



2005 Change Management Data on Effective Communications

Effective communication in top three

Prosci and the Change Management Learning Center are proud to present this tutorial focused on communications. It is important to understand that change management does **NOT** equal communications, but communications are an integral part of a successful change management plan.

According to data from the 2005 Change Management Best Practice Report **effective communication ranks third** in the top change management contributors to success. This tutorial provides the framework for your communications plan and gives you more insight from the 2005 Change Management Best Practices Report about the two most effective communication methods or delivery mechanisms.

Are you curious about the top two success factors? Stay tuned to upcoming tutorials as Prosci releases study highlights to help you effectively manage change.

Note: The 2005 Change Management Best Practice Report will be finalized and available in May 2005.

Creating your communications plan

The process of developing your communications plan requires significant work from your change management team (very large projects may even have a sub-team dedicated to communication). You will be combining project information and your findings from the change characteristics and the organizational attributes assessments. The output is a set of actionable items for your team and others in the organization. Details on the change characteristics and the organizational attributes assessments can be found in the [Change Management Toolkit](#) (hardcopy) or [Change Management Pilot](#) (online version).

The communications plan is required to create a roadmap of the required communications including senders, key messages, timing and delivery channels.

The process for developing your communication plan is:

1. Identify the audiences.
2. Identify key messages and timing.
3. Determine content packaging, delivery method, frequency and sender.
4. Prepare and present your communications plan to the project team, primary sponsor and business leaders who are needed to support the change.

The output of your communication plan will be a table like the one below for each of your targeted populations.

Audience:				
Timing (phase of project)	Message content	Delivery mechanism	Sender	Date and time

Note that a separate table is prepared for each targeted audience. The messages are organized by their timing in the project, and each phase has specific key messages. The messages are assigned a delivery mechanism and a sender that effectively convey that particular message. The communication activity will occur at a specific date and time to ensure that the right messages are received at the right time in the project.

As an example, take the key message “why is this change happening now.” The components that you need to consider are:

- **What do you want the employees to know about the reasons behind the project?** This change may be as a result of a new service provided by your competitors. The important **message** is that this change is necessary to keep up with our competition.
- **When do your employees need to know this information?** This information is critical to building buy-in for your project, so you may want to deliver this message early in the project, before solution design or development has even begun. The **timing** would be at start-up.
- **How do you want to deliver the message?** There are many options for delivering this message. You may

decide that a one-hour department meeting is the appropriate **delivery mechanism** for this message.

- **Who should deliver the message to your employees?** Messages around the business reasons to change are typically best received from senior leaders and executives. You may identify the COO as the appropriate sender, and bring her in for a 30-minute presentation during your meeting.
- **When will the meeting take place?** After examining the project timeline, you may pick January 10 at 11:00 as the date and time of your department meeting.

2005 change management best practice data

The frequency and mode to communicate change in organizations varies but the resounding message learned from participants was that the majority had a comprehensive communication plan to roll out the message pertaining to change within their organizations. The methods most frequently cited were:

- E-mail
- Group meetings (cascading message delivered throughout the organization)
- One-on-one communication
- Company publications (i.e. newsletters and magazines)
- Intranet
- High level and executive storytelling delivered company-wide

The **two most effective communications methods** (delivery mechanisms), according to the 2005 Change Management Best Practice Report, were:

- One-on-one or face-to-face discussions that are honest and straight forward and that offer details of the change one a personal level.

"People in the organization focused much more on personal interactions than reading information."

- Cascading small group meetings to share information, brainstorm solutions and implement new processes.

"We provided all managers with the same tools and messages so that managers across the system delivered a common message."

Remember, participants stated that effective communications was the third most important **contributor to success**. This tutorial provided a process for systematically developing your communications plan and shared some of the most effective delivery methods identified by study participants. The new best practices study will include additional benchmarking data regarding communications - including essential messages to communicate, key senders of messages and what teams would do differently. For a complete communications plan template, see the [Change Management Toolkit](#) or [Change Management Pilot](#).

Summary

As a project team or change management team, your efforts in building a communications plan are important, but your efforts are equally as important to build the plans that go along with the communications plan. Change management does not equal communications only. To be effective in your change, you need to build a communications plan along with a sponsor roadmap, coaching plan, training plan and resistance management plan. For a complete set of descriptions, templates, checklists and worksheets on each of the above plans please see the [Change Management Toolkit](#) (hardcopy) or [Change Management Pilot](#) (online version).

Resource guide

Benchmarking Reports and Toolkits

Best Practices in Change Management: 288 companies share experiences in managing change and lesson on how to build great executive sponsorship. Includes success factors, methodology, role of top management, communications, team structure and more. The report makes it easy to learn change management best practices and discover the mistakes to avoid when creating executive sponsorship.

Change Management Toolkit: a comprehensive change management process, including templates, worksheets, assessments, checklists and guidelines - a *must have* for change management team members and consultants.

Change Management Guide for Managers and Supervisors: a guide specifically designed for managers and supervisors dealing with change - complete with team and individual coaching activities, best practices findings and frequently asked questions.

Online tools

Change Management Pilot: a fully electronic version of Prosci's popular change management toolkit with templates, worksheets, assessments, checklists, eLearning modules, ready-to-use presentations and guidelines.

Change Management Pilot Professional: a fully electronic version that combines the Change Management Pilot with the Change Management Guide for Managers and Supervisors and Employee's Survival Guide - a combination that allows you to reach **each level** of the organization.

Books and Resources to distribute

Change Management: the people side of change: a solid foundation in change management perspectives, theories, activities and practices.

Employee's Survival Guide to Change: answers questions most employees are unwilling to ask and uncovers what it takes to survive and thrive in today's changing workplace. Employees will learn the ADKAR model and become effective change agents, instead of difficult change barriers.