



The Four Simple Keys to Successful Change Management

Executive Summary

In today's tech-driven landscape, software change is a critical part of strategy for every enterprise. Yet change management remains a challenge for most IT leaders and their teams. Why is it so hard? IT teams have limited bandwidth, often underestimating the importance of personalized communication and accessible training materials—both of which make all the difference when trying to overcome the number-one barrier to success: user resistance.

The good news is that with some planning and the right partnership, IT leaders and their teams can achieve incredible success.

At Nitro, we've helped hundreds of customers find success by following four simple steps: Keep change management at the forefront of the initial decision to change, make communication your strong point, speak your users' language, and choose a vendor that provides support during every step of the journey.

In this eBook, we dive into each of these four keys to change management success, as proven by our most successful customers.

Introduction

We've all heard it before: nothing is constant but change. But just because change is constant, doesn't mean it's easy. In fact, change—and specifically, organizational change—can be complicated. As a result, this battle against change has waged for decades. Studies show a **60-70% failure rate for organizational change projects—a sobering statistic that has remained the same since the 1970s.**

What's standing in the way of successful change management and, more specifically, IT change management?

For many CIOs and their IT teams, the roadblocks to change are a combination of three things:

- **Limited resources:** change consumes time and focus, and what IT team has extra time right now?
- **Vague benefits:** the value of a specific software change is different for unique user groups, leaving too many people focused on the personal impact of a change vs. the broader organizational benefits.
- **Fear of the unknown:** it's human nature for people to fear change because they don't know how it will impact their world.

Yet as hard as change can be, CIOs know that evolving technology and vendor partnerships is critical to transformation and innovation. Simply put, change management is a cornerstone of successful software implementations and avoiding it will ultimately result in stagnation.

The great news is that with thoughtful planning and an experienced vendor partner, successful change management is both realistic and attainable.

In this eBook, we explore what successful change management for IT teams can and should look like. We'll start by unpacking some of the most common barriers to success: IT bandwidth, user resistance, and multiple user group requirements. Next, we'll share the proven keys to getting it right in your organization. Finally, we'll share what the common benefits of success look like: faster adoption, improved productivity, and, of course, quicker ROI.



The Common Barriers to Successful Change Management

You may have heard that “people are wired to resist change.” While that might feel true when you’re in the middle of a project, it’s more accurate to say people are **wired to resist change that they believe is not in their best interests.**

This opposition to change is actually rooted in science. Every human has a habenula, a part of the brain that seeks to avoid failure. When we detect change, the habenula lights up and categorizes the change as a negative surprise, telling the rest of our brain to avoid it as a survival instinct.

Unfortunately, many leaders don’t take the necessary measures to overcome these neurological instincts. Instead, many leaders socialize organizational change with their employees by communicating the underlying business need for change, the cost of change, and the technology investment required to successfully implement the change. Yet the actual process of managing change and communicating the personal benefits to employees often goes overlooked.

Unsurprisingly, treating change management as an afterthought often triggers barriers that have a lot more to do with people than anything else.

