

The AI adoption Change Management Checklist

Even the best AI strategy will fail if leaders underestimate the human side of change. Most transformation breakdowns don't happen because of the technology itself – they happen because people feel left behind, unheard, or uncertain about their future. This checklist is designed to close the gap between strategy and execution, helping leaders adopt AI with trust, transparency, and long-term success.

FOUNDATION: Set the Groundwork

Understand: Sentiment, AI Use, Policies

- ☐ Clearly explain why this AI initiative matters to both the business and employees. (e.g., faster onboarding, more accurate forecasting, reducing repetitive tasks like manual data entry in finance or HR).
- ☐ Link AI adoption to purpose, strategy, and values – not just efficiency. (e.g., “We use AI to create more time for innovation, not to cut headcount”).
- ☐ Identify which roles, skills, and workflows will be most affected.
 - Map your workforce using skills taxonomies to show not just what changes, but why.
- ☐ Track how time will shift, what will be reduced, and what higher-value work it will unlock. (e.g., customer service reps spending less time on ticket triage, more on complex resolutions).
- ☐ Provide upskilling and reskilling resources before asking people to adapt.
 - Use multimodal learning: short simulations, mobile-first microlearnings, peer groups, and AI safety training.

Define: Goals

- ☐ Make AI goals specific, measurable, and aligned to both business outcomes and workforce growth. (e.g., “Reduce employee time spent on monthly reporting by 40%⁺ in 90 days”)
- ☐ Set realistic expectations about the *time required* for learning and adoption, not just efficiency gains.
- ☐ Define what success looks like in the first 90 days and in the long term.
 - Consider a 30/60/90-day view: learning goals at day 30, behavioral shift by day 60, and impact by day 90**RESOURCE: 30/60/90 PLAN FOR L&D**

Align: Senior Management

- ☐ Secure executive sponsors who champion AI adoption and model curiosity.
 - ☐ Embed accountability for AI adoption into leadership KPIs.
 - ☐ Integrate AI adoption into overall leadership and workforce development strategies. (e.g., require leaders to complete training in AI ethics, prompt engineering, or automation governance)
- RESOURCE: TRUST-FIRST AI PLAYBOOK FOR EXECUTIVES**



ACTIVATION: Bring AI to Life

Harness: Power users

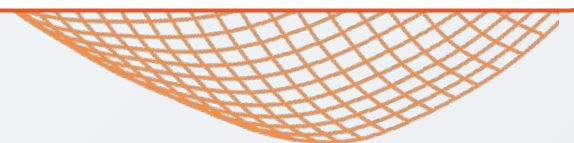
- ☐ Identify and empower early adopters who can serve as champions.
- ☐ Celebrate and amplify their contributions as visible success stories.
 - These can be featured in internal newsletters, in your LMS feed, and on any internal communications platforms, like a Slack or Teams channel.
- ☐ Create feedback loops so their input shapes the rollout.

Build: AI literacy & skills

- ☐ Offer structured opportunities for employees to build AI fluency in low-stakes ways.
- ☐ Make it safe to ask “basic” questions about AI.
- ☐ Provide ongoing learning pathways, not just one-off training.
- ☐ Encourage employees to question AI outputs and raise ethical concerns without fear.
 - Consider adding a “What to do when the AI gets it wrong” section to every training.

Prepare: People Leaders

- ☐ Provide people leaders with the time, resources, and messaging to support their teams.
- ☐ Equip people leaders to answer questions, normalize experimentation, and handle resistance. (e.g., provide “AI coaching cards” with sample scripts for addressing common concerns.)
- ☐ Encourage people leaders to feel safe admitting what they don’t yet know about AI.
 - Model vulnerability: “I’m still learning this too.” It goes further than you think.



CULTURE: Make AI Stick

Embed: Processes

- ☐ Integrate AI adoption into continuous skills development, not as a one-time project.
- ☐ Track adoption, trust, and performance metrics on leadership dashboards. (e.g., course completions, usage trends, sentiment tracking, skill development scores.)
- ☐ Revisit and adapt the approach as AI tools and workforce needs evolve.
 - AI moves quickly, so it's best not to wait for an annual review. You may want to check in at least quarterly to ensure you're always on the cutting-edge and using the best tools available.

Involve: Community

- ☐ Invite all roles, not just technical or executive, into the AI conversation. (e.g., host open office hours or cross-functional roundtables on AI use cases.)
- ☐ Create safe channels for employees to share concerns, suggestions, or challenges.
- ☐ Reinforce that AI is here to augment, not replace, human value.
 - Highlight stories showing AI removing busy work so people can focus on creative, strategic, or customer-facing work.

Change management isn't a memo, a meeting, or a launch event. It's a leadership discipline that requires continuous communication, co-creation, and reinforcement.

Using this checklist alongside the AI Adoption Framework will give you the capacity to:

- ☒ Understand the "why" behind the change.
- ☒ Activate leaders, managers, and employees to co-create adoption.
- ☒ Build a culture where AI is trusted, questioned, and continuously improved.

The payoff is more than smooth AI adoption – it's a workplace defined by resilience, belonging, and trust, where people and technology move forward together.

Additional Resources

- [Trust-First AI Playbook for Executives](#)
- [Curated Course List: Leading AI Adoption: A Change Management Learning Path](#)
- [Future of Learning Webinar Series](#)
- [5 Essential Moves to Lead Talent in the Age of AI](#)

Contact us today to learn how OpenSesame can help your organization.

www.opensesame.com | (503) 808-1268