

The **human** element of change

Enabling people before, during and after



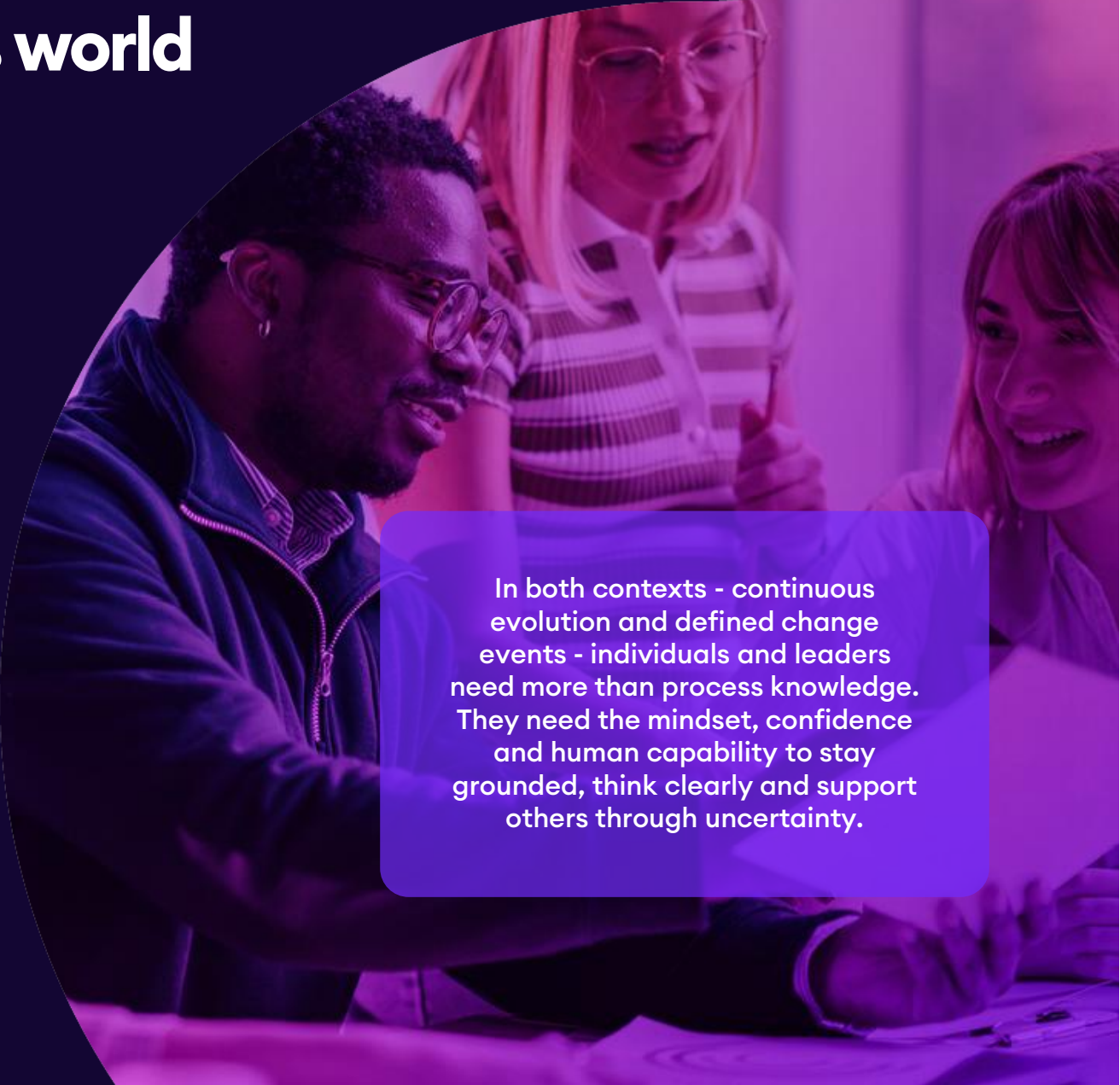
Navigating change in today's world

Change and uncertainty are the background soundtrack / consistent elements within today's work environments. Change, whether it's a one-off initiative or ongoing requires a focused effort to prepare and land successfully.

The ongoing ambient changes around market shifts, evolving technology, customer expectations and internal priorities, is something many experience day to day and forms how people work, collaborate and make decisions.

At the same time, organisations still encounter specific, one-off change initiatives system implementations, mergers, restructures, leadership transitions or strategic pivots - that require concentrated effort, clarity and coordinated human response.

These moments create acute pressure points where people need targeted support to understand what is happening, why it matters and the skills and strategies they and their teams need to successfully move through it.



