



## WHAT IS THE POINT OF CHANGE IF IT DOESN'T STICK?

### Abstract

Don't spend the inordinate amount of time and money to implement a change initiative for it to fail soon after go-live due to lack of controls and support to maintain the change. Implementing a Sustain program is not as costly or time-intensive as it might seem, and inevitably will save a company from the otherwise-inevitable deviations that, over time, would invalidate the business and financial purposes of the change.

## Introduction

Implementing change is a monumental effort – not only in cost, personnel, systems, and processes, but also in mindset. People are inherently resistant to change, and that is reflected in how often change initiatives fail. Bain & Company published that only 12% of business change initiatives meet their initial goals, while McKinsey and Company published a now-frequently-cited statistic that 70% of change initiatives fail. But managing a change initiative – an already saturated topic – isn't what this paper is about. This paper covers the oft-overlooked step after a change go-live, after all of the time, effort, and money have been expended, and after the high-touch project team and change professionals have rolled off to further projects. This paper is about ensuring the change for which you worked so hard is sustained.





## What is Sustain?

Sustain is the last step of the project management lifecycle, where the change process has turned into the new business as usual (BAU) process. Sustain involves establishing controls and supports services to maintain the BAU process for as long as it is used by the company.



## Why is it important?

Sustain programs ensure that the new BAU process maintains its purpose and value.

Lingering resistance to change after go-live and the inclination of individuals to make small process or technical deviations to better tweak a solution to their needs is inevitable. Without a structure in place both to enforce the new BAU process as well as to prevent or, otherwise, catch impermissible uses, the new BAU process will fracture into a myriad of bespoke practices. This fracture will, over time, cause the new BAU process to fail to meet the objective of the original change initiative, invalidating all of the time and money already spent, and compromising the strategic purpose for the change.



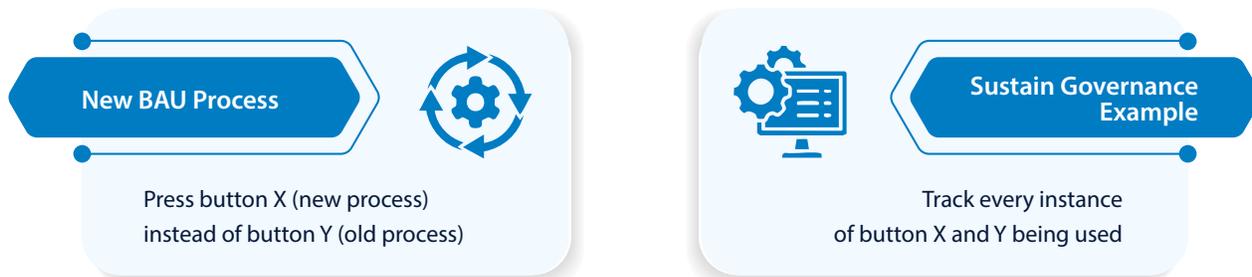
## Implementing & Managing Sustain

Since Sustain covers the period in which a change program has become BAU, Sustain programs must not only have governance – that is, the rules and processes by which new BAU processes are to be maintained – but also BAU resources or personnel to manage and, otherwise, enforce the governance for as long as the BAU process is used. It is highly recommended that both Sustain governance and Sustain management be defined and set up prior to go-live to leverage the project team and/or change resources before they roll off.

### Governance

It is important that Sustain Governance is differentiated from the rules, processes, and controls governing the new BAU process. Sustain Governance, conversely, is the rules, processes, and controls through which compliance with and adherence to the new BAU process is measured.

