these domains, explaining how they are applied in the case study context to address specific challenges. The chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of the theories and their practical implications rather than critiquing or challenging their limitations. It is the theoretical backdrop for the 9-month change plan to revitalise a low-performance team.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Change Management, Leadership and Organisational Learning

This study employs Change Management, Leadership, and Organisational Learning theories to explore a change strategy's implementation and the roles of leadership and learning. These theories offer insights for addressing research questions.

2.2 Change Management Theory

Change management theory provides a systematic framework for facilitating individual and organisational transformations. Drawing on works by Kotter (1995), Weick & Quinn (1999), and Cameron & Green (2004), the theory offers practical insights into understanding motivations and internal experiences. It addresses shifts in various areas, from organisational structures and processes to methods and culture.

In his work, Spector (2013) identifies three paradigms of change: turnaround, tools and techniques, and transformation. The turnaround paradigm prioritises swift financial adjustments, tools, and practices focusing on process optimisation in conjunction with behavioural considerations. In contrast, the transformation paradigm accentuates behavioural shifts for sustained exceptional performance.

Derived from Kotter (1996, 2007), Prosci (2019-2023), Cameron and Green (2004), Weick and Quinn (1999), and Lewin (1947), fundamental principles include dividing the process, involving stakeholders, communicating, assessing readiness and impact, strategies for managing resistance and utilising tailored approaches.

The change management discourse is further enriched by diverse change management models designed to provide a systematic framework for effective organisational change. These models furnish guidelines, principles, and steps that navigate resistance, optimise adoption, and enhance the probability of success across different contexts. Among these models are:

- **Kotter's change management model** (Kotter, 1995) emphasises the importance of a strong vision and step-by-step planning.
- **Lewin's model** (Lewin, 1947): Focuses on the phases of unfreezing, changing and refreezing.
- **PDCA** (Deming, 1986): Advocates for a cycle of continuous improvement
- **Prosci ADKAR** (Prosci, 2023): Tackles the human aspect of change, focusing on readiness and adoption.

These models, though distinct in approach, cater to organisations of varying types and sizes, spanning a spectrum of changes. It is crucial to remember that not all change management models universally apply to all modifications or organisational contexts. Every situation necessitates a deliberate approach towards selecting the appropriate change management strategies.

In this case study, the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) and Prosci ADKAR models were chosen as they align with the unique characteristics of the team's journey towards transformation. Based on Deming's principles, the PDCA model is an ideal fit for the case study team's size and focuses on procedural improvements, offering a structured cycle for continuous growth. Meanwhile, the Prosci ADKAR model complements the PDCA model by addressing the human aspects of change and individual readiness and adoption. By combining these models, the change agent caters to the specific needs of small teams and addresses both

process-oriented improvements and human dynamics that influence successful change execution.

In conjunction with the chosen change management models, our (mine and the manager's) approach encompassed a proactive strategy to anticipate and address potential resistance to change. We employed a force field analysis, a valuable tool for mapping out driving and restraining forces influencing change adoption (Lewin, 1947). We strengthened our change implementation strategy by identifying and listing potential sources of resistance, which provided us with valuable insights into areas that needed more attention and communication (Kotter, 1995). This analysis enabled us to devise targeted strategies to mitigate resistance and enhance the overall success chance of our transformational journey. The combination of change management models and the force field analysis underscored our commitment to a comprehensive approach tailored to our team's unique dynamics and change objectives.

2.3 Leadership Theory

Leadership theory takes centre stage in this theoretical framework, guiding the change management strategy to amplify team performance. Leadership theory encompasses various perspectives exploring influential leaders' attributes, behaviours, and styles (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2006). Defined through multiple lenses, leadership is viewed through the prism of leader behaviour and characteristics or as a dynamic interactive process (Yukl, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

Leadership entails "mobilising others to want to struggle for shared aspirations" (Kouzes & Posner, 2023, p. 18). In change, adept leaders create compelling visions clear objectives and communicate the rationale behind change initiatives (Kotter, 1995). It is important to emphasise that leadership is not a one-way street, and the modern understandings of leadership, such as servant and transformational leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Bass, 1985), underscore a reciprocal relationship where the interaction between leaders and followers creates a dynamic that either facilitates or hinders change. Leaders are typically responsible for setting the vision and providing a roadmap for change while

serving as navigators who guide their teams through complexities. Conversely, the followers are active agents who interpret, challenge and sometimes resist change initiatives (Kotter, 1995).

A crucial element in this relationship is trust and psychological safety. Edmondson (1999) shows that in a psychologically safe environment, followers are more willing to take risks, share ideas, and admit mistakes. The absence of trust can cripple change processes by fostering resistance or apathy among followers. Open communication is indispensable in this dynamic relationship. While leaders disseminate the “what” and “why” of change, feedback from followers can offer on-the-ground insights, revealing potential pitfalls and opportunities for adjustments (Ancona, 2012). Goleman's (1995) theory of Emotional Intelligence suggests that influential leaders adapt their style to meet the needs of their followers. In the context of change, this may involve shifting from a directive style during the initiation phase to a more participative or coaching style as the change progresses.

Further leadership theories unravel more leadership dimensions. Transactional leadership focuses on leader-follower exchanges, employing rewards and corrective actions (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 2006), whereas situational leadership theories underscore the alignment of leader style with contextual demands, emphasising adaptive leadership (Yukl, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

The infusion of Leadership theory into the change management strategy provides a nuanced comprehension of how leaders navigate intricate changes, inspire teams, and cultivate an environment conducive to continuous improvement and innovation (Kotter, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

In driving organisational transformation, I have anchored our change management strategy in Leadership theory, incorporating transactional and adaptive leadership elements. I focus on clear communication, fostering a positive mindset toward change, and encouraging innovation. I have created a dynamic leadership framework by setting clear expectations, being open to feedback, and demonstrating flexibility. This approach enabled us to navigate

uncertainties, adapt to challenges, and collaborate for novel solutions, aligning the team with our change initiative and enhancing engagement.

2.4 Organisational Learning Theory

Organisational Learning theory enhances organisational capabilities, adaptability, and sustained success (Senge, 1990). Rooted in organisations as dynamic entities consistently improving, it emphasises processes and mechanisms for growth. The definition of organisational learning has evolved, encompassing concepts like "improving actions through better knowledge and understanding" (González & González, 2012) and "knowledge about actions leading to actions that produce knowledge" (Argyris & Schön, *Organizational Learning: A theory of Action Perspective*, 1979, p. 27).

Peter Senge defines organisational learning as enhancing the capacity to create desired results, where learning is integral (Senge, 1990, p. 8). Learning includes single-loop learning with incremental adaptations and double-loop learning with challenging assumptions and mental models (Argyris & Schön, *Organizational Learning: A theory of Action Perspective*, 1979). The latter is crucial during change, fostering critical introspection and identifying challenges hindering implementation. Based on that, Weick and Quinn (1999) add that organisations can learn from their own experience and the experience of others, highlighting the importance of creating mechanisms for capturing and sharing knowledge, such as communities of practice, after-action reviews, and knowledge management systems.

It is crucial to remember that barriers can exist that prevent an organisation from acquiring, disseminating, and applying knowledge effectively. These can be cultural, such as resistance to change and silo mentality; structural, such as lack of time and resources; psychological and even technological. Communication and leadership barriers hinder organisational learning (Senge, 1990). Understanding these barriers can help organisations develop strategies to mitigate them, paving the way for a more responsive and adaptive learning environment.

Effective leadership aligns with other components, nurturing a learning culture and employee growth (Northouse, 2022). Change management uses an organisation's learning capacity to assimilate new practices (Kotter, 1995). Integrating Organisational Learning theory into this framework amplifies change implementation and performance, aligning with change management and leadership.

Organisational Learning theory underpins our efforts for continuous improvement. It operates in two intertwined dimensions with our change strategy. First, team members engage in learning processes during change, adapting to new methods and paradigms. This proactive approach, termed double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, *Organizational Learning: A theory of Action Perspective*, 1979), challenges assumptions. Second, our growth initiative relies on team members acquiring new skills. This dual learning facet highlights the symbiotic relationship between change and learning, where change fosters education and learning aids change adoption.

We promote a learning culture by encouraging open communication and questions, fostering psychological safety and ongoing skill enhancement. Aligned with Organisational Learning theory, we have set up dedicated meetings for continuous learning and skill acquisition. This theory enhances our adaptability by combining a holistic approach with change management and leadership principles. This multidimensional framework is the foundation for a 9-month change plan to revitalise a low-performance team. It interweaves change management, leadership dynamics, and continuous learning to navigate the complexities of organisational improvement. Future sections will unpack these dimensions further.



Figure 1. Venn Diagram showing the interconnection of change management, leadership, and organisational learning.

2.5 Gaps in Literature

While existing research offers valuable frameworks in the realms of Change Management, Leadership, and Organisational Learning, there are notable gaps that this study aims to address. First, current Change Management theories provide comprehensive models for organisational shifts but often neglect the unique challenges faced by low-performing teams. Second, Leadership theories delve into the dynamics between leaders and followers but rarely scrutinise the disconnect between managerial intent and actual behaviour, a concept known as the gap between espoused theory and theory-in-use. Lastly, Organisational Learning theories emphasise the importance of adaptability and continuous improvement but fall short in exploring organisational cultures resistant to

learning and innovation. This study seeks to fill these gaps by integrating these theories to offer a nuanced understanding of change management in the context of low-performing teams.

Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that the literature on change management often assumes a one-size-fits-all approach. This overlooks the potential influence of cultural, gender, and generational variables on the success or failure of change initiatives. Although these variables are not the focus of this study, recognising their potential impact adds another layer of complexity to the change management discourse. Future research could benefit from a more nuanced understanding that includes these variables, thereby offering a more comprehensive view of change dynamics.

3 ENHANCING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH CHANGE MANAGEMENT

This chapter outlines the current understanding of employee performance within the change management framework. It discusses the role of Key Performance Indicators, leadership styles, and communication strategies as accepted by existing literature. The chapter aims to provide a comprehensive view of how these elements contribute to employee performance during organisational change.

3.1 Impact on Employee Performance

While conventional measurements such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provide a snapshot of employee performance in change management (Kaplan & Norton, 1996), they fail to encapsulate the multifaceted nature of human behaviour and organisational culture. Performance metrics often represent results without narrating the underlying process changes and adaptive behaviours contributing to those outcomes (Schein, 2010). Thus, a nuanced approach incorporating quantitative and qualitative aspects is indispensable for a comprehensive understanding.

Leadership practices have been shown to influence the effectiveness of change management efforts significantly. Incorporating participative leadership styles, for example, positively impacts employee engagement levels during transitional phases (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2006). Such leadership methods optimise performance and synergise with a culture of continuous learning.

