



ELEVATE CONFERENCE SESSION

When to Let Go: The Art & Heart of Sunsetting Programs and Organizations

A practical framework for closing programs with clarity, compassion, and intention

6–12

MONTHS
TRANSITION
TIME FRAME

4–6

WEEKS TO
PLAN

Knowing when and how to sunset a program is as critical as launching one. This session delivers a structured, empathetic approach from initial visioning, execution and through final celebration. This practical framework highlights Dairy Council of California's program transition process, and it may be used as a guide to equip organizations.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Visioning &
SWOT Analysis

Process
Assessing &
Mapping

Vetting
Process

Transition
Execution &
Monitoring

Celebration &
Closure

PLANNING THE WIND DOWN

Scope & Governance

Develop a project charter: scope, sunset timeline, responsible parties, and adoption paths, if applicable

Conduct transition mapping of all organizational and programmatic areas impacted

Review the plan with leadership for buy in and formal approval

Use a project management tool to monitor progress and establish regular checkpoints

Organizational Team & Communication

Conduct staff training and provide frequent, transparent updates throughout the process

Lead with empathy: hold ongoing staff check-ins to support morale and well-being

Coordinate a communication strategy covering internal and external messaging

Consider branding implications and opportunities when transitioning

Execution & Monitoring

Taper activities gradually to minimize disruptions to services and partnerships

Manage and archive all digital and physical assets, data, and resources

Ensure complete financial and contractual closeout with all vendors and partners

Closeout & Celebration

Prepare a final report documenting outcomes for funders, the organization, and partners as necessary

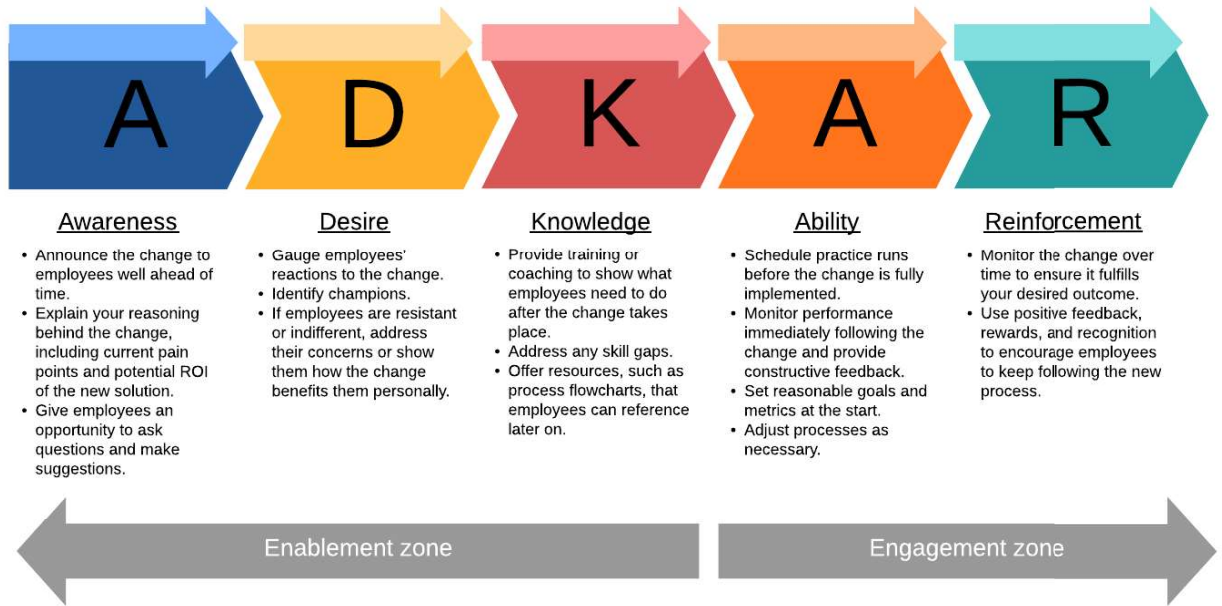
Celebrate contributions and successes

Document lessons learned to guide future transitions within your organization

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The attitude of “But this is the way we always do it” can be difficult to overcome—but luckily, there are tried-and-true methods to make change happen with less resistance. Created by Jeff Hiatt, founder of [Prosci](http://Prosci.com), the ADKAR change model has been proven to help individuals understand and accept change so companies can successfully innovate and become more efficient.

<https://www.lucidchart.com/blog/using-the-adkar-model-for-change-management>



The Ladder of Inference is a model of the steps we use to make sense of situations in order to act. It helps us to think about our thinking and to coordinate our thinking with others.

LADDER OF INFERENCE

