



BREAK THROUGH PROJECT ROADBLOCKS:

A Project Manager's Guide to Success

Prosci[®]



Project managers face increasingly complex challenges in organizations. From securing executive commitment to managing resistance and triple constraints, common obstacles can derail even the most carefully planned initiatives.

This guide explores practical solutions to the most pressing project management challenges today, backed by Prosci's latest research.

4 Common Project Manager Challenges

Understanding and addressing common project management challenges is crucial for delivering successful outcomes. But often project managers focus too much on the technical solution and underestimate the effects it has on people. By addressing the people side of a change, you're far more likely to overcome challenges—and achieve much higher levels of success.

Here are four significant challenges project managers encounter and proven strategies to overcome them.

- 1 **Obstacles with securing commitment and support from leaders**
- 2 **Poor communications and employee engagement**
- 3 **Inadequate or non-existent resistance management**
- 4 **Difficulty balancing triple constraints**



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Obstacles with securing commitment and support from leaders

Securing commitment for project plans often involves overcoming resistance from leaders who may not see the value of the change or who fear its implications for their roles. A lack of clear communication about the change can also lead to misunderstandings and skepticism.

The solution? Start by speaking the language of leaders. Our latest research on executive buy-in shows the top two ways to gain commitment and support are to link the change to strategic goals (35%) and quantify its benefits (19%).

Other research-based ways to get support from leaders include:

- Involving leaders early in the change planning process to build their sense of ownership in the project.
- Clarifying their leadership/sponsorship role to make sure they understand and can perform their specific responsibilities during a change.
- Helping them build a coalition of support with other leaders to present a unified front for change.



9 Ways to Demonstrate Value to Leaders

- 1 Link to strategic goals
- 2 Quantify benefits
- 3 Share case studies
- 4 Present data visually
- 5 Highlight risk mitigation
- 6 Measure intangible benefits
- 7 Benchmark performance
- 8 Conduct pilot programs
- 9 Calculate long-term value

Source: The Change Practitioner's Guide to Elevating Executive Engagement, Prosci Research Hub, © 2024.

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Poor communications and employee engagement

Communicating about a change takes far more than an email message from the project manager before a solution goes live.

Using specialized, targeted communication strategies while engaging stakeholders early in the change process is essential to building the commitment, support and adoption a project needs to succeed. A detailed communications plan identifies key messages, audiences and communication channels, and ensures that employees are informed and engaged throughout the project lifecycle.

Our research shows that all people impacted by a change—including managers, employees and other stakeholders—need answers to certain questions before they will demonstrate their support. For example, front-line employees need to understand the business reasons for a change, why it's taking place now, and how it will affect them personally.

Communications should also continue throughout the project. Proven communication strategies include regular updates, face-to-face meetings, and opportunities for feedback. Engaging employees in the change process and addressing their concerns directly can significantly enhance their commitment to the change.

Effective change communications

Communications play a critical role in improving employee engagement during change. Prosci research emphasizes four points to bear in mind:

- Prioritizing frequent and open communications fosters a culture of transparency and trust.
- Developing structured, comprehensive communications plans helps ensure that key messages are delivered by the right people at the right times through the most effective channels.
- Creating opportunities for employees to share feedback, express concerns, and ask questions builds engagement and commitment.
- Regularly communicating progress and celebrating successes publicly reinforces positive behaviors while strengthening employee connections to the initiative.