3.2 Factors Influencing Employees' Reactions to Change

The heterogeneity in employee reactions to change initiatives can serve as both a challenge and an opportunity. Research suggests that resistance is often a symptom of deeper organisational issues such as lack of trust, poor communication, or an unclear vision (Oreg, 2006). Some scholars highlight that

demographic factors like age and tenure can influence adaptability (Spector, 2013), and other studies indicate that psychological safety and perceived value significantly impact employee reactions to change (Edmondson, 1999)

In this vein, addressing the underlying causes of resistance rather than treating it as a hurdle to overcome opens avenues for improvement and optimises performance outcomes. Therefore, diagnosing the root causes of resistance can offer invaluable insights into the intricate dynamics of human behaviour in organisational settings.

3.3 Effective Communication Strategies for Change Management

Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful change management, minimising resistance and enhancing employee performance (Kotter, 1995; Prosci, 2023). However, effective communication transcends mere information dissemination. It necessitates a dynamic, bidirectional flow of information where employees feel heard and their input is valued (Piderit, 2000).

The notion of “dialogic communication”, where conversations are not solely top-down but encourage feedback and participation, contributes to successfully implementing change management strategies (Lewis, 2018). Therefore, communication is an enabler, aligning organisational objectives with individual performance metrics through transparent, ongoing dialogue.

In this case study, communication is pivotal in navigating employee participation and resistance dynamics. Leveraging transparent communication, fostering two-way dialogue, and tailoring messages to address specific challenges played a crucial role in surmounting obstacles and garnering employee support. Moreover, these strategies contributed to nurturing employee ownership and commitment, enhancing the overall success of the change management endeavour.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study utilises a case study approach. This section elaborates on the rationale behind selecting the case study design and how it aligns with the research objectives.

4.1 Research Philosophy and Rationale for Case Study Design

The study adopts a pragmatic research philosophy, aligning closely with its objectives to examine the impact of a change management plan on team performance (Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2018). The pragmatic orientation offers a problem-solving and flexible approach, ideal for exploring the multifaceted challenges of organisational change.

Given the complex and multifaceted nature of studying employee reactions to organisational change, a case study design was chosen. This approach allows for a holistic exploration of the subject, effectively capturing real-world interactions and context-specific variables (Bryman, 2012). The case study design aligns with the study's qualitative focus, allowing a deep dive into employee perspectives on change. Utilising interviews, observations, and document analysis, it provides rich insights tailored to the unique organisational context, capturing complexities and potentially leading to new theories or insights.

4.2 Research Methodology, Data Collection and Data Analysis Methods

Key Component	Description	Objective or rationale
Research Philosophy	Pragmatic Philosophy	To adopt a practical problem-solving orientation and adapt to the specific context of the study
Research Approach	Qualitative Research	To deeply explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of employees during organisational change
Research Method	Case Study Design	To provide an in-depth, contextually rich understanding of change management within a single organisation
Data Collection Methods	Semi-structured Interviews Ongoing Feedback Sessions Observational Analysis Quantitative Data Analysis Documentation	To understand manager's perspectives and decision-making processes. To capture the real-time experiences of employees. To observe behaviours and interactions within the organisation. To quantify the impact of performance metrics. To document various forms of evidence for analysis
Data Analysis Methods	Thematic Analysis Content Analysis	To discern patterns and themes related to challenges encountered, employee reactions, and perceived impact on team performance

Table 1. Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative methodology consistent with its pragmatic philosophical underpinning (Saunders et al., 2019). Qualitative methods enable a nuanced exploration of stakeholder perspectives in an organisational setting, thereby contributing rich insights into the complexities of change management (Bryman, 2012).

4.2.1 Data Collection Methods

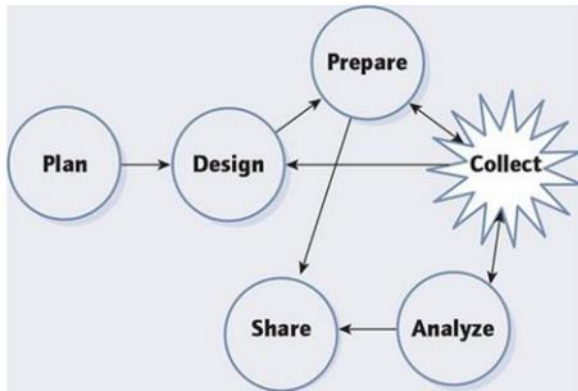


Figure 2. Collecting data for the case study adapted from Yin (2018)

- **Semi-structured Interviews**

The semi-structured interviews with the manager were designed to explore the manager's experiences and perceptions throughout the change initiative. Questions were formulated based on Change Management theories to understand the manager's role in facilitating change, handling resistance, and adapting strategies. Leadership theories were also considered to delve into the manager's leadership style, the team's trust level, and how leadership contributed to the change process (Appendix 1).

Examples:

Question: "Were there moments where you felt the change process was not going as planned? How did you handle that?"

This question aims to understand how the manager dealt with unexpected challenges or resistance, aligning with theories that discuss managing resistance to change.

Question: "How would you describe your leadership contributions during this initiative?"

This question is based on Leadership theories that focus on different leadership styles and their impact on change initiatives.

- **Ongoing Feedback Sessions**

The study features ongoing feedback sessions to capture real-time employee perspectives. These sessions encouraged open dialogue and aligned with the research objective to understand intricate nuances in employee reactions. (Heller, 2017). The questions for team members were designed to gauge their

feelings about the changes and leadership. They were grounded in Change Management theory to understand how effectively change was communicated and implemented. Organisational Learning theories inform questions about the team's learning culture, aiming to understand how the team adapts to new methods and paradigms.

- **Observational Analysis**

An observational analysis is another cornerstone of the data collection plan. This approach allowed me to capture real-time behaviours, interactions, and contextual factors within the organisational setting (Yin, 2018). Immersion in the environment provides rich insights into the practical impact of the change initiative on various administrative aspects.

In addition to observations, the study examined physical artefacts—specifically, online training modules created by the team. These modules were analysed for layout, design, interactive features, and user engagement levels, indicating procedural change effects on team efficiency and learning. This tactic aligns with Yin's emphasis on using diverse evidence types to enhance case study credibility (Yin, 2018).

4.2.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis complemented qualitative insights, offering a numerical lens on the change initiative's impact. Financial and productivity metrics from organisational records were compared to key performance indicators pre-and post-intervention.

- **Documentation**

The study also benefited from meticulous documentation, capturing a range of data sources, including monthly reports, development summaries, educational material, and email archives. This repository offered tangible insights and evidence of the leadership's role in fostering a supportive environment.

Finally, my reflective journaling adds another layer to the data collection process. This introspective practice documented my leadership journey, capturing

insights, challenges, and successes. The journal excerpts serve as a qualitative data source that captures real-time reactions and observations from the team leader. The entries were analysed in the context of all three theoretical frameworks to understand the dynamics of change management, leadership effectiveness, and the learning culture within the team (Appendix 2(02-03))

In sum, the research employs a comprehensive, multi-method approach. It integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques, observational analysis, physical artefact evaluation, and reflective journaling, aligning closely with the inquiry's pragmatic philosophy. This combination offers a holistic perspective on organisational change, capturing its multifaceted complexities and nuances.

- **Reflexivity, Positionality and Researcher Bias**

Given my dual role within the study context, strategies have been employed to manage potential bias and subjectivity. Reflexive journaling, as a part of reflexive practice, is used to document thoughts, assumptions, and possible biases (Bryman, 2012). This strategy helps to maintain a critical distance between my roles.

The study considers the potential influence of my background and societal roles on the research process to address positionality. Additional mitigation strategies, such as peer debriefing sessions, challenge biases during data analysis, thereby ensuring the research's credibility and objectivity.

By integrating these strategies, the research aims to minimise bias and maintain its credibility, aligning with the standards of qualitative inquiry.

4.3 Data Analysis Methods

The research adopts a tri-method approach—thematic analysis, content analysis, and quantitative performance metrics—to comprehensively examine change management outcomes.

Thematic Analysis

This method captures qualitative insights, focusing on nuanced human experiences and attitudes towards implemented changes. Particular attention will be given to collaboration, morale, and engagement with new strategies.

Content Analysis

Employed for both qualitative and quantitative data, content analysis will assess text-based communication, such as managerial emails and training materials. This analytical approach adds depth to the qualitative side of the study.

Quantitative Performance Metrics

Beyond the thematic and content analysis, the study employs quantitative measures to assess Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and productivity metrics. Descriptive statistics will be used to refine the productivity data analysis, focusing on the following metrics:

- Total productivity per employee
- Number of modules published
- Number of pages produced
- Level of complexity of the modules
- Modules developed per week

These metrics will be compared to performance data from the first eight months of the previous year to offer a longitudinal perspective on productivity changes.

4.4 Methodological Limitations, Validity and Reliability

4.4.1 Methodology Limitations

This study, while providing valuable insights into change management within a single organisation, has several methodological limitations that need to be considered:

- **Lack of Quantifiable Metrics**

The study was initiated with qualitative goals like enhancing team collaboration but needed more specific, quantifiable metrics for evaluating success. This gap impacts the precise attribution of observed changes to implemented strategies and adds ambiguity to performance assessments. Future research should align clear numerical metrics with objectives for more accurate evaluations.

- **Single-Case Focus**

The study is limited to exploring one team in one organisation. While this offers in-depth insights, it limits the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts, as unique cultural, leadership, and industry factors may differ. Further cross-contextual studies are needed to validate or expand these findings.

- **Short Duration of the Study**

The study's nine-month timeframe is too short to assess the long-term sustainability. Change management is a protracted process that requires more time for comprehensive assessment. Longitudinal research is needed to determine the long-term impacts of change interventions.

- **Comparability Over Time**

Developer B shifted to more complex and time-consuming tasks during the study period, affecting the direct comparability of productivity metrics with the prior year. Future research should account for the nature and complexity of functions when comparing performance metrics over time.

The absence of set metrics, the single-case focus, the study's short duration, and the issue of comparability over time collectively pose challenges for interpreting and generalising the study's findings. These limitations necessitate further, more comprehensive research to address these gaps.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, several strategies were implemented:

- **Triangulation:** Multiple data sources (interviews, informal feedback, financial and productivity data) were employed to cross-validate and corroborate the findings, enhancing the credibility of the case study narrative.

- **Member Checking:** The manager was allowed to review and validate their interview transcript to ensure the accuracy of the data interpretation.

4.4.2 Ethical and Data Management Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from the manager and employees, and their confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Pseudonyms were used to protect the organisation's identity in the case study narrative.

The data collected during this study was securely stored and only accessible to the research team. Any data shared in the case study narrative was anonymised to protect participants' identities and ensure confidentiality.

4.4.3 Research Validity

The chosen theoretical framework, encompassing Change Management, Leadership, and Organisational Learning theories, guided the analysis and interpretation of the data, enhancing the validity of the case study narrative.

