

Humans Are Not Robots

Why Implementing New Technology Doesn't Always Fix the Workplace



The goal of technological innovations is to make our tasks **faster, easier, better, more fun, or more productive**. But have you ever noticed that in the work environment, this doesn't always happen? Changes can instead increase stress, complicate our processes, and distract our focus from our colleagues, our surroundings, and the tasks at hand.

Sometimes we're so enamored of new electronic toys that we let them overrule our better judgment. This can lead to texting at the dinner table, tweeting before thinking, or sharing photos we should have kept to ourselves. New workplace technologies often don't have the same hold over us, because we approach them differently than our personal technologies.

Where's the Fun?

Think about it. We select our personal mobile phone, tablet, service provider, and operating system in response to a barrage of sophisticated marketing campaigns, comparative reviews, and peer advice. Not so at work – where few of us have the opportunity to provide input, choose from different options, or even give meaningful feedback.

At home, common automation technologies include timed lighting, programmable thermostats, and security systems with motion detectors, window and door sensors, and even cameras. Less common but increasingly popular options offer remote Wi-Fi control of household devices via smartphones.

We tend to approach these new personal technologies as an adventure, a game, or a chance to show off our “geek chic.” We admire the sleek styling of our gadgets and their amazing capabilities. We like displaying them to the envy of our friends. But when was the last time you heard anyone (especially actual users) brag about new enterprise software, supply chain management systems, or business process improvements?

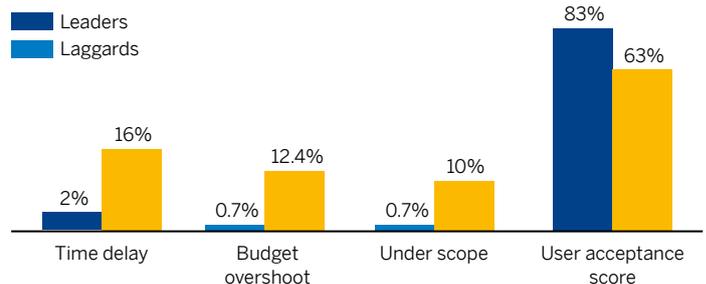
MAKE IT PERSONAL

Recreationally, the most health conscious and nerdy among us voluntarily wear fitness trackers that keep tab of activity levels, calories burned, even sleep stages and patterns. But even in this group, few welcome performance monitoring at work.

The introduction and implementation of new workplace technologies simply aren't as pleasant as the acquisition of new personal technologies, because employers focus on everything **except** the human factors involved.

When we acquire new personal technology, our skills improve quickly because we anticipate, enjoy, and value the user experience. We are engaged, motivated, and rewarded throughout the learning curve. We connect with our friends, send messages and photos, join groups, express opinions, and update and expand

Figure 1: Keeping Projects on Time, on Budget, and on Scope with High User Acceptance



our networks. And once we've mastered all the functions and features, we look forward to the release of newer, more exciting versions of our gadgets.

In the workplace, managers focus on the potential for improved productivity. They fixate on data capture, aggregation, and analysis. They pore over implementation costs and schedules, and they obsess over architecture risk assessment, return on investment, return on assets, and any other metrics that will “prove” that new technology is the answer to their needs.

Management may give lip service to user “enablement” and “adoption” and “performance enhancement” – believing that if they can just get those pesky employees to do things right, everything will be all right. Which will prove them right. Right?

Wrong. If you don't pay attention to people's broader needs, you will fail – or, at the very least, reduce your level of success.

A survey of the world's companies by SAP and Americas' SAP Users' Group (ASUG) found that the 25% of participants with the best on-time, on-budget, and on-scope delivery (leaders) made an incremental investment in organizational change management that resulted in 20% higher user acceptance, versus the remaining 75% (laggards). (See Figure 1.)



Create positive expectations before an implementation, build skills during the implementation, and sustain engagement and motivation after going live.

PREPARING FOR CHANGE

Imagine handing a smartphone to someone who has previously only used a landline and has no friends or acquaintances with smartphones. This person has never been exposed to highly orchestrated ad campaigns and marketing techniques and did not ask for or expect to receive the phone. Then imagine you press this person to use the phone and all its functions immediately. While you watch. And take notes. And critique the process.

He or she is likely to react by being suspicious, uncertain, intimidated, and annoyed. Wouldn't you?

Users can't optimize what they didn't expect, don't understand, and have no reason to want. When uncertain, users create resistance, make mistakes, impede progress, and waste an organization's time, energy, and money.

