

# THE ADKAR MODEL AS A MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Applications of ADKAR Research Study



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# INTRODUCTION

Peter Drucker famously observed, “what gets measured gets managed.” What we measure indicates what we value and where we focus our attention. Even with the increased recognition of the value of change management and an overwhelming body of evidence that employee adoption and usage directly impacts change success, measuring the progress and outcomes of change in people has long been vague or even elusive. Leading organizations are looking for tangible, repeatable and valid mechanisms to measure the people side of change.

When used effectively, data gathered through measurement enables us to identify issues, diagnose gaps and take corrective action. Measurement data reveals where progress and change is happening and where obstacles need to be addressed. As leaders of change, we know that demonstrating progress is important to establishing the value of change management and maintaining ongoing commitment to investing in the people side of change.

In a research effort to investigate how leading organizations are using the **Prosci ADKAR® Model** (ADKAR) in practical application, Prosci asked benchmarking questions about using ADKAR as a framework for measuring change progress and outcomes. The elements of ADKAR represent the outcomes that need to be achieved in impacted individuals for change to be realized and sustained. Measuring the elements of ADKAR at intervals throughout a change project provides a picture of how ready an individual or a team is for change and how likely they are to successfully adopt and sustain it.

In this analysis, we explore the prevalence, effectiveness and benefits of using ADKAR as a measurement framework, as well as best practices around when to measure, who to measure and how to measure change with ADKAR.

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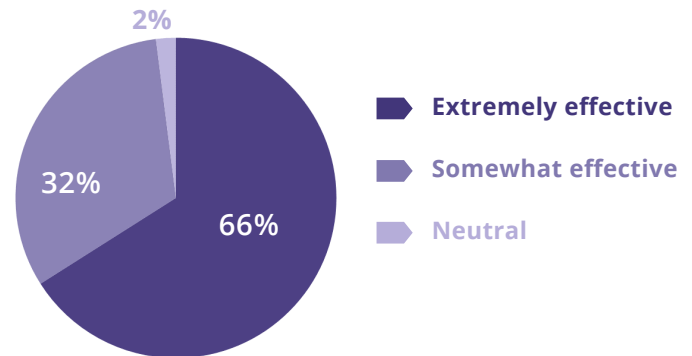
*ADKAR allows you to measure where individuals are in the change process so change management activities can be tailored and timely.*

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*It provides a practical approach to understand where the impacted users are on the journey, by using tailored statements. By using this a[t] regular intervals throughout the change effort I can demonstrate the success of change management.*

# WHO IS USING ADKAR AS A MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Over 40% of study participants reported they had used ADKAR as a measurement framework, and nearly all of these participants said that ADKAR was either somewhat (32%) or extremely (66%) effective for this particular use.



Percent of Study Respondents Who Used ADKAR as a Measurement Framework

USE CASE	PREVALENCE	FREQUENCY
Leverage a structured approach and methodology	80%	95%
Facilitate individual change	45%	95%
Measure change outcomes	44%	91%
Create a common language for change	34%	98%
Integrate with project management	34%	90%
Empower managers	32%	87%
Equip senior leaders	25%	97%

# WHY USE ADKAR AS MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Participants in the *Applications of ADKAR* study were asked to identify why they used ADKAR as a measurement framework. Responses fell into four categories:

## 1 Easy to use

Participants reported that using ADKAR as measurement framework was very easy. The model lends itself to a simple a measurement tool, giving a clear picture of where impacted groups are on their change journey with the data gained from using ADKAR.

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*ADKAR provides a straightforward approach in evaluating where individuals and or groups are at within the change process. It is easy to understand and apply.*

## 2 Reliability and validity

Participants felt secure using ADKAR as a measurement framework because it produced reliable and valid insight. The data collected using ADKAR could be trusted because the model produces consistent data in similar situations.

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*Objective and evidence based framework increases credibility of findings / recommendations with clients and stakeholders.*

### 3 Actionable output

Participants reported that using ADKAR as a measurement framework yielded actionable data and insights. The output of ADKAR measurement gives a clear picture of how change is progressing and how individuals were handling the change in the organization. It identifies where groups or individuals were struggling with a certain aspect of the change.

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*ADKAR gives us insights into how we need to spend our time working with people to move through a change more easily.*

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*It makes it easier to move from measurement results to actions. If Knowledge and Ability are low, the issue is training--if Desire is low, training will not solve the problem.*

### 4 Progress tracking

Participants reported measuring ADKAR scores to track the progress of a change. ADKAR was specifically helpful for tracking change at an individual level over time.