5 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

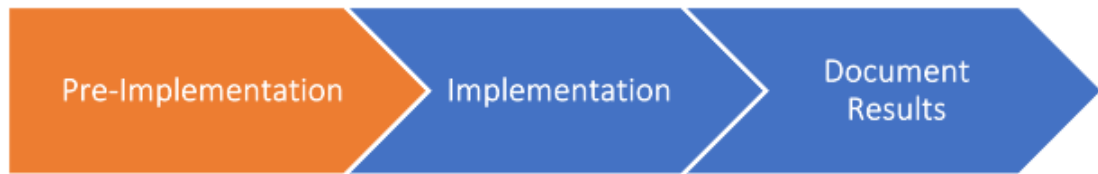


Figure 3. Change Management Plan Timeline highlighting the Pre-Implementation phase.

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of an eLearning team's transformation under a structured change management plan. I will explore the team's background, challenges, and strategies to foster a cohesive and productive environment.

5.1 Team Background and Context

This chapter analyses the eLearning team's transformational journey under change management, focusing on a diverse group with varying roles, and the exploration uncovers dynamics, challenges, and the rationale for adopting change management. It examines pre-change team composition and functions, then explores difficulties and their effects. Probing the catalysts for the change management plan, the emphasis is on historical productivity decline and organisational shifts. This chapter offers insight into the team's transformation, unveiling outcomes, and the role of change management in shaping dynamics, collaboration, and performance.

5.1.1 The Team

In 2020, the eLearning development team had four U.S.-based members, of which two high-performers contributed innovative ideas with positive outcomes. However, the company's strategy to reduce workforce costs led to recruiting a Europe-based team member to consolidate its primary body of eLearning developers in Europe. Complications arose when one team member declined

relocation and left, and tragedy struck when the second high performer died. Amidst these changes, the supervisor recognised potential in the third team member, transitioning them to a different role. This change proved successful as the member thrived in the new position.

In 2022, before the change plan, the team had four eLearning developers (2 based in the U.S. and 2 in Europe), all working remotely, a team supervisor, a manager, and an administrator. The manager's position was characterised by inefficiencies, leading the supervisor to take on additional responsibilities. This situation eventually culminated in the manager's dismissal, and this reorganisation promoted the supervisor to team manager, granting him transformative authority. At the core of this transformation was appointing the highest-performing team member as the team leader (mentioned below as "Developer B"), tasked with assisting the manager in enhancing team performance.

The eLearning developers' team consisted of the following:

- **Developer A** is a veteran in the field with nearly 20 years of experience. His wealth of knowledge is invaluable, but it comes at a cost: complacency. Although he can potentially be a standard-bearer for the team, his reluctance to adapt to modern methods or seek help from colleagues creates a stifling environment. His hesitance to collaborate limits knowledge exchange, thus diminishing collective growth.
- **Developer B**, the first to be hired in Europe, is a relative newcomer with less than two years on the job. She brings innovative approaches to eLearning development that have been well-received. However, her communication style sometimes comes across as condescending, which hampers team morale. Her tendency to solve problems independently or only consult with the manager has isolated her from the rest of the team, creating resistance when she tries to share her innovative approaches.
- **Developer C** is an industry veteran returning to the company after a break. He is generally more open to adopting new methods but struggles with consistency, especially regarding meeting attendance and

commitment. Although open to asking for help, he often disregards constructive feedback, which hampers his progress.

- **Developer D**, another Europe-based team member, has ambiguous qualifications and a penchant for experimenting with new techniques. While some of her work has been inspiring, she frequently deviates from established guidelines, causing concerns about her role in the team. Her resistance to feedback and questionable work ethic have led to internal friction, affecting the team's motivation.
- **Manager**: At the helm is a young manager who combines significant industry experience with a focus on customer satisfaction. Although he has a record of organisational achievements, his lack of formal business education sometimes limits his ability to navigate intricate managerial challenges effectively. His hands-on approach to managing day-to-day tasks is commendable but detracts from his ability to perform core leadership roles effectively.

Given this intricate landscape, the manager's role in the change management plan becomes even more critical. He must navigate diverse personalities, varied commitment levels, and differing skill sets. This sets the stage for a complex challenge: steering a disparate team towards cohesive change, requiring nuanced leadership skills beyond routine management.

5.1.2 The Challenges

The team encountered development pace and quality challenges, leading to difficulties meeting customer expectations. The manager needed to improve communication with team members regarding product quality expectations and invest considerable time to meet deadlines and align modules with customer preferences. While the manager attempted to build trust among team members, this resulted in under-management and unclear performance expectations. Team members also showed hesitancy in sharing their concerns with the manager, causing a disconnect between his expectations and their comprehension. Limited dialogue avenues further impeded collective understanding and progress.

The lack of collaborative learning mechanisms added to the challenges, with team members operating in relative isolation and limited opportunities to pool their expertise and learn collectively. This resulted in outdated and inefficient module designs, worsening the team's challenges. The mismatch of skills and competencies also contributed to low team performance, as team members lacked specific technical proficiencies for the project's demands. This mismatch diluted the output quality and necessitated frequent managerial interventions to rectify errors and realign the team with project objectives. The continuous need for rework and adjustments further slowed the development pace, impacting customer satisfaction.

Lastly, there needed to be more alignment of people and professional contexts. Developer B was a good fit for the company, while Developer A had difficulty finding their place due to higher standards since recruitment. Developers C and D would perform better in different roles and environments.

5.2 Overview of the Change Management Plan

Recognising that the team was at a critical juncture, the manager wasted no time initiating dialogue with a prospective team leader. This individual was earmarked to serve as the change management agent, a pivotal role in the execution of the transformation plan. The timing was less than ideal, as this conversation was scheduled just a week before the plan's launch date of January 2 and overlapped with the holiday season. Nevertheless, the change agent demonstrated exceptional commitment by planning the project during the holiday. Due to the time crunch, while they could align on overarching objectives and procedural changes, details regarding new role responsibilities and strategies to manage potential resistance were not fully fleshed out.

5.2.1 Model Selection: PDCA and ADKAR and Further Tools

The sense of urgency, combined with the complexity of the organisational landscape, underscored the need for a robust yet agile change management model. The initiative was aimed at immediate tactical shifts and fostering a long-term culture of innovation and resilience. The study narrows its focus to the first nine months of this critical change initiative, providing a detailed lens through which the dynamics of this transformation can be studied.

After rigorous evaluation, two change management models were identified as ideal for guiding the transformation: the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) and ADKAR models.

- **The PDCA Model**

Known also as the Deming Cycle, the PDCA model provides a structured framework for change built around four stages:

1. **Plan:** This stage involves identifying the problem or opportunity and forming a detailed plan as the blueprint for action.
2. **Do:** During this phase, the plan is put into action following predetermined strategies and protocols.
3. **Check:** This involves measuring the actual outcomes against the set objectives and spotting any deviations or areas for improvement.
4. **Act:** Based on the insights gathered, corrective actions are taken, setting the stage for the next cycle.

PDCA is iterative, meaning the cycle continues with each round building on the lessons learned from the previous iteration.

- **The ADKAR Model**

The ADKAR model was chosen as a complementary approach to provide a more nuanced, human-centred perspective. It delves into individuals' psychological journey during a change, broken down into five stages—Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement.

By blending the PDCA model's structured framework for procedural adjustments with the ADKAR model's individual-centric focus, the team is equipped with a comprehensive toolkit for change management. This dual approach ensures the

transformation plan is both procedurally sound and culturally sensitive, allowing the team to face complex challenges at both systematic and individual levels.

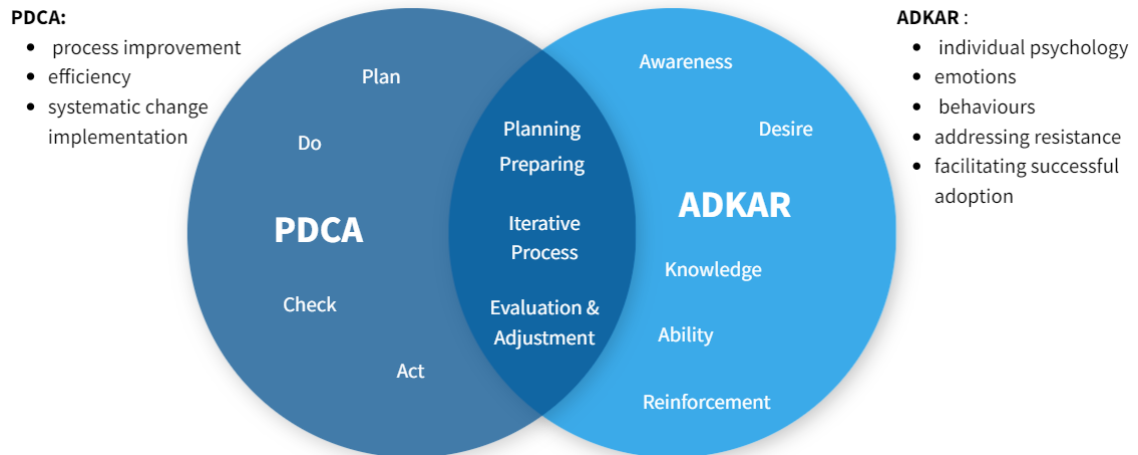


Figure 4. Venn Diagram showing the relationship between PDCA and ADKAR change management models.

• Further Tools

A project planner was crucial in overseeing implementation progress alongside chosen change management models. This tool aided task alignment and served as a researcher's comprehensive journal. The project timeline aligned with the PDCA model featured multiple "Check" phases, ensuring effective and on-track changes. The project planner's integration provided dynamic visibility into execution stages, reinforcing a commitment to improvement and enabling timely adjustments.

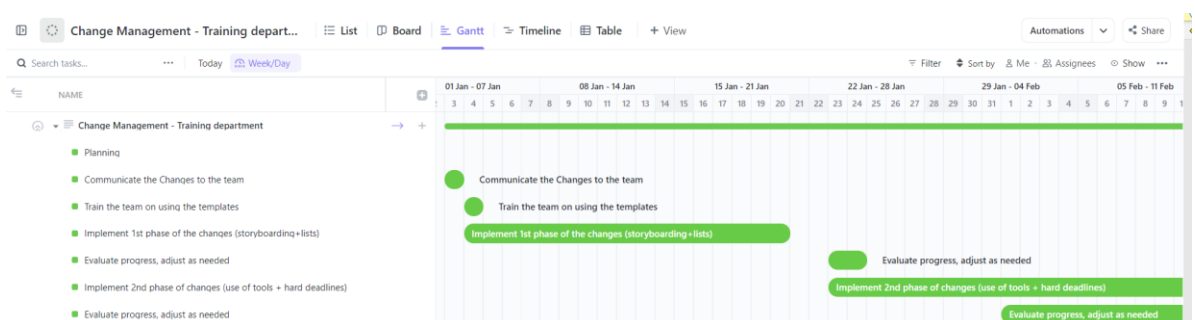


Figure 5. Gantt Chart depicting the PDCA phases along with the timeline. Created in ClickUp.