In both contexts - continuous evolution and defined change events - individuals and leaders need more than process knowledge. They need the mindset, confidence and human capability to stay grounded, think clearly and support others through uncertainty.

Why change?

Organisations rarely change for the sake of it. The drivers are real and usually pressing: markets move, technology resets what is possible, customer expectations rise, or the cost base stops working. The cost of not changing is rarely dramatic at first. It shows up as erosion. Talent leaves for organisations that feel like they are going somewhere. Customers don't complain, they just don't come back. By the time the need is obvious, the options have narrowed and the change that follows is bigger and more painful than it needed to be.

So the reason almost always exists. The problem is what happens to it. It is clear to the people who set the strategy and much less clear to everyone asked to deliver it. The conversation becomes dominated by how: which model, which milestones, which communications plan. The why is treated as self-evident, or covered once at launch and never returned to.

When change is constant, that no longer holds. Why becomes the harder question, and the one that determines whether anything actually shifts.

Why this change?

Why now?

Why does it matter to the organisation, to my team, and to me?

Where change fatigue has set in, people are rarely resistant because they don't understand the process. They are unconvinced by the purpose. Starting with why also changes what we ask of leaders. Their first task is not to roll out a plan. It is to make meaning - a narrative that is honest about what is uncertain and clear about what is not.

“The landscape and business is transforming faster than we can reskill”

UK Respondent, 2026 L&D Impact Survey

The rational and the emotional case

“Answering why well means attending to both.”



The emotional case
What people actually weigh: what this means for my role, my status, my relationships, my competence, my working day.

Change is a human process

We start from a straightforward position. Organisational change succeeds or fails on human terms. Structures, systems and plans are all necessary, but they only move when people move them.

Change efforts that make only the rational case tend to secure compliance. Those that make both earn commitment.

That leads to two principles.

Support the full span of people.

From the individual living the change to the leader guiding others through it.



Prepare for the full arc of time.

Before the change, during it, and long after it has landed.



How individuals navigate change

Whether it is the ongoing background reality or a specific initiative, change brings emotional, cognitive and behavioural challenges.

In continuous change, people have to sustain resilience and keep momentum over long periods.

In one-off change events, they face spikes of uncertainty, rapid transitions and the need to recalibrate roles or responsibilities.

Where people struggle, it is often because they lack the tools and language to make sense of what is happening – and because the reason for the change has never been made clear enough to hold on to.

What makes the difference

- Recognising how they respond to change
- Developing emotional agility
- Protecting their wellbeing
- Moving from reacting to taking part with confidence

Employees with relevant change reflexes are **3.5x** more likely to achieve healthy change adoption.

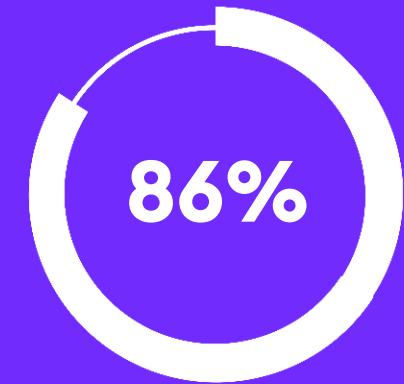
Gartner
2025

How leaders guide and stabilise others

Creating clarity, empathy and purpose, whatever the scale of the change.

For leaders, the demands are the same whatever the change. They must communicate openly, pace change appropriately, and create the psychological safety for teams to raise concerns, test new approaches and move forward with confidence. What differs is how those demands play out.

Human capability	Continuous change	Specific change events
Communication	Consistent, low-key, keeping people connected to why the work matters	Clear narrative, repeated often, honest about what is still unknown
Role modelling	Absorbing constant small shifts without passing the churn on	Visible steadiness when others are unsettled
Storytelling	Connecting daily decisions to the bigger direction	Making meaning of a disruption people did not choose
Pacing	Protecting attention when priorities move	Reading when to push and when to hold



Believe core people-management skills, coaching, feedback, and performance, are the top leadership priority for the next 12–18 months. cited by 86% of UK respondents.

2026 L&D Impact Survey

A core truth

Change is most effective when leaders focus less on selling the destination and more on helping people navigate the journey by, routinizing change and building change readiness capabilities in adaptability, resilience and confidence to manage through uncertainty.

Leaders as stewards whose role is to build confidence in the future of the organization, with humility as a role model for the change.

McKinsey
& Company

Getting ready for success, navigating the middle, and making it stick

Most change support clusters around the launch. Yet readiness is built long before it, and value is only realised long after. And in ongoing change, where there is no launch at all, the three phases still apply - they just cycle round faster.

