



Change Management Practitioner Career Guide



The Change Management Practitioner

It's an exciting time to work in the change management discipline. Change practitioners are more important than ever in the global business world, especially in forward-thinking organizations where change is fast-paced and ever present. When these organizations make big changes—like acquiring other businesses, implementing technologies, and streamlining processes—they also need to help employees engage with, adopt and use the changes. Otherwise, the organization risks losing their sizable investments. After all, what good is the latest technology if no one uses it?

Installing the new technology is not enough to ensure the high levels of adoption and usage required for success. A change management practitioner takes on this critical responsibility.



Change management is an enabling framework for managing the people side of change.

What does a change management practitioner do?

Like a project manager, a change management practitioner ensures that projects and initiatives meet their objectives on time and on budget. Yet, while a project manager focuses on the “technical side of change” by designing and delivering the solution itself, the change practitioner focuses on the “people side of change” by enabling the organization’s people to adopt and use it in their daily work.

Generally, a change management practitioner:

- Understands the details of the change and the impact on people
- Creates and implements change management strategies and plans
- Overcomes individual barriers to change that may manifest as change-resistant behaviors
- Coaches and supports others in the organization to execute their unique roles during change

An effective change management practitioner drives faster adoption, increases ultimate utilization rates, and improves user proficiency with project changes. In turn, these enhancements increase benefits to the organization, maximize return on investment, and enable the organization to achieve the results and outcomes desired from the project.



\$107,863 per year¹

Change management jobs pay well on average



113% Growth²

Organizations employ more change management professionals than ever



156,000+ jobs³

Numerous open roles in change management posted in the U.S.

1. ZipRecruiter, “Change Management Specialist Salary.” <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Salaries/Change-Management-Specialist-Salary> (Accessed July 13, 2022)
2. Prosci *Best Practices in Change Management – 11th Edition*
3. ZipRecruiter, “Change Management Specialist Jobs.” <https://www.ziprecruiter.com/Jobs/Change-Management-Specialist> (Accessed June 29, 2022)

8 Essential Skills for a Change Management Career

1. Position the value of change management in different contexts across the organization

This is an essential engagement skill at any job level. Change management professionals must be able to influence roles in the organization, ranging from senior leaders to front-line associates, to gain their support for and investment in change management. This includes being able to successfully respond to objections about change management's value.

2. Engage and coach sponsors with credibility and mastery

Engaging with senior-level executives who sponsor the organization's change takes confidence, especially as a novice practitioner. You must be able to crisply define the role and responsibilities of a sponsor during change, coach sponsors to fulfill their roles throughout the lifecycle of the change, and build change management credibility with leaders across the organization.





3. Navigate the human dynamics of change

It stands to reason that a change management practitioner must facilitate the transition that individuals go through to move successfully from their current state to the desired future state. This involves being able to identify, address and overcome [individual barriers to change](#), and then to reinforce and sustain the change with impacted individuals.

4. Identify and communicate change impacts, stakeholders and scope

Estimating the [impacts of change on people](#) is a critical skill. Change practitioners not only identify and quantify the impact of a specific change on impacted individuals and groups, but they also create positive momentum for change through active stakeholder management and effectively manage resistant behaviors from different stakeholder groups across the organization.

5. Apply a change management methodology

Change practitioners facilitate the application of change management frameworks, methods and tools to organizational projects and initiatives. This includes assessing change risk and organizational readiness. They must also adapt the change management approach to address different organizational scenarios. Finally, change practitioners develop and implement the overall change management plan and individual plans that enhance organizational results.

6. Establish change-success measure, metrics and monitoring

Creating a shared definition of success is a critical first step in change management planning. The practitioner must then gauge progress toward success on the project or initiative by identifying and building agreement on adoption metrics, and tracking and reporting on those metrics over the project lifecycle.

7. Develop consulting competencies

Change practitioners need to effectively influence and facilitate change with and through others in their organizations, and a consulting skillset makes this possible. These more advanced abilities include facilitating and influencing others, [delivering change management training](#) to others, and working across functional areas of the organization. Consulting competencies also fuel effective problem solving, meaningful compromise through negotiations, comfort with ambiguity, and more.

8. Build competencies in complementary disciplines

To get ahead in change management, today's practitioner needs to speak the change-enabling "languages" used in organizations to improve performance and realize strategic vision. Acquiring skills and credentials in project management, Lean Six Sigma, Agile, innovation, Design Thinking, customer experience, organizational development, business transformation, learning and development, communication, and other areas will enhance your performance while preparing you for senior-level roles in change management.





Empathy and The People Side of Change

People who work in change management know it's a rewarding job—it's often described as a purpose-driven career. They know it takes more than a great solution to enable successful changes. And they know that working with and through people is essential to the role. This makes being a "people person" a must. More than any other skill, the ability to understand and empathize with others—to put yourself in another's shoes—is a prerequisite for success as a change practitioner.

In addition to essential skills and behaviors, high-performing change practitioners bring people-focused traits and other professional attributes to their role:

Commitment to the success of organizational projects and initiatives in terms of the people they impact

Most importantly, commitment means working to prepare, equip and support people through their individual transitions. This also includes the commitment to continually grow and learn, remaining curious throughout their career.

Connections in terms of people, projects, processes and outcomes

- People connections involve successfully influencing people throughout the organization, from senior leaders to front-line employees.
- Project connections include understanding how individual projects impact the organization, and the cumulative and collective impact of multiple projects.
- Process connections involve integrating business and solutions-development processes with change management to achieve a common objective.
- Outcome connections ensure that results align with organizational vision, strategy, goals and objectives in a measurable, sustainable manner.

