Gartner
Peer Insights™

Change Management: Approaches and Outcomes

One-Minute Insight Report summary:

- The majority of decision makers were currently in a period of change management or planning for one at the time of the survey
- Digital transformation efforts are the most common driver of change management
- Change management is run internally by most, though engagement with external partners is common
- Reduced time to execute vision is the top benefit of change management
- Leadership is the most identified factor for navigating change, but is also the most commonly cited issue decision makers have experienced

Organizational change is inevitable, resulting from strategic shifts, digital transformation or mergers and acquisitions among other disruptive forces.

Change management, the process of overseeing periods of change in terms of end users, workflows and service management, may impact how successfully the business navigates change. What are decision makers' experiences of change management?

Use these insights to benchmark against your peers.

One-Minute Insights on timely topics are available to Gartner Peer Insights members. Sign up for access to over 100 more, and new insights each week.

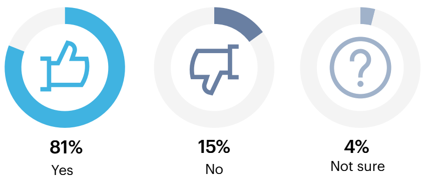
Data collection: Sep 25, 2021 - Feb 27, 2022

Respondents: 347 tech decision makers

Change management is a common practice

81%
of respondents were currently undergoing a period of change management.

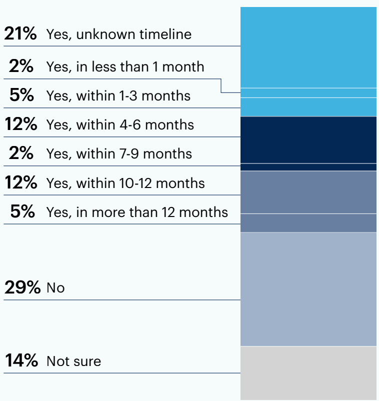
Is your organization currently undergoing change management?



n = 347

Of those who weren't currently undergoing a period of change management,
59% reported that their organization was planning for a period of change management in the future.

Is your organization planning for a period of change management?



n = 66

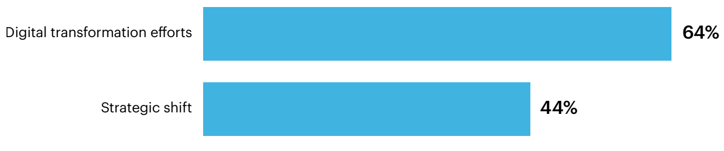
> "Change management is often the most overlooked aspect of introducing change to an organization."
>
> - Director, finance industry, 1,000 - 5,000 employees

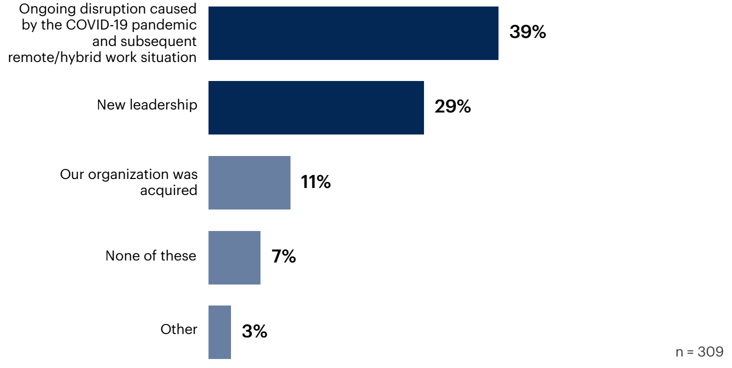
> "[Change management] is an underappreciated skill at most companies."
>
> - C-suite, finance industry, 1,000 - 5,000 employees

Digital transformation is the most common driver of change management, and most are satisfied with how it's going

The most commonly reported driver of change management was **digital transformation (64%)**, followed by **strategic shift (44%)** and **remote/hybrid work (39%)**.

What was the reason behind your current need for change management?



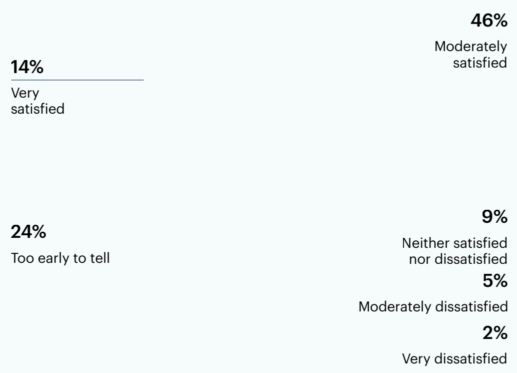


For those undergoing change management,

60%

were **satisfied** with the initiative.