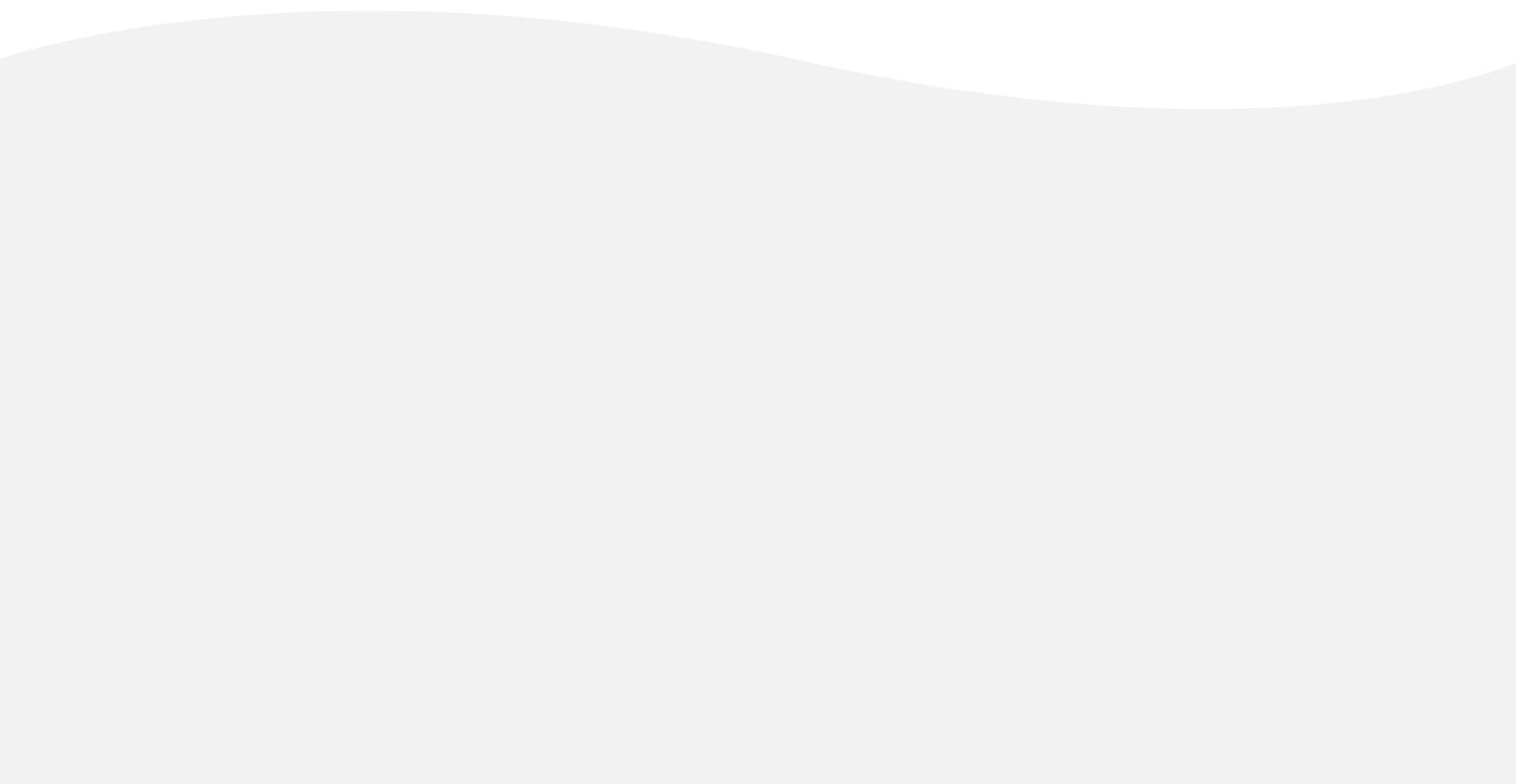
Here are the three most common barriers to successful change management:

- **IT Bandwidth** - According to a Nitro survey, 67% of IT leaders say the biggest challenge to successful change management is limited resources, including inadequate bandwidth on their team.

- **User resistance to change** - According to a Nitro survey, 50% of IT leaders say the biggest challenge to successful change management is user resistance. Everyone has a warning system (i.e. the hyperactive habenula), and widespread user resistance will lead to a lack of adoption and overall implementation failure.
- **Multiple user groups with varying needs** - Fifty-three percent of IT leaders say multiple user groups make change management a challenge. When multiple stakeholders all have a wide variety of needs, it's tough enough to pin down who needs what, let alone figure out a good way to communicate unique benefits.

Successful change management takes proactive planning, a willingness to empathize with users, and a partner who is ready to support your effort during every step of the journey.

In this next section, we list four proven keys to getting change management right.



The Four Keys to Getting It Right

We've helped hundreds of organizations make the switch to Nitro, and we've learned some valuable lessons along the way. Here are four keys to getting change management right—as proven by our many successful customers:

1

Prioritize change management at the beginning of your decision

While feature sets, technical requirements, and user experience are important, maximizing your technology investment requires strong user adoption. As a result, change management should always be at the forefront of change.

Think about the way your team prioritizes other critical decision factors like system requirements and feature sets. You likely have an RFP process to gather vendor capabilities and map them to your stated goals. Approach change management with the same attention to detail.



Create a list of requirements for what a successful change management project looks like and ask potential vendors how they will support your organization at every step of the journey. Here are some questions you should consider asking:

- What document challenges do our users face?
- Does it scale?
- What does customer support consist of?
- What is the development process like?
- What are the licensing options?
- Is compliance difficult? Are there audits?
- Is it easy to use?
- What types of training resources are available?
- Can we try before we buy?

2

Consider communication key

When it comes to large software rollouts, it's too easy to focus on "flipping the switch" when the software goes live and forget that the actual "switch" is happening to people who will require time to socialize and accept the change.

Look at the calendar, think about your "go-live" date, and then work backward to create a communication schedule that not only helps set expectations around when the change will happen, but also communicates the "why," "what," and "how."

Lastly, make sure your communications are delivered at the right time and in the right format to ensure the best chance of being received, opened, and understood.

3

Speak your users language

Resistance to change is inevitable. Your ability to get ahead of that resistance will ultimately determine how much of an uphill battle you'll face. How do you proactively diminish resistance?

Ensure that your communication centers around the benefits to each user and answers the age-old question of "what's in it for me." Instead of speaking in vague terms, take the time to translate these benefits into specific language your end users will understand.

For example, instead of stating that a 50% cost reduction is the company goal, reposition the change in a more relevant context to specific end user groups:

The Product Team

"This switch will enable all of our global product teams to collaborate inside the same version of a document."

The Sales Team

"This switch will eliminate the need to stop and print documents just to sign them, accelerating contract execution and significantly reducing sales cycles."

