
Change Communication Planning: Sponsor Messages, Manager Cascades and Adoption Course

29 March – 2 April 2027
Amsterdam





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Programme Summary

Change communication planning is a one-week training course for senior leaders and change sponsors, culminating in a change communication plan for a live initiative in their organisation. Restructures, system launches and new operating models often stall not because the design is wrong but because people hear about them late, from the wrong person, or only once. The approach treats communication as a planned workstream, sequencing sponsor messages, manager cascades and feedback loops against each stage of adoption. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in change communication planning.

The Business Case

When employees do not know why a change is happening or what it means for them, rumour fills the gap, resistance hardens and benefits arrive late. Sponsors who explain the reasons, line managers who translate the personal impact and teams that can ask questions openly shorten the time to adoption. Planned communication also gives leaders early warning of resistance, so they can adjust the change before it fails.

- Speed of Adoption: Improved when awareness and desire are built before go-live rather than after.
- Employee Engagement During Change: Protected by two-way channels and timely answers from line managers.
- Benefits Realisation: Supported by measuring understanding and acting on feedback through the change.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Prosci ADKAR Model: Links communication to the awareness and desire stages of individual change in Sessions 1 and 2.
- Kotter's 8-Step Process: Frames the role of a communicated change vision and early wins in Session 2.
- Sender Preference Research: Assigns business reasons to senior sponsors and personal impact to direct managers in Session 3.
- Stakeholder Analysis and Audience Segmentation: Matches messages, channels and timing to each group's impact in Session 1.

Intended Participants

- Leaders who sponsor major organisational, technology or policy change.
- Heads of internal communication who plan and coordinate change messages.
- HR leaders who manage the people side of restructuring and transformation.
- Programme directors accountable for adoption and benefits.



The programme serves government entities, banking and financial services, energy and utilities and healthcare organisations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose the communication needs of each stakeholder group through change impact analysis.
2. Participants will be able to construct a change narrative and key message hierarchy for a defined initiative.
3. Participants will be able to design a sequenced communication plan with sponsor and line manager roles.
4. Participants will be able to prioritise channels and feedback mechanisms for different audiences.
5. Participants will be able to evaluate resistance signals and plan targeted responses.
6. Participants will be able to justify measures of understanding and adoption to a steering committee.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Change Communication Foundations

Why do people accept or resist change, and what does communication contribute?

- Prosci ADKAR Model and Communication
- Change Impact Analysis by Group
- Stakeholder Mapping and Audience Segmentation
- Lessons From Failed and Successful Change Announcements
- Change Communication Readiness Check

Day 2: The Change Narrative

How is a change explained so that people see the reason and the destination?

- Kotter's 8-Step Process and the Change Vision
- Change Story Structure: Case for Change, Future State and Personal Impact
- Key Message Hierarchy
- Frequently Asked Questions Bank
- Message Testing With Sample Audiences

Day 3: Senders, Channels and Manager Cascades

Who should say what, through which channel and in what order?

- Sponsor Versus Line Manager Messages
- Channel Selection Matrix
- Manager Briefing Packs and Cascade Design
- Communication Calendar and Sequencing
- Digital and Face-to-Face Channel Mix



Day 4: Feedback, Resistance and Measurement

How do leaders hear concerns and know whether messages have landed?

- Two-Way Feedback Mechanisms
- Resistance Signals and Response Planning
- Rumour Management During Change
- Pulse Surveys and Understanding Checks
- Adoption Indicators and Reporting

Day 5: Applying Change Communication Planning

How are the tools brought together into a plan for a live initiative?

- Applying Impact Analysis to a Participant Initiative
- Drafting the Change Narrative and Message Hierarchy
- Building the Cascade and Communication Calendar
- Peer Review of the Measurement Approach
- Change Communication Plan Presentation

Methodology

The programme is built around case analysis and structured exercises drawn from public sector restructures, banking system migrations and hospital service redesigns. Participants analyse what was said, by whom and when, then rebuild the communication using the tools of each session before applying them to an initiative from their own organisation.

- Suggested activity: Rewriting a restructure announcement as a sponsor message and a manager briefing.
- Suggested activity: Designing a feedback loop for a core system go-live.
- Suggested activity: Responding to a rumour that spreads after a merger announcement.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a change communication plan for a live or planned initiative. It contains the impact analysis, change narrative, message hierarchy, sender roles, a sequenced calendar, manager briefing outlines, feedback channels and adoption measures, ready for the sponsor and steering committee to approve.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is change communication planning suitable for leaders who are not communication specialists?

Yes. It is designed for sponsors, programme directors and HR leaders as well as communication heads. It assumes experience of leading or supporting change but no formal communication training.

Which models does change communication planning in this programme rest on?

It rests on the Prosci ADKAR Model, Kotter's 8-Step Process, research on preferred senders of change messages, and stakeholder analysis and audience segmentation.

How is the change communication plan used at work?

It becomes the working plan for your initiative, telling sponsors and managers what to say and when, and giving the steering committee measures to track adoption.

How does change communication planning differ from a change leadership programme?

It concentrates on messages, senders, channels and feedback during change, while change leadership programmes address vision, governance, culture and the leader's wider role in transformation.