Are you satisfied with the impact of the change management initiative so far?



n = 281

> "Scope and context of change does matter to how much change management is required. E.g. when we were spun off, very little was needed, since most everyone was primed for change."
>
> - Director, software industry, 10,000+ employees

> "Poorly communicated change [can] appear to be change for its own sake. Senior managers who create change initiatives should be rewarded for the results of the change and not for simply executing it. There is nothing more demotivating than seeing a senior manager promoted into the next great position, whilst everyone who has been affected by the change struggles for years to compensate."
>
> - C-suite, finance industry, 10,000+ employees

Change management is mostly being driven by internal teams

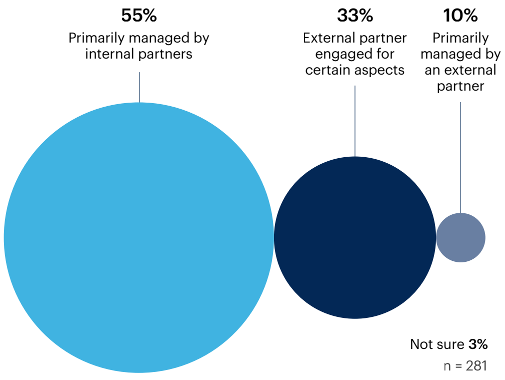
Most (**55%**) decision makers reported that change management was primarily being overseen by internal partners.

However,

43%

were engaging with an external partner to at least some degree.

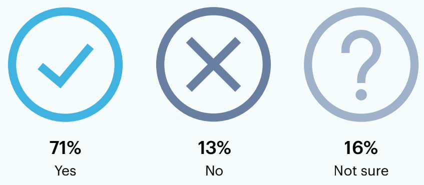
Did you engage an external partner(s) to oversee change management?



n = 281

Of those who were engaging with an external partner, **over two-thirds (71%)** would recommend their external partner to a peer.

Would you recommend the external partner to a peer?



n = 119

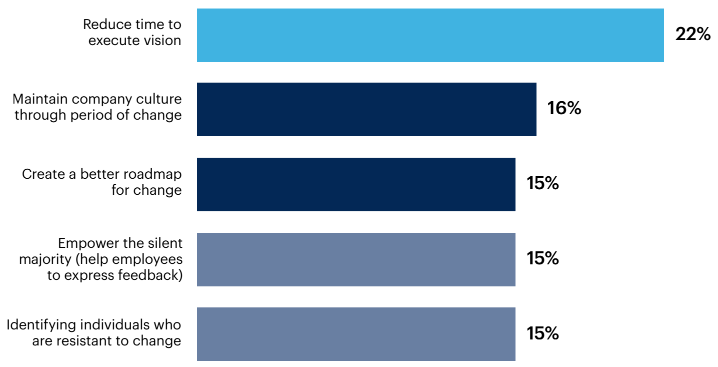
> "Manage change fatigue by effectively communicating with those directly involved why change needs to happen."
>
> - Director, telecommunications industry, 5,000 - 10,000 employees

> "When moving the company into a different direction I think it's very important for a management change as well. Old brains can't bring in new ideas."
>
> - C-suite, software industry, <1,000 employees

The top benefit of change management is reduced execution time, while almost all agree that without change management, change is likely to fail

Most decision makers consider **reduced time needed to execute vision** as the top benefit of change management.

Other than achieving a successful outcome, which of the following is your top perceived benefit of change management?

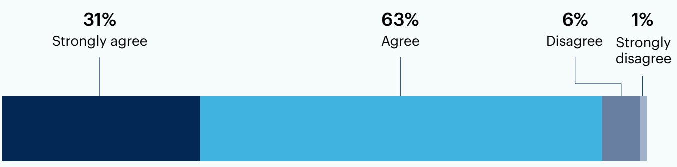


Identify gaps in the strategy/vision **12%**, None of these **4%**, Other **0%**

n = 347

94% of decision makers agree that change without change management is likely to fail.

To what extent do you agree with the following: "Change without change management is likely to fail."



n = 347

> "Change management plays a crucial role in deciding the future of the organization and helps in strengthening the bond within the company and improvises the culture."
>
> - Director, software industry, <1,000 employees

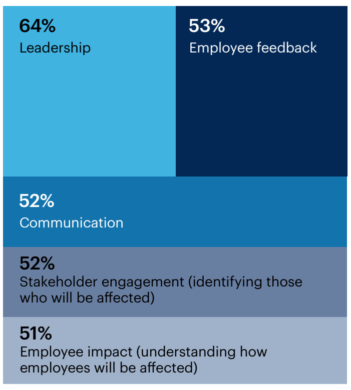
> "Culture is a crucial aspect to change management... Culture eats strategy for breakfast, as they say!"
>
> - C-suite, healthcare industry, 1,000 - 5,000 employees

Leadership is the most identified critical factor for navigating a period of change, but also the most commonly cited issue decision makers have experienced

The most commonly cited critical factors for navigating a period of change are **leadership (64%), employee feedback (53%)**, and **communication (52%)**.

