

Beyond Change
Management:
*How Change Activation
Turns Strategy Into Results*



Create a *Culture* That Means *Business*



The Era of One-and-Done Transformation Is Over—and Change Activation is Here to Stay

The pace of change is unrelenting, nearly tripling over the past five years.¹

There is no such thing as “one and done” when it comes to corporate transformation initiatives. Digital transformation, AI design and implementation, restructuring and cost-cutting, hybrid staffing and return to office (RTO), changing business models and mergers and acquisitions are happening all the time.

Yet only about 12% of transformation initiatives achieve their original goals.²

Most transformations don’t stall because the plan is bad, but because old mindsets and behaviors persist.

Change Activation turns strategy into results by shifting how people think and act.

Change Activation is about building the beliefs and behaviors your strategy depends on to succeed. It’s how organizations close the gap between executive intent and frontline execution. And it’s what separates the 12% of transformations that actually deliver from those that are forgotten.

Organizations that consistently achieve the intended results of their transformation have learned to activate the people executing it—building the clarity, alignment, and accountability required to turn strategy into results.

183%

The rate at which business disruption has risen over the past five years³

88%

C-suite executives who anticipate more change year over year⁴

12%

Companies that get it right⁵



You've Been Down This Road Before

Like most organizations implementing some kind of change initiative, you have likely:

- **Set goals**, sometimes many of them. Some senior leaders set up to as many as 60 or more objectives, which is both overwhelming and difficult for employees to follow or understand.

The problem? This wide-ranging focus is designed to be comprehensive, yet when one in three employees say having unclear priorities is a key barrier to building resilience, this approach can seem incomprehensible.⁶ Organizations that fail to establish a few key priorities make it easy for employees to re-trench into their typical work habits and de-focus from the objectives leaders are setting.

- **Cascaded from the top down**. Often, information flows from the top down in hopes that executive intent will trickle down to the execution levels of the organization.

The problem? Top-down communication about change actually reduces understanding and increases resistance compared to inclusive strategies.⁷ More than half of workers report feeling like there's too much change happening, and even more disconcertingly, 44% say they don't understand why things have to change at all.⁸

- **Emphasized checklists and compliance tracking**. Often, companies turn to spreadsheets, daily and weekly updates, and engagement metrics to monitor progress.

The problem? Micromanagement may provide leaders with a sense of forward momentum, but it does nothing to drive ownership through the ranks — only enforces compliance. This approach leads to half of organizations feeling unprepared to react to future changes.⁹

“The status quo bias is a decision-maker's inflated preference for the current state of affairs.”

— C.J. Anderson, *The Psychology of Doing Nothing*¹⁰



Is this the 10th or 11th change initiative?

Employees are struggling.¹¹ To put it in perspective, the average person has already experienced at least 10 planned enterprise changes, according to Gartner.

Employee workloads have increased, they're being asked to learn new technologies and adapt new tools, their teams are being restructured, and one out of every three workers say the entire nature of their role has changed.

The picture looks even dimmer for managers — a 2025 HR study from Gartner found that 75% of mid-level leaders are overwhelmed by the changing scope of their job responsibilities, and only 23% of HR leaders are confident this rank can rise to meet the future needs of the organization.¹²

Change Activation exists for exactly this moment — building the clarity, alignment, and accountability people need to move through change and deliver results.

Why be more adaptive? Business results.

Cultures that align purpose, strategy, and culture:

- Grow 192% more than those unable to adapt to change
- See an average increase in revenue of nearly 50% compared to 17% for non-adaptive companies
- Increase revenues 31% faster¹³
- Are 2.5x more likely to bounce back from crises¹⁴



The Challenge Isn't Change — it's Overcoming Resistance

Your teams are tired and stressed, with 73% of employees reporting moderate to high stress levels and 80% struggling to balance the tensions associated with change.

While leaders have been focused on planning for transformation, your underlying **corporate culture has become resistant to change.**

Resistance takes root when existing beliefs about how work gets done are left unchecked. It's at this point that most transformations stall.

Successful transformation requires leaders to go beyond the checklists of change (aka process and procedure) to address the people side of change: *the way people must think and act to drive results.*

Organizations that do so are more resilient in the face of change because they know how to adapt and drive business results when the next wave of change arrives.

This is what Change Activation addresses. To move from strategy to results, organizations need to do three things:

1.

Communicate the plan and expectations clearly, connecting the shift in strategy to a clear purpose

2.

Align beliefs with the behaviors necessary to achieve desired results

3.

Foster a culture of accountability by empowering employees to own outcomes — and recognizing those that do

73% of employees report moderate to high stress levels¹⁵

80% say they don't know how to balance "cultural tensions" or competing priorities in times of change¹⁶

Fatigued employees are **35%** less engaged and **44%** less likely to stay¹⁷



The Belief Gap: Why Clarity Is Where Change Activation Begins

Clarity is foundational to every successful change effort. Too often, though, leaders skip this foundation-building — jumping straight to accountability.

But without clarity, alignment is impossible and accountability has nothing to anchor to.

Clarity means leaders know exactly what they are trying to achieve, can articulate it at every level of the organization, and communicate progress honestly and frequently.