5.3 Objectives

The impetus for the change management plan stemmed from critical issues endangering the team's long-term survival. A historic low in productivity necessitated an urgent strategic overhaul. Coupled with the manager's growing responsibilities and reduced time for constant monitoring, the need for a more self-sufficient team became crucial.

Considering the company's precarious financial condition and ongoing layoffs, the manager faced a daunting challenge: proving the team's efficiency, increasing revenue, and reducing costs per module to impact the company's bottom line positively.

Overall Team Objectives:

1. **Increase Revenue through Quality:** Improve the quality of eLearning modules to attract more clients. Each team member is accountable for producing 14 high-quality modules by year's end.
2. **Reduce Cost Per Module:** Streamline work processes to make module production more efficient, lowering costs. No percentage of reduction cost was specified.
3. **Localization:** Reach a 30% translation goal for the module library, enhancing market reach and potential revenue streams.
4. **Specialized Content Creation:** Develop modules focusing on the 'Description of Operations,' which can increase product diversity and attract more clients.
5. **Skills Development:** Acquire or upgrade specific work-related skills contributing to product quality and process efficiency.

Additional Individual Objectives for Developers:

- **Developer A:** Besides other objectives, focus on improving authoring tool knowledge to contribute to quality and efficiency.
- **Developer B:** Concentrate on project management skills to enhance team efficiency and lower costs.
- **Developer C:** Work on video and image processing skills to improve module quality and customer satisfaction.

- **Developer D:** Prioritize authoring tool knowledge to support quality improvement and cost reduction.

This comprehensive change management plan was a quick fix and an ambitious pathway towards holistic transformation. The project aimed to resolve immediate challenges by instituting these measurable objectives while steering the team towards sustained, financially beneficial success.

5.4 Strategies

In pursuit of the above objectives, a balanced approach focused on adopting new tools and optimising existing systems and skills.

- **New Development Tools**

The team will adopt a storyboard requirement and a development checklist to improve structure and efficiency.

Accountability: Team Leader and Manager.

Timeframe: Implementation within the first month.

- **Multi-Tiered Review Process**

A multi-tiered review process will be introduced to elevate the quality of eLearning modules.

Accountability: Facilitated by the Team Leader.

Timeframe: Fully operational by the end of the first month.

- **Deadlines and Enhanced Communication**

Introducing specific development deadlines and improved communication practices aims to streamline progress.

Accountability: Manager with oversight from the Team Leader.

Timeframe: Implementation within the first month with ongoing tracking.

- **Monthly Feedback Sessions**

The Team Leader and Manager will conduct monthly feedback sessions to foster open communication.

Accountability: Team Leader and Manager.

Timeframe: Starting in the second month.

- **Knowledge Sharing for Skill Enhancement**

Monthly Template/Process Improvement meetings will resume to promote knowledge exchange.

Accountability: Team Leader.

Timeframe: Resuming from the second month.

- **Transparent and Detailed Communication**

Clarity in roles, responsibilities, and expectations will be emphasised to strengthen the team's base for growth.

Accountability: Team Leader and Manager.

Timeframe: Immediate implementation.

- **Appointment of a Team Leader**

Developer B will be promoted to Team Leader, primarily responsible for quality control, team training, and facilitation of multiple strategies like the multi-tiered review process and monthly feedback sessions.

Accountability: Developer B as Team Leader.

Timeframe: Immediate promotion and ongoing assessment.

By collectively addressing identified challenges through these proposed strategies, a foundation for positive change within the team was expected.

5.5 Implementation Timeline and Execution of the Change Management Plan



Figure 6. Change Management Plan Timeline highlighting the “Implementation” phase.

Below is the detailed implementation timeline of the 9-month change management plan, highlighting key activities, milestones, and developments:

Month 1: Preparation and Launch

- Developer B initiates the formation of a structured communication model and crafts a comprehensive presentation on the rationale and change management models.
- Kick-off meeting led by the manager, outlining impending changes and their rationale, supplemented by detailed email communication.
- Developer B conducts training sessions on new eLearning tools; sets a KPI of publishing at least 14 modules by Month 8.
- Initial positive response and engagement with new tools and processes.
- Interactive sessions to address questions and concerns; metrics dashboard introduced for tracking KPIs.

Months 2-3: Initial Rollout, Continuous Communication and Monitoring

- Continuation of interactive sessions to solidify learning.
- Initial enthusiasm gives way to emerging challenges in communication and performance feedback.
- Subtle resistance patterns, such as missed deadlines and communication issues, become apparent.
- Introduction of monthly review meetings focusing on KPIs; Developer D announces departure.
- Leadership and team members provide and actively seek feedback on practices.

Months 4-6: Refinement and Adaptation

- Adjustments made in leadership style, with the manager adopting a more inclusive approach.
- Developer B temporarily shifts her communication style while integrating changes to reach her KPIs.
- Developer A shows improvements due to candid feedback; publishes five modules.

- Developer C fails to meet expected KPIs and exhibits decreased engagement.
- Leadership re-evaluates and recommits to initially dropped practices due to their long-term benefits.

Months 7-8: Challenges and Slowed Progress

- Slowdown due to summer vacations and diversion to other projects; impact on KPIs noted.
- Recognition that certain practices are crucial for long-term improvements; Developer B achieves her KPI of 14 modules and begins preparing for project management training.
- Localization efforts reach 30%, contributing to KPIs.
- Developers A and C improve advanced knowledge but do not actively use the authoring tool.
- Developers A, B, and C fail to complete a Description of Operations training module; the failure is analysed for future improvement.
- Manager considers releasing Developers A and C due to continuously low performance.
- Developer D is asked to offer customer-facing training and receives overwhelmingly good reviews.

Month 9: Final Evaluation and Conclusion

- Intercultural communication management workshop reveals employees' resistance and more significant organisational culture issues.
- Comprehensive evaluation of changes' impact on team performance and productivity.
- Comparison of post-implementation performance against the initial baseline.
- Manager and team leader gather final feedback and insights from team members.
- Conclusions drawn based on results and lessons learned from the process.

Months 1-3: Preparatory Phase, Implementation, and Initial Evaluation

In adherence to the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model for change management, the initial phase was designed to acquaint team members with new protocols, namely the storyboard and checklist documents. Training sessions were executed to ensure the effective use of these resources, culminating in a review led by both the team leader and the manager to confirm comprehension.

With the new storyboards, the manager could proactively identify bottlenecks and issues in the initial stages of module development. This advanced identification prevented delays and fostered a more streamlined work process. The utility of the checklist became increasingly evident, elevating both the quality and efficiency of the workflow.

The succeeding part of this phase focused on deadline implementation to serve as performance benchmarks. Despite rigorous planning, the team encountered challenges in adhering to these deadlines, requiring a reassessment of the original timelines.

Simultaneously, Developer B assumed dual roles of team leader and eLearning developer. Her feedback communication style initially drew concerns and prompted a discussion with the management. This dialogue catalysed an adaptive response from Developer B, triggering adjustments in her leadership methodology.

Though some changes led to efficiency gains, the manager opted to roll them back to better align with team morale. This action created friction with the team leader, who was committed to the recent changes, asserting their positive impact on performance metrics.

Months 4-6: Refinement and Role Adjustments

Contrasting team dynamics characterised the next three months. Developer D resigned, coinciding with managerial intentions due to her below-average performance. Developer C continued to underperform, failing to engage in team meetings and lagging on presentation preparations.

On the other hand, Developer A experienced an upward trajectory attributed to honest, constructive feedback sessions. These sessions ignited a newfound zeal for learning and improvements in his work, fulfilling the management's performance expectations.

Continuous feedback sessions between the manager and the team leader led to self-reflection and pushed for objective evaluation of the team's progress. The manager, acknowledging past errors, realigned with the original implementation strategy and sought the team leader's assistance in reiterating the importance of the new protocols.

Months 7-8: Challenges and Diminished Momentum

Months 7 and 8 brought a downturn in progress, primarily due to the summer break and the team's involvement in other projects. This divergence led to a disjunction in the coordination between the manager and team leader, affecting the consistency of the change management process. An interesting instance in this period was Developer D receiving outstanding feedback for customer-facing training that he delivered. This incident indicates that Developer D's full potential is not being utilised in his current position as an eLearning developer.

Month 9: Final Assessments and Summation

A workshop facilitating better intercultural relations encountered strong pushback from team members. Despite disclaimers that prevent stereotype reinforcement, employees felt triggered and insisted on a uniform "company-approved" communication style. This incident hindered immediate objectives and indicated a broader issue: an organisational culture resistant to self-examination and learning.

This concluding month involved a thorough evaluation of the changes and their outcomes. Performance metrics, qualitative feedback, and other evaluative tools were employed to measure success.

5.6 Theory Integration

The integration of change management, leadership, and organisational learning theories was the guiding force throughout the preparation, implementation, and execution phases of the eLearning development team's transformation. Change management theory provided a roadmap for addressing challenges and engaging stakeholders, while leadership theories shaped strategies for communication and support. The organisational learning framework emphasised continuous improvement and adaptive responses. This synergy facilitated a comprehensive approach, enabling leaders to navigate change while fostering a culture of growth and collaboration, resulting in a lasting and impactful transformation journey.

5.6.1 Change Management Theory Integration

Effective change management was pivotal to the project's success, and two leading theoretical frameworks—ADKAR and PDCA—served as guiding methodologies for planning, execution, and evaluation. Each framework offered unique insights but also posed distinct challenges.

Initially, the ADKAR model was employed, representing the stages of Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. While the "Awareness" stage successfully established a shared vision for change among team members, the model's "Desire" stage proved an obstacle. Although communication was transparent enough to raise awareness, it did not generate the necessary enthusiasm and commitment for change. This gap identified a need for more strategically focused communication to drive engagement in future implementations.

Concurrently, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model was utilised to encourage a culture of continuous improvement. However, time constraints led to a rushed "Plan" phase, resulting in vague objectives that hampered the efficacy of the subsequent "Check" phase. The absence of specific, measurable goals made it difficult to evaluate performance accurately. Nevertheless, the iterative design of the PDCA model enabled real-time adjustments, thus providing a flexible framework for identifying and rectifying issues.

In summary, while both ADKAR and PDCA models served as valuable guides for the change management process, they also revealed specific limitations. The experiences gained from employing these models suggest a need for a more holistic approach combining both frameworks' strengths for future projects. Such an integrated methodology could address the identified gaps and contribute to the ongoing refinement of effective change management strategies.

5.6.2 Leadership Theory Integration

Leadership theories provide a framework to analyse the dynamic shifts in leadership styles during the transformational journey. Transformational Leadership Theory was instrumental in Developer B's transition from an aggressive and rigid style to emphasising emotional intelligence, trust, and open communication.

Similarly, Adaptive Leadership Theory informed the manager's shift from a mechanistic approach to one more organic and responsive to situational dynamics. Over time, the manager adapted to become more attuned to the team's social dynamics and emotional needs.

The coalescence of these two leadership theories—transformational and adaptive—led to a holistic leadership strategy that proved invaluable during the change management implementation phase. Notably, integrating these theories resulted in a versatile leadership model that effectively navigated the complexities of the transformation journey.

