



Change  
Management  
Institute

## Global Insights 2022

# The Change Manager of the Future – Next Generation Change Management

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Predictions and Lessons.....	3
Top Skills in Demand Today .....	4
Our Current Operating Context .....	5
How has <i>change</i> Changed?.....	6
The Adaptive Change Manager of the Future .....	7
The four Dimensions of Change Management .....	8
The Change Practice Framework .....	9
Summary.....	10
Further reading .....	11
References .....	11

## Introduction

The Change Management Institute continues to be a widely recognised voice for change managers globally. With all the economic, social, environmental and technological changes, particularly just in the last few pandemic years, the operating context for Change Management has changed, and the Institute has matured and adapted accordingly.

In today's fast-paced, disruptive and technological-driven world, change is inevitable, and the change manager of the future will need an exceedingly adaptive mindset and broad-based skill set to be highly effective.

With the release of our Global Insights 2022, we have closely reviewed our predictions made in 2019 (before Covid) and updated our current predictions to help define the next generation change manager.

Drawing on the last 17 years of research, our global network, member case studies and insights from our guest presenters, we are well-positioned to comment on the changes, consistencies, and new developments in change management.

With the release of the next edition of Change Management Body of Knowledge (CMBok™), 'The Effective Change Manager', it is timely to share which elements of change management remain relevant, what is new and what has evolved with a slightly different lens.

We hope our findings will help support all change managers, whatever stage in their career, to be even more effective in our very exciting and ever-changing profession.

## Predictions and Lessons

In our global trends for the 2020s, we made several predictions about the global trends in Change Management. While we were delighted to see our predictions fulfilled, no one could have anticipated the accelerated rate at which the predictions would be realised—all due to the unexpected upheavals of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Prediction 1: The acceleration of digital transformation**

Before the pandemic, business models were already experiencing digital disruption. There has been a great acceleration since, as technology revolutionises how we share information, connect with each other, and operate our organisations.

Effective people engagement has always been at the heart of successful digital transformations. Change Managers can best respond to the pace of the digital world by ensuring the heart of digital transformation focuses on engagement with people – your teams, your customers, and your supply partners.

### **Prediction 2: Increase in volume and pace of change**

In 2020, we predicted that the volume of change would increase, and the pace would be more variable. There is a greater demand for everything in work and life to be faster. Managers and employees often unknowingly pass the same expectation for volume and pace onto the people they work with.

Change managers can best respond to the increase in volume and speed of change by bringing a sense of balance through the human capacity to adapt and embrace change.

### **Prediction 3: The high demand for change skills and education**

Change capability was seen as a specialist skill early in 2020. It has skyrocketed in demand since, as we absorb all the disruptions of the pandemic. The types of skills emerging for change professionals include a sound understanding of good change practice and a greater need for adaptiveness, resilience and curiosity and the ability to work with ambiguity whilst still taking responsibility for delivery to customers enabling organisational outcomes.

With this demand, change managers have tremendous opportunities to evolve their change practice and adapt to the ever-changing conditions.

## Top Skills in Demand Today

Coming through the pandemic, with all the changes impacting the workplace, the acceleration of digitalisation and the overall pace and volume of change, we have updated our 2022 skills for change managers. Ultimately, putting people at the heart of everything we do is more important than ever.

### **Prediction 1: End to end change capability across the full process of change**

The market is hungry for change managers who can practice and support the entire human change process – from the inception of the design to the reinforcement of the change and realisation of business outcomes.

### **Prediction 2: Coaching and partnering on multiple levels**

Modern change managers must be ready to coach others to lead themselves and to lead others through change through collaboration and partnerships that achieve

the required outcomes. Good change professionals recognise their own strengths and the strengths of others and use the combined superpowers to good effect.

### **Prediction 3: Adaptability and continuous learning mindset**

Effective change managers need to apply a constant learning mindset and adapt their practice to conditions as they evolve and not just hit repeat. It involves working with others who have complementing skill sets such as project management, lean and human-centred design and bringing them all together with advanced facilitation skills for greater impact.

## Our Current Operating Context

People returning to the workplace after Covid have changed, so putting people first is more important than ever.

As we start moving forward into a different phase of the pandemic, we know that we and the people we live and work with are not the same as before the pandemic. Life has been tough. Some of us have lost loved ones or friends, some of us have lost connection with our networks, some of us have had to juggle unimaginable priorities, and others have felt isolated. We cannot ignore that there has been stress and heartache, and therefore our own resilience and well-being must be nurtured, our empathy heightened and ensure we put people at the heart of everything we do.

