



The Change Report

A Report on Attitudes,
Perceptions, & Impact
of Workplace Change

Released in 2025

/ About The Report

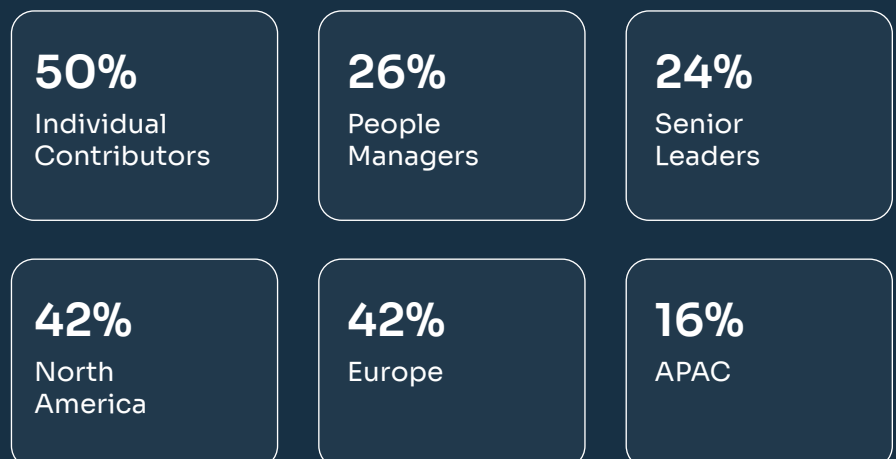
In 2024, we surveyed over 1,200 people concerning their experience with change within the workplace. We asked people what types of changes they've been experiencing at work, how these changes have impacted leaders and employees, and how well their organizations are handling the changes.

Survey respondents ranged from C-suite executives to front-line staff, from a wide range of companies, representing countries across North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific, including a cross-section of individuals of varying ages, races, and genders.

This reports summarizes what we found, including trends around workplace change – what types of change are happening, how much change is happening, and how organizations are handling it. Throughout the report we have included insights for upcoming trends and how organizations can equip themselves to manage change successfully.

This report includes a year-over-year comparison over the past 36 months.

Of 1,200 Respondents



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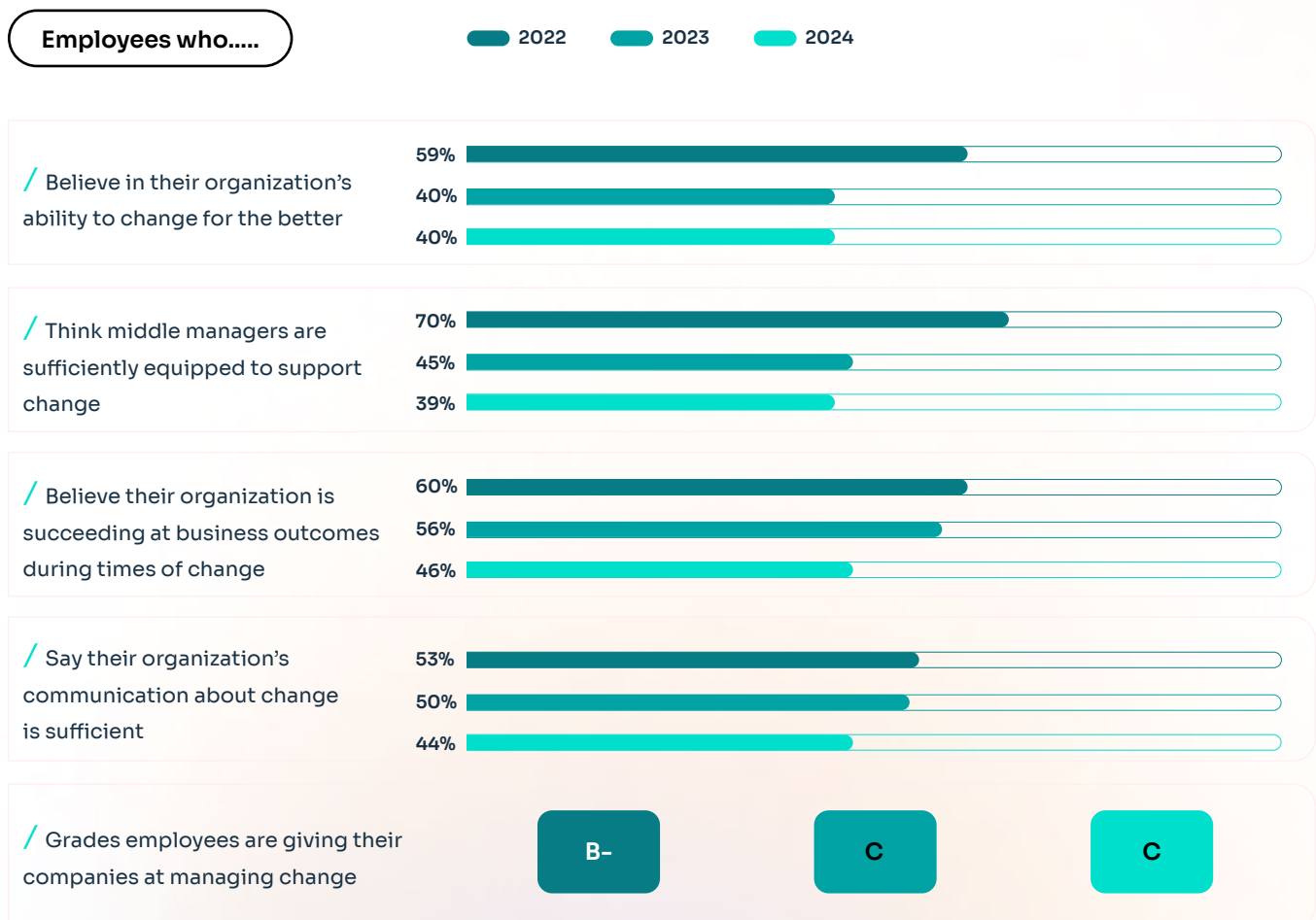
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Change is on the rise, but how organizations manage change is declining

