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Calculating the ROI of Change Management

How to quantify the value change management delivers on your projects



As an experienced change practitioner, you know that successful change isn't accidental—it's measurable, intentional, and directly tied to business outcomes. But explaining the tangible value of change management to executives and stakeholders often presents a significant challenge.

Most change initiatives face a crucial question:

What portion of your project's benefits depends on people adopting and using the change effectively?

For technology implementations, process optimizations, and enterprise-wide transformations, this "people-dependent" value often represents **50-80%** of the total expected return.

Framework: Connecting Change Management to Business Results

Prosci research shows that projects with excellent change management are **7x more likely to meet objectives** than those with poor change management. To quantify this value, we need to shift the conversation:

Move from asking **“What is the ROI of change management?”** to **“What amount of the project benefits depends on employee adoption and usage?”**

The People-Side Benefit Contribution

To calculate change management ROI, follow this framework:

- 1. Identify total expected project benefits** – Document the full business case value (e.g., \$1.3M for a process optimization)
- 2. Determine Adoption-Dependent Benefits** – Ask the critical question—**“What would the benefits be if adoption and usage were 0%?”** (e.g., only \$350K would be realized without employee adoption)

3. Calculate People-Side Benefit Contribution –

$$\text{People-Side Benefit Contribution} = \text{Expected Project Benefits (Business Case Baseline)} - \text{Expected Project Benefits (if adoption and usage = 0)}$$

4. Determine People-Side Benefit Coefficient –

$$\text{People-Side Benefit Coefficient} = \frac{\text{People-Side Benefit Contribution}}{\text{Expected Project Benefits}}$$

- 5. Quantify Change Management Value** – Multiply the coefficient by expected benefits to show the value change management delivers

Example: Process Optimization Project

Metric	Value
Expected Project Benefits	\$1,300,000
Benefits if adoption/usage is 0	\$350,000
People-Side Benefit Contribution	\$950,000
People-Side Benefit Coefficient	73%

This analysis shows that 73% of the expected value depends on employees adopting and using the new processes effectively—a compelling case for investing in structured change management.



Three Factors That Impact Change Management ROI

The impact of change management varies by initiative. Consider these factors when analyzing your specific project:

1. Scale of Impact:

- How many employees are impacted?
- How many locations are affected?
- How many aspects of work will change?

2. Departure from Status Quo:

- Is this an incremental change or a disruptive transformation?
- How different is the future state from current operations?
- Is this a familiar adjustment or completely new territory?

3. Cultural Readiness:

- What's the organization's history with change?
- How strong is existing change capability?
- What's the current level of change saturation?

Projects with broader impact, greater departure from the status quo, and lower organizational readiness will have higher people-side benefit coefficients—**often 60-80% of total value.**



Securing Stakeholder Buy-In: Building Your Business Case

The Data You Need to Gather

To build a compelling business case, collect these key data points from project and senior leaders:

1. Expected project benefits (baseline business case)
2. Benefits if zero adoption occurs (the “technical-only” value)
3. Change management costs (resources, tools, training)
4. Implementation timeline with and without structured change management
5. Historical data from similar previous initiatives

Engaging leaders in this discussion is valuable beyond the numbers—it builds awareness of change management’s importance and creates essential sponsorship for your approach.



Three Ways to Present Your Case

1. Risk Mitigation Approach

Frame change management as protection against failure:

- “Without effective change management, we risk capturing only 27% of the expected \$1.3M in benefits.”
- “Our change management investment of \$X represents just Y% of the at-risk value (\$950,000).”

2. Accelerated Benefits Approach

Emphasize faster time-to-value:

- “Structured change management can reduce adoption time by X months.”
- “Accelerating adoption by X months delivers \$Y in additional benefits.”
- “Every week of faster adoption generates approximately \$Z in value.”

3. Resource Optimization Approach

Focus on efficiency and reduced support costs:

- “Effective change management reduces help desk tickets by X%.”
- “Proactive training and communications save approximately \$X in support costs.”
- “Reducing rework and corrections saves approximately \$Y per month.”

Making It Real: Beyond the Numbers

While ROI calculations provide the foundation, complement your business case with:

1. **Benchmarking data** from similar organizations or industry standards
2. **Testimonials and case studies** from successful initiatives
3. **Visual tools** like dashboards showing adoption rates over time
4. **Heat maps** illustrating change impacts and resource allocation



Maximize Your Change Management ROI with Prosci Enterprise Solutions

Change done right requires more than calculations—it demands the right approach, tools, and capabilities. Prosci's Enterprise Solutions are designed to help change practitioners like you deliver the full value of your projects by achieving maximum CMROI.

Our comprehensive enterprise approach includes:

- **Consulting Services** that provide expert guidance for your most complex transformations
- **Enterprise Training** that builds change capability across all levels of your organization
- **Licensing Solutions** that give you the flexibility to scale proven methodologies
- **Advanced digital** tools like **Proxima** and **Kaiya™** that streamline implementation and measurement

When you're ready to move beyond project-by-project change management to building true enterprise change capability, Prosci provides the research-backed methodology and comprehensive support you need to consistently deliver results.



Ready to unlock the full potential of your change initiatives?

Contact Prosci to explore how our Enterprise Solutions can help you achieve maximum CMROI and build lasting change capability in your organization.

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