

Mini-guide to Change Recovery

Even well-established and well-run change initiatives can face unexpected challenges; challenges that can lead to the need to take urgent, corrective action. This mini-guide outlines the symptoms to look out for and a tried and tested approach for ensuring the action taken is effective.

Some signs that all is perhaps not well

Checkpoints are being missed and this looks like a continuing state.

Actual and projected costs are outside the agreed budget.

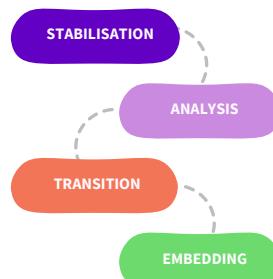
Governance is ineffective and not giving the clarity needed.

The team is not working well, showing signs of stress.

The end-customer is becoming less engaged, or even negative.

The 4 stages of a well-tested recovery process

Stabilisation serves to prevent further deterioration, allowing for a more thorough **analysis** of the issues at hand and the formulation of agreed, corrective actions. **Transition** then puts these actions into practice to realign the initiative, whilst the final **embedding** stage integrates these changes into the broader operational practices to avert similar issues from happening in the future.



TRUST
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PROCESS

This doesn't have to be a complex or a lengthy process - it depends. If the Olympic Games is behind plan, that might take a while to fix, but it is perfectly possible to recover a rogue initiative quickly. It all depends. and the process helps.

1 - Stabilisation

This is the moment to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. Much like an Emergency Room, where doctors swiftly stabilise trauma patients for a more thorough evaluation.

In the context of change this may mean such things as halting implementation activities or avoiding additional costs until more information is available. It is important to act, but not to over-act. If someone comes in to ER with chest pains, you schedule an ECG, you don't clear the theatre and book the coronary bypass team.

Our primary goal here is to provide everyone with the time and information needed to thoughtfully assess the necessary steps for moving forward.



2 - Analysis

Whilst the nature of the issues that are faced will drive much of the activity in this stage, it helps understand what we want to achieve:

- To identify root causes beyond symptoms. For example are budget issues the result of incorrect estimating assumptions?
- To determine the necessary actions for sustainable realignment of the change initiative.
- To secure buy-in from authorities for suggested actions.

This involves reviewing many documents and talking to lots of people to gather information, building a strong fact base for the recommended corrective actions.

WHY?

3 - Transition

With actions and approval secured, the transition can proceed:

- Agree and allocate transition resources.
- Communicate formal decisions to the relevant people, teams, suppliers, and regulatory bodies.
- Develop a transition plan outlining the key activities ownership, outcomes and schedules.
- Renegotiate contracts and expectations where necessary.
- Re-baseline program documentation, delivery plans, business case, and resourcing plans

The final activity above is crucial. Often, the transition is only partly done, leading to only a partial reset. The re-planning and re-forecasting done here really helps to avoid just postponing the inevitable.



4 - Embedding

With the initiative getting back on track, the final stage focuses on ensuring lessons are learned and the same issues do not recur in the future. This might involve:

- Preparing and delivering wider communications.
- Considering additional measurements during change delivery.
- Modifying reporting for key stakeholders, applicable to all change initiatives.
- Collaborating with program members to embed necessary changes.

Dividing change recovery into these four areas isn't the only method to restore order, but clearly distinguishing these stages significantly helps everyone to grasp the situation and recognise what needs to be done.