The trends over the last 36 months indicate that, although workplace change is increasing in volume, frequency and pace, organizations are navigating change less effectively year-over-year.



Latest insights indicate that leaders need to 'lean in' when it comes to change

1. Change is happening fast, and communication to employees is not catching up

Change is rapid in today's workplace, happening at the highest levels seen in years. Most employees report that they are dealing with more changes than ever before, however many also report that their concerns are not being addressed and there are limited opportunities for two-way dialogue.

2. Skeptics have stopped caring

The percentage of respondents who indicate low levels of trust & understanding in their organizations' ability to navigate change successfully is at an all-time high, up 26% from last year. Employees' faith in the future is low, increasing the risk of disengagement and indifference in the workplace.

3. Outcome-driven focus is undermining engagement

Employees report that when it comes to navigating change, financial performance, roi, and customer satisfaction are the key areas of focus --- sometimes at the expense of employee engagement and retention. Many feel deprioritized & powerless, and do not feel welcome to raise questions and concerns or provide input.





4. Managers and employees are feeling under-resourced, creating risk

Managers are not feeling sufficiently empowered to lead change. There is a lack of empowerment for middle managers, that extends to frontline supervisors. Middle managers are feeling the strain most acutely however, indicating they feel tasked with guiding their teams through change without enough support from senior leaders.

5. The growing divide: leadership vs. frontline employees

There is a widening gap between senior leaders and the rest of the workforce. While senior leaders rate themselves and their organizations more highly than in past years when it comes to navigating change, mid-and-junior-level employees are giving their leaders and organizations lower ratings than before.

6. Tech and data are shaping the future of work

New disruptions leading to change are rapidly entering the workplace. Employees report that emerging areas such as data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI) and the associated regulatory/compliance requirements have taken center stage. Many are uncertain about their own security and stability and seeking relevant resources, training, tools, and support needed to adapt and thrive in the new world of data & technology.

1. Change is happening fast, and communication to employees is not catching up

Organizations are taking on a lot of change. Employees feel that they are not hearing enough about what's happening and that they do not always know where to direct questions or provide feedback.

“

I wish my organization would stick to one plan instead of trying to muddle through many at once.”

Lots of change, with little room for employee questions or feedback

Change continues to be constant, and employees are feeling lost in the shuffle.