Communication with others in an open, honest and authentic way

This means meeting people where they are during change in both language and context, as well as aligning messages with what people care about and the problems they're trying to solve. High-performing change management practitioners also communicate with and through others in the organization to enable more attainable outcomes, communicating lessons learned and celebrating successes.

Creativity that taps into imaginations throughout the organization

This trait enables a change practitioner to bring fresh ideas to the table to simplify complex concepts and break down large efforts to make results more attainable. A creative change practitioner isn't afraid to try new things and may even make the effort fun for people along the way.



Common Roles in Change Management

Change management practitioners possess varied experiences and educations. They come from numerous disciplines, such as human resources, organizational development, learning and development, IT, project management, communications, management consulting, and others. Some professionals practice change management as part of another job role. And most change management positions are tailored to meet the unique needs of the organizations they serve.

Although titles can differ, common change management roles include:

Change Management Specialist or Analyst

Change management specialists support organizational change management at the project and initiative levels. They execute change management activities, including organizational readiness assessments, impact assessments, stakeholder analyses, and change management plans. Working with and through others, they apply a change management framework and methodology, support communications and training efforts, and engage with key roles in the organization. Change management specialists may also liaise with and enlist project management, human resources, learning and development, and others to support successful adoption and usage of change projects.





The change management specialist or analyst role may require a bachelor's degree and three years of experience in business, technology, or another related role. Change management certification, other formal change management education, or equivalent on-the-job experience is needed to execute the responsibilities of the role.

Manager, Director or Lead in Change Management

Change management leads are responsible for developing and driving successful change management strategies at the project and program levels while supervising and coaching junior members of the change management team. In addition to executing change management activities on projects, change management leads may also use their significant experience to coach organizational leaders and managers to execute their roles during change. Change management leads can also be required to train others in change management.

This advanced role may require a master's degree and several years of experience in change management, as well as supervisory experience. Change management certification, advanced training in change management, and credentials in related disciplines are usually needed.



Most change management positions are tailored to meet the unique needs of the organizations they serve.

Enterprise Change Management Deployment Leader

An enterprise change management (ECM) deployment leader is responsible for designing, embedding and advocating for change management in an organization at the enterprise level. In addition to assessing the organization's change management maturity, the ECM deployment lead develops and executes a plan to institutionalize change management competencies and capabilities that increase maturity level, improve return on investment on initiatives, and enhance organizational agility. This senior-level role may also be responsible for establishing and managing a change management office to serve the enterprise.

This senior-level role may require a master's degree and several years of experience in change management, as well as managerial and management consulting experience. Change management certification, advanced change management training, and credentials in related disciplines are often required to execute the role successfully.

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Prosci's Change Management Certification Program has equipped me to lead projects more effectively and meet the strategic initiatives of our organization. Their practical, people-centered approach reduces the anxiety of change, increases employee engagement, and brings alignment to the impactful work we do at the Society.

—Emily Cellar

Project Manager, National MS Society





How to Get Started in Change Management

If you're excited and motivated to pursue a career in change management, the best step you can take is to acquire the right skills and credentials for the job. Universities increasingly offer four-year degrees in change leadership, and change management courses are widely available online. But getting certified as a change management practitioner offers a distinct advantage because many organizations consider it a requirement, even alongside other formal education.



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After doing some research on enterprise change management, I registered for Prosci's Enterprise Change Management (ECM) Boot Camp. At the time, I didn't feel strongly about Prosci because I already had a master's degree in change management and firmly understood the value it could bring to realizing strategic and project goals. But my experience with ECM Boot Camp revealed the beauty of the Prosci Methodology and led me to become a Prosci Certified Change Practitioner and Train-the-Trainer.

—Michael Triolo-Sapp

Global Change Management Lead, Matthews International

The value of change management certification

Participants in Prosci's Best Practices in Change Management research say change management is necessary for success on projects—and 74% of these participants have acquired a change management certification.

To deliver meaningful value, a change management certification program should offer you:

- A structured approach, research-based methodology, and repeatable process for implementing organizational change management on projects and initiatives
- Universal tools, including digital tools and templates, change management frameworks, best practices and techniques, and a common language around change
- Skills and confidence through hands-on practice with a real organizational change project
- Credentials delivered by experts in change management and recognized globally by hiring organizations
- Proven ability to achieve strong results and outcomes from organizational changes

Earning change management certification enables you to quickly acquire essential skills for a career in change management, improve your job prospects, and help your organization and its people thrive through change.

Your Change Management Career

Is a career in change management right for you? If you're a people person and problem solver with a background in communication, project management, organizational development, human resources, consulting, or another change-enabling discipline, you might find change management a great fit. Organizations of all kinds are looking for people to help them implement the people side of change today. Even if you don't have the right background yet, you can acquire the knowledge and skills you need to pursue a career in this rapidly growing and rewarding discipline.



Take the Next Step in Your Change Management Career



Prosci Change Management Certification Program

Get the tools, support and knowledge you need for a successful career in change management. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting out, becoming a [Prosci Certified Change Practitioner](#) opens doors—to advancement in your organization or the new career you want in change management.



Prosci Certified Train-the-Trainer Program*

Are you already Prosci Certified? Becoming a [Prosci Train-the-Trainer](#) is a great investment in your professional career if you want to teach Prosci programs to others within your organization. This two-level program enables you to start with level 1 and learn to deliver the foundational programs. And you can choose attend level-2 training if and when it meets your needs and career aspirations.



Prosci Certified Advanced Instructor Program*

If you're looking to take a big step forward in your existing change management career, becoming a [Prosci Certified Advanced Instructor](#) can help you get where you want to go. Designed for Prosci-certified, experienced change practitioners who are passionate about training and facilitation, Advanced Instructor training delivers the sought-after skills and credentials for certifying others in the Prosci Methodology and building lasting change capabilities in your organization.

*Specific requirements apply

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