Sweeney Communications Ltd



Delivering Sticky Change

Ensuring Technology Change and People Change Work Together to Deliver the Benefits Executives Expect

Engagement and communications keep stakeholders informed and supportive by:

- Giving detail on improvements to functionality and user experience
- Listening to end users, respecting their feedback and acting on suggestions
- Identifying and delivering executives' expectations

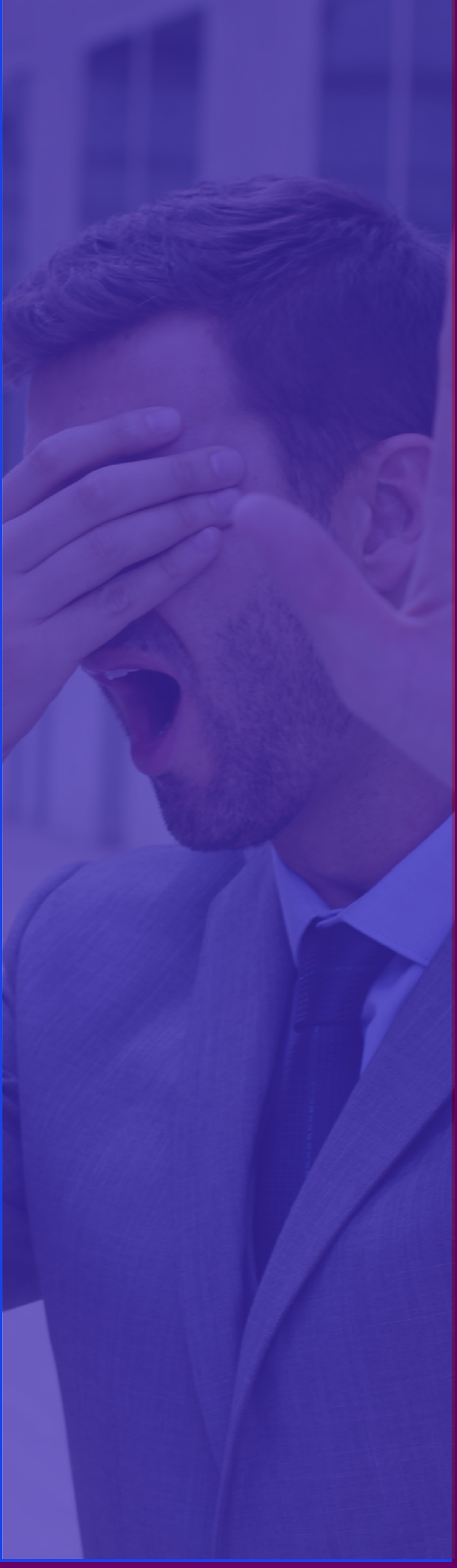


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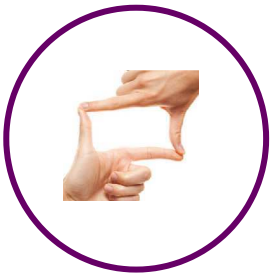
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Executive Summary

Success is people continuing to use new technologies, systems and processes for business-as-usual after migration.



Anecdote says 80% of change and transformation programmes fail. Who knows if this is accurate. Whatever the figure, we all experience programme failure; programmes that fail to deliver what our end users and business leaders expect.



Even when we deliver technology on time and budget, giving ourselves a big pat on the back, we fail to deliver clear benefits that cement long term success for our organisation.

There are multiple reasons why that fundamentally boil down to people not changing the ways they work.



Technology is just an enable of change; change happens when people change head knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Our experience is that most people are open to change; they just don't like having change imposed upon them. They want to be involved, listened to, their experiences valued and taken into consideration by the programme team.

When this does not happen people resist. Resistance may be overt to our faces, or covert so we don't recognise it is happening. It may become personal with individuals seeking to undermine us and the programme team. This causes delays, frustrations and withdrawal of senior executive support.

In this white paper we look at how to make a clear and simple case for change. How to keep key stakeholders engaged with change and transformation so they understand what is happening, trust the programme team and willingly change behaviours.

We take each of our key stakeholder audiences from knowing nothing and negativity, to being actively committed to the new ways of working. This is known as the Change Journey.