89% of employees experienced some degree of change → **18%** experienced 6 or more changes → **Up 7%** from last year

Meanwhile, amidst unprecedented amounts of change, employees feel lost:

Individual Contributor and Manager Feedback

Say their companies are mediocre, or worse, at addressing employee questions **61%**

Say their companies are mediocre, or worse, at asking for feedback **59%**

Say their company is doing 'about the same' or 'worse' with handling change **75%**

Note

European respondents show the highest levels of dissatisfaction with their organization's ability to address questions and ask for feedback, at 64% and 60% saying their organizations are mediocre or worse at each, respectively; compared to 58% and 58% for North America and 62% and 53% for APAC

APAC respondents are most optimistic about their organization's ability to handle change, with 33% of employees saying their orgs are better at handling change today than in the past, versus 24% or lower for all other regions

In the wake of several years of quick and turbulent change – a pandemic, global economic challenges, etc. – **high amounts of change at work are still the norm, with 18% dealing with six or more changes this year.**

Employees are challenged by all this change. **Most respondents – 61% – say that their organizations are mediocre or worse at taking care of their employees during change** – for example, addressing employee questions and asking for feedback.



2. Skeptics have stopped caring...

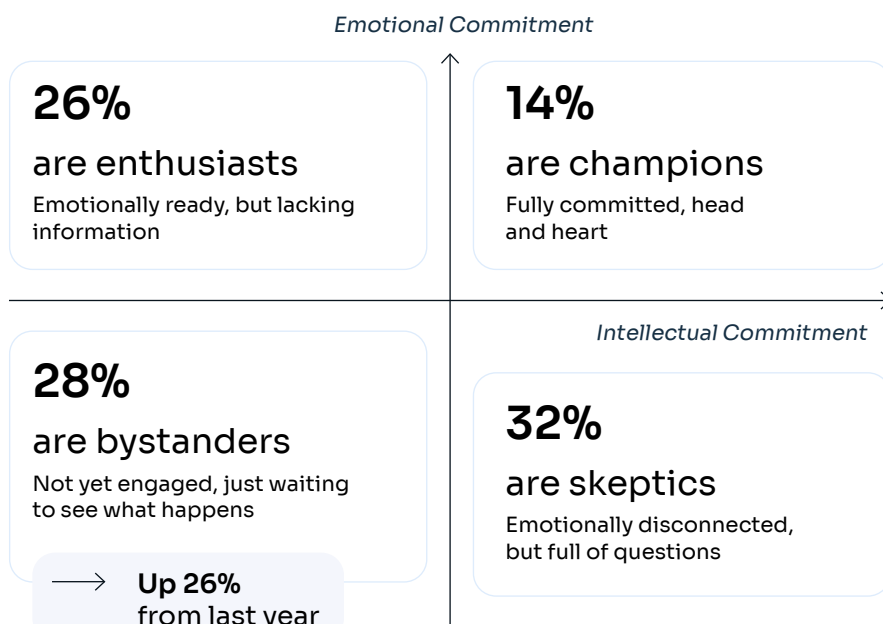
Disengagement is trending up, for how people handle both the emotional and intellectual aspects of change. A big takeaway is that less employees believe in their organization.

“

When leaders don't communicate or involve us, people stop believing—and when they stop believing, they stop caring.”

Rising employee disengagement signals a need for transparency & empathy

Four personas align with each quadrant of the head/heart commitment grid. This year, 'bystanders' are up to 28% from 12% last year, a major trend of disengagement.



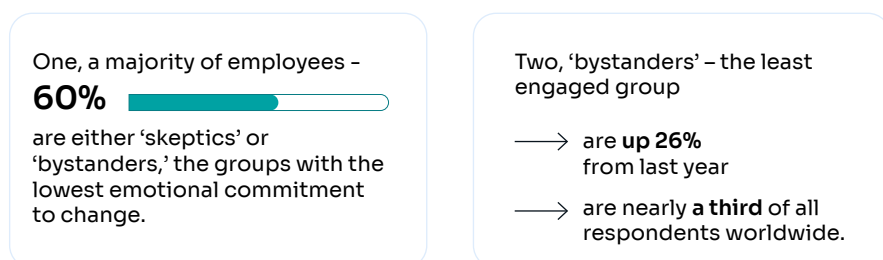
Note

/ Regionally, Europe and APAC employees are more 'positive' than North Americans – Europe and APAC respondents are both at roughly 45% of employees as 'enthusiasts' or 'champions,' with North American respondents closer to 35% for those personas.