This is a coming of age for change management professionals, particularly at this time, to coach others on the importance of showing empathy and compassion and developing resilience and flexibility with themselves and their teams. There is no doubt that many people have been overwhelmed with heightened anxiety due to the volume, breadth, and length of change.

Remote working and the accelerated shift to hybrid workplaces have many pros and cons, depending on your role in the organisation. Change managers can help organisations to transition through these changes more effectively.

Understanding the current operating context has never been more important to determine the tools and approaches you take. The adaptive change manager seeks to understand the context first and how their support fits the overall ecosystem.

## How has *Change* Changed?

Along with change come lessons. Over the last 24 months, the Institute has reviewed and updated the second edition of the Change Management Body of Knowledge, so it has been timely to think about this question – how has change changed?

Reflecting on how our profession has matured since the first edition of our Body of Knowledge (CMBok™) – *The Effective Change Manager*, released in 2014, this is what we learned:

### **Lesson 1: Change maturity in our practice has grown**

Several years ago, change practice was dominated by project management frameworks and methods, with system implementations driving repeatable cookie-cutter change processes.

Change in companies now occurs at many different levels. They are evolving beyond the formal project, portfolio, and program practices into a broader business context, leading to greater variety and more employment opportunities for change managers.

As a result, there is a greater diversity of experience and capabilities in the change community. Change practice maturity is a continuum with a broad range of relevant experiences and abilities.

### **Lesson 2: There is a greater diversity of methods used in our practice**

Agile and Lean change are good examples of this as change practice is methodology agnostic. An effective change manager can grasp the context in which they operate and adapt their methods and tools to fit the situation, constantly adjusting based on the data gathered. All change methodologies have a part to play and are integrated at different times to bring the best outcomes.

### **Lesson 3: Change Managers are adaptive**

The best change practitioners adapt their practice and themselves. They are curious and constantly apply new ideas (or old ideas) differently.

### **Lesson 4: There is greater professional maturity and recognition**

There are more instances of project managers reporting to Heads of Transformation and Change. This reflects the growth in change maturity and the possibility that either profession can have overall accountability.

### Lesson 5: The recognition of the role of the leader and sponsors in change

It was once common to see change managers fronting the change themselves. But change professionals now see themselves as the coach, adviser, designer, and facilitator of the change – alongside the leaders and the change agents.

### Lesson 6: Using a 'fit for purpose' approach

Our methods have evolved into something more fit for purpose. Along with general business practice, there is greater use of visual and virtual communication, canvas-based tools, and techniques – based on design thinking. These methods are not exclusive to Lean or Agile. All change methods now use these in different ways.

## The Adaptive Change Manager of the Future

All this research points us to the capabilities and attributes of the change manager of the future.

The change manager of the future has deep change knowledge, strong facilitation and co-design skills, empathy and compassion, and uses data to inform their actions, constantly adapting their practice to the change context. Above all, they are continually adapting their approach to the context of the change.

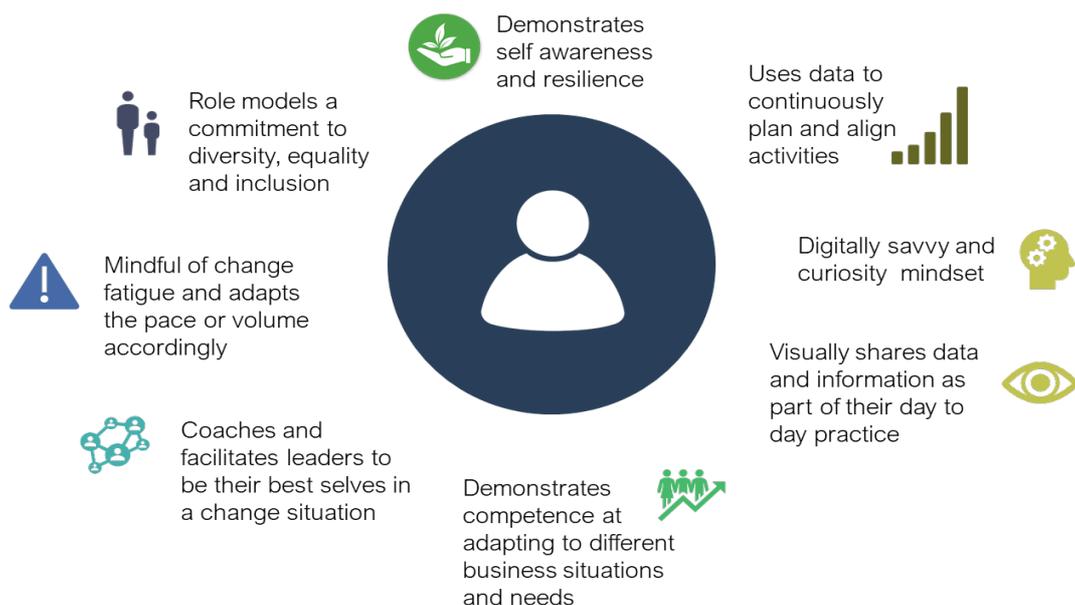


Figure 1: Skills and attributes of the Adaptive Change Manager

## The four Dimensions of Change Management

There are four dimensions to help change managers develop their capabilities and navigate the many tools and frameworks available – Context, Practice, Theory and You.