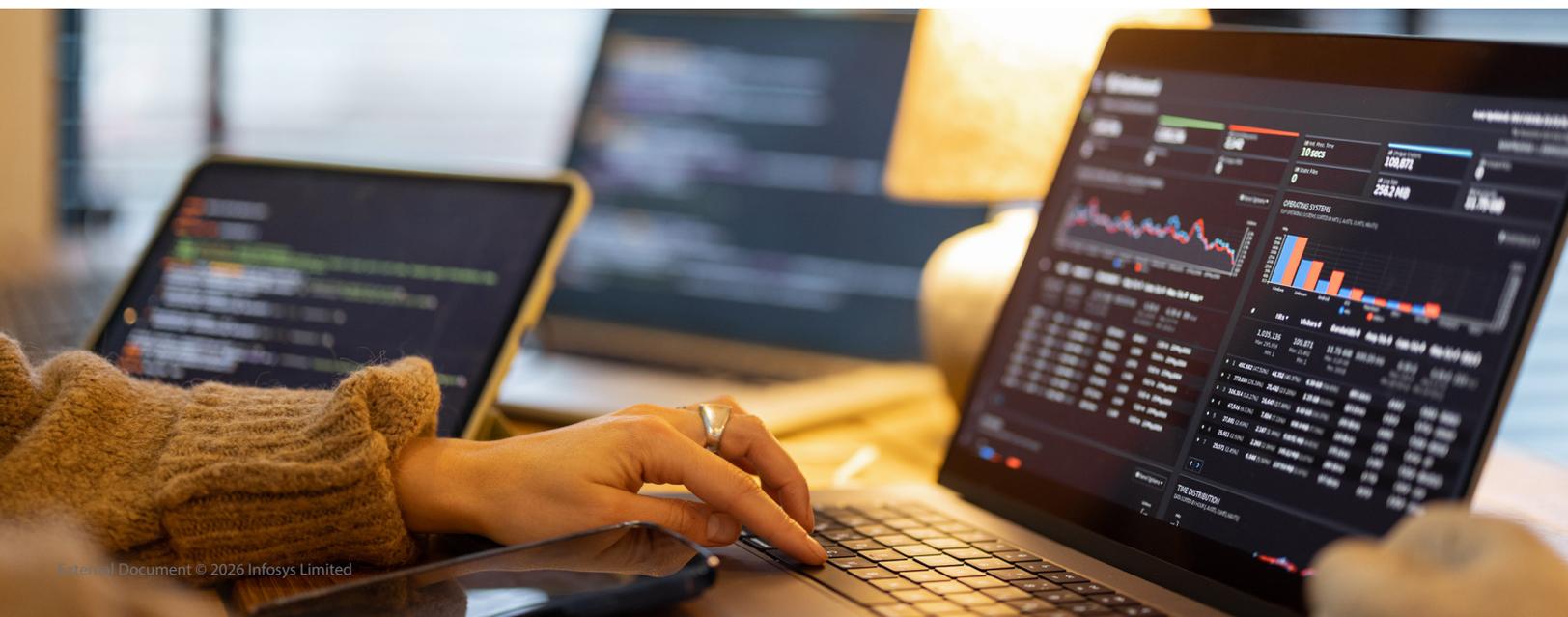
For instance:



Sustain Governance – as in this simple example – provides companies with concrete metrics by which they can catch deviations to the new BAU process and act upon them. Sustain Governance comes in two flavors: technical controls and procedural controls.

Technical controls are either blockers (that stop a certain non-compliant action automatically) or trackable data points that can be accessed or leveraged by automation or reports. An example of a technical blocker might be that the Y button (from the above example) has been disabled. An example of a trackable technical control would be a report that produces the number of times Y has been used over a given period, and by whom. Technical controls are much easier to manage than process controls due to their minimal reliance on human oversight. As a result, wherever possible, technical controls are recommended.

Procedural controls are the processes or procedures implemented by which adherence to the new BAU is graded. For example, evaluation of Button X utilization (a technical control) might happen quarterly and be subject to a grading from A to E based on predefined levels of utilization. Whenever possible, use metrics that can be measured via reports or digital tooling to minimize the need for human interference. But recognize that certain success metrics – such as processes that inherently involve qualitative feedback (e.g., a user satisfaction score) – will require manual processing. Additionally, collating, interpreting, and acting upon both technical and procedural controls will almost always require human interaction, which is why Sustain Governance cannot be successful without Sustain Management.