/ 'Bystanders' are highest in North America at roughly 33% of employees in the US and Canada, and lowest in Europe, with only 21% of French employees identifying as such.

/ Senior leaders and C-suite are more likely to be 'champions' and 'enthusiasts' of change, with a higher percentage believing the organization is handling transitions better than before.

As change leaders map employee reactions to change, they should be concerned about two things.



This disengagement signals a deeper need for organizations to foster transparency and empathy, ensuring employees remain invested in the change process. Not doing so could be a major risk for both business and employee outcomes.

3. Outcome-driven focus is undermining engagement

Employees say that organizations are prioritizing business outcomes – financial performance, ROI, and customer satisfaction, for example. Meanwhile, employee engagement and retention scores are at their lowest in years.

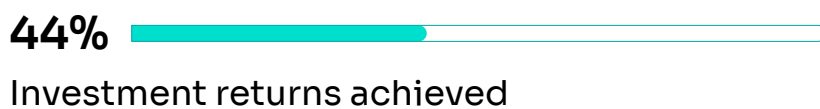
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The success of a business depends on the success of its employees. Keeping them in the dark, insisting on ‘my way or the highway,’ and forcing non-productive rules are all detrimental to employee retention.”

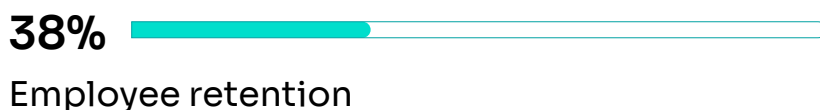
Outcomes prioritized over employees

Respondents say that their organizations are succeeding at prioritizing business outcomes, but it's coming at a cost.

When it comes to 'business' and 'performance' related outcomes during change, below are the percentage of respondents and the areas of change they evaluated:



Yet, in terms of employee outcomes, the percentages of respondents saying their organizations do well are lower:



Note

For business outcomes, numbers are similar across the globe, with APAC and North America coming in at slightly higher percentages of employees rating their organizations well at satisfying customers (46% in APAC and 43% in NA), meeting financial goals (45% APAC and 46% NA), and achieving investment returns (35% APAC and 42% NA), versus Europe (43%, 40%, and 32%), respectively.

For employee outcomes, numbers are also similar globally, with APAC coming in at slightly higher percentages of employees rating their organizations well at engagement (41%) and retention (47%), versus NA (38% and 37%) and Europe (36% and 33%).

Employees feel that organizations prioritize outcome-driven metrics during change, like financial performance and customer satisfaction, but neglect the 'human' factors, limiting overall success.

The results from respondents show 10+ points of difference in percentages of those who say business outcomes are being prioritized and those who say employee factors are being prioritized.

Change leaders should consider bringing employees along on the journey, in addition to meeting their business and financial objectives, for a more holistic and strategic approach to change management.

4. Managers and employees are feeling under-resourced, creating risk

Managers are feeling under-resourced and not empowered during change, which is trickling down and leading to a lack of understanding at the lowest levels of the organization. The disconnect creates major risk for change adoption.

“

The message is breaking down at middle management. We feel left in the dark, as a result.”

The risk of unempowered managers and under-supported employees

Managers are not feeling empowered....

65%

of managers say their organizations are mediocre, or worse, at equipping them during change

64%

of employees say their organizations are mediocre, or worse, at equipping managers during change

...while employees and managers report a lack of understanding around change...

60%

of employees and managers say their organizations are mediocre, or worse, at helping them understand 'why' changes are happening

...creating the risk that many employees are not on board with the direction of their organization.



The answer?

Managers and employees seek trust, involvement, and empathy during change. In their words:

/ Think more about the human behind the employee.”

/ Have one channel of communication to employees; too many ways to get information can be overwhelming”

/ Understand that some workers may have a hard time with change; be patient and kind.”

/ Learn from past organizational changes and stop repeating the same mistakes.”

/ Clearly communicate the rationale, goals, and expectations of the change throughout the process.”

/ Involve employees in discussions about important decision-making.”

5. The growing divide: leadership vs. frontline employees

Perception is creating a growing divide within organizations. Leadership respondents to our survey rate their organizations management of change more positively than in the past, while managers and employees say their organizations are doing worse with change.

