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Change management creates a competitive advantage for our customers, and it achieves business outcomes and ROI at a greater rate than we would have seen otherwise. It made sense to move to a globally-recognized methodology. We call Prosci the global leader in the professional discipline of change management.



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BACKGROUND

Microsoft has always been good at change. For over a decade, a 25-person consulting team worked to help customers adopt and sustain use of Microsoft technology. These early change practitioners blended elements of several change management methodologies and saw good success.

Changing market dynamics and customer expectations in the technology sector created an increased urgency around change and user adoption. The move to subscription-based licensing models for Microsoft's core technology solutions coupled with a move to cloud services made change management an essential competency to drive and sustain revenue. Without the security of a large upfront software sale, successful technology implementations now bring sustained value only when customers effectively adopt and continue to use the software over time.

THE CHALLENGE

To drive revenue and create a competitive advantage by implementing a change capability that would allow Microsoft customers to adopt Microsoft technology faster, better and more completely.

THE SOLUTION

- Acquire a Prosci license to customize and scale the Prosci methodology
- Invest in Prosci-Certified Advanced Instructors to become expert change management trainers around the world
- Certify 2,250+ change practitioners to create a solid base of change management professionals
- Make basic change management principles and resources available to 250,000+ Microsoft employees, partners and customers
- Customize change management training and resources for consulting services and self-serve use by Microsoft partners and customers

Microsoft Enterprise Services identified the need for increased emphasis and external credibility around change in their Adoption and Change Management services as a strategic differentiator and competitive advantage in their enterprise consulting practice. They also realized that more than just 25 people needed to know about change, not just in the customer-facing roles but also across Microsoft partners, customers and all internal employees. This realization prompted Microsoft to pursue standardizing around an existing change management methodology that would scale to meet its many varying needs.

While the genesis for the growth of change management came from Microsoft Enterprise Services as a way to help customers, it has since grown to encompass divisions across the whole of Microsoft – including HR, Customer Success Organization, Microsoft IT, Datacenter Operations, Sales, Product Groups and many more.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PROSCI

Microsoft began the search for a change management methodology with two requirements: first, it must have a world-wide reputation that would be recognized by Microsoft customers as the professional discipline's global leader. Second, it must quickly scale to reach all customer-facing professionals at Microsoft with the ability to grow into an internal capability that would reach 250,000+ Microsoft employees, partners and customers.

Prosci fit both of these requirements. Not only did Microsoft recognize that the Prosci methodology is comprehensive, research-based, and established as the industry standard, but the presence of Prosci partners all over the

world and the ability to train internal facilitators ensured that every Microsoft project – both internally and externally with customers and partners – could access the change management training and support they needed. In addition, the format of Microsoft's relationship with Prosci (which included an Enterprise Change Management License), allowed Microsoft to customize and scale Prosci offerings to fit the needs of its diverse groups.

APPLICATION

Microsoft built a strong base of change management practitioners and expert trainers. The change team then customized comprehensive change management resources and socialized change management with customer-facing employees, Microsoft partners and Microsoft customers.

Creating a community of change practitioners and subject matter experts

Microsoft knew having a solid base of change management practitioners, experts and trainers would be key to success. This was due to the number of people the company needed to train on change management and the volume of anticipated change management requests that would flood in once change management was formalized as a service and capability.

The change management community of practice

Microsoft established a change management community of practice early on. This group identified Prosci as the Microsoft change management methodology and committed to a strategic plan that began with getting people certified in change management and investing in change management trainers.

The community of practice now includes monthly meetings where change management thought leaders come and speak and has grown to formulate a more formalized subject matter expert group. The change management team has also continued to customize training, including creating webcasts and one-day change management classes for continued professional development. Microsoft's change management practitioners not only speak at change management conferences, but also volunteer at board positions in industry change management associations and chapters across ACMP and CMI, host regional change management events, and engage with Thought Leadership Teams. All of these give Microsoft a network of continuing professional development to tap into, while giving back to the industry.

Prosci-Certified Advanced Instructor Program

The change group knew they needed trainers who were true experts in change management and could certify practitioners with the same level of excellence as a Prosci Master Instructor. To do this, they sent almost 20 trainers through the Prosci-Certified Advanced Instructor (PCAI) track, a master-level program that includes in-person and self-paced training, requires a personal Prosci coach, and ends with an in-person audit by a Prosci Program Advisor.