BEFORE

Getting ready

Building individual and collective capacity to meet change well: understanding personal responses to change, strengthening resilience and adaptability in advance of need, and helping leaders make the case and prepare the ground. Change readiness is one of the capabilities that matters most here, and it applies to any kind of change – the shift you can see coming and the one you can't.



DURING

Navigating the middle

Sustaining performance and wellbeing through the ambiguous stretch where the old way has gone and the new way is not yet established. In a defined change, that stretch has a shape. In ongoing change, it is simply the condition people work in. For individuals, staying grounded, managing energy and continuing to contribute. For leaders, honest communication, appropriate pacing, and working with resistance rather than overriding it.



AFTER

Making it stick

The phase most often skipped. Reflecting on what the change has meant, consolidating new behaviours into habits, recognising what has been achieved, and capturing what should carry forward. In continuous change there is no natural end point to prompt this, which is why it has to be built in deliberately. Without it, organisations repeat the same change badly, and people carry the residue of the last one into the next.



In practice

Human skills at the heart of transformation

A global technology and engineering organisation was looking to increase its success in digital transformation opportunities. The assumption was that additional technical capability would unlock growth.

However, a closer look revealed that the real challenge was not technical expertise, the leaders already had those capabilities. What it needed were leaders who could connect people across business units, create trust quickly and bring the full strength of the organisation to the customer.

In response, we co-created a leadership programme that developed the behaviours most critical to transformation success: building trust, fostering inclusion, creating a shared vision and collaborating across organisational boundaries.

The programme helped leaders turn those behaviours into visible actions that strengthened customer relationships and supported new business growth through unlocking digital transformation opportunities.

Challenge

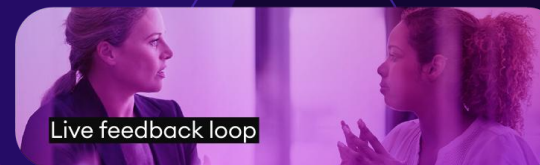
- 📍 Opportunities approached in fragments - siloed units and untapped client relationships
- 📍 Leaders needed to grow from technical experts into people-first change leaders
- 📍 A scalable way to build collaborative, trust-led leaders across countries and cultures



Solution

We built a leadership programme around the human side of transformation - four months per cohort, blending virtual workshops, peer coaching and a live feedback loop.

It focused on the human skills that turn technical experts into people leaders: trust and psychological safety, collaboration, inspiring communication, inclusive decision-making and a growth mindset – applied in real deals, not the classroom.



Impact

- +23%** growth in leaders' confidence to drive innovation - the weakest behaviour going in
- 198** examples of new behaviours seen by colleagues and clients - bids won, teams united, client trust built
- 2 deals** won work credited to the new behaviours
- 4.5/5** average client score after the programme (93% rated 4 or 5 out of 5)



Human skills as change enablers

The capabilities that carry people through change are human. Resilience, emotional intelligence, empathy, adaptability, communication, psychological safety, collaboration, growth mindset – these are not soft accompaniments to the real work of change. They are the mechanism by which change actually happens.



Built before

Human skills developed ahead of a change create genuine readiness.



Applied during

They keep people clear-headed and connected under pressure.



Practiced after

They turn a completed initiative into a lasting shift, and into capacity for what comes next.

They cannot be treated as generic. The empathy a leader needs when announcing a restructure is not the same as the empathy needed six months in. They are best developed in the context of change, at the point they are needed.

The **CHANGE** mindset, skillset and toolset



Control

the ability to control the controllables



Habits

creating healthy habits



Agility

adopting an agile mindset



Navigate

being prepared to navigate ambiguity



Growth

seeing change as an opportunity for growth



Evolve

being open and prepared to continuously evolve

Want to learn more?

Talk to us about the change your organisation is facing, and we can support with human-led programmes to best equip you and your leaders for change.

Explore our new workshops or let's create something custom.

From the individual living the change to the leader guiding others through it, we're here to help.

➤ [Speak to one of our learning experts](#)



Leading Continuous Change

How to keep your team engaged and performing in a constantly changing environment.



Leading a Change Initiative

How to guide your team through change with clarity, confidence, and consistency.



Navigating Change

Stay engaged and performing in a constantly changing environment.



Leading Through Change

This one-day in-person course offers practical leadership skills for guiding teams through transformation and continuous evolution.



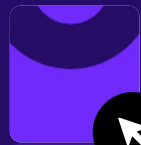
Building Personal Resilience

We all face challenges, disappointments and setbacks in our private and professional lives: that's not going to change.



Building Team Resilience

Focus on the critical role managers play in shaping the conditions that help teams cope, adapt, and perform under pressure.



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