

What actually works in leading through transformation



Perspectives from 1,945 leaders on successful change

This analysis draws on **1,945 unique reflections** from leaders on the Adepton platform across 17 organizations. We asked each to recount a specific instance when they successfully led a person or group through change, focusing on their approach and why it worked. By mapping these data points to the **Prosci ADKAR® Model** — the industry standard for understanding the five stages of individual change: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement — we've identified several behavioral themes present in successful change.

ADEPTION INSIGHTS

KEY INSIGHT 1: PURPOSE IS AN ESSENTIAL STABILIZER IN HIGH-COMPLEXITY CHANGE

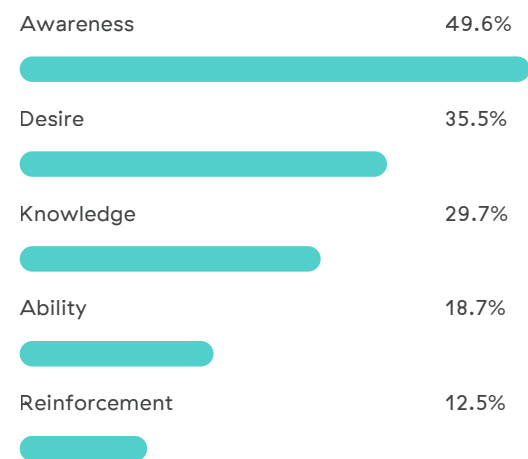
In high-complexity environments, information provides the 'what,' but trust provides the stability needed to move forward. Our analysis suggests that by authentically Emphasizing the Purpose during the initial rollout, leaders create the behavioral foundation for the Trust required to navigate subsequent stages of change.

Data: 49.6% of leader responses focused on the Awareness phase of change; the standout behavioral theme in this stage was Emphasizing the Purpose (19.4%). As the change journey moved into the Desire stage, the focus shifted toward Building & Maintaining Trust (17.1%).



Be Conscious for leaders: Reflect on your own perspective of the transformation. In your next meeting, share one vulnerable truth about why this change matters to you personally. By being transparent about your own 'why' you intentionally lay the groundwork for Building & Maintaining Trust.

Percent of leaders whose responses included each **stage of the Prosci ADKAR Model**



Multiple themes allowed per response

KEY INSIGHT 2: INCLUSION OUTPERFORMS COMMUNICATION 2-TO-1

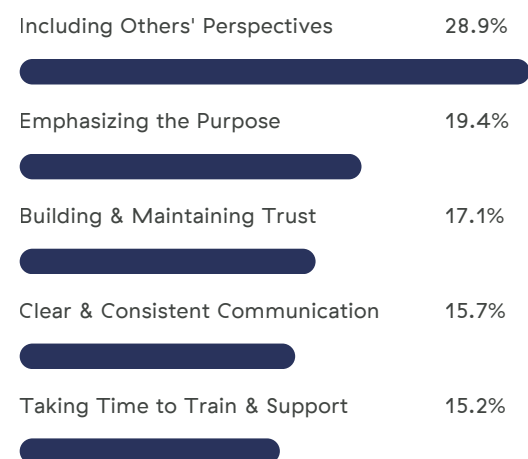
While the Awareness stage is often treated as a top-down information exercise, our data suggests that inclusion is a far more effective lever. By providing the scaffolding for teams to act as active architects of change rather than passive participants, leaders replace simple information delivery with a shared understanding.

Data: The most cited behavioral theme was Including Others' Perspectives and Ideas (28.95%) — mentioned by leaders nearly twice as often as Clear Communication (15.7%) during the Awareness stage.

TOOL

Be Curious for leaders: Try a team 'pre-mortem' [Read More](#)

Percent of leaders whose responses included the **Top 5 behavioral themes**



Multiple themes allowed per response

KEY INSIGHT 3: TRANSFORMATION SUCCEEDS THROUGH ACTIVE GUIDANCE

Change often stalls at the point where people know what to do, but haven't yet built the skill to do it. Our analysis shows that even in successful transformations, these 'Doing' stages are mentioned significantly less often. It suggests that Taking Time to Train and Support is a key differentiator — with leaders describing small interventions and celebrations of micro-wins to support sustainable shifts.

Data: While the Ability (18.7%) and Reinforcement (12.5%) stages were mentioned less frequently, leaders consistently cited the behavioral themes of Taking Time to Train and Support (15.2%) and Providing Positive Reinforcement (5.3%).



Be Better for leaders: Set up mechanisms to recognize progress, and ask team members: "Is there one small thing I can do to support your new way of working?" to help identify and address process friction. Acknowledging progress and smoothing the adoption process can help solidify new habits.

TOOL

Try ideas in our tool Making Change Stick [Read More](#)



OUR PERSPECTIVE

Organizational change and transformation is no longer an occasional initiative; it's become the permanent environment in which most leaders operate. To navigate this complexity, leaders need to build their adaptive capacity — the ability to learn and unlearn through collaboration, experimentation, and iteration.

ABOUT ADEPTION

Adeption moves beyond the content-delivery focus of traditional L&D to build adaptive leadership capacity at all levels. By integrating our Be Conscious, Be Curious, Be Better (B3)TM methodology into the flow of work, we provide the scaffolding for leaders to expand their mindset range while navigating the complex business challenges inherent in transformation.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

[Click here for the detailed data analysis](#) behind this report