## Sustain Management

As mentioned above, having personnel tasked with tracking and acting upon BAU process deviation is essential to ensuring the continued value of the change initiative. The main issue, though, is why do we need these individuals (i.e., why can we not just trust the normal organizational structure) and how do we budget for them if we have no money to allocate for Sustain resources?

Sustain Management is necessary because line managers often focus on outcomes and not processes, which is entirely normal in ever-changing and dynamic corporate environments. The reasoning is simple: as long as outcomes are accurate, on time, and within budget, why should anyone care? It is because of this practice that employees create workarounds to BAU processes – to more efficiently achieve their desired outcome without recognizing that it might be to the detriment of the company's desired outcome. For example, a finance professional might elect to use their offline tracking spreadsheet because it is easier and quicker for them to use than the company's finance portal. While the professional's job is accurate and quicker than if they used the portal, the absence of the data in the portal skewed all financial reporting, analytics, and BI that relied upon data in the portal. Sustain Management catches deviations to ensure that both processes and outcomes are achieved in the desired way.

Sustain Management, contrary to most clients' beliefs, does not require budget. It does, though, require creativity and a deep understanding of an organization to implement. As a result, there is no simple, out-of-the-box Sustain Management solution, but here are a few key principles for setting up Sustain Management:



Do as much as possible before go-live (e.g., planning, establishing, onboarding, testing)



Create a team of personnel with an interest in the change program's continued success



Widely distribute the time requirement for each team member as much as it is practical



Simplify and standardize human involvement as much as possible

Two examples of successful Sustain programs are included at the end of this paper for further insight on how this has been implemented.



## Conclusion

Implementing a Sustain Program is essential for ensuring change initiatives remain successful long after go-live. Reference the couple personal examples below and do not hesitate to reach out with your Sustain-related questions.

### Example of Successful Sustain Program: Oil & Gas Supermajor

#### The Problem:

An oil & gas supermajor developed and deployed numerous bespoke, in-house digital tools for employees. The client, though, did not have a way to measure the continued value of these tools against the purpose of each's development.



#### Objective:

Develop a self-sufficient Sustain Program that can track and measure each digital tool against the value proposition of its development.



#### Resulting Sustain Governance:

Implemented a recurring, semi-annual review cycle for each tool against "Sustain Conformance Metrics" (i.e., utilizing each digital tool's specific technical and procedural controls), ultimately producing a "Sustain Conformance Level" (i.e., a grade from 1-5 based on level of conformance).



#### Resulting Sustain Management:

Created a Central Sustain Team to manage and track each tool's Sustain Conformance Metrics over time. The team was populated by members of the technical development teams, the program management teams, and the end-user teams to ensure a holistic and accurate review of each Sustain Conformance Metric. The Central Sustain Team convened semi-annually to coincide with the Sustain Conformance Metric timeline and to ensure it was not too onerous on the individuals involved.



## Example of Successful Sustain Program: M&A Playbook

### The Problem:

An oil & gas supermajor engaged in a lot of M&A activities but did not have a central repository of best practices as well as tools and templates, leading to loss of helpful artifacts, disparate experience, and endless re-work. A Playbook was developed to capture and centralize these best practices, but there was no team or process by which the Playbook would remain updated.



### Objective:

Develop a Sustain Program that will maintain the Playbook and keep all information therein current.



### Sustain Governance:

Set up a Playbook-specific Sustain email where new artifacts, upon development and across projects, could be sent for review. Implemented a standardized post-M&A retrospective process to capture insights. And established a recurring, semi-annual review of Playbook content against submitted emails and retrospectives.



### Sustain Management:

Created an M&A Center of Excellence to manage and execute the Sustain Governance described above. This CoE was populated by members of the broader M&A team and included a rotational system to ensure that involvement was spread out over time and fairly shared amongst the many members.



## About the Authors:



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Zachary White is a Principal with Infosys Consulting and has over a decade of experience leading large programs – such as enterprise-wide digital transformations and complex mergers and acquisitions – across industries, functions, and the globe. Zach is a licensed attorney, MBA, and professional scrum master, who leverages his diverse and discerning perspectives to deliver value-driven solutions for clients.

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