

Difference Between Transformation and Change

For the purposes of this specialization, we assume that you have a degree of control over initiating change or transformation within yourself, your teams, and organizations. Through this lens, we identify the key differences between change and transformation.

Transformation may be sparked by change, but eventually, it takes a life of its own.

CHANGE	TRANSFORMATION
May be planned or unplanned(e.g. immediate response to a safety incident)	Always planned and intentional (e.g. cultural or technological transformation)
May require passive or active participation (e.g. organizations must comply with regulatory changes, this assumes passive participation in designing change since it is being imposed by a third-party. These regulatory changes will happen regardless of whether stakeholders participate in it. However, they will be forced to respond to these changes.)	Requires action and active participation(e.g. because there is an intent behind every transformation, it requires all parties who initiate the transformation to take action and actively participate in it. If they don't, the transformation will not happen on its own.)
Has a low to moderate degree of risk(can range from low to high complexity)	Has a high degree of risk(complex with a lot of moving parts, cross-functional, multi-year)
Has clear boundaries(e.g. improving sales by 10%)	Does not have a clear definition (e.g. strategy or vision for the future)
Typically contained within an individual initiative	Consists of a portfolio of initiatives or actions that have to be taken
New state looks slightly different compared to the past state(e.g. installing new sales system)	Has no resemblance to the past state(e.g. completing a multi-year culture transformation)
Simple and conservative	Profound and radical