SIMPLAR

5 Essential Strategies for Successfully Implementing Organizational Change
in the Construction, Architecture, and Engineering Industries

Competitive business environments and limited financial resources have forced construction, architecture, and engineering organizations to look for ways to improve their project processes, adopt new technologies, and implement new modes of delivery.

Successfully implementing changes, of any kind, is extremely challenging with the vast majority of change efforts failing to meet their original intent. The main factor causing the failure is resistance among internal personnel. **Below are five essential change strategies that will increase your chances for success.**
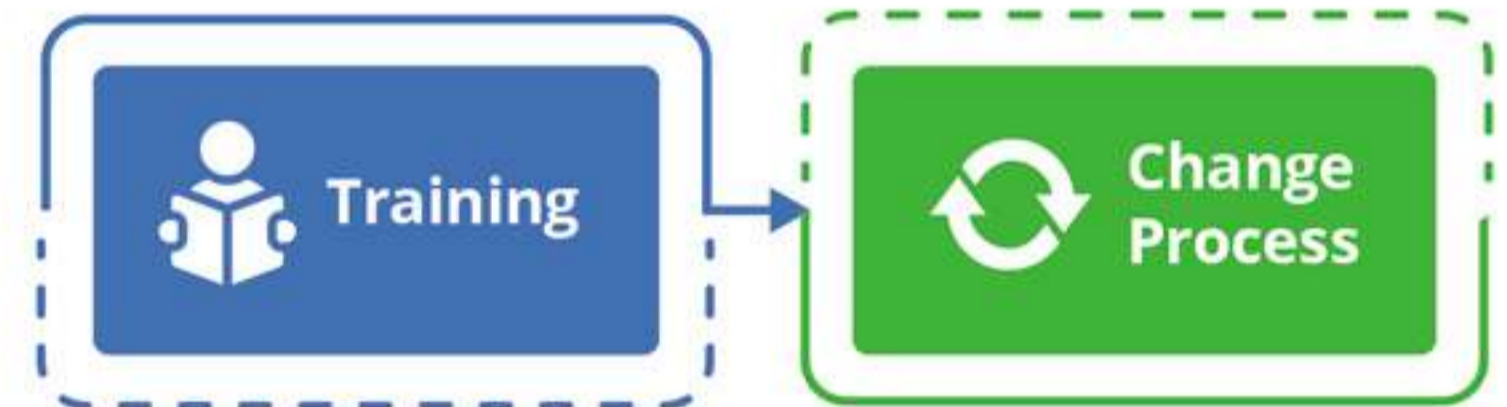
This research provides insights on how to avoid the pitfalls of change efforts and what strategies increase the likelihood of successfully implementing organizational change in the construction, architecture, and engineering industries.

1 Training

In a study of public and private organizations in North America, Simplar found that **when employees receive training regarding the change initiative, they are more likely to support the implementation of the change.**

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Training → Change Process
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The training is most effective when provided before the change is initiated. The ideal training describes, step-by-step, how personnel will be expected to carry out the change.

Personnel who receive extensive training on the purpose of the change, as well as specific aspects of the change, are the most accepting of the change. Those who receive limited or no training are the most likely to resist the change.

Training specific to each employee's role further reduces uncertainty and resistance to change. Support of the change initiative increases if the long-term benefit for the employees and the organization is clearly demonstrated.

2 Change Agents

Organizations need to select appropriate personnel to be Change Agents.

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Select Appropriate Personnel → Involve them in the Daily Activities → Achieve the Project Deliverables
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In a Simpar study of organizations in the United States and Canada, those that didn't assign change agents experienced four times greater resistance to change and did not achieve the same levels of success.

The most effective Change Agents are peers/co-workers to those being impacted by the change and have the personality and skillsets to support others with their adoptions of the new processes/technology. **Change Agents should be involved in the daily activities** required to achieve the project deliverables related to the change being implemented. This increases accountability and support while decreasing employee resistance to the change.

3 Involvement of Frontline Personnel

Employees' job levels correlate with resistance to or acceptance of change. Executives and supervisors involved in planning and implementing the change are the most supportive of the change, whereas project managers, contracting officers, and other frontline workers are most resistant to change.

Resistance can be reduced by involving frontline workers during the change planning. This includes soliciting their feedback on how to implement the change. Frontline workers who appear open to change should be assigned as Change Agents to rally their peers to support the change.

4 Realistic Expectations

For change efforts to be successful, organizations must also have realistic expectations on how quickly the change can be implemented. Based on Simplar's research, when companies recognize that change implementation is a long-term program requiring regular employee training provided by Simplar, the **companies experience seven times less resistance to the change.**

SIMPLAR Training = **7 times less resistance to the change**

5 Project Size, Duration, and Scope

Simplar found that project size, duration, and scope correlate with resistance to change. Small, short construction projects prompted the least resistance, compared to projects that were longer, broader, or involved design/engineering or facility services work. **As a result, different expectations, strategies, and resources need to be allocated for implementing change based upon the attributes of the project.**

Project Size → **Duration** → **Scope** → **Resistance to change**
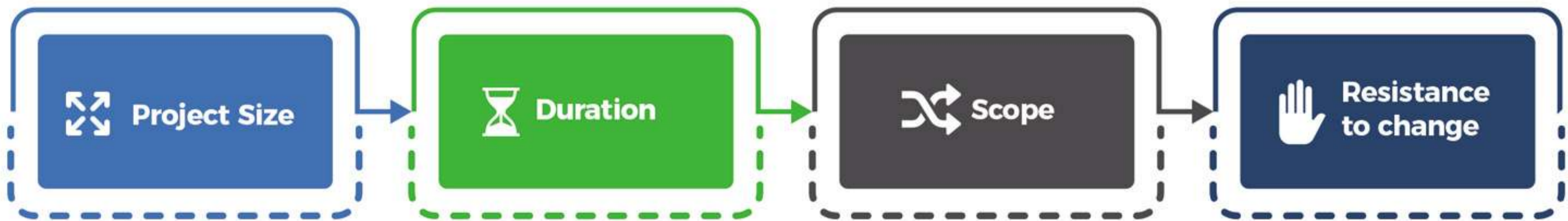
Important factors to consider include a project's strategic value and the opportunities the project provides for organizational learning.

Conclusion

Successful organizational change management is a necessary capability for maintaining a competitive advantage. Yet many companies in the construction, architecture, and engineering industries fail to successfully implement change initiatives.

Overcoming employee resistance to change significantly increases the likelihood of achieving organizational change and is achieved by implementing employee training, designating Change Agents, involving frontline personnel in change planning, setting realistic expectations, and understanding how project attributes impact the change.

About SIMPLAR

Through the combined knowledge and experience of the Simplar's team, we provide an array of organizational assessment and process improvement tools to address your organization's unique goals and challenges, delivering exactly what your business needs in order to be successful.

Improve your competitive advantage! Partner with Simplar for your next organizational change effort.