When the people responsible for executing the strategy don't understand the Key Results, the expectations tied to them, or how their role connects to both, the strategy stalls before it starts.

Change Activation begins here — with leaders establishing clarity on results before asking anyone to change how they work.

Clarity is integral to the success of change initiatives.

When leaders are unclear on Key Results or fail to communicate them consistently, the people responsible for executing the strategy are left filling in the gaps.

Transformation stalls here. Employees default to old behaviors because no one has defined what new ones look like.

Alignment isn't Agreement, it's Commitment

Only 42% of employees feel included in co-creating change strategies, yet research tells us that a culture that shares implementation planning with employees increases the probability of success by 12%.¹⁸

People can hear the plan and still not move toward it. The gap between leadership's vision and frontline execution is a *belief gap*.

Alignment happens when people at every level hold the same beliefs about where the organization is going and those beliefs show up in the experiences they create for one another every day.

That commitment happens when employees can draw a clear line between their daily actions and the results the organization is trying to achieve.

When people genuinely believe in the direction of change, they don't need to be managed toward it. They move toward it of their own accord. That's the difference between compliance and commitment.

Change Activation builds alignment by shaping the shared beliefs that make a common direction possible — not just at the leadership level, but across the organization.

Alignment doesn't happen because everyone attended the same all-hands.

It happens when people genuinely believe in the direction — and that belief shows up in how they work, collaborate, and make decisions every day.

Compliance follows orders. Commitment follows belief.
Change Activation is how you get from one to the other.

Accountability Can't Be Enforced

In most companies, *accountability* is treated as a punitive word — something leaders demand when things go wrong. This negative perception is the first obstacle to building an accountable workforce.

Rather than own their personal growth, employees opt for self-preservation: shrinking back, shifting blame, making excuses, waiting to be told what to do, and staying silent until everyday problems snowball into catastrophic failures.

When people experience accountability as empowering rather than punishing, morale rises and individuals step up. Because of this, developing a culture of accountability begins by adopting a new way of thinking about accountability.

Accountability is a personal choice to focus on what you can control and act in ways that move key results forward, regardless of what's happening around you. When that ownership mindset takes hold across an organization, results follow.

But accountability can't be enforced — it must be activated.

Change Activation builds the muscle of accountability by equipping leaders to model the behaviors required, recognize ownership when they see it, and reinforce the beliefs that make accountability sustainable.

Accountability can't be given — it can only be taken.

When people experience accountability as punishing rather than consciously chosen, they comply at best and disengage at worst.

The shift happens when accountability becomes personal. Not a policy to follow, but an individual decision to focus on what you can control and drive results anyway.

From Strategy to Results: What Change Activation Makes Possible

Four in 10 CEOs say their company will no longer be viable in 10 years if it continues on its current path.¹⁹

The organizations that consistently perform well go beyond managing change — they activate the people executing it, building the beliefs, behaviors, and accountability that turn strategy into results.

That's what Change Activation does. And it starts the moment you decide that getting 100% of what your transformation was designed to deliver is non-negotiable.

Organizations with adaptable cultures report an increased revenue over three years compared to non-adaptive companies.

33%

Increase in Revenue



Organizations rated as “change accelerators” experience more revenue growth compared to companies with below-average change effectiveness.²⁰

264%

More Revenue Growth

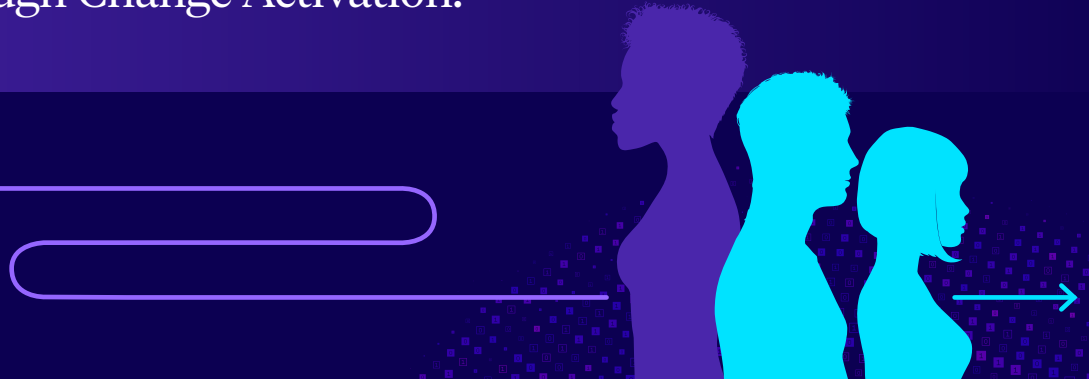


About Culture Partners

Culture Partners is the leader in Change Activation, helping organizations achieve extraordinary results by creating clarity, alignment, and accountability across their purpose, strategy, and culture. Powered by 37 years of research, world-class IP, and award-winning expertise, we equip leaders with a practical framework to align people, processes, and priorities and activate a culture of ownership. Millions of individuals in thousands of organizations worldwide rely on us to unlock human potential, accelerate performance, and empower people at every level to drive business-critical results.

For more information, visit us today at culturepartners.com

Find out how to move your organization from strategy to results through Change Activation.



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