To support the growth of these Prosci-Certified Advanced Instructors, the Microsoft-developed in-house instructor program included an internal mentor program and audit process that ensured all instructor candidates were prepared to pass the final Prosci audit and achieve their Advanced Certification. Establishing a competency in instructor development was crucial. Microsoft continues to invest in this, with seven more people currently moving through the process to become a PCAI during the next 12 months.

Certifying practitioners

The Microsoft team of Prosci-Certified Advanced Instructors moved forward with building a strong base of change practitioners globally. These certified practitioners left their training with the tools and ability necessary to apply change management effectively on a project. They also graduated into a robust community of practice to problem-solve with peers and subject matter experts.

The change team started with a goal of certifying 500 change practitioners, but they experienced much higher demand for change management practitioner training than they expected. As of early 2018, Microsoft had sent over 2,250 people through the Prosci Change Management Certification Program. Microsoft continues to run around 85 change management classes a year in countries all across the globe.

License for customization and scalability

While training up a team of change management experts, trainers, and practitioners, the change team was also utilizing their Prosci Enterprise Change Management license to customize Prosci's offerings to fit the culture and scale of Microsoft's change management needs. This included supplementing parts of the methodology with additional neuroscience-based practices.

Through this customization, the change management team truly mastered the content and made it their own. This ensured that the change management methodology, when rolled out to the whole organization, both met the diverse needs of partners and customers and fit the culture.

To more quickly reach a wider audience, the change team expanded the Prosci role-based training programs to include online self-paced and virtual instructor-led versions. These customized programs were accredited by PMI® and ACMP®. The change team is now embedding change management into the Microsoft management courses, as well as integrating change management into Microsoft improvement systems.

Self-serve playbook

Part of the change team's customization work included publishing a self-serve guide to the complete suite of the Prosci change management trainings, tools and resources, as they apply to Microsoft. Part of this playbook includes an example change network plan, measurement and reinforcement plan, resistance management plan, communications plan, training plan, etc. These pre-filled plans lower the time it takes to drive forward change management on a Microsoft technology project.

This playbook also categorizes and explains all pieces of the Prosci solution set and allows Microsoft employees and vendors to quickly get started with change management while also giving them the option to go as deeply into the methodology as they want. This resource is continually updated with Prosci's newest change management resources and tools. It remains a crucial part of Microsoft's partnership with Prosci, as Microsoft must be able to offer its people both internally and externally the right change management solution at the right time.

This playbook was published broadly inside Microsoft and made available to partners and customers.

Socialization of change management

With the trainers, practitioners, and supporting resources in place, the change team was ready to begin rolling out change management as a competency organization-wide. They began with a socialization campaign on what change management is, why change management is important, and where employees could go to get more information. Key parts of this campaign included customized webinars, in-person training for sponsors and managers, written communications, and providing access to the comprehensive playbook. This campaign also spawned continued interest in the Prosci Change Management Certification Program.

This campaign touched over 25,000 people and also included integrating change management into several high-profile projects in key divisions.

Investing in Prosci-Certified Advanced Practitioners and Deployment Leaders

Part of the expansion of the Microsoft community of practice included sending several practitioners through the Prosci Advanced Certifications. In addition to Prosci-Certified Advanced Instructors, the team also invested in acquiring two new advanced roles:

- An Advanced Deployment Leader has the ability and support to build an organization's Enterprise Change Management (ECM) capability, staff a change management office, think about governance, create a training program, and embed change management in ongoing systems
- An Advanced Practitioner has the ability and support to produce results in even the most complex change projects and can see how change projects will influence and interact with each other

Investing in these two expert roles and gaining the Prosci advisor support that comes with them gave Microsoft more expertise and coaching, accelerating its change management capability.

External implementation

The change team used a three-pronged approach to implementing change management with top-tier customers and external partners. They started with educating and supporting all Microsoft people who interact with these groups.