Figure 2: Change Management Institute Model of Continuous Learning and Adaptability (Source: CMBoK 2nd edition).

### Dimension 1 – Context

Firstly, understanding the context in which they operate in the broadest sense, external factors, societal factors, political, environmental and cultural factors. Change managers need to understand where the change they support fits into the broader ecosystem.

### Dimension 2 - Practice

Once they've identified and understood the context, the change manager adapts their approach and practice to suit this context. This will guide the choice of appropriate change frameworks and tools to use for the greatest effect and what measurement or data points to put in place for constant feedback loops to adapt and adjust for the best results.

### Dimension 3 - Theory

Change management practice is based on theory. Adaptive Change Managers have a sound educational base in these theories that underpin their practice, so their decisions on which tools to use or approaches to apply are based on human theory.

#### Dimension 4 - You

Adaptive change managers are self-aware and in tune with their own biases and emotions. The energy and professionalism of change rely on high levels of self-awareness, insight and ongoing learning and development.

## The Change Practice Framework

To help bring together, the ever-changing operating context change managers work in and the four dimensions of change management, we have provided a new framework in the 2nd edition CMBok™ reference book.

*'The Change Practice Framework'* illustrates the key practice dimensions, change outputs and relevant CMBok™ knowledge areas most likely applied to a change initiative. At the centre of all change is people. It is why our profession exists. Change Managers continuously adapt and plan their activities throughout the change lifecycle as they focus on different practice dimensions and associated outputs. These practice dimensions are represented as Define, Analyse, Co-design and Align and Refine.

By its very nature, change is not linear in its execution, and change outputs and activities are continuously revisited throughout the change process. Underpinning all practice dimensions are three applied knowledge areas required of an effective change manager. These are change management context, organisational context, and human dynamics.



Figure 3: Change Management Institute, Change Practice Framework (Source: CMBok 2nd edition).

## Summary

Change management has evolved and grown in maturity.

Change occurs across organisations, and change managers now support a much broader range of change initiatives and the development of change capabilities.

There has been a greater convergence between project change implementation, business change readiness and strategic change leadership, with a greater demand for change managers across all these aspects.

This is an exciting time to be working in change, no matter the tools and methodology you work with. Being curious, resilient, and adaptive is what matters most.

For a deeper dive into the frameworks and knowledge areas that underpin change management, please explore our new edition of The Change Management Body of Knowledge (CMBok™) – 'The Effective Change Manager'.

Join us in reviewing each of the knowledge area chapters each month over the coming year. We look forward to your feedback on how you have explored these approaches in your practice.

## Further reading

### **The Effective Change Manager: The Change Management Body of Knowledge**

'The Effective Change Manager' is designed for change management practitioners, employers, authors, academics and anyone with an interest in the evolving professional discipline of change management. The first edition, 'The Change Management Body of Knowledge (CMBoK™)', drew on the experience of more than six hundred change management professionals in thirty countries. This second edition has grown that base to over 900 contributors and reviewers.

'The Effective Change Manager' describes the underpinning knowledge areas that change managers must know and understand to be effective in their change practice. It also describes the evolution of the change management practice as it starts to mature.

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It is a basic tenet of the Change Management Institute to encourage and stimulate creative thought and discourse in the field of change management.

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## About the Change Management Institute

The Change Management Institute is a global leader in strengthening, connecting and advancing the change management profession.

We are committed to assisting members develop Capability, Credibility and Connections in their pursuit of professional excellence.

- **Capability** – Change capability frameworks and development pathways, endorsed training that builds skills and capabilities aligned to the Change Management Institute competency standards and robust assessment of individual and organisational change management capability
- **Credibility** – We are an independent professional institute with no commercial agenda. We set and maintain robust change management standards and provide access to thought leadership and future thinking in change across multiple disciplines
- **Connection** – We create global connections for members through social and physical media. We proactively share news and latest thinking from our digitally disrupted world and have strong business partnerships leveraged for the benefit of members

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