The Finance Team

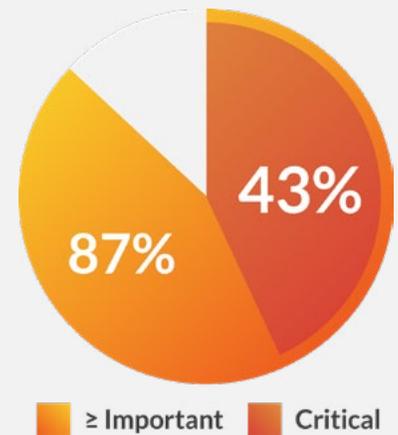
"This switch gives you more control over PO processes across the whole organization."

4

Ask your vendor for a change management roadmap

No one knows a product better than the company who makes it. So why not ask the product experts to play a key role in preparing your organization before, during, and after the change? According to Nitro's Modern Change Management Survey, 87% of IT leaders ranked customer support resources as an "important" factor in a software vendor evaluation, including 43% who said the offering was "critical."

How important are customer support resources?



Software vendors should be willing and able to provide tools and a roadmap for successful change, complete with several layers of support:

- **Before the final selection**, prospective partners should be able to offer proactive advice for how to "break up" with your current vendor. For example, if you are changing PDF management software providers, ask about early termination fees and workflow mapping.
- **Before change begins**, ask your potential partner for specific training, education, and change management tools centered on best practices. Tools could include tailored demos/webinars, customized training microsites, assistance with helpdesk submissions, communications templates, FAQ documents, and use-case mapping.
- **During and after the change**, ask how your partner will help you monitor usage and understand the "who," "what," and "when" behind user adoption. This kind of real-time insight will help you adapt ongoing communication more effectively and provide additional support in the case of slow adoption.

Asking for this kind of roadmap upfront sets the expectation for partnership and signals the breadth and depth of their team's experience with implementing a specific change.

Customer Success Story

After acquiring 6,000 additional employees, Nitro customer Zebra Technologies needed to standardize the whole team on a single document productivity platform. Many of their employees were longtime Adobe users who had no experience with other products. Zebra Technologies turned to Nitro early in the process, well before the change took place, to map a change management strategy.

Our advice? Communicate early and often. Nitro armed Zebra Technologies with educational tools, including a custom microsite to centralize “all things change,” a helpdesk integration to keep answers accessible in the daily workflow, and site analytics to help the change management team understand when and with what teams they may need to provide extra communications. As a result, Zebra Technologies consolidated 2–3 programs, mitigated pushback, and gained user adoption quickly.

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The evaluation wasn't just about features—it was about partnership and change management support. While cost is a factor, the approach and partnership were most imperative. Zebra wanted to work with a partner that would adapt to the changing landscape to ensure they could capture their edge as an organization. From release plans to support mechanisms, it was more than buying a product. It was engaging in a relationship, which is why Nitro is our preferred partner today as we continue to manage toward digital transformation. With Nitro, we can make the tool broadly available, equipping users who in the past haven't had access, and capitalize on a singular solution.”



David Floss
Global Client Support Manager
Zebra Technologies

The Benefits of Successful Change Management

When done well, change management helps an organization see exponentially more and faster return on their enterprise software investment. At Nitro, we've noticed that successful change management delivers a few consistent benefits, including:

Faster user buy-in and user adoption

According to Nitro's Modern Change Management Survey, 71% of CIOs ranked satisfaction as the top success metric for change management initiatives. Intuitively, when users are satisfied, they accept the change, which significantly expedites adoption across the organization.

If you have followed the keys to successful change management, personalized communication, and easily accessible training, you should expect faster user buy-in and adoption. We've seen these benefits firsthand: 89% of our customers get their users up and running with Nitro in less than one month, including 64% who accomplished a full rollout in less than one week.

Increased productivity

If user adoption has increased and cost savings have allowed your organization to expand access from just 10% of the workforce to 90%, the next logical benefit of successful change management is increased productivity.

When the majority of the workforce can streamline a workflow, keep data alive inside digital documents, collaborate inside the same tools, or simply ditch the “print-to-sign” bottleneck, productivity skyrockets. According to Nitro’s 2016 TechValidate survey, nearly 60% of our customers view Nitro as a strategic partner in improving productivity across the organization.

Quicker ROI

When change management goes well, projects are completed on time and on budget. Because users adopt the tool quickly and increase productivity, the return on the investment materializes much faster. For example, one Nitro customer, an enterprise healthcare company, is saving an estimated \$14.43 per user per week due to the additional productivity Nitro affords.

Conclusion

It’s a fact that organizations will continue facing constant change. The ones who can manage it successfully experience faster user buy-in, increased productivity, and a much faster return on investment. Consider the four critical steps to implementing strategic change: keep change management at the forefront of the initial decision to change, make communication your strong point, speak your users’ language, and choose a vendor that provides support during every step of the journey. By following this proven formula, you can turn constant change into constant success.

[Learn more about how easy it is to standardize on Nitro Pro »](#)