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*The individual assessment provided easily quantifiable and comparable data - baseline and progress measure - to guide change management efforts.*

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*To gauge the progression of impacted stakeholders and audience groups, from project initiation to project close and transition/beyond. ADKAR helped to document and record the current state and detail the journey of where we landed.*

# HOW TO USE ADKAR AS A MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Prosci asked participants in the *Applications of ADKAR* study a series of questions about how they implemented ADKAR as a measurement framework. We investigated when, who and how organizations are measuring with ADKAR, and also asked how action is being taken based on the insights of the measurement data.

## WHEN TO MEASURE WITH ADKAR

Participants identified the circumstances in which they used ADKAR as a measurement framework.

### 1. Throughout a project lifecycle

Most respondents identified that they have used ADKAR as a measurement framework throughout the lifecycle of a project. They reported measuring ADKAR scores as a baseline at the beginning of a project, as a pre-go-live checklist and at other key milestones during the project.

### 2. On large and complex projects

Participants reported using ADKAR on large and complex changes in particular. This included projects involving many types of change happening at once, changes across multiple geographies, projects with a high dollar value attached, and changes that have a large and varied impact on

diverse employee groups. Samples of the large and complex projects identified included business systems changes, ERP implementations, mergers and acquisitions and re-organizations.

### 3. When gauging change readiness and anticipating resistance

Participants reported using ADKAR to gauge employees' readiness for change. Changes in readiness over time is valuable feedback to the project teams and senior leaders about how individuals and groups are progressing through change. The data indicate where gaps still exist and serve as a leading indicator for anticipated resistance and adoption challenges.

## 4. When designing and evaluating change management activities

Measurement data based on ADKAR were used to influence change management plans and activities. It informed fact-based decisions on where to focus change management work. Based on data collected from assessments, participants could evaluate the effectiveness of change management activities like communications and training. They also reported adjusting their change management plans, even going so far as to moving “go-live” dates for projects.

## 5. When seeking buy-in from senior leaders

Some participants reported measuring ADKAR scores as a tool to catalyze leadership and gain buy in from senior leaders. They demonstrated the return on investment of change management work by showing adoption rates through ADKAR progress.

# WHAT GROUPS TO MEASURE WITH ADKAR

Participants identified the groups in their organization whose progress in a transition had been measured using the ADKAR.

## 1. Impacted employees

By a four-to-one margin, employees directly impacted by a change were the groups most frequently measured with ADKAR. ADKAR was

used to evaluate the progress and change readiness of employees and stakeholders who have to do their work differently in the future state. Some participants reported measuring all employees across the organization and at all levels of the hierarchy. Where measuring all employees was not feasible, participants reported prioritizing their focus on groups and individuals who were experiencing the greatest impacts of change, were key revenue generators, or were saturated by other ongoing initiatives.

## 2. Senior leaders

ADKAR measurements were conducted to measure the level of buy-in and support from executives, sponsors and steering committee members who play a critical role in times of change.

## 3. Managers and supervisors

Functional managers, team leads and line supervisors whose teams were undergoing change were measured using ADKAR.

## 4. Project team

Project team roles specifically identified as being measured included project managers, support resources (communication and training departments, human resources, etc.) and subject matter experts.

## 5. IT

IT team members are a common group to measure with ADKAR. They may play roles in initiating and implementing technology and systems changes, and may be impacted by those changes themselves.

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## 6. Super users and change agents

Participants reported using ADKAR to measure the readiness of super users and members of the change agent network.

## STEPS TO TAKE WHEN MEASURING WITH ADKAR

Participants in the *Applications of ADKAR Study* reported using a variety of means for gathering data using ADKAR.

### 1. Surveys

Surveys were the most frequent means of gathering ADKAR measurement data. Participants who reported using surveys to gather ADKAR data identified the following tools:

- a. Prosci's ADKAR Dashboard
- b. Survey Monkey
- c. Sharepoint
- d. Internal share drive/survey tool

### 2. Interviews

Participants also used interviews with key groups to identify ADKAR scores. Interviews were primarily used with subject matter experts, key stakeholders, organizational influencers and leadership, including middle managers and front-line supervisors.

## 3. ADKAR Assessments

Participants distributed hard-copy ADKAR assessments to collect ADKAR data on individuals' progress during change. The tool was frequently used to enable managers to gauge their employees' ADKAR scores, rather than for collecting self-assessment data from the employees themselves.

