How to Make Measuring Organizational Change Readiness Meaningful and Applicable

Applies to:

Organizational Change Management Professionals

Summary

There has been much written about communication and the importance of aligning organizational elements with the changes introduced by SAP. But the question remains, 'How do you measure organizational readiness to ensure you have a smooth and effective transition?'. This article proposes a method to measure organizational change readiness while ensuring the metrics are meaningful, manageable and measureable.

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Author Bio

Gregg Maslak is a Managing Consultant for Axon Global, a worldwide leader in Business Transformation. He has 20 years of experience applying technology and performance improvement practices to needs within organizations. He is well versed in change management, OD interventions, project management, and Total Quality Management (TQM). Additionally, Mr. Maslak has presented on the subject of Change Management for students pursuing Performance Improvement Certification through the University of Texas at Dallas.

Mr. Maslak received an M.B.A. in Business Management from the University of Dallas, Texas, and a B.B.A. in Computer Science and Management from Pace University, New York. He is a certified Project Manager (PMI) and Change Management Professional (ProSci).

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Executive Summary

Most Change Management Methodologies focus on Leadership, Organizational Alignment and Communications. Embedded in these activities is the assumption 'If we build it ***they*** will come'. However, if you are like some people who are naturally risk-adverse, you probably want a more concrete way to know that ***they*** are on the way. But how do you go about building a set of Change Management Metrics that are meaningful and applicable to the organization that is going through an SAP transformation? In addition, how do you do this via a means that is supportive and increases the likelihood of participation by the organization versus creating resistance? The answer lies in developing a set of metrics that are meaningful, measureable and manageable at the right level within the organization and to administer these metrics with empathy and encouragement. The following sections delve into how to go about developing these metrics, how they should be introduced to the organization, and how to administer them in a fair and reasonable way. If done properly organizational change readiness metrics should lift-up your change activities, not draw away from them.

What should be measured?

The answer to this question comes in two parts. First, you have to look at what change management activities you have scheduled and determine how specific organization entities will participate in those activities. For example, if you have a CM activity to map users to SAP roles and another to identify organizational impacts, then both of these activities can be linked to specific departments. In this way you can create alignment between change management and the departments contributing to organization readiness. Once you have a candidate list of activities that can be tracked at an entity level, then you need to discuss various ways to measure each and confirm the metrics are measureable, meaningful and manageable. Measureable means that you can quantify the activity. A good example would be the number of users who attend a change management workshop or presentation. A bad example is the number of folks who read something you sent to them. One measure is empirically evident while the other is not. Meaningful is the aspect of the metric that actually makes a difference if someone does the activity or not. What we are striving for is measuring activity that has an impact on the change program, not something that is convenient to measure. In the prior example, even if you could measure how many folks read the CM material distributed to them, it doesn't really help your CM program unless they take action as a result of the reading. Finally we hope that the metric would manageable, meaning it wouldn't take a whole gaggle of consultants to analyze the data to determine the result. Preferably metrics are a by-product of your activities and not something you have to design elaborate collection mechanisms to capture. A sample list of measures appear below:

- User Role Defined
- Users assigned to system roles
- Leaders participate in Change Leadership Training
- Users attend Role Change Workshops
- Business Transition Plans identified and documented
- Users complete Navigation Web-Based Training (WBT)
- Users complete SAP training
- SAP software installation complete on Users work stations

When should you measure?

Just like your CM program which should build like a Crescendo, your measures should be spaced out over your project lifecycle, and may increase during the final prep phase of your project. It is suggested that you build an Organizational readiness metric document that outlines the metric, the methods of measurement, the standard (i.e. what constitutes red, yellow or green), and when the metric will be measured. This document should be coordinated with all affected parties (e.g. client PM, exec sponsor/steering committee, affected entities) before the measurement program begins. Below is a sample stop light chart:

Business Readiness Stop Light Charts

DEPARTMENT	Participation in Exec. Interview	Participation in Leadership Training	Users assigned to system roles	Computer Hardware In place/on order	Org Impacts Defined	Participation in Role Change Workshop	Department Briefings Complete	Individual Action Plans Activites done	WBT Training complete	Organization Changes Approved	Organization Changes Rolled Out	SAP Training Complete	SAP Installation Complete on Desktops	Community of Practice Registration	Post Go-Live Surveys/Measures	Mitigation Plan
DEPARTMENT A	G	G	G	G	G											
DEPARTMENT B	G	G	G	G	G											
DEPARTMENT C	G	G	G	G	G											
DEPARTMENT D	G	G	G	G	G											
DEPARTMENT E	G	G	G	Y	G											
DEPARTMENT F	G	G	G	G	G											
DEPARTMENT G	G	G	G	TBD	G											

How should you communicate the measured results?

The results should appear on the project web page or be part of the on-going communications to the project stakeholders. However prior to the publication, each department should receive an advance copy of their results and be given the opportunity to catch-up. In this manner you are not putting any organizational group on the defensive. Because you have coordinated with each department in advance about what the measures are, and when they are going to be measured, there should be little surprise if a department does not meet its objective. However, by discussing the results before they are published you may be able to work out a recovery plan that gets that department back on track. For instance, let's say that the Tax department could not participate fully in the change leadership training because they had some filings to complete. It would be prudent to meet with them prior to the stop light chart being published and offering to have a make-up class, which will move them from yellow to green. The goal is to enable these departments to complete their Change Management Activities, not create enemies.

Summary

Including effective measures as part of your change management program spreads the responsibility for successful completion of all CM activities. However the metrics must be meaningful, measureable and manageable. In addition the means in which the measures are communicated must give priority to enabling organizations to succeed in accomplishing these metrics. Like all good feedback mechanisms, change management metrics should be a conduit for improvement not a source of reprimand. While the metrics measure each organization entity, they are also a reflection on you, the Change Management professional, and how well you have reached out to these groups. Therefore it is incumbent upon you to create an environment where these groups can succeed in their SAP transformation. Because if they succeed so will your change management program.

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