1 Frustrations

Biggest frustration linked to technology

When asked about the biggest frustration in their job, stakeholders cite systems and processes:

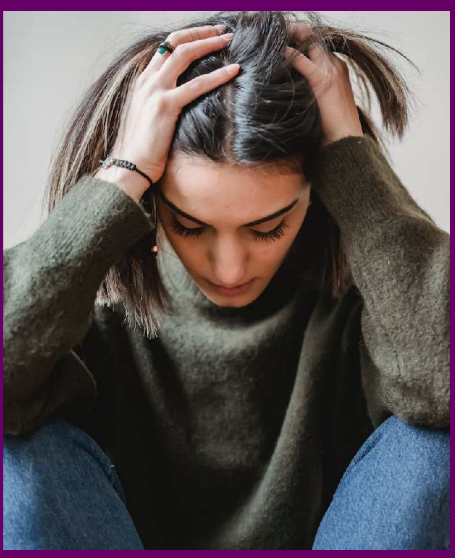
- Too many systems that don't talk to each other
- Too much repetitiove manual input of the same or similar data
- Inputting takes too much time
- Systems are outdated, slow, confusing, clunky,inaccurate, inflexible
- Data quality is worsening, data arrives late and is backward-looking

Expectations 2

New technologies are expected to resolve these frustrations with:

- Automation
- Faster data processing
- Real time data
- Standardised reporting
- No bugs
- Reliable outputs





3 Concerns

Concerns about new ways of working focus on the technology being no better than what it is replacing:

- Launched too early
- Won't be tested properly
- Bugs fiexed while live working
- Won't be adopted and used across the organisation
- Senior executives not supportive
- Take too long to learn and get up to speed



4 Support

People will be supportive when communication activities ensure:

- Regular information flows about functionality and benefits
- Everyone feels informed and understands the benefits
- Executives are visible and seen to be supportive
- Transformation vision is clearly explained and relevant
- People feel listened to, their questions and concerns are resolved

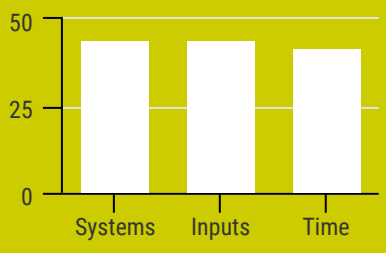
Involvement 5

Typically, people are keen to be involved in change and transformation by:

- Sharing their day-to-day experiences
- Inputting to design
- Giving feedback on what works and how to improve the technologies
- Acting as testers and piloting
- Acting as change agents and change champions.

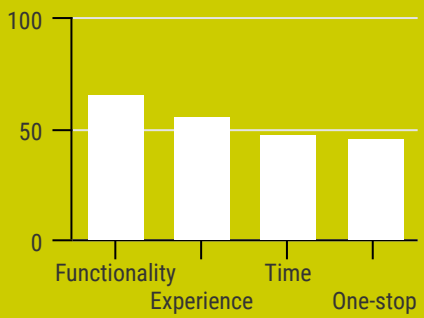


Key Findings From Client Research



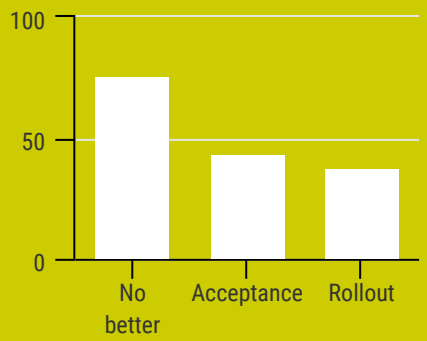
Frustrations

Systems incompatible, manual inputting, time consuming



Expectations

Better functionality, improved user experiences, saves time, one-stop shop for data



Concerns

No better than what have, low user acceptance, rollout issues

Making a Clear and Simple Case for Change

Change happens when people willingly choose to change because they believe new ways of working are good for themselves, their colleagues and customers.

Even when people are highly frustrated with the technologies they are currently using in their jobs, they still need to be convinced that new ways of working are better than what they have.

They will support new technology rollouts once they are sure functionality is better and it will make their working lives easier.

It is common to find people are frustrated by the systems they use; this is unsurprising given most systems are designed to support a variety of tasks across multiple teams and business units. The systems may be state-of-the-art at the point of rollout, but this will not last.

