

Preparing an Organization for Change

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Today's business environment is rapidly changing, requiring organizations of all types and sizes to continually transform in order to remain competitive, achieve business growth and meet their goals. Transformation projects have also changed over time, becoming far more complex in the new business environment. They demand very different types of project management skills and attributes than in the past, with a shift away from primarily technical skills and towards the need for understanding of the business environment and skillful stakeholder management.



The business risks of organizational transformation failure are high, yet the importance of advance preparation for an organizational change initiative is often neglected, and there is a widespread lack of understanding among business executives about what is required to achieve this. Many transformations fail, and research shows that these project failures are only rarely due to a lack of formal project management expertise, but can often be attributed to people-related factors.

For any organizational transformation, it is therefore crucial to achieve the right balance of art and science in project management. The science of transformation consists of best practice project management methods and techniques and the art comprises the softer skills necessary for managing the people-related aspects of transformation.

Before a transformation project is implemented, it is crucial to investigate whether the organization has the right combination of art and science project management skills in place, and take the necessary measures to address any gaps, through recruitment, training, or contracting out of the project management function.

There is also a need to ensure that the organizational culture and systems are not likely to hinder a successful transformation and take steps to identify any necessary changes.

A project management skills audit and an organizational readiness assessment are recommended for use in this preparatory stage of organizational transformation, and offer many potential business benefits including reduced risk, more effective project management and better alignment of organizational culture and systems with the transformation objectives.

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