5.6.3 Organisational Learning Theory Integration

The project is a microcosm of organisational learning involving layered individual, team, and managerial adaptations. Developer B and the manager initially engaged in single-loop learning, modifying their behaviours based on immediate feedback. Over time, both shifted towards double-loop learning, questioning, and altering their assumptions and approaches.

The team evolved from focusing on mastering technical skills—a form of single-loop learning—to engaging in more open communication, signalling a transition to double-loop learning. This shift required the team to challenge and change the prevailing norms and assumptions governing their interactions.

The project's success can be attributed to this multi-layered learning approach. The collective transition from single to double-loop learning across individual, team, and managerial levels led to transformative changes that significantly influenced project outcomes.

In summary, the complexities of learning unfolded on multiple levels, from individual to team to managerial, each influencing the other. The interplay between single and double-loop learning enriched the learning experience and contributed significantly to the project's success.

6 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

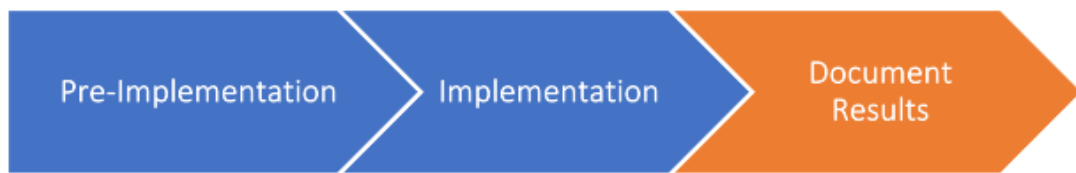


Figure 7. Change Management Plan Timeline highlighting the “Implementation” phase.

This chapter delves into the multifaceted impacts of the change management initiative within the eLearning Development Team. I use qualitative and quantitative methods to explore how the initiative has affected team performance, organisational culture, and employee engagement. The findings are analysed through thematic lenses, offering a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, limitations, and lessons learned in implementing change.

6.1 Thematic Analysis: Understanding Employee Reactions and Impacts of Change Management within the eLearning Development

In this study, I conducted a thorough thematic analysis of the change management initiative implemented within the eLearning Development Team. By incorporating multiple data collection methods, such as semi-structured interviews, ongoing feedback sessions, observational analysis, quantitative data, documentation, and reflective journaling, I aimed to capture the multifaceted complexities involved in organisational change.

6.1.1 Data Preparation

Data were collected through various methods, including semi-structured interviews, ongoing feedback sessions, observational analyses, physical artefact evaluations, and meticulous documentation. These comprehensive, multi-method approaches aligned with the study's pragmatic philosophy, providing a robust dataset that captures quantitative and qualitative aspects.

The dataset was reviewed multiple times to comprehensively understand the team members' attitudes, behaviours, and experiences. Preliminary notes were made to capture initial impressions and potential themes.

Raw data were dissected into manageable components through an initial coding process. This was essential for translating qualitative and quantitative insights into thematic groupings later in the analysis.

6.1.2 Generating Themes

The analysis of the data uncovers a complex interplay of factors that influence the change management process within the organisation. At the heart of these factors lies the issue of Leadership Misalignment. Drawing upon Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985), it becomes evident that a cohesive vision from leadership is indispensable for successful change. However, the data reveals a significant disconnect between the manager and the team leader, which has a cascading effect on the entire change process. This finding echoes Yukl's (2006) emphasis on the role of adaptive leadership in navigating complex organisational changes.

This lack of alignment is further exacerbated by inconsistent Managerial Support and Consistency, a theme that aligns well with Kotter's (1995) Change Management principles. The sporadic nature of managerial support can be traced back to an organisational culture that is not conducive to learning, a notion supported by Senge's (1990) Organizational Learning Theory.

Nevertheless, the role of Feedback and Self-Reflective Practices emerges as a beacon of hope. The data suggests that team members who engage in self-reflection are more adaptable to new processes. This aligns closely with the concept of a "learning organisation" (Senge, 1990), which underscores the transformative power of constructive feedback loops.

The theme of Employee Engagement and Motivation further complicates the landscape. The data reveals a team that is largely reactive rather than proactive, waiting for cues from leadership to improve. According to the Self-Determination

Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), such an environment could stifle innovation and personal growth.

Lastly, the overarching theme of Organisational Culture emerges as both a standalone barrier and a pervasive influence on other themes. The culture, deeply rooted in job security and minimal performance expectations, has cultivated a reactive approach among team members. This aligns with Schein's Organisational Culture Model (1985), which emphasises how deeply entrenched cultural norms can impact various facets of organisational life.

6.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

The analysis employs a dual approach, combining thematic and content analyses to offer a nuanced understanding of the change management process. The thematic analysis brings to light the human elements, such as attitudes and emotional responses, while the content analysis provides empirical evidence of shifts in managerial practices and communication styles. Together, these methods paint a multi-dimensional picture of the effectiveness and areas needing improvement in the change management initiatives.

One of the standout findings is the improvement in Employees' Feedback and Work Organisation. During feedback sessions, employees consistently reported a positive shift in work organisation, particularly praising the introduction of new documentation tools like checklists. These tools have proven to be effective mechanisms for quality control, aligning well with Senge's Organisational Learning Theory (1990). This theory underscores the role of tools and processes in facilitating organisational learning and adaptation, a theme that resonates strongly with the employees' feedback.

On the managerial front, the interviews reveal a Managerial Self-Reflection and Engagement that is both encouraging and instructive. The manager not only engages in self-reflection but also shows a willingness to improve, accompanied by proactive troubleshooting efforts. This behaviour is in line with Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985), which advocates for self-

aware and self-improving leaders. It also echoes the concept of Double-Loop Learning (Argyris & Schön, *Organizational Learning: A theory of Action Perspective*, 1979), where errors become opportunities for reflection on underlying policies and assumptions.

Further enriching the landscape is the theme of Clarity and Detail in Leadership Communication. The content analysis of managerial communications, including emails and presentation slides, indicates a marked improvement in clarity and detail. This enhanced communication has facilitated a better understanding among employees regarding managerial expectations and the company's financial health. This finding is consistent with Kotter's *Principles of Change Management* (1995), which stresses the importance of clear communication. It also aligns with *Adaptive Leadership* (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2006), suggesting that leaders need to adapt their communication styles to meet the needs of different situations and audiences.

6.3 Factors that Influenced Employees' Reactions

Strategy Theory vs. Strategy Practice

(some wisdom from 40 years ago)

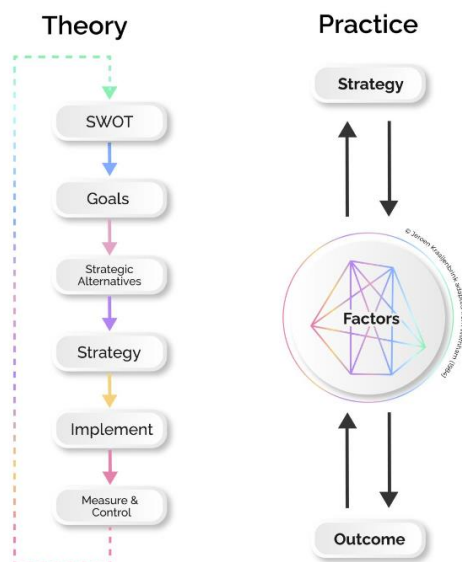


Figure 8. Strategy Theory vs Strategy Practice. Jeroen Kraaijenbrink adapted from Wernham (1984)

Understanding the various elements that shape how employees respond to change is paramount for the successful rollout of any change management initiative. Multiple variables have come into play within the eLearning development team's recent change efforts—from communication and culture to organisational context and decision-making involvement.

- **Feedback Delivery and Cultural Nuances**

Cultural norms diverged, shaping distinct feedback delivery expectations. Generational and gender disparities heightened this divergence, with the feedback occasionally perceived as confrontational due to inherent communication biases. In day-to-day interactions, these cultural norms manifested in feedback being ignored or only superficially accepted and acted upon.

- **Transition to Stringent Work Norms**

The abrupt transition to higher accountability jolted employees, lacking a preparatory "unfreeze" stage as per Lewin's Change Management Model. The existing complacent culture failed to create a sense of urgency, as advised by Kotter's Eight-Step Change Model. This abruptness was intensified by an organisational culture that neither promoted adaptability nor prepared employees for such a significant shift. The result was resistance and difficulty in adapting to new norms, revealing the crucial role of adequate preparation and cultural alignment in effective change management.

- **Limited Employee Participation**

The top-down approach left employees feeling disempowered. When employees were not invited to participate in decision-making about the changes, it led to disengagement and decreased motivation. This underscores the importance of fostering employee involvement in the change process.

- **Resistance to Change**

Inertia played a role in employees' hesitancy to embrace new practices. This resistance stems from human psychology—when established routines are disrupted, it can result in discomfort. Addressing this requires change management strategies, considering human behaviour and “habit is power”.

- **Motivational Deficits**

Spector (2013) asserts that elucidating the necessity of change is not enough to motivate employees, and this case study supports his claim. Leadership focused primarily on negative reinforcement—retaining employment—as a motivator, overlooking positive external and internal drivers for change. This approach failed to instil intrinsic motivation, which is crucial for long-term change sustainability. In this case, the organisation missed the opportunity to frame the change as beneficial for employee growth and satisfaction, which could have led to a more enthusiastic and sustained response.

- **Inconsistent Leadership Actions**

The inconsistency between the team leader and manager's actions eroded confidence in the change initiative—for instance, the manager's changing stance on the consequences of missed deadlines created confusion. The manager's inconsistent support could be a classic case of the divergence between “Espoused Theory” and “Theory-in-Use” (as read in the interview Argyris, 2008), leading to confusion and resistance among team members.

- **Leadership Dissonance**

The misalignment between the team leader, who aimed for efficiency, and the manager, who prioritised employee comfort, led to mixed signals. This emphasises the need for alignment between different leadership tiers.

- **Personnel Misalignment**

Historically, inefficient recruiting led to a mismatch between employee skill sets and job roles, leading to low motivation. Effective change management should consider the right fit between people and roles and how fit influences intrinsic motivation and adaptability.

- **Organisational Culture**

The organisational culture serves as a pervasive backdrop against which all other elements—such as leadership dissonance, feedback mechanisms, and motivational deficits—are magnified and interpreted. This aligns with Schein's Organisational Culture Model (1985), which emphasises how deeply entrenched

cultural norms can hamper adaptability and influence various facets of organisational life.

In a culture resistant to growth and learning, feedback is more likely to be met with defensiveness, as supported by Argyris' Theory of Defensive Reasoning (1990). Similarly, inconsistent leadership actions or dissonance between leaders can be exacerbated when the prevailing culture already fuels scepticism towards change. This phenomenon is well-explained by Kotter's 8-Step Change Model (1996), which highlights the importance of establishing a sense of urgency and forming a guiding coalition to implement change successfully.