When asked about the biggest frustrations in their jobs, the number one gripe for most people is the systems and processes they depend on each day. They say systems don't talk to each other, there is too much manual and repetitive inputting, the technologies are outdated, slow, clunky, inflexible, confusing and complex.

Their systems don't provide the data they need to do their jobs, they don't trust the data inputs or outputs, and spend too much time rectifying errors.

They know what they want. One place for all their data, real-time, accurate data they can trust, seamless integration between the various systems they use, faster processing and automation.

User experience is equally important to functionality. They want the new systems to be easier and quicker, feel friendly and be flexible, show only what they need to see, be straightforward and easy to learn, reduce duplication and give consistent, more rounded insights.

How realistic are these expectations? Will the technology deliver what they want, or will they be disappointed?

What about senior leaders, what are they looking for change and transformation to deliver? Their focus is strategic; there are eight universal business imperatives that challenge them.

At any one time they focus on a maximum of three. Four are financial – stable or increasing profits, stable or increasing revenues, stable or reducing costs, stable or slowly growing share price for organisations listed on the stock exchange.

Another two are marketing – stable or growing market share, positive brand and reputation – leaving more effective people and more effective assets as the final two business imperatives executives expect change and transformation to deliver.

Taking People on the Change Journey

From where they are to where you want them to be: first changing head knowledge, then attitudes, before calling on them to change behaviours.

Working with us, our clients develop a strategic engagement framework alongside communication, resistant management and training route maps they can also use for future digital transformation.



Research Identifies Outcomes

We begin with qualitative research to understand stakeholders' awareness and attitudes, asking about the biggest frustrations in their jobs, how they hope the new technology will resolve these frustrations, what will cause them to be supportive or resistant, how they want to be involved and how they want to be kept informed.

Their responses give a good indication of what the grapevine is already saying, who the likely advocates and critics are, the best communication channels to use and messaging for each stakeholder grouping.

Typically, these findings convince senior stakeholders that they need to give the same focus to engagement and communication as they do to technology development.



Explaining Change

We then develop a strategic engagement framework that acts as an umbrella for communication activities and is integrated into the overall programme plan.

This framework has:

- Clear purpose linked to executives' business imperatives
- Stakeholders segmented and prioritised by their likely reaction to change
- Measurable objectives that demonstrate activities are delivering the business imperatives
- Core messaging that sponsors buy into and that audiences embrace
- Portfolio of communication channels supporting two way information flows to reach each audience in the most effective way
- Calendar of milestones and activities linked to programme phases
- Clear roles and responsibilities for creativity, production, distribution and reporting
- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Using this framework ensures consistency across communication activities over the duration of the programme, which often spans 18 months or more, plus it significantly increases the number of stakeholders who pay attention to messages: opening emails, joining webinars, watching videos, commenting on posts.



Engaging Stakeholders

Communication and training plans for each of the key stakeholder audiences fall out of this strategic framework. Each plan has activities based on the five-step Communication Escalator developed by Bill Quirke. This is a tool for taking audiences from initial awareness, through understanding, support and involvement, to commitment to change.

Separate key messages are developed for each stakeholder audience for each of the five Communication Escalator steps. Usually we have multiple messages at each step for each audience, making this a complex challenge to create.

Its strength is that the messages build on each other, taking stakeholders one easy step at a time towards our end goal. They come along on the journey because it feels easy, non-threatening and helpful.

We vary the communication channels we use to deliver messages to give stakeholders the variety that keeps their interest and that maps onto the channels they said they like in our initial research.

Our messaging journeys are not set in stone. We can move back and forth repeating messages, though always using different channels so communications don't feel repetitive, depending on what is happening on the technology change side of the programme.



Capabilities and Confidence

Training is based on the buddying methodology, a simple yet effective framework for ensuring people understand and can apply the skills they learn. Buddying gives end users at least four chances to practice each of the new ways of working. First they watch more experienced gold users, then they do together, finally doing themselves while being observed.

Buddying shares the training load widely across the organisation. The technology team gives in-depth training and ongoing support to the gold users who become experts and then go on to give the same support to their cohort of end users.