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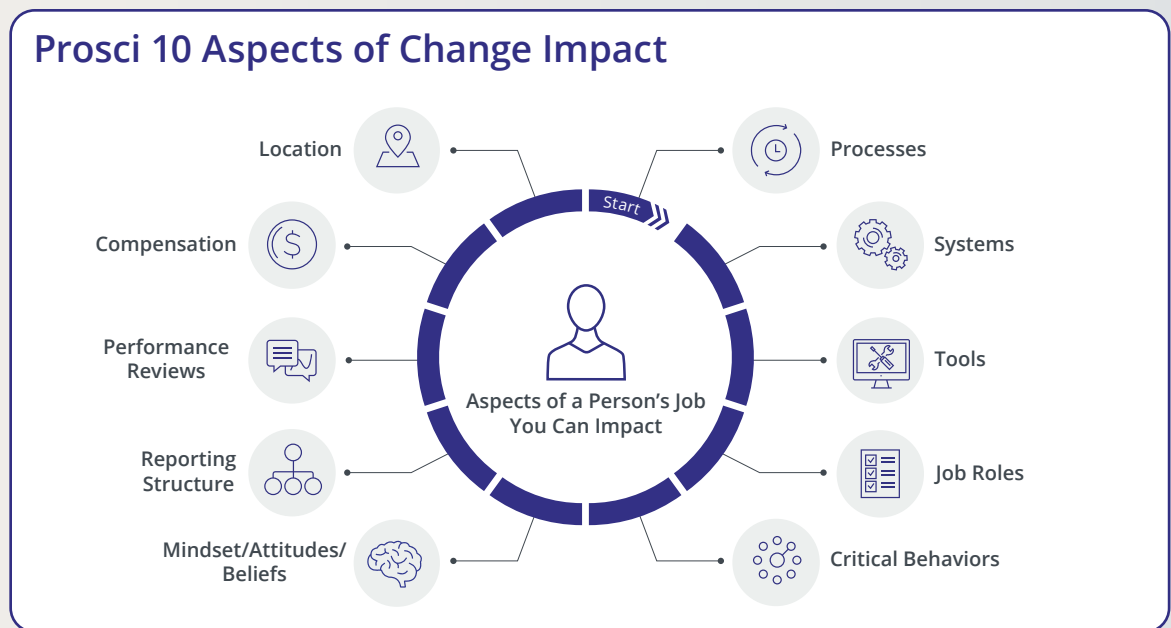
Inadequate or non-existent resistance management

Resistance is costly. It causes delays and rework, and puts project success at risk. It's also a natural human reaction to change, especially when that change affects people's jobs.

It may come as a surprise to learn that mid-level managers are the most resistant group cited in our global research (43%), followed by front-line employees (25%).

The good news is that about half of all resistance is avoidable.

The key to prevention? Identify and address root causes early—well before resistance can start. This involves evaluating all of the areas where a change can impact the way people work.



Preventing resistance may also require a mindset shift. Instead of blaming people, it's important to consider resistance an opportunity to listen and learn from them.

To bring this mindset to life, be curious, ask questions, and try to empathize. And engage affected people in the change process. They're far more likely to support a project or initiative when they feel heard and are part of the solution.

Other effective approaches for managing resistance include:

- Equipping people managers with the training and tools needed to support their teams.
- Helping managers recognize and resolve their own resistance before helping others.
- Having open, honest conversations with people who are experiencing barriers to change.
- Building a network of change agents to influence and support people throughout the change.

