

5 CHANGE MANAGEMENT TIPS TO GUARANTEE A SMOOTH SAAS ROLLOUT

Change Management

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Most people hate change.

Beyond driving people to continue to rock some really bad '80s hair, change-loathing is one reason IT implementations of all kinds are often less successful — or more difficult — than they should be.

“Why fix what isn't broken?” some people will say. (Why not rock a mullet? Parachute pants, anyone?)



Rock. That. Hair.
©Amanda Brenchley Photography.

No matter how cool the new technology is, it's change. And change is hard. People are affected by what Future State calls “emotional barriers to adoption,” which can completely derail a SaaS implementation.

“In our experience, we almost always find that the barrier to adoption is clarity and trust, not the technology

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itself. Whether it's distrust of the product's inner-workings or doubt about how it aligns with business objectives, human factors can be decisive. **Understanding and addressing those concerns is a powerful adoption strategy.**"

- Future State

Management has to understand that the transition to SaaS could meet some resistance. That doesn't mean the change shouldn't happen. What it does mean is that change management is critical.

After all, when the point of the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) implementation is to achieve goals like a **better** customer experience, **reduced** administrative costs, and **enhanced** staff and resource allocation, then of course the implementation will involve change.

Change isn't easy, but it's often necessary. So here are five tips that can help you successfully introduce company wide change to your organization.

5 TIPS FOR MANAGING CHANGE DURING A SAAS ROLLOUT

TIP #1: EXPLAIN YOUR "WHY"

Why is the organization implementing the SaaS application? What problem is it solving? What benefits will it deliver?

As the "why" guy **Simon Sinek** says, "People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it."

Nowhere is this concept better illustrated than in corporate change management. Employees don't care **what** is being implemented; they'll get on board with anything if there's a compelling reason for doing it. And eliminating redundant processes is a hugely compelling reason.

The benefits to employees might include the ability to access schedule changes from anywhere, at any time; or the time savings they'll experience from the automation of previously manual tasks.

Regardless of what the benefits are, **selling them to your employees** is a crucial component to the change management strategy. Simon Sinek makes the point beautifully in this video:



Simon Sinek advises to kick off your SaaS implementation by establishing your "why."

TIP #2: GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON BOARD

As business and IT strategy consultant Karolyn Schalk advises, "Establish the team that will review and govern system changes early in the project, and keep them engaged."

Sounds good. But exactly how do you select your team members?

MEET YOUR CHANGE MANAGEMENT TEAM:

THE EXPERIENCED DRIVER



While a top-down mandate from the C-suite alone won't drive user adoption (see tip #1), executive buy-in—and championship— is critical. Where a lot of employees might take an “It’s not broken, why fix it?” position, it’s the Driver who understands that technological innovation is key to maintaining your company’s competitive advantage. And she (or he) won’t let anything derail progress.

So it’s up to the Driver to lead a “Get ‘er done” approach. SaaS is not a trial. Adoption is not voluntary. SaaS is the way forward, and there will be no going back to the old system.

THE ULTIMATE ENFORCER



Also known as your “Buck Stops Here” person, this individual holds the gavel when decision-by-committee threatens to get out of hand. As IT consultant [Michael Schiff](#) tells us, “Giving a committee (rather than a single person) ultimate responsibility is likely to lead to conflicts among committee members when there is a problem. If at all possible, a ‘the buck stops here’ person should bear ultimate responsibility for the implementation.”

THE GREAT COMMUNICATOR



Your Communicator is responsible for understanding the “why” behind the implementation and passing that explanation along to employees and customers. This individual ensures users understand what’s happening on the technology side, and that the technologists understand the users’ perspectives.

Think of your Communicator as a mediator. This person should be one who possesses the gift of making people feel heard and understood. Someone who could sell the proverbial ice to an Eskimo.

TIP #3: COMMUNICATE EARLY AND OFTEN

With an effective communication plan, you set expectations for what a successful SaaS implementation will require. Communicate directly and often with users — employees and customers — as well as the other stakeholders in the process.

Your users will appreciate being included in the rollout, and providing information early on in the process allows more time for everyone to educate themselves on the changes ahead.

TIP #4: PLAN FOR TRAINING

No matter what the solution is or who the users are, training is essential. This is especially true when the solution represents a significant change to existing business processes.

It might seem counter intuitive that even after putting 800 million iOS devices in the hands of consumers, Apple’s Genius Bar® would have lines out the door.



And yet they do.

So, heed these words from [This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.&l=50_HTML&u=5972707&mid=1060748&jb=62&Page=1" target="_blank">Michael Schiff](#): “Ensure that training and operational procedures are part of your project plan, not an afterthought. This should be verified

as part of user acceptance testing.”

At AppointmentPlus, our project planning process includes working with you to determine:

- What needs to be trained,
- Who needs to be trained, and
- At what level.

We provide content, best practices, and documentation to support the training.

We also recognize that vendor training for every user can be cost-intensive. So we offer a train-the-trainer program, in which we teach your trainers on staff how to effectively educate users across your organization.

TIP #5: THE VENDOR MATTERS

Especially important is the SaaS product vendor’s ability to build a technology solution that meets your needs. Having an expert on your side means you don’t have to reinvent the change management wheel.

But some vendors are better able to help you manage the change associated with the implementation, and some vendors are less able.

To determine whether the SaaS vendors you’re vetting can help you manage the change, ask them:

- Do you have tested, validated change management processes?
- Are those processes well documented?
- Can someone walk me through the implementation?
- Do you have experience managing SaaS implementations with organizations like mine?

Change is hard, no doubt. But change is also a good thing. And when it’s managed well, the end result can be beautiful, and the process, painless.



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ABOUT KENDALL E. MATTHEWS

Vice President of Global Marketing and user of "The Force." I've been a growth hacker since 1995, producing like a ZILLION inquiry leads (ok . . . a couple hundred thousand). Also good at taking 2 pm naps.

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