In such an environment, even well-planned, gradual changes can face heightened resistance if perceived as threats to a profoundly ingrained status quo. This is consistent with Lewin's Change Management Model (1951), which posits that successful change involves 'unfreezing' existing behaviours, changing them, and then 'refreezing' them into new patterns. Understanding and addressing the resistant organisational culture is not just an isolated task but a fundamental prerequisite to successfully managing various factors contributing to employees' reactions to change.

6.3.1 Multi-level Resistance

Understanding the factors contributing to the employees' reactions towards change allows us to introduce the "multi-level resistance" concept. This term encapsulates the multi-dimensional barriers to organisational change—from inconsistent leadership and managerial practices to a resistant organisational culture. In a "multi-level resistance" scenario, the various obstacles are not merely independent issues but are often interconnected, amplifying each other's impact and making the resistance to change more complex and challenging to address.

6.4 Impact on Team Performance

The change management initiative within the eLearning development team prompted a kaleidoscope of impacts, some quantifiable and others intangible yet no less significant. The initiative created ripples not only in productivity metrics but also in the subjective experiences of team members, shedding light on the multi-dimensionality of organisational change.

6.4.1 Quantitative Enhancement

The following performance metrics refer to the period between 1st Jan 2023 and 1st Sept 2023. The team collectively saw a 14.3% increase in the total modules published year-over-year. Coupled with this, the team's average publishing rate increased by 25.5% weekly. Regarding interaction metrics, which indicate the modules' complexity and user engagement, there was an average increase of 33.55% across all developers. Moreover, by the 1st Sept the team had 32% of their library translated into other languages. These collective results suggest that the change management plan positively impacted productivity and engagement. However, these metrics may only partially reflect the operational challenges encountered. Specifically, the manager had to personally develop and publish ten modules during this period to meet customer deadlines (not counted in the statistics). This suggests that this change management initiative yielded some positive outcomes but required further refinement to achieve fully self-sustaining improvements.

Year	Total Published Modules	% Change
Last Year	28	
This Year	32	+14.29%

Table 2. Overall Team Productivity

Developer	Modules Last Year	Modules This Year	% Change	Modules/ week Last Year	Modules / week This Year	Notes
Developer A	5	7	+40%	0.24	0.30	
Developer B	18	15	-16.7%	0.75	0.55	More complex modules, additional team lead responsibilities
Developer C	3	4	+33.3%	0.16	0.31	
Developer D	2	6	+200%	0.09	0.40	Three modules needed significant managerial rectification to meet standards.

Table 3. Module Productivity and Development Time

Developer	Avg. Inter. Last Year	Avg. Inter. This Year	% Change
A	2000	1570	-21.5%
B	900	1100	+22.2%
C	760	1042	+37.1%
D	560	1100	+96.4%

Table 4. Interactions Metrics

- Team Average Development time: 0.39 modules per week
- % Change in Team Average: approximately 25.5%
- Regarding the localisation effort, the team surpassed the initial 30% goal, reaching a 32% translation rate by September 1st.

6.4.2 Interpretation Notes

- The team increased their published modules by about 14.3%, showing a modest but positive uptick in productivity.
- The team increased module development speed by about 25.5%, indicating that the changes implemented had increased efficiency.
- Developer B's output and development time metrics need to be contextualised due to the complexity of the modules and added responsibilities.
- Developer D's seemingly impressive productivity metrics come with the caveat that managerial intervention was required to bring three of her six modules up to standard.
- Surpassing the translation KPI by 2% added another success to the change management initiative, showing the team's capability in handling additional aspects of development, like language localisation.

6.4.3 Quality Enhancement

The team's transformation journey presents a complex interplay of quantitative and qualitative variables. On the quantitative front, an observable increase in productivity can be attributed to the team leader's adherence to Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985), which emphasises the role of visionary leadership in inspiring performance. Concurrently, the manager's commitment to excellence aligns with Kotter's Principles of Change Management (1995), reinforcing the importance of managerial support in facilitating change.

However, these productivity metrics offer a partial view, necessitating an examination of Emotional Well-Being as a qualitative variable. Despite the quantitative gains, the team exhibited strains in morale and motivation, which align with the softer elements of Organizational Change Management (Cameron & Green, 2004). This divergence between quantitative and qualitative outcomes underscores the multidimensional nature of change processes, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that considers both hard and soft elements of change.

An unexpected variable in this transformation equation was the Departure of Developer D. Contrary to the prevailing notion that staff turnover during periods of change is disruptive (Oreg, 2006), this event had a net positive impact on team dynamics. Developer D's resistance to constructive feedback and minimal contributions made her exit a non-disruptive event, thereby challenging conventional wisdom on staff turnover and its impact on change processes.

The contrasting trajectories of Developer A and Developer C offer further insights into the complexities of human behaviour during change. Developer A's increased engagement can be understood through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which posits that supportive environments foster intrinsic motivation. In contrast, Developer C's declining performance and resistance to change resonate with Schein's Organizational Culture Model (1985), raising questions about individual-organizational fit in the context of evolving cultural norms.

Central to these varied experiences is the role of Feedback and Self-Reflective Practices, which align with Senge's Organizational Learning Theory (Senge, 1990). The team leader, manager, and Developer A demonstrated a commitment to creating a feedback-rich environment, thereby fostering a culture conducive to continuous learning and improvement.

6.5 Challenges and Limitations

The change management initiative under study was fraught with a number of challenges, each contributing to the complexity of the transformation process. One of the most salient issues was the prevalence of "Organizational Silence," a phenomenon well-documented by Morrison and Milliken (2000). The observed reluctance among team members to voice their opinions and concerns not only stifled open dialogue but also impeded the organisation's adaptive capacity, thereby underscoring the criticality of fostering a culture of open communication for effective change management.

Cultural incongruities further complicate the changing landscape. The team leader's emphasis on meticulous planning and direct communication clashed with the team's preference for a more nuanced, indirect critique and relaxed punctuality. This cultural dissonance resonates with Schein's Organizational Culture Model (1985), highlighting the resistance to learning and adaptability as a broader issue. The observed lack of intrinsic motivation for upskilling, despite allocated time for professional development, further exacerbated this resistance.

Managerial inconsistency emerged as another significant impediment. While the initiation of changes was commendable, the sporadic nature of managerial involvement hindered the full adoption of new practices. This inconsistency aligns with the gaps identified in Kotter's Principles of Change Management (Kotter, 1995), particularly the importance of sustained managerial support for successful change implementation.

Balancing team morale with operational efficiency also presented a challenge. The manager's initial focus on morale, in response to employee resistance, inadvertently compromised performance. This tension between morale and efficiency calls for a nuanced approach, informed by Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985), which advocates for a balanced leadership style that considers both emotional and operational aspects of team dynamics.

The manager's time constraints, owing to responsibilities across multiple teams, led to periods of under-management, adversely affecting the team's adherence to new standards. This lack of oversight aligns with the challenges outlined in Organizational Learning Theory (Senge, 1990), emphasising the need for consistent managerial engagement for effective learning and adaptation.

Employee disengagement, particularly from Developers C and D, posed a persistent challenge. Their lack of engagement, even in the face of opportunities for creative input, reflects the broader issue of low intrinsic motivation across the team. This aligns with the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which posits that a lack of intrinsic motivation can stifle innovation and personal growth.

Resource constraints, exacerbated by the company's financial struggles and "no-fire" policy, limited the manager's options for personnel changes, thereby compounding the existing challenges.

In summary, the change management initiative was beset by a complex array of challenges, each with its own theoretical underpinnings. These challenges underscore the need for a multifaceted approach to change management, one that incorporates thorough planning, unequivocal support, transparent communication, and strategies to cultivate a culture of learning and adaptability.

6.6 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Within modern organisations, organisational learning fosters adaptability, innovation, and sustained performance. This chapter aims to unveil how the team's exposure to new insights during the change initiative translated into meaningful shifts in behaviour. By analysing the case study, I navigate the intricacies of how the team harnessed knowledge, absorbed it into its collective consciousness, and manifested these learnings through adaptive behaviours.

Nevertheless, while learning often manifests as an observable change in behaviour, it is worth pausing to reflect on the nature of learning itself. Is learning only truly learning if it results in behavioural change? Or can it exist as a latent potential, waiting for the moment to manifest? For the context of this case study and the lessons learned, these questions are not purely academic but have practical implications. It is worth considering, especially in organisational change, how much of learning is the accumulation of knowledge and how much is the application of that knowledge (Illeris, 2009). Scholars like Kolb (1984) have articulated that learning is a continuous cycle that includes experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and experimentation.

Cognitive theories of learning, stemming from the works of theorists like Robert Gagné, suggest that learning encompasses a spectrum of outcomes, from intellectual skills and cognitive strategies to changes in attitudes (Gagné, 1985). These outcomes do not always necessitate immediate behavioural

manifestations, opening the conceptual space to recognise learning that occurs "inside the head" only to be externalised when the appropriate opportunity arises (Bandura, 1977).

The nuanced recognition of learning allows for the inclusion of insights that may have yet to result in tangible actions but have fundamentally shifted understanding or perspective. As Weick (1999) implies, identifying patterns in change is a complex process, suggesting that the inability to immediately manifest what one has learned does not invalidate the learning process.

The following lessons, therefore, encompass not just behaviours that have been modified over the past nine months but also insights that have reshaped collective and individual understanding—ready to be enacted when the context calls for it.

- **Leadership Alignment and Theoretical Coherence**

The observed misalignment between the team leader and manager underscores the critical importance of aligning espoused theories with theories in action, as conceptualised by Argyris & Schön (1974). This study validates that effective change management is not merely about having a coherent vision and strategy, as supported by Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985), but also about ensuring that leadership's espoused theories are consistently enacted in practice. The principles of Situational Leadership (Northouse, 2022) further emphasise the need for leaders to adapt their styles based on team readiness, which can only be effectively executed when there is alignment between what leaders say they will do (espoused theory) and what they actually do (theory in action). Thus, this study affirms that for successful change management, it is imperative to achieve both alignment and adaptability in leadership approaches grounded in theoretical coherence.

- **Power of Transparent Feedback**

The team leader and manager's constant and candid feedback catalysed deeper introspection among team members. This behaviour aligns with Senge's concept of a "learning organisation" (1990), which advocates for an environment conducive to continuous learning and improvement. Open feedback also fosters accountability and realigns team goals, further correlating with Transformational

Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985). Thus, the study offers practical evidence supporting both Senge's and Bass's theoretical frameworks, underscoring the transformative power of transparent feedback.

- **Strategic Planning and Preparation**

The need for Strategic Planning and Preparation is substantiated not just by the Prosci ADKAR (Awareness Desire Knowledge Ability Reinforcement) Model's focus on 'Awareness' and 'Desire' as foundational stages for effective change but also by the 'Plan' stage of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model. Both models underscore the critical importance of meticulous planning before any implementation. The initial hasty approach to change planning observed in the case study resonates with these models, offering practical confirmation of the importance of thorough preparation.