“

I wish we weren't treated as just another number. Leadership should listen to us, rather than just dictate.”

The growing gap between what leaders think about change and what employees feel

Compared to last year*, leaders give their organizations even higher marks in almost every category of change:

59%

of executives and leaders say their organization does well with 'strategy and process' change outcomes

61%

of executives and leaders say their organization does well with 'human' change outcomes

60%

of executives and leaders say their organization does well with 'performance' change outcomes

Note

/ 2023 points of comparison are for US only. 2024 numbers represent an international sample.

→ compared to **57%** last year

→ compared to **59%** last year



Meanwhile, compared to last year*, employees give their organizations lower marks in almost every category of change:

36%

of employees and managers say their organization does well with **'strategy and process'** change outcomes

35%

of employees and managers say their organization does well with **'human'** change outcomes

41%

of employees and managers say their organization does well with **'performance'** change outcomes

Note

/ 2023 points of comparison are for US only. 2024 numbers represent an international sample.

→ compared to **39%** last year

→ compared to **43%** last year



The growing gap in perception between leaders and employees around how companies are handling change shows **what is intended by leaders does not always lead to what is desired among employees.**

A false sense of reporting around the success of change initiatives **may result in a defeated workforce that suffers from culture and morale issues,** especially during the chaos of workplace change.

Leaders should strive to engage employees – collecting feedback, answering questions, engaging on the 'why' – to prevent this discrepancy moving forward.

6. Tech and data are shaping the future of work

Employees report that topics like regulatory compliance, data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors are now front and center, requiring fresh skills and approaches to keep up.

“

It seems that we're still learning how AI will impact us. Leaders are pushing its use without understand its benefit.”

Navigating emerging disruptions in the workplace

While the most typical workplace changes this year continue to be topics we have seen in the past...

48%

Have seen new processes or procedures

42%

Have seen new leaders or managers

35%

Have seen new technology or systems

28%

Have seen new corporate strategy

In addition to the familiar changes like process updates, leadership transitions and technology changes, organizations are increasingly facing newer, more complex issues.

Areas such as regulatory compliance, data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) are creating new pressures on organizations, who now need to help their employees develop specialized skills to navigate these disruptions.





...New types of change are growing in prevalence:

18%

Have seen new regulations or compliance mandates

→ “We need clearer guidance on new regulation, and we should source support to implement it in the workplace.” **(US)**

“Regulation limits our potential customer base, forcing us to continuously re-evaluate our strategy.” **(Hong Kong)**

16%

Have seen new AI tools

→ “We need to invest more in AI and really focus on training our staff.” **(US)**

“We are still learning how AI will impact us. We should set guidelines around its use.” **(Canada)**

15%

Have seen increased expectations in data analytics

→ “The focus on data has offered valuable insights for businesses to improve decision-making, personalize offerings, and optimize operations.” **(France)**

10%

Have seen new focus on ESG issues

→ “We are seeing increasing costs for production due to carbon taxes.” **(Canada)**

“My organization is committed to reducing its environmental footprint and implementing measurable sustainability initiatives.” **(France)**

Advice for driving successful change

From employee insights this year, here are key recommendations for CEOs navigating change.

“Prioritize sustainable cost-cutting over short-term gains.”

CEOs should avoid drastic measures that undermine the organization’s core and culture in the pursuit of quick savings.

“Communicate change clearly and thoroughly before moving forward.”

Ensure that changes are fully understood and supported with adequate training before implementation to avoid confusion and resistance.

“Retention is an investment, not a cost.”

Focus on employee retention through recognition, growth opportunities, and support, as it is more cost-effective than constantly hiring new talent.

“Hold senior leaders accountable to build trust.”

Accountability at the top sets a standard for transparency and integrity, which strengthens confidence in leadership.





“Equip leaders before implementing change.”

Train managers and senior leaders first so they can effectively support and guide their teams through new initiatives.

“Engage employees early in the planning process.”

Involve staff and managers from the outset to gain valuable insights and foster a sense of ownership in the new procedures.

“Focus on substance over recognition.”

Avoid implementing changes solely for visibility or legacy; prioritize changes that genuinely benefit the organization.

“Adopt flexible approaches for diverse needs.”

Recognize that a one-size-fits-all solution rarely works; tailor changes to fit varying team dynamics and functional requirements.



Optimists for change

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