Which of the following are critical factors when navigating a period of change?

Willingness to course-correct (alter approach if necessary) **50%**, Vision **44%**, Transparency **40%**, Time **39%**, Management support **38%**, Parting ways with those who don't share the vision **6%**, None of these **1%**, Other **0%**



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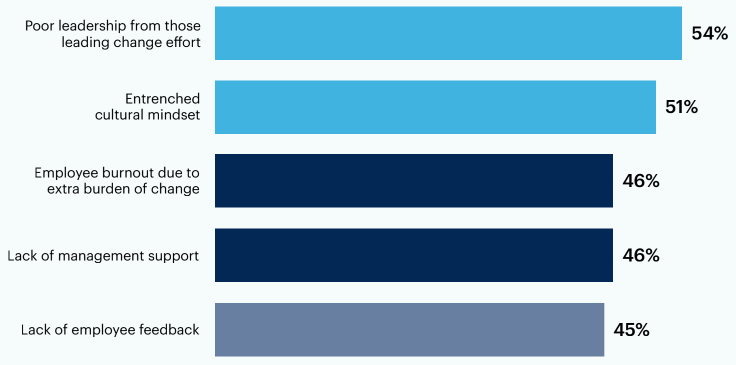
The most commonly experienced issues during a period of organizational change are **poor leadership (54%)** and **entrenched cultural mindset (51%)**.

Thinking about periods of organizational change at any point in your career, have you experienced any of the following issues?



Insufficient time frame (change period is too long or too short) **39%**, Failure to identify influential dissenters **35%**, Failure to communicate why change is necessary/the value of change **30%**, Poorly defined roadmap **23%**, Strategy fixed/no course correction **18%**, None of these **1%**, Other **0%**

n = 347

> “[Organizations experiencing change] need to ensure all upstream and downstream areas of the change impact are identified and all key team members are identified and part of the team.”
>
> - Director, software industry, <1,000 employees

> “Based on my experiences, I think [change management] is an area that requires greater focus within organisations, as the implications of a poorly executed process can be very significant.”
>
> - C-suite, software industry, <1,000 employees

> “I have seen a stark difference between an organization with a traditional/static leadership structure and organizations that were built agile from the beginning. The first type always struggled to manage change properly while the latter is built with change in mind.”
>
> - Director, finance industry, <1,000 employees

> “Having gone through significant changes through acquisitions and re-organizations, communication is critical and I have never seen it done well. I have seen some communications be complete lies, ‘We don’t plan on any reductions in staff,’ only to have layoffs 2 weeks later. Our organization takes 6-8 weeks to review layoff lists, review with HR and Legal. Don’t communicate bald-faced lies. Your employees know better.”
>
> - Director, finance industry, 10,000+ employees

> “One of my favorite quotes is ‘People don’t resist change. They resist being changed.’ People are the biggest component in change management. People will resist if they don’t understand the value and benefits of change.”
>
> - C-suite, software industry, <1,000 employees

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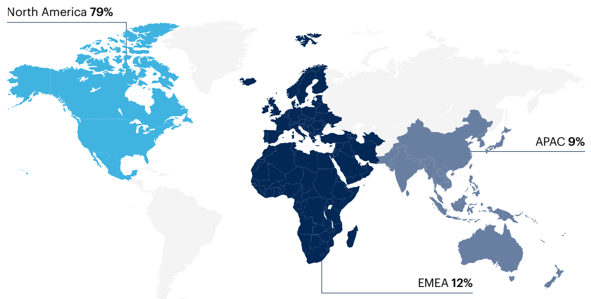
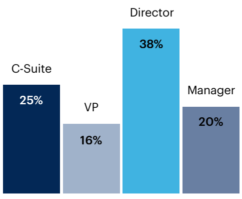
Respondent Breakdown

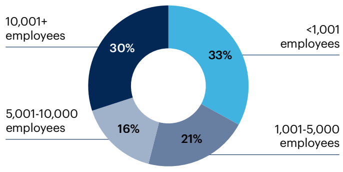
Region



Title



Company Size



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Source: Gartner Peer Insights, Change Management: Approaches and Outcomes survey

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