

**Energy Point
Consulting**CLARITY
OUT OF CHAOS

TRAINING IS NOT ADOPTION

13%

of organizations with poor change management meet their project objectives (Anderson, 2025)

#1

Active and visible sponsorship, top contributor to change success since 1998 (Prosci Benchmarking)

Six months after go-live, the new system is running. The data migrated. The go-live date was hit. From a project management standpoint, the implementation was a success.

But when you look at usage, the picture is different. Users are still pulling reports from a spreadsheet maintained for years. Payments are still being reconciled outside the system. A shadow tracking document lives in someone's SharePoint folder and is updated after every transaction because "the system doesn't do it the way we need."

This is what a failed adoption looks like. And it happens all the time to projects that were technically delivered on time and on budget. The reason? It's almost always the same: the organization treated training as change management. It isn't.

"Training does not equal adoption. Adoption is behavior change."

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRAINING AND ADOPTION

Training teaches people how to use a system. Adoption changes how people work.

That distinction matters because technology initiatives don't just add a new tool. They change workflows, decision rights, data ownership, and the daily habits of people who have been doing their jobs a particular way for years. Training days before go-live cannot accomplish all of that. It never could.

Prosci’s research is clear: only 13% of organizations with poor change management meet or exceed their project objectives. Flip that equation: organizations with excellent change management are 7 times more likely to achieve their intended outcomes. That’s not a marginal difference. It’s the difference between a system that transforms how an organization operates and one that collects dust.

WHAT POOR ADOPTION LOOKS LIKE

It’s recognizable, once you know what to look for:

SHADOW SYSTEM

Teams maintain parallel records outside the implementation because they don’t trust the new system’s data or outputs.

WORKAROUNDS

Users find ways to complete transactions outside the intended process, often because the system doesn’t match how they actually work.

INCONSISTENT USAGE

Some users adopt; others don’t. The result is a data quality problem that undermines the value of the system for everyone.

REGRESSION UNDER PRESSURE

During an acquisition, a divestiture, or an audit, teams revert to the old way because it’s faster and more familiar.

None of these are user failures. They’re organizational failures; failures to prepare, support, and reinforce the change that was supposed to accompany the technology.

WHAT EFFECTIVE CHANGE & ADOPTION LOOKS LIKE

In the VOICE framework, Change & Adoption is not a phase. It’s a thread that runs through the entire project from planning through sustainment.

1 Change Impact Analysis, before the first configuration session

Who is affected by this implementation? How does their work change? What is the magnitude of that change for each group? What resistance is likely, and why?

2 Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement

Who are the people who will make or break adoption? What do they need to hear, from whom, and when? Where is resistance likely to show up, and what's driving it? Answering those questions deliberately, and building a plan around the answers, is what turns stakeholder engagement from a checkbox into a genuine force for adoption.

3 Active and Visible Executive Sponsorship, non-negotiable

Prosci's benchmarking research has identified sponsorship as the top contributor to change success in every study conducted since 1998, cited four times more often than any other factor. Yet 50% of executives don't understand their role in change. The executive sponsor cannot just be present at kickoff; they must be visible throughout the project, communicating why it matters, removing obstacles, and modeling the new behavior.

4 Role-Based Training, timely and specific

A landman's training looks different from a division orders specialist's training, which looks different from an accounting user's training. One-size-fits-all training serves no one well.

5 Sustained Reinforcement, past go-live

Change management doesn't end at project go-live, but continues with change champions embedded in the business, ongoing reinforcement, and feedback loops that surface adoption gaps before they harden into habits. This is not a 30-day hypercare window. It's a sustained effort to confirm that behavior has changed.

THE SPONSORSHIP GAP



What typically happens: A VP signs the project charter, attends the kickoff, and then delegates everything that follows. They resurface when there's a scope dispute or a timeline risk. What they don't do is communicate consistently to the organization about why this implementation matters, what it will change, and what is expected of everyone.

That gap, between nominal sponsorship and active sponsorship, is one of the single greatest risk factors in any implementation. And it's one of the most addressable if identified early.

A DIFFERENT QUESTION TO ASK

Most project teams track go-live readiness: task completion, data migration progress, defect counts. The teams that achieve real adoption track something different: Are people ready? Do they understand what’s changing and why? Do they have the knowledge and ability to work in the new system? Is there reinforcement in place to make the change stick?

Those questions have answers that can be measured through readiness assessments, adoption metrics, feedback channels, and usage data in the weeks and months after go-live. The organizations that ask them early and act on the answers are the ones that end up with a system people use.

Training gets people to go-live. Change management keeps people using the system.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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ABOUT ENERGY POINT CONSULTING

Energy Point Consulting empowers organizations across industries to accelerate digital transformation: selecting and implementing the right software, automating workflows, and embedding best practices. Through organizational change management and business transformation services, we ensure technology investments are adopted, trusted, and sustained. By building and leveraging scalable, integrated systems and data-driven visibility, we deliver process efficiency, compliance readiness, and real-time insights that enable strategic decision-making and sustainable performance.

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