That's why encouraging effective adoption of new technology – by executives, mid-level managers, other employees, suppliers, vendors, and customers – requires a thorough, relevant strategy for organizational change management. You must create positive expectations before an implementation, build skills during the implementation, and sustain engagement and motivation after going live.

It's a proven process:

- Anticipation builds acceptance
- Acceptance builds engagement
- Engagement builds competence
- Competence builds confidence
- Confidence builds speed
- Speed builds value

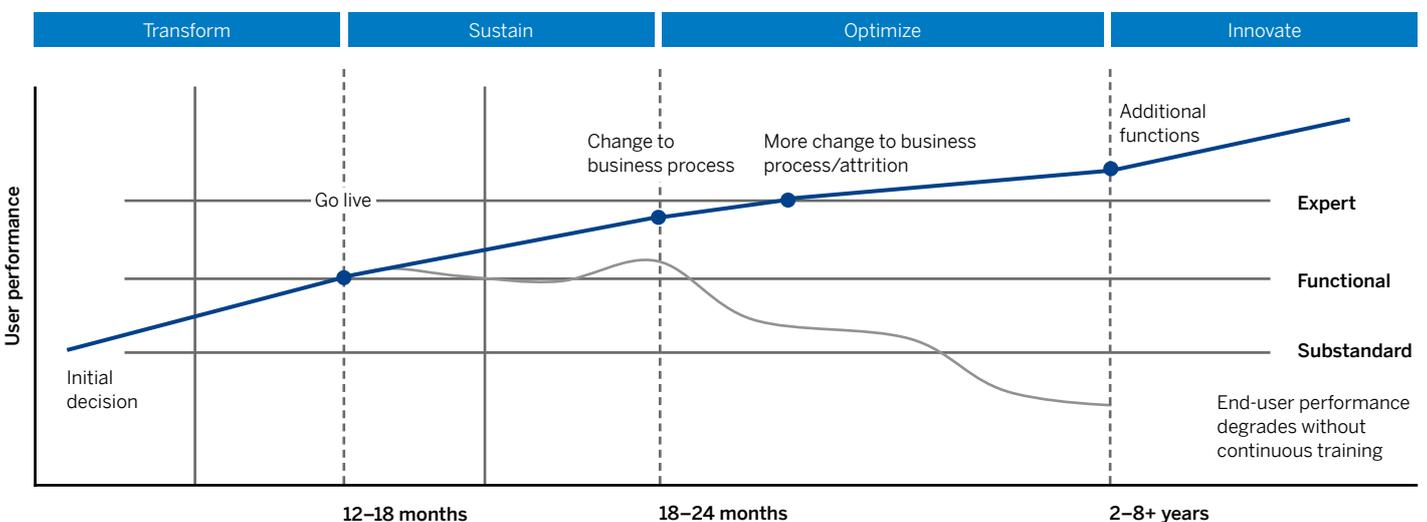
Trying to short-circuit any of these stages will impede your progress. Increasing **readiness** for change decreases **resistance** to change.

As Figure 2 illustrates, encouraging users to adopt new processes and technology through continuous training – from initial transformation through sustainability, optimization, and innovation – can accelerate performance and the return on your technology investment. Without this, end-user performance decreases over time.

SAP® EDUCATION CAN HELP

Effective change management begins by examining the existing expectations, needs, and attitudes of people involved in the change. It then leverages those characteristics to make change relevant for each individual, role, or group.

Figure 2: Sustaining User Performance Through Continuous Training



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- Amp up adoption rates and implementation timelines
- Boost user competence and confidence
- Empower your workforce to achieve sustainable performance with improved usability
- Spark ongoing user involvement and innovation

With help from SAP Education, you can balance the individual needs of your employees with the needs of your enterprise. Provided with the right preparation, training, and performance support, each user becomes more capable and your business sees positive results.

Playing games is fun at home and fun at work. With the SAP ERP Simulation game by Baton Simulations, you can have fun (no kidding, fun!) playing with SAP software. Just as you get reminders on your mobile device, you can provide microlearning

bursts to employees with SAP Workforce Performance Builder software. This software can also act as a wizard to help users learn tasks they don't know and simulate or practice work activities in a safe environment.

Using the SAP User Experience Management application by Knoa, you can see whether users are performing tasks correctly and quantify the specific results of new technology. The SAP Jam social software platform helps users create work communities with the same quick help and collaboration we've learned to depend on from communities in our personal lives to find the best places to eat or fun things to do on the weekend.

These and other solutions prove that it is possible to introduce technology that pleases both the individual **and** your business.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the personalized approach SAP Education takes to change management and project implementation, please contact education.northamerica@sap.com.