People want and need differing levels of support during change depending on their self-confidence. Buddying allows this to happen without judgement as ongoing support is optional and tailored to what is happening that week and day for those who join the training sessions.

The buddying methodology is about upskilling capabilities as well as how to use new technology, It gives people confidence they can apply their new skills in the practical situations they face and ensure they remember how to do so back at their desks and into the future.

They have space to try out the system on a test platform, making mistakes and learning in a safe place, with ongoing support from someone they trust and can turn to whenever they want. At rollout they are already confidently using the new ways of working. Buddying works whether end users are in one city, country, region or global.



Realising Benefits

Proving there is a return on their organisation's investment in both technology and people change is key for our clients. Thus we monitor and measure in four areas – outputs, outcomes, value and differentiation.

Outputs are the tangible things we do, that we can see and touch. Like completing alpha, beta and release sprints, creating videos, hosting webinars and podcasts, posting on social media.

Outcomes are the changes in our stakeholders. First we change their head knowledge, then their feelings and attitudes, before issuing the call to action to change their behaviours. We need outputs to get outcomes.

Value is the business imperatives executives expect the programme to deliver; revenues, profits, cost savings, share price, market share, brand reputation, effective people and effective assets. We need outcomes to deliver value.

Differentiation is how the change or transformation has helped our client differentiate itself from its competitors. This is something we measure after the programme ends and the new ways of working have become business as usual for teams.

How easy or hard is it for competitors to copy what we have done. Easy and there is no long term advantage from the programme; hard and our client now stands out in its marketplace as a premium provider. We need value to deliver this differentiation.

Smooth Migration

As each cohort of end users migrates to the new technologies and processes, their levels of understanding and engagement are high. Typically they are keen to be involved in knowledge sharing webinars and the training sessions with their gold user buddies.

Their line mangers and more senior leaders are also engaged, supporting teams as they take time to practice the new ways of working, reminding people to complete training.

These business leaders express surprise that their people are positive towards the change and want to know more about what is happening, as well as how they can get involved and help make change a success.

They are proactive and more interested than in previous technology rollouts, which are more often than not perceived as failures. There is a sense of urgency that is inspiring people to change more quickly than they otherwise would have done so.

End users are so involved they are flagging areas where the new systems are not working for themselves and asking for updates. They're passionate about refining the technology so it is the best it can be.

The programme team can take credit for these achievements because they engaged stakeholders early on, began communication activities and planned to manage resistance well in advance of rollout.

They made a clear and simple case for change based on the marketplace and customer realities end users were experiencing. They focused on the people side of change alongside day-to-day programme delivery.

Agile People Change



1 Research

Understanding stakeholders mindsets and behaviours, support and resistance, imvolvement and communication preferences

Engagement Framework 2

Clear purpose, segmented stakeholders, measurable objectives, stepped messaging, two-way channels, clear roles and responsibilities, evaluation





3 Communication Plan

Taking each stakeholder audience on the Change Journey from initial awareness to commitment to change the ways they work

Training Plan 4

Ensuring people have the support they need to apply new ways of working using the Buddying methodology





5 Evaluation

Monitoring outputs, outcomes, value and differentiation to prove RoI for both technology and peope change activities

Bringing in an Outside Perspective

Sweeney Communications is a virtual stakeholder engagement consultancy based in the United Kingdom supporting change and digital transformation in the IT, technology and telecommunications sectors globally; the consultancy was formed in 1993.

Our associates are experts in their fields, with extensive experience in change management, stakeholder engagement, resistance management, training and corporate communications for multinational organisations.

We are known for clearly explaining technical and complex information so stakeholders understand both the detail and relevance to themselves.

Our results-focused approach ensures engagement and change activities achieve their objectives, meet stakeholder expectations, make best use of resources and deliver value to reputation and the bottom line.

Founder Jo Ann Sweeney is an Explaining Change Expert. She brings an outside perspective, new thinking, and acts as a sounding board that creates a drumbeat of urgency and makes change happen more quickly. Hear what clients say:



"With your just-do-it mindset you acted as a lightning rod conductor, making things happen."

"You've been the voice of reason in a fog of uncertainty."

"There is no way I could have delivered without your support. You have made the technology delivery piece easier."

Would you like to replicate these achievements? Let's have a conversation and talk through your challenges

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