Customer-facing employees

A majority of customer-touching people inside Microsoft's consulting services division went through customized change management training. They received access to change management tools to use directly with their customers when talking about change, when explaining what change management is and why it is important, and when sizing and scoping customers' change projects. Previously, some customers had not expected to spend money on change management. By equipping all customer-facing employees in this division with change management training and tools, Microsoft was able to competently and consistently talk about change management at every customer touchpoint.

Engaging with customers

To make change management accessible to enterprise customers, Microsoft embedded adoption and change management content and guides into its customer-facing portals. This allowed customers to see how to drive adoption and usage inside their organizations and provided them with free education and tools to begin doing so. Microsoft also created [a portfolio of professional change management services](#)

for enterprise customers to accelerate business outcomes by driving the people-side of change. This portfolio ranges from a few days to multiple months of change management work, and is designed around ensuring customers see three outcomes before the project ends: (i) employees have transitioned to a new way of working, (ii) the customer builds change management capability for continued growth, and (iii) there is evidence that the change is positively impacting business outcomes.

Training and supporting partners

With tens of thousands of Microsoft partners, a self-serve option for change management was key to engaging this crucial part of Microsoft's audience. These partners are certified implementers of Microsoft's technology solutions who work with business of all sizes.

The change team created a free [Change Management Framework for Partners](#) with sample deliverables to help grow partner capabilities in change management. In addition, the change team created the Adoption Services Program for Partners, which is a 40,000-page guide with assets and templates that allows partners to deliver basic adoption services with the same framework that Microsoft uses. Partners can even work with Microsoft to get a Prosci license with more advanced change management trainings, resources and tools. Microsoft further encouraged its partners to pursue change management competencies by offering change management trainings at conferences and other events.

This arrangement allows partners to get as involved with change management as they want, up to following Microsoft's example of embedding change management organization-wide. But it also allowed partners to come up to

speed on what change management is and how it works significantly faster.

THE RESULTS

Within four years of deciding on the Prosci methodology and standing up the CMO, Microsoft has seen significant return on investment from change management. The most notable result was the success customers experienced. Microsoft showed that after something as simple as a short three-day adoption and change management workshop, customers saw a 450% increase in adoption rates compared to those who did not attend the workshop. In addition, 80% of customers who attended the workshop reported increased adoption, and 50% reported a shortened deployment.

Internally, too, change management is taking root at Microsoft. Change management is now integrating into Microsoft improvement systems and professional development programs. The Core Services Engineering and Operations division, who build and manage the critical products, processes, and services that Microsoft runs on, has integrated change management into its ongoing project and delivery management approach and invested in an ongoing coaching and mentoring program for change management to ensure it is being successfully implemented. The Global Data Center Operations team that manages all of Microsoft's data centers worldwide has also embedded change management into the way that they support thousands of people who are subjected to a lot of ongoing change.

The change management group has grown from 25 people to thousands of change practitioners and dozens of Prosci-Certified Advanced Instructors. Over 25,000 people in Microsoft have meaningfully engaged with change management

through a change management webinar, in-person training or online resource. This includes 2,250+ certified practitioners and an additional 1,000+ managers and sponsors who attended training on change management and their role in the change process.

Prosci role-based trainings require attendees to have a live project in mind when considering the change process and their role. By providing role-based training or change management certification to 3,000 people at Microsoft, thousands of projects included a stronger focus on change management.

This widespread training could not have been successful without the careful intent, support and strategy that the change team did first. The change team set Microsoft up for success by ensuring that those who were interested in change management had the comprehensive tools and expert community to support them in reaching change management success.

RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

- 450% increase in adoption for customers
- Increased adoption reported by 80% of customers
- Shortened deployment reported by 50% of customers
- Embedded change management into improvement systems and professional development programs
- Provided scalable change management training, tools and resources to 250,000+ Microsoft employees, partners and customers

BUILD YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE CAPABILITY WITH PROSCI

Over 80% of Fortune 100 companies have worked with Prosci to build their change capability. Our research-based, results-driven methodology is easy to apply. We can equip your organization with the tools to out-change others, remain agile and thrive during bigger, faster and more complex change.

SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION WITH A PROSCI SOLUTION ARCHITECT

Your no-cost consultation will:

- Define your organization's goals
- Assess your current state of change management maturity
- Review your change capability development strategy
- Provide actionable insights to drive your organization forward

[SCHEDULE MY CONSULTATION](#)

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