- **Cultivating a Learning Culture**

The team's positive response to new course development methods and willingness to continuously improve aligns closely with Senge's "learning organisation" framework (1990). Thus, the study provides practical evidence for fostering a culture of learning and innovation, as Senge advocates.

- **The Importance of Shared Vision**

A more precise, shared vision among team members could have mitigated the initial resistance encountered in this case study. This observation confirms the emphasis Kotter places on the importance of shared vision in his 8-Step Change Model. A collective vision is thus a cornerstone for effective change management, corroborating Kotter's theoretical framework.

- **Sustained Follow-Through**

The observation that unfinished initiatives led to scepticism among team members finds its theoretical underpinning in the final stages of Kotter's 8-Step Change Model. Kotter emphasises the need to anchor new approaches in organisational culture for sustained impact, corroborating the study's insights on the importance of follow-through for long-term success.

- **Self-reflection and Critical Evaluation**

One crucial lesson from this study is the courage required for honest self-reflection and critical evaluation during change initiatives. This aligns well with Argyris and Schön's "Single-Loop and Double-Loop Learning theories" (1978). The willingness to face uncomfortable truths and admit mistakes is not a failure but a vital step toward meaningful improvement. Single-loop learning may prompt adjustments without challenging underlying assumptions, while Double-Loop Learning involves scrutinising and altering those assumptions. The case study provides practical evidence that courage in self-reflection fosters a culture of Double-Loop Learning, significantly influencing the success of change processes.

- **Embracing Conflict**

The lesson of embracing conflict, rather than avoiding it, resonates with the principles of Conflict Management Theory, precisely the "Integrative Negotiation" approach. Encouraging individuals to articulate and analyse differences can lead to improved organisational effectiveness. The case study confirms that engaging constructively with conflict, as advocated by Integrative Negotiation, can enhance problem-solving and foster a more cohesive team.

- **Importance of Flexibility and Adaptability**

The team's ability to adapt plans or change their work approach when needed underscores the importance of flexibility during change processes. This aligns with "Contingency Theory" (Wikipedia, 2003), which posits no "one-size-fits-all" approach to organisational management. The case study demonstrates the value of an adaptive approach, corroborating the need for flexibility.

- **Importance of Setting Specific Metrics**

Clear metrics provide clarity, accountability, and a quantifiable measure of progress. Aligned with the Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), well-defined metrics are tangible benchmarks guiding change. Supported by Performance Measurement Theory (Neely, 2005), metrics objectively track progress for intended improvements. Resonating with SMART criteria (Doran, 1981), metrics must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound, ensuring alignment with objectives. In summary, defined metrics play a dual role, practically and theoretically, in enhancing change initiatives.

- **Intrinsic Motivation and Adaptability**

The study uncovers a crucial aspect that challenges effective change management: the team's intrinsic motivation for learning and adaptability. While various members demonstrated the capacity for improvement when directed by leadership, there was an absence of self-driven efforts to engage in professional development. This observation aligns with the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), emphasising that intrinsic motivation can hinder effective change. Assessing and fostering the team's internal drive for learning and adaptability in future initiatives is crucial.

7 DISCUSSION

This chapter delves into the theoretical underpinnings that guided the study on the transformation journey of an eLearning development team. I align the research with three key frameworks: Change Management Theory, Leadership Theory, and the Organisational Learning Framework. The discussion explores how these theories illuminate the complexities of change, leadership, and resistance at both managerial and team levels, ultimately enriching our understanding and offering practical implications for future initiatives.

7.1 Alignment with Theoretical Framework

This research synthesis is profoundly influenced by its alignment with critical theoretical frameworks: Change Management Theory, Leadership Theories, and the Organisational Learning Framework. This section explains how these theoretical paradigms guide and enrich the eLearning development team's transformation journey.

7.1.1 Relevance of Theoretical Selection

The chosen theoretical frameworks are indispensable for examining and understanding the complexity of managing change in an eLearning team. Change Management Theory offers pragmatic guidelines for planning, implementing, and evaluating the transformation process. Leadership theories provide lenses to evaluate and cultivate effective managerial strategies. Finally, the Organisational Learning Framework laid the foundation for fostering a culture of continuous growth and improvement.

7.1.2 Methodological Alignment

Data collection methods comprising qualitative and quantitative approaches were selected to validate theoretical principles in real-world contexts. The Balanced Scorecard elements and the principles of stakeholder engagement in Change

Management Theory inspired the choice of key performance indicators and qualitative observations.

7.1.3 Case Study Relevance

The eLearning development team's experience is an empirical proving ground for these theoretical frameworks. The nuances that emerged during the transformation—such as the need for tailored communication strategies and leadership styles—add depth and complexity to these theories. The case study substantiates the ideas while exposing areas for further exploration, such as cultural considerations in leadership and change management.

7.1.4 Contributions to Theoretical Frameworks

The first significant contribution of this work lies in its empirical richness. By delving into the lived experiences of an eLearning team undergoing change management, the study provides a nuanced understanding that goes beyond theoretical postulations. It captures the essence of real-world challenges, from cultural and generational differences affecting feedback to the psychological barriers that hinder change. This empirical grounding offers actionable insights for practitioners aiming to navigate similar terrains.

Secondly, the study introduces the concept of “multi-level resistance”, a term that encapsulates the multi-dimensional barriers to organisational change. This concept serves as a framework for understanding how various factors—ranging from inconsistent leadership to a resistant organisational culture—interact and amplify each other's impact. This is a novel contribution that extends our understanding of resistance in change management literature.

Lastly, the study enriches the discourse on leadership dissonance and its impact on change initiatives. It highlights the need for alignment between different tiers of leadership, a factor often overlooked but critical for the success of any change management plan.

In summary, this study contributes to the field by offering an empirically rich, multi-dimensional exploration of team transformation in eLearning. It introduces a new framework and sheds light on overlooked aspects of leadership and organisational culture. These contributions advance academic understanding and offer practical insights for industry professionals navigating similar challenges.

7.1.5 Limitations and Future Considerations

While the theories provided a robust framework, they could not account for all real-world complexities.

In aligning the study with change management theories, it was found that the Prosci ADKAR model significantly shaped the planning and evaluation phases. In particular, the "Awareness" and "Desire" components were critical in driving stakeholder buy-in, as demonstrated by Developer B's stakeholder engagement strategies. However, a critical evaluation suggests that while the team succeeded in "Awareness" and "Knowledge," there was room for improvement in the "Ability" and "Reinforcement" phases. This echoes Kotter's 8-Step Change Model, which emphasises the need for consolidating gains and anchoring changes in the corporate culture (Kotter, 1995).

A blend of leadership theories profoundly influenced the transformative journey of the eLearning development team. Developer B's decision to seek external consultation for modulating her communication styles can be examined through the lens of transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985). This study also revealed limitations in universally applying transformational leadership principles. For instance, despite Developer B's attempts, there was an initial disconnect in communication styles, a nuance often overlooked in the broader discourse around transformational leadership.

The alignment with these theoretical frameworks offers a validation and a critique of the models in question. The project's real-world implementation revealed the practical constraints often glossed over in academic discussions. It provides a

nuanced understanding, advocating for a more tailored application of these theories based on organisational context and specific needs.

As per Senge's (1990) concept of a "learning organisation", future efforts should embed these theoretical constructs more deeply into the fabric of the organisational culture, creating a self-sustaining cycle of continuous improvement.

7.2 Implications of Findings

7.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This research enriches the landscape of organisational learning theories by uncovering a deeply rooted resistance to learning and professional growth at both managerial and team levels. This form of resistance challenges conventional theories about organisational change resistance (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). The corporate culture in the case study manifests a "fixed mindset", which hampers the willingness to modify established norms and practices.

Moreover, the study extends the discourse on leadership alignment in change management theory. While existing literature (Kotter, 1996; Yukl, 2013) emphasises the importance of aligned leadership behaviours, this study introduces the concept of "people alignment". This broader alignment includes not just the leadership tier but also the entire organisational structure, thereby offering a more holistic perspective on alignment to navigate multi-level resistance effectively.

The study's findings align with Argyris and Schön's theories of action, particularly the concepts of "Espoused theory" and "Theory-in-use" (Argyris & Schön, 1974). While traditional organisational learning theories focus on explicit strategies and policies, the theories of action delve into the unconscious reasoning processes that often guide behaviour. The observed incongruence between what team members say they value and how they actually behave can be understood through this lens. The study suggests that for change management to be

effective, there needs to be a congruence between "Espoused theory" and "Theory-in-use", echoing Argyris and Schön's emphasis on double-loop learning as a mechanism for achieving this congruence.

7.2.2 Practical Implications

The findings underscore the need for an iterative approach to change management, aligning with the PDCA model. Organisations should continually refine their strategies based on actual outcomes, thereby fostering a culture of agility and continuous improvement.

The study also highlights the importance of self-reflection in leadership, particularly in a change management context. The team leader's journey serves as an illustrative example of the power of self-awareness and alignment in facilitating smoother change processes. This calls for organisations to encourage a culture of open dialogue and self-reflection as a pivotal part of leadership development programs.

On a practical level, the study suggests that organisations should consider not just the skills but also the alignment of roles as part of their planning phase. This is an actionable way to mitigate resistance and enhance the effectiveness of the change process.

Finally, the study emphasises the need for custom strategies to promote candid feedback in diverse workplaces. Leaders must consider cultural norms, gender dynamics, and generational preferences when designing feedback approaches. This real-world case highlights that embracing diversity enriches feedback and requires a deliberate commitment to understanding and accommodating individual differences.

8 CONCLUSION

This chapter is the capstone of this research journey, synthesising key insights and offering actionable frameworks for organisational change. The first part of the chapter introduces the PERFORM-E Framework, a holistic model that addresses the complexities of change management by integrating well-established theories with practical steps. It provides a nuanced roadmap for organisations, emphasising adaptability, continuous feedback, and multi-level alignment. The Conclusion then summarises the research's key findings, contributions, and lessons learned, including the critical role of leadership alignment, organisational culture, and well-defined metrics. These sections aim to bridge the gap between theoretical rigour and real-world applicability, offering a comprehensive guide for effective change management.

8.1 The PERFORM-E Framework for Comprehensive Performance Improvement

The PERFORM-E framework offers a multi-faceted approach for driving meaningful and sustainable change aimed at performance enhancement. While frameworks like Kotter's 8-Step Change Model focus extensively on planning and execution, PERFORM-E offers a more holistic approach, emphasising continuous feedback and adaptability, addressing gaps in current change management paradigms. This framework elegantly fuses practical wisdom with established theories, providing a clear roadmap through its eight essential components:

- **Planning and Preparation**
- **Engaging Leadership (Alignment)**
- **Regular Feedback (Transparent Feedback Culture)**
- **Fostering Learning (Cultivating a Learning Culture)**
- **Objective Metrics (Setting Specific Metrics)**
- **Reflect and Adapt (Self-Reflection & Adaptability)**
- **Meaningful Communication (Shared Vision and Communication)**
- **Evaluation and Dynamic Re-calibration**

1. Planning and Preparation

- **Organizational Mindset Analysis:** Identify areas of "fixed mindset" that may hinder change efforts.
- **Strategies for Overcoming Multi-layered Resistance:** Develop targeted interventions to address resistance at both managerial and team levels.
- **Employee Readiness Assessment:** Adapt principles from Adult Learning Theory.
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** Understand how to engage affected parties.
- **Resource Allocation:** Plan time, personnel, and financial resources.
- **Predictive Analytics:** Use historical data to forecast potential roadblocks or resistance.