### 4. Focus groups

Participants used focus groups as a method to measure ADKAR progress among employees. Rather than measuring all impacted individuals, respondents would select a sub-set of the larger population and then interview that group in a controlled setting to determine if groups were progressing through transitions.

## HOW TO ACT UPON ADKAR MEASUREMENT DATA

Participants were asked what they did with the data they collected from their ADKAR work.

### 1. Adapt change management tactics

Participants reported applying the data they gathered using ADKAR to adjust their planned change management activities. The ADKAR data informed customization of communications and training plans and helped to tailor efforts to match the respective audiences.

### 2. Report progress

Participants used the data collected to inform sponsors, change managers, project team members and other organizational leaders as part of project updates. The data collected via ADKAR was easy to translate and feed into tracking metrics.

### 3. Focus and prioritize activity

Participants reported using their ADKAR data to inform a gap analysis on impacted groups. Gaps identified in the ADKAR data helped project teams focus and prioritize their change management efforts.

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*Reviewed feedback to adjust our change management plan, e.g. provided a different focus for communications, got different teams engaged in things we didn't think they had concerns about, held discussion groups for particular topics highlighted.*

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*Organized, summarized and reported the data to project sponsors and project team members. The data was then used to make adjustments to change management activities.*

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*The data collected from the survey results enable the change team to drill down further on specific gaps and or barriers.*

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*Put in place an action plan to provide what was missing, i.e. further information packs, tailored around the 'what's in it for me' as well as drop in sessions to provide knowledge of how to do SMART objectives and practice them (to build ability).*

## 4. Measure effectiveness

Participants reported using their ADKAR data to inform a gap analysis on impacted groups. Gaps identified in the ADKAR data helped project teams focus and prioritize their change management efforts.

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*Used internally to gauge and measure effectiveness of change management activities.*

# CONCLUSION

ADKAR provides a straightforward framework for evaluating where individuals and groups are within the change process. It is easy to understand and apply. When ADKAR is used as an assessment, it provides easily quantifiable and comparable data to move from measurement results to actions. ADKAR as a measurement framework guides change management efforts and is a vital tool to evaluate progress – both individual and change management effectiveness – throughout the lifecycle of a project.



# SUCCESS STORY: LARGE UTILITY IN SOUTHERN US

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*Often times we are forced to learn from our mistakes. Sometimes we can learn before our mistakes.*

– Change Management Lead

Several years ago a large utility organization in the Southern US had a large IT project that needed to be implemented across the organization. This project was huge by any definition of the word. It was a several million-dollar implementation that radically impacted nearly every functional group across the organization. Project failure would not just mean loss of capital and outcomes but loss of company morale and willingness to engage with large-scale change projects. Therefore, some business units in the organization made the decision to create and apply a change management strategy.

After the IT project, those leaders were so impressed with the success that they decided to fully adopt change management. They adopted the Prosci change management methodology, and a central part of their effort was proactively utilizing ADKAR as a measurement tool.

Today the organization has trained over 1,400 employees in change management and the ADKAR Model, and their customer service business unit's change management team applies change management on all large-scale/high-impact changes in the organization. While change management has had a large impact on increasing the success of their projects, one of the organization's strengths has been its ability to utilize ADKAR as a preventative research model to identify resistance, adapt their approach and identify obstacles and best practices within their organization.

On any given large/high-impact project, the project team will begin with a custom, anonymous, survey designed to provide data on all five elements of the ADKAR score. The data is then analyzed in two ways. First, long-term trend analysis is done to identify score improvements over the life of the project. Second, short-term snapshots are collected using focus groups and panels. Demographic information, such as region and classification, is collected to further stratify the data for specific impacted groups. The team identifies trouble spots and plans for and implements mitigating factors. The process is repeated for each project milestone and runs parallel to the larger change management initiative.

This robust measurement process allows the organization to customize and adapt its change management approaches for each project, but it also does so much more. Using this data and their research capabilities, leaders and project teams are able to identify internal and project-specific best practices. One of their internal resources said:

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*If I see that the south side region is showing better ADKAR scores, I will do a focus group with them to understand what is working so well. I can then take that information to the north side group ,which has not been scoring well.*

This use of ADKAR helps them look back, examine the present and look to the future of their change management projects. Change management at this organization is not a stagnant program or methodology; it is a living and adaptable approach to addressing change on an individual level. By using ADKAR as a measurement tool, the organization is able to ensure that their change management program is adjusting and adapting at the speed of change.

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