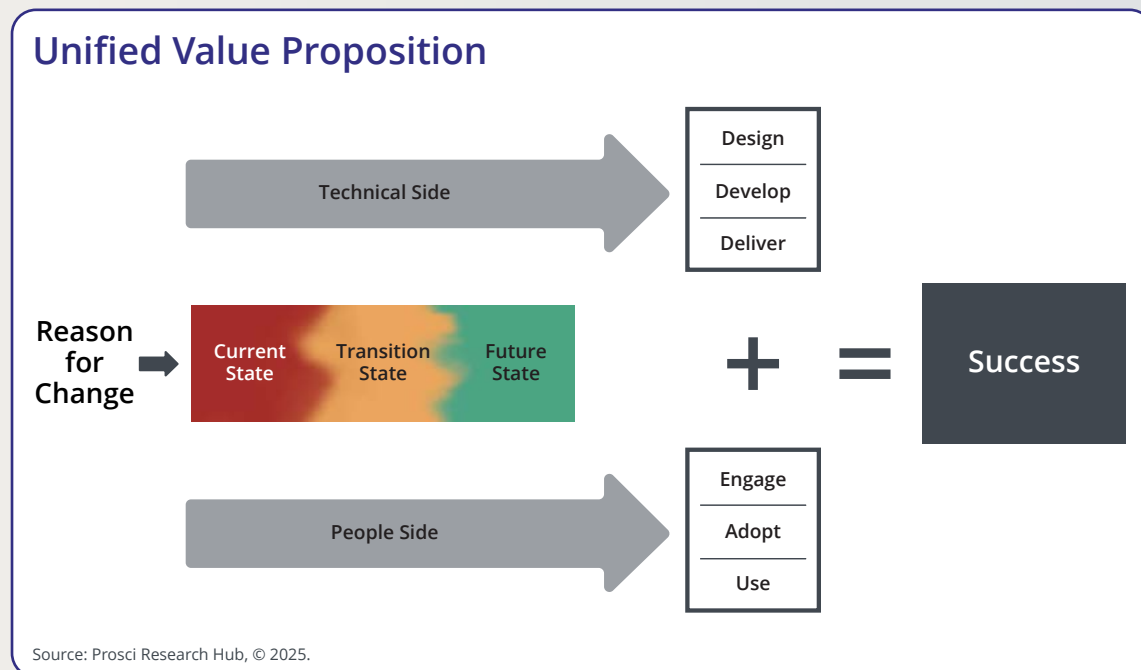


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Difficulty balancing triple constraints

Managing the impact of change requires careful assessment of how it will affect project timelines, scope and resource allocation. Without a clear understanding of these impacts, projects often face delays, budget overruns and scope creep.

Prosci research consistently shows that integrating the people side of change with the technical side enables significantly improved outcomes.



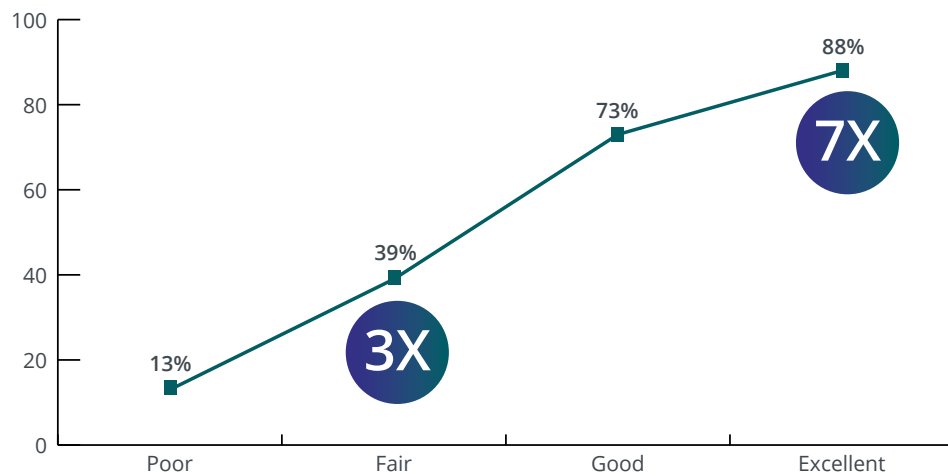
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The Unified Value Proposition framework depicts how the people side and technical side of change work together to achieve a common goal of success. By integrating the two sides at the start of a project, project teams address the critical “people” aspects of change that impact adoption and results.

Applying change management alongside project management enables your teams to balance scope, time and cost constraints more effectively while achieving the project’s intended benefits.

Prosci research on best practices bears this out. Projects that apply effective change management are **seven times more likely to meet or exceed objectives**.

Correlation of Change Management Effectiveness With Meeting Project Objectives



Source: Research Hub, © 2023 Prosci, Inc.



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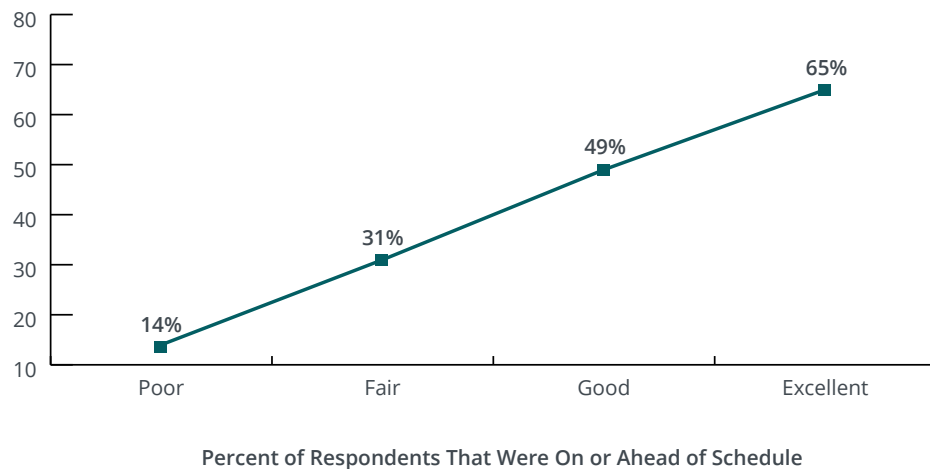
Time management

Scheduling constraints can lead to rushed implementations and poor adoption. Effective planning and stakeholder engagement allow adequate time for user training and support. And projects with excellent change management are five times more likely to stay on or ahead of schedule.