2. Engaging Leadership (Alignment):

- **Shared Vision Building:** Workshops to build common understanding.
- **Role Modeling:** Leadership should embody the change they advocate.
- **Managerial Transparency:** Address inconsistent managerial support.
- **People Alignment:** Extend alignment strategies to include all organisational members, not just top leadership.

3. Regular Feedback (Transparent Feedback Culture):

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish real-time, transparent feedback systems like 360-degree reviews or regular team check-ins.
- **Promoting Candid Feedback:** Develop customised strategies to encourage open feedback in diverse workplaces, considering cultural norms, gender dynamics, and generational preferences.
- **Feedback Loop Integration:** Align feedback mechanisms with the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model to ensure continuous improvement.
- **Emotional Quotient (EQ) Assessment:** Gauge how well the team is emotionally adapting to the changes.

4. Fostering Learning (Cultivating a Learning Culture):

- **Learning Techniques:** Introduce various educational tools, like mentorship programs, workshops, and e-learning courses.

- **Identifying Learning Needs:** Conduct regular skills and needs assessments to tailor learning and development programs.
- **Mindset Transformation:** Implement strategies to shift the organisational mindset from fixed to growth.

5. Objective Metrics (Setting Specific Metrics):

- **KPIs:** Use a balanced scorecard approach.
- **Leading vs. Lagging Indicators:** Adopt a balanced set of metrics.
- **Iterative Improvement Metrics:** Align metrics with the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model for continuous improvement.

6. Reflect and Adapt (Self-Reflection & Adaptability):

- **Learning Techniques:** Offer various educational tools, like mentorship and gamification.
- **Self-Reflection Mechanisms:** Encourage periodic "lessons-learned" meetings and self-reflection, aligning with my findings on the importance of feedback and self-reflection.

7. Meaningful Communication (Shared Vision and Communication):

- **Communication Channels:** Use a multi-channel approach.
- **Crisis Communication Protocols:** For timely and accurate information during emergencies.
- **Diverse Team Communication:** Implement strategies for effective communication across diverse teams, considering cultural norms, gender dynamics, and generational preferences.

8. Evaluation Phase:

- **Kirkpatrick's Four Levels:** Measure the impact of the change initiative.
- **Resistance and Mindset Metrics:** Include metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to overcome multi-layered resistance and fixed mindsets.
- **AI / Machine learning:** Use algorithms to suggest adjustments to the plan based on real-time data automatically.

The PERFORM-E framework is designed to be highly adaptable, accommodating organisations across varied sizes and industries. However, its multiple components might initially appear complex for smaller organisations with limited resources. To address this, the modular framework allows companies to prioritise specific elements that align with their immediate needs and resource capabilities. For instance, smaller teams can focus on implementing key features like “Objective Metrics” and “Regular Feedback” using existing, low-cost tools and methods.

Over time, as the organisation grows, these initial elements can be further developed and integrated into a more comprehensive performance management system. This modularity makes the PERFORM-E framework scalable and customisable, providing a roadmap for sustainable performance improvement across start-ups and multinational corporations.

8.2 Implementing the PERFORM-E Framework for Organisational Excellence

Drawing on this research, the PERFORM-E framework offers a structured, evidence-based pathway for organisations aiming to enhance performance through robust change management strategies. This framework harmonises well-established theories with actionable steps, incorporating cutting-edge elements like predictive analytics, emotional intelligence metrics, and machine learning to tackle critical challenges. Below, I unpack each component of the PERFORM-E framework and explain how they can be strategically applied in an organisation:

Planning and Preparation

This initial step goes beyond traditional change management models by emphasising meticulous planning supported by predictive analytics. Tools like SWOT, PESTEL, and Force Field analysis are complemented by machine learning algorithms that forecast potential roadblocks or resistance, offering a more proactive approach to change management.

Engaging Leadership (Alignment)

Leadership alignment sets the tone and direction for any change initiative. Workshops and leadership training sessions are designed to build a shared understanding of the change vision. These sessions also introduce the concept of "Managerial Transparency," which aims to address and rectify inconsistent managerial support.

Regular Feedback (Transparent Feedback Culture)

A transparent feedback culture is crucial for open communication. This is supported by theories like the "Johari Window" and is further enhanced by the introduction of Emotional Quotient (EQ) assessments. These assessments gauge how well the team is emotionally adapting to changes, offering a more holistic view of the change process.

Fostering Learning (Cultivating a Learning Culture)

The importance of a learning culture is amplified through the use of various educational tools like mentorship programs, workshops, and even gamification techniques. These methods aim to foster a culture that values learning and innovation, making the organisation more adaptable to change.

Objective Metrics (Setting Specific Metrics)

Objective metrics are derived from a balanced scorecard approach, incorporating both financial and non-financial KPIs. The framework also introduces "Sustainability Metrics" to ensure that the changes are not only beneficial in the short term but are also sustainable in the long term.

Reflect and Adapt (Self-Reflection & Adaptability)

Drawing from Double-Loop Learning and Agile methodologies, this phase encourages a culture of introspection and adaptability. Periodic "lessons-learned" meetings and pivoting strategies are based on measurable outcomes and stakeholder feedback, making the process more dynamic and responsive.

Meaningful Communication (Shared Vision and Communication)

A strong communication strategy is vital for reducing resistance to change. A variety of channels like town halls, newsletters, and intranet updates are

employed, and a "Cultural Sensitivity Index" is introduced to ensure that communication strategies are culturally adaptable.

Evaluation and Dynamic Re-calibration

The final step employs Kirkpatrick's Four Levels to gauge the change impact and introduces AI/machine learning algorithms to suggest adjustments based on real-time data automatically. This ensures that the framework is not just evaluative but also adaptive, capable of real-time recalibration to meet organisational needs.

By meticulously implementing the PERFORM-E framework, organisations can navigate the turbulent waters of change more confidently. This approach bridges scholarly rigour with practical exigencies, offering a balanced, holistic, and innovative strategy for performance improvement.

8.3 Conclusion

This research journey began with the aspiration to investigate the multidimensional challenges and outcomes of implementing a change management plan in a low-performing eLearning development team. What unfolded was understanding the various facets of team performance and employee reactions and identifying systematic and structural inefficiencies. The study found that while the change management initiatives positively impacted productivity and user engagement, they were not without hurdles. Notably, inconsistent managerial support, the limitations of existing theories of change resistance like the Kübler-Ross Change Curve, and deep-seated cultural factors significantly influenced the change outcomes.

One contribution of this research has been developing and proposing the PERFORM-E Framework. The framework addresses the complexities and nuances found in real-world change management scenarios, providing a more holistic and adaptive model than existing frameworks. Drawing from diverse theories and methodologies, from Kotter's Change Model to Adult Learning Theory, the PERFORM-E Framework offers an actionable roadmap to organisations of various sizes and industries geared towards implementing and sustaining change.

In conclusion, this thesis fills gaps in change management literature and offers a pragmatic framework that bridges theoretical rigour and practical needs. The PERFORM-E Framework, therefore, stands as a testament to the complexity of organisational change and the necessity for multifaceted, adaptable solutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

Interview with the manager

1. How do you feel about the outcomes of the change initiative we co-led?
2. Were there moments where you felt the change process was not going as planned? How did you handle that?
3. Can you identify any specific instances where you felt resistance either from yourself or the team? How did that make you feel?
4. How would you describe your own leadership contributions during this initiative?
5. Did you find that you had to adapt your leadership style at any point? Can you share an example?
6. How did you perceive the level of trust and psychological safety within the team as we went through this change?
7. What have you personally learned from leading this change initiative?
8. Were there any "aha" moments for you, where you felt like you or the team learned something crucial for the initiative's success?
9. How do you think the team's learning culture evolved during this initiative?

Questions to the team members, asked at every meeting.

- How do you feel about the changes that have been implemented in the team? Do you think they are effective in achieving the intended goals?
- How do you evaluate the leadership during this change initiative?
- Do you have any concerns or suggestions that you believe could improve the change process or the team's performance moving forward?

Appendix 2(01). Excerpt from team leader's journal (it only has been edited to protect the team members' anonymity)

“Template Improvement Meeting Nr 2

This meeting was a success. The team had the following tasks:

- Take a page from a module that you have developed and re-create it in a different tool.
- They were given a list of possible tools but asked to feel free to use any other tool they knew.

Developer A presented a page that he recreated in Articulate Rise. Even before his presentation, there was a little discussion about why we were not using this authoring tool, and all members got to contribute to the discussion. During the presentation, Developer A talked about the limitations he identified and what he found inspiring. He liked the FAQ section of Articulate Rise and the discussion about the value of those and how we can incorporate them in our modules. Again, everyone shared their thoughts/remarks/questions.

Then it was Developer D's turn. He did not re-create any page, but he shared another company's tool. It was the 3D representation of a warehouse, and the learning method was scenario-based. The idea was very interesting, and everyone commented on the possibilities.

Lastly, I showed something with gamification. We did not find much practical use in it, but still there was discussion and constructive feedback.

The following happened:

- The team felt safe to share their ideas
- The team got interested in each other's ideas and provided constructive feedback
- We came up with useful elements to add to our template
- There was a great mood; everyone participated, and there were no passive observers

Since everyone's ideas got great feedback, their morale was high, and they felt valuable contributors”

Appendix 2(02). Excerpt from team leader's journal (it only has been edited to protect the team members' anonymity)

April, 2023

"April was also a weird month.

Developer C did not work for the first week, the manager took a week off at the beginning of the month, I went to a conference on the second week and Developers D and A were working on some DoO modules.

After I came back from the conference, the manager scheduled a meeting with me to admit that I was right and he was wrong. He meant that the schedule I had implemented at the beginning of the year, with the timed reviews, deadlines, and frequent communication should be implemented back, as he had lost track of everything. He admitted that people stopped working and he was practically overworked because he was trying to catch deadlines and improve everyone else's quality of work.

Supposedly, from today on, we will resume the practices I implemented in January. Is that a lesson learned? What were the lessons learned so far?

- we should have a clear vision and clear strategy and tactics
- we should communicate, both me and the manager, but also the leadership with the employees
- we should monitor the situation
- we should listen to feedback and adjust, but not at the expense of our vision
- we should acknowledge our own resistance to change
- we should keep in mind that sudden changes happen top-down

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