



## POINT OF VIEW

**Are you missing the mark with your change program communications?**

The usual change countdown messages won't cut it with today's employees. Learn how to motivate your employees with inspiring communication.

## Executive Summary

Today's dynamic business environments fuel constant change. Yet, when implementing change efforts, many organizations fail to realize the desired benefits of such programs—often because they fail to win the hearts and minds of employees first. This Avande Point of View explains how three key elements can improve adoption of your organizational transformation.

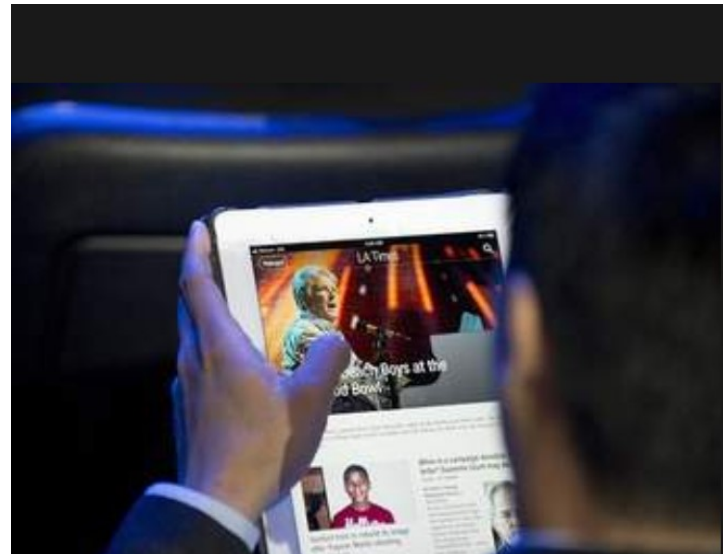
### Turn change communication on its head.

Research from the Project Management Institute shows that 50 percent of project failures are related to ineffective communication. That number is concerning because, arguably, communication is the most important factor in increasing adoption within a change program.

When implementing transformation, many companies send standard countdown messages prior to deployment about what to do and when. Behavioral messages are important, but they don't connect people to the mission in a deep way. The missing piece in most change communication is the appeal to human nature.

Sure, employees want to know why change is important, and what the benefits are to them and the organization. But they also want to have a sense of purpose, to know how they can contribute. And they want to connect with leaders before they'll invest emotionally. Organizations that fail to address these things risk losing employee loyalty—and will see lower adoption rates and higher change program costs.

So, how do you get your employees' hearts and minds involved in your change effort? The answer may lie in creating an organizational transformation story. A story can serve as a powerful tool for enabling change. And, stories can help strengthen the organizational culture through shared experiences that bring an organization's core values to life.



### Key element #1: Create an inspiring story.

Employees want to be motivated to undertake transformational change. A good transformational story can focus, align and inspire the human energy needed to realize the vision you have for your organization. Stories help others see what you see, connecting people to ideas and each other, while unifying their thoughts, aspirations and actions. Below are some tips to consider when developing your story.

Your transformation story should have broad meaning and resonate with everyone. A good place to begin is with your organization's core values and purpose, which can help guide behavior and foster the new way of working—and build a new culture.

Use a verbal and visual metaphor or analogy (i.e., posters, etc.) to craft your story to help employees "see" the change effort. A metaphor helps employees grasp the nature of change and characterizes the journey, while visual cues illustrate the emotional aspects of change

Create a journey map that explains the change path to help employees visualize your trek. The journey map should follow a series of stages that align with the work plan

Include graphical cues, such as signposts, as well as the characters' facial expressions that illustrate the change impacts employees will experience throughout the journey.



### **Key element #3: Develop employees to succeed in the new way of working.**

The final element involves preparing your employees for the new way of working. Frame your story around what employees need to learn, how to grow and how to take an active role in participating. Here are a few additional tips to consider.

Talk about the journey and the varying levels of change (i.e., from awareness to understanding to adoption to commitment) and what to expect throughout the journey (i.e., skepticism, challenges, need for ownership). Let them know that they may experience some emotional issues—and that it's OK to feel and express them.

Discuss the skills employees will need to develop to perform in the new way of working. Provide learning in varying formats, such as lectures, computer-based learning, job aids, gamification.

Reassure them that they will develop new skills and will have support throughout to become successful.

Remember to present the change in rich, inspiring language (in speeches and in writing) that will captivate employees' imaginations—as well as their hearts and minds.

Contact [Avanade](#) to learn more about how to make your transformation journey a success.

### **Key element #2: Engage your employees by connecting them to your vision.**

An important aspect of storytelling is engaging employees in the story (change initiative). To do that, learn what inspires them. When employees become engaged, they feel a personal sense of pride and are more willing to support their organization.

Align your journey map and story with what's ahead. Tell and show them where the twists and turns are, and how to navigate them. Highlight wins, no matter how small, to show what success looks like.

Make the change about them, rather than about technology. According to a recent survey, 70 percent of employees are already disengaged at work and that number is even greater in times of change. Explain to employees what their roles are in the bigger picture to engender a sense of purpose. Share how they can attain more meaningful outcomes for themselves, such as learning and growing in a job, contributing as a valued member of the team and doing work that is challenging and meaningful.

Making the journey personal will help motivate your employees to participate and work toward the end goal.



#### **About Avanade:**

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