

# Change sustainability your ROI health check



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Implementing workplace changes can be overwhelming. KAREN SKILLINGS guides you towards a successful workshopping program

**C**hange sustainability programs are as unique as each of the workplace projects themselves. They can be developed either to dovetail into the end of a change program where business-as-usual kicks in, or they can be integrated into a prototype rotation experience, which enables greater uptake of the workplace practice changes to be introduced later on.

The program objectives can a combination of:

- protecting the Return on Investment (ROI)
- effectively using the spaces and technology that were designed and built for function
- ensuring the best 'business readiness' experience, or
- creating a dialogue to determine what's right for the organisation and how are to measure this.

The practice of measuring the effectiveness of integral project changes is often overlooked. Organisations continue to undertake utilisation studies or use their space optimisation software to review efficiency of their space, but this method doesn't show how well your people have adopted the change or the ROI factors that the project, through the change program, was asked to deliver on.

So, who looks at whether staff adoption and uplift in practices has sufficiently occurred to get the best out of the new workplace?

## THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Call them facilities or workplace services, operations or corporate services, facility managers are the people that hear the problems regularly and are required to respond.

Ask these teams the four questions deemed most important to their leaders:

- Do they think the workplace is maintaining the momentum or is it losing traction?
- Are they realising increased utilisation of neighbourhoods through engagement with staff who were nominated to manage their zones or neighbourhoods?
- Since the program's inception, have there been any challenges in the way work is delivered?
- Are they well-armed to support staff remedy the issues?

Whatever the answer is, if there is noise, then there is fraying around the seams, and your organisation should run a change sustainability program and get to the root cause.

## WHERE TO START – APPROVALS AND A HEADS-UP TO LEADERSHIP

Running workshops that will eventuate in a program that corrects and sustains the changes your organisation is not an expensive exercise – in fact, it is probably something you can't afford to avoid.

Once you have decided you will run this program, enlist a change manager who is experienced to pull such a program together. Consider beginning with the fundamental working principles that changed in the workplace.

After the program has been approved by the relevant stream lead (perhaps the head of Property), ensure that the leadership team is aware of this delivery over the next six months and develop a communication plan to deliver updates. This eliminates noise and objection to what is agreed

## WHAT NEXT

Outline the themes of each workshop and the possible programs that may eventuate, identifying key stakeholder groups that may be involved, either through conversation or education.

Enlist support from People and Culture and Internal Comms in delivering the message through the correct channels, and you should invite them to participate in the ensuing workshops. Why? These key stakeholders have

been working hard to align the changes to the organisation's values, brand, tone and culture, so their attendance is critical to understand if this is being undermined and why.

Another good reason for P&C to be involved is that often they run pulse surveys and staff satisfaction ratings, and sitting in on one workshop can explain why ratings are low.

## WORKSHOPS

The change sustainability program will be made up of a number of workshops and will eventuate with programs relevant to the key issues identified.

To foster genuine conversation about neighbourhood engagement, lea with themes that are easy to digest is key. Start working on your material and perhaps lead with the first workshop focusing on themes relevant to everyone.

Begin your first workshop with themes such as:

- location
- collaboration
- technology
- connection
- privacy
- flexibility, or
- content sharing.

## WHO TO INVITE?

Invite your EAs (executive assistants), migration managers, office administrator network, retired change leads and neighbourhood managers. (At the very least, get the neighbourhood managers there!) Don't forget the stream leads who worked to develop and roll out new processes and practices, such as the P&C, Internal Comms, IT, Records Management, Group Security, HSE and Technology departments.

## WHAT TO TELL THE PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

Tell participants that the workshops are 'free expression exercises' that provide the neighbourhood managers and others with a forum to identify any number of issues about the workplace.

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Start with an 'ice breaker' by asking about something everyone has an opinion on – end-of-trip facilities, for example. This should get the conversation going.

At the beginning of each workshop, make clear that this is an exercise to help improve everyone's work life and that they play a crucial role in this.

Ensure that participants feel safe and that they understand there are no recriminations for being honest in the workshops.

Use appreciative inquiry techniques and welcome participants to express their thoughts on each subject. Encourage them to talk among themselves and question if they have improvements for the next session. This way, the next workshop can be developed with some certainty of enthusiasm for participation and views.

## FACILITATING THE WORKSHOPS

Keep the sessions to a maximum of two hours. This amount of time allows for good room participation, time for a quick cuppa, and since you are looking to improve and protect the organisation's ROI as well as improving the work life of your employees, a two-hour time outlay will sound like a good ROI to your leadership team.

For each workshop, tell the story of how you chose the specific workshop topic. For example, if your workshop is on workplace etiquette, you could start with discussing the backstory of how etiquettes were formed and if there is a workplace charter and a neighbourhood charter for these – and explain the difference. Don't be surprised that a good number of people in the room may be new to the organisation since moving to the new workplace and they don't have the history that the retired change leads would.

When you present your theme, set the housekeeping rules for how you would like the questions answered. Clarify:

- how it is working?
- why is it working?
- what could make it work better? and
- when does it work best?

Capture everything the room says. The gold you will get from the participants will

help to determine what the roadblocks and opportunities are and this is the content that will inform the programs for remedy.

Liase regularly with your key stakeholders that engaged you to do this work. Show them the results of each workshop in a spreadsheet. They should have a good number of team members present at each of the workshops.

## NEXT STEPS

After you have conducted your workshops, possibly running the same workshop across several locations, review how far the organisation is from the planned design and intent.

You will start to see the main themes come through very early, possibly by the end of workshop two.

The programs to remedy the roadblocks or issues should be delivered by the right stakeholder groups, so consider getting the IT staff engagement manager involved. Your leadership team will also have a role, your people managing your facilities will need to be apprised of new techniques and strategies, and perhaps P&C and HSE will take an active role.

Your organisation should do this change sustainability health check every 12 months now. This blueprint will form the baseline for future projects, with the findings making their way into the campaigns, training and inductions of the next workplace.

Finally, don't forget to encourage the participants to share the experience with their teams and to keep the programs and the results visible. Celebrate the successes that this change sustainability program provides for all staff and the organisation as a whole. ●

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## Return on Investment (ROI) factors

**People-side ROI factors include faster speed of adoption, higher ultimate utilisation and higher proficiency.**

**Regular cost-benefit analyses will be undertaken through the change program by way of campaigns, surveys on the user experience and adoption and proficiency metrics of the change. An example may involve the early rollout of Skype for Business prior to the relocation, which has all staff moved across to mobile technology driving proficiency, enabling mobility (a ROI achieved before the relocation event).**

**Cost avoidance – avoiding the costs that can occur with poorly managed change.**

**Providing adequate support and training to achieve high user adoption levels is a cost avoidance exercise, as well as the right thing to do. If you do nothing to help staff understand the benefits of their work settings, they may decide that the work settings in neighbourhoods don't work for them and this can translate to rectifications within the first months of moving in.**

**Risk mitigation for individuals, the project and the organisation – the project team and other key streams will be charged with the mandate to ensure staff adopt the new workplace skills and continue to do their work effectively. This will help the organisation meet its business objectives; it can minimise impact on operations, employee disruption and transition risks.**

**Realisation insurance through the uplift of technology and people doing their jobs differently but effectively.**

**The IT enterprise will identify and put in place any programs that deliver new skills required by staff as a result of technology uplift. They will also support the facilities and operations teams in helping them to master the technology for the spaces they will manage.**

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