ADKAR Change Model

Idea In Short

As a consultant, whether you're trying to achieve work-life balance or transforming a multi-national organization, achieving successful change is hard. Understanding and using the ADKAR change management model can give you a greater chance of making your change successful.

ADKAR Model In a nutshell, for an organization to change, the people within that organization must change. came about by analyzing successful and unsuccessful change within hundreds of organizations over several years. Jeff Hiatt – a former Bell Labs engineer and program manager - developed the model and founded Prosci in the 1994. The model differs from other change management models in its focus on change at an individual level. In contrast, most change models drive change at the organizational level. It focuses on the individual because, even if you're trying to transform a large organization, successful change occurs only when each individual in the team is able to change. The ADKAR framework is an acronym made up of the five steps a person needs to undertake in order to be willing and able to change. You carry out the steps in order, with each step building on the previous step. The ADKAR Model allows leaders and change managers to focus their efforts on driving individual change. Consequently, this will drive organizational change.

ADKAR Model

Each of the steps in the ADKAR model is named after the outcome from that step:

Awareness

The outcome of this step is that everyone has an awareness and understanding of the need to change. Evidently, each individual needs to know why the change is happening and necessary. Without a full understanding of why the change is necessary, employees will be unmotivated. Subsequently, this makes the change less likely to succeed. Hence, the

organization's management should ensure that everyone understands the need for change.

Desire

The outcome of this step is that everyone has the desire to take part in and support the change. To achieve this outcome, it is important to work with all individuals to achieve three aims. First, that they feel dissatisfied with the current state of affairs. Second, they should understand the negative consequences of keeping things the same. Third, people need to want to participate in the change. To achieve the final outcome, it's important to explain on an individual basis what's in it for them. For example, this could mean enhanced job security, a sense of belonging to a team, career advancement, or even financial incentives.

Knowledge

The outcome of this step is the individual knowing how to change. There are two types of knowledge according to the ADKAR Model:

- How to change e. knowing what they need to do during the transition
- Knowing the future skills and behaviors they need, once the change is in place.

Knowledge is only useful when both the stages are complete. Furthermore, the individual already has the awareness and desire to change. There are many ways to impart this knowledge, such as:

- Through formal education and training
- Coaching and mentoring
- Workshops

Ability

The outcome of this step is that the individual can demonstrate the desired new skills and behaviors. A great aspect of the ADKAR Model is its distinction between theory and practice. Once the theory of how to change is in place, that is, the knowledge, the individual needs to be supported to acquire and practice that behavior (the ability). Thereupon, management can support new working methods by providing any necessary training and access to resources employees need to build their capabilities.

Reinforcement

The final step's outcome is that the new change and any new behaviors are reinforced within each individual. To sustain the change, we don't want individuals reverting to the old ways of doing things. Many methods exist to ensure that individuals don't revert to previous ways of working or thinking, including:

- Taking corrective actions quickly
- Positive reinforcement
- Feedback
- Rewards and recognition
- Celebrations

This step is often the most difficult to perform. The reason for this is because as soon as one change "goes live," the organization immediately moves on to thinking about the next change without giving reinforcement the time it needs.

Implementing ADKAR model

The following table summarizes the roles and responsibilities when using the ADKAR model.

Outcomes	WHO	HOW
Awareness of the need to change	Business leaders, sponsors, line manager	Communication, coaching, storytelling, 1-to-1 meetings.
Desire to support and take part in the change	Business leaders, sponsors, line manager, the project team	Coaching, resistance management, incentives.
Knowledge of how to change	Project team, HR	Training, coaching.
Ability to implement the change	Project team, HR, line manager	Feedback, coaching, and tools and facilities needed.
Reinforcement to sustain the change	Business leaders, line manager	Corrective action, feedback, positive reinforcement, rewards, celebrations.

Individuals that make up the organization don't just change in isolation. As they change, so does the organization.

Advantages

There are a number of advantages to using the model, including:

- It focuses on outcomes rather than tasks. Most change management models focus on what needs to be done. But, ADKAR focuses on achieving outcomes
- The model helps measure how well the change is progressing. For each step of the model, you can measure progress at the individual level and identify gaps to rectify
- The model recognizes that it is ultimately people that facilitate change and not simply processes
- It provides a clear checklist of things that need to be done to manage change

Disadvantages

There are several disadvantages associated with the model.

- It ignores the complexity of change and the need to create a vision and create a long-term strategy to reach that vision, possibly over many years with course corrections along the way
- It is better suited to smaller change initiatives. Only focusing on the people dimension isn't enough to make large-scale change happen

Summary

The ADKAR model is a change management framework. The steps of the model are Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. Unlike most other change management models, ADKAR focuses on the human element of change. It recognizes that individuals must change in order to make an organizational change successful.