To better manage time and scheduling:

- If you experience schedule delays, use them as opportunities to strengthen change readiness rather than viewing them purely as setbacks. Schedule gaps can be valuable times to build engagement and understanding.
- Have your executive sponsor actively communicate about timeline changes and their rationale. This helps maintain project credibility when schedules shift.
- Plan for both technical milestones and people-readiness milestones from the project's start. Don't wait until the end to address adoption and usage, as this creates massive schedule pressure.

Correlation With Staying On or Ahead of Schedule



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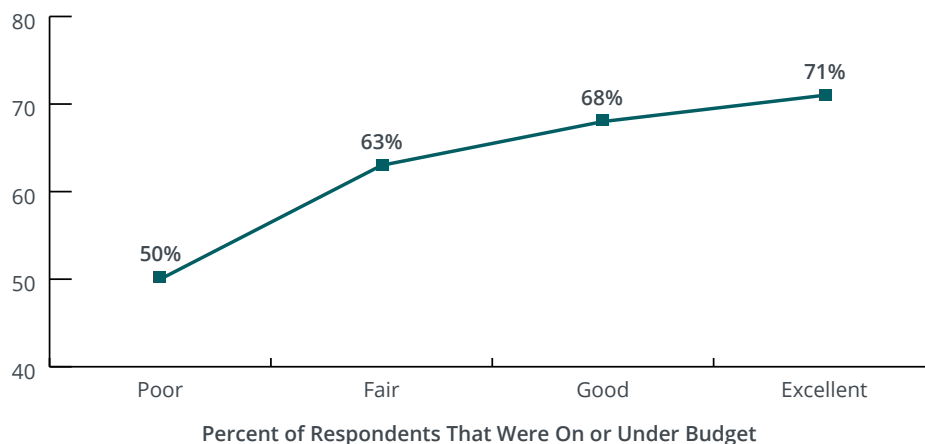
Cost management

Prosci experts recommend starting small if resources are limited. Pick the most impactful change management tactics for your specific project rather than trying to do everything. A little is better than none when it comes to managing the people side of change alongside the technical side. When you demonstrate success, stakeholder support and resources for change management will grow.

To better manage costs:

- Account for “unfunded work” in your budget planning, especially organizational change management activities that often get done as an added responsibility.
- Use middle managers (people managers) strategically to extend your change management resources, but provide them with simple, clear tools and talking points to make it easy.
- Remember that managing the adoption aspects of a change often leads to costly rework and delayed benefits realization. Some investment in managing the people side of a change is better than none.

Correlation With Staying On or Under Budget



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Scope management

Changes in project scope can lead to confusion and misalignment. When you define and communicate project scope clearly, you ensure that all stakeholders understand expectations.

To better manage scope:

- Use clear, frequent communication to ensure everyone understands what's in and out of scope. Nothing is more devastating than having two people think they're on the same page when they're not.
- Leverage executive sponsors to validate and communicate scope decisions. When scope changes are needed, have sponsors explain the business rationale to build understanding and acceptance.
- Engage middle managers as feedback loops to identify potential scope issues early. They can help surface team expectations about functionality and features before they become scope problems.





Change Done Right With Prosci

Integrating change management practices into your project management approach is essential to helping you control triple constraints while addressing other common challenges. While it may seem like extra effort, effective change management prevents the big issues that plague project managers down the road, adding costs and delays that threaten project success.

7X

More likely to
achieve project
objectives

4.6X

More likely to
stay on or ahead
of schedule

1.4X

More likely to
stay on or under
budget

At Prosci, we've been equipping project managers for change success for more than 25 years. Our approaches are research-based, proven effective and used by 80% of the largest brands in the world. When you learn change done right with Prosci, you'll see change as an opportunity to achieve more than ever and grow stronger in the process.



Prosci Change Management Certification Program

Get the tools, support and knowledge you need to break through common roadblocks in project management. Whether you're implementing a new ERP system or AI tool, or undergoing a complete digital transformation, the **Prosci Change Management Certification Program** equips you with the knowledge, methodology and tools you need to succeed.

That's Change Done Right.