United Nations

MANAGING CHANGE

A Tool for Those Managing People
During Organizational Change

Introduction to Managing Change

1

Managers must focus their attention on three elements of the change process associated with Umoja to enable themselves and their staff to minimize the disruption and maximize the benefits associated with the initiative.

2

These three elements are:

- Alignment of Umoja with the UN Secretariat's mission and strategy by fostering the commitment of individuals to the case for change through the demonstration of their own understanding and commitment to the case for change which is the rationale for the introduction, implementation and of the change

- Application of project management discipline to the change before during and after the implementation of Umoja

- Support of individuals in the Organization as they deal with the changes associated with Umoja
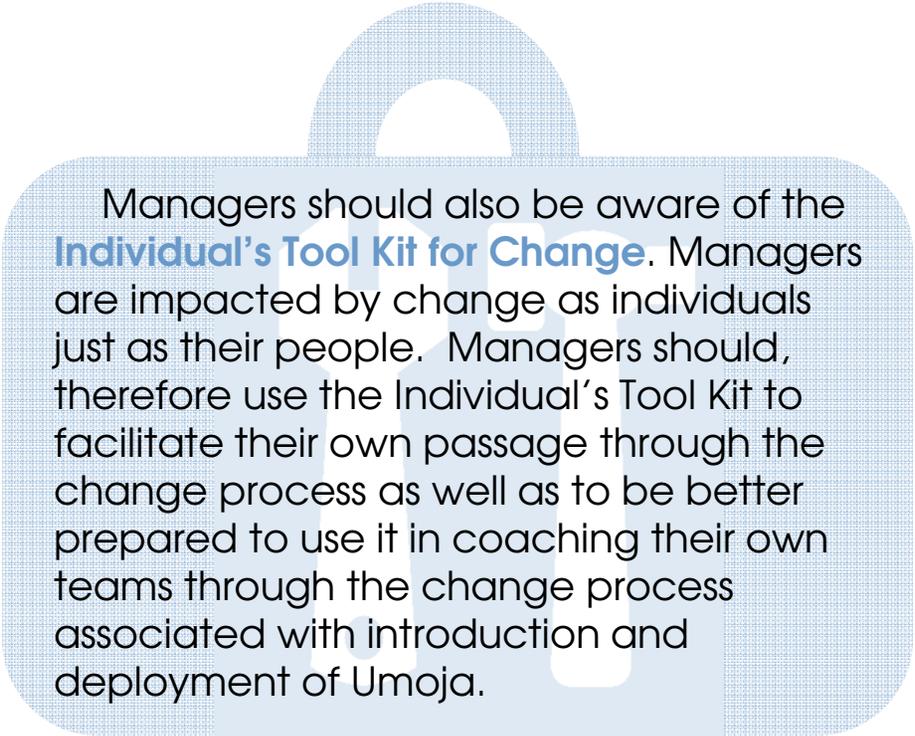
Managers should also be aware of the **Individual's Tool Kit for Change**. Managers are impacted by change as individuals just as their people. Managers should, therefore use the Individual's Tool Kit to facilitate their own passage through the change process as well as to be better prepared to use it in coaching their own teams through the change process associated with introduction and deployment of Umoja.

Strategic Alignment – The Case for Change

Use the **Case for Change Tool** from the Individual's Tool Kit to explicitly detail the reason(s) the implementation of Umoja is important to your own work and that of the people who work for you. The development of the case for change is a key factor in achieving the alignment of Umoja with the UN Secretariat's mission and strategy across the Organization. The case for change will enable you and your team to demonstrate understanding of the case for Umoja and thus foster commitment. The case for change you create with your team provides the rationale for the introduction, implementation and integration of Umoja in your department, office, section or unit. You can create the case for change for your department, office, section or unit by answering the questions on the following slide with your team.

Strategic Alignment – The Case for Change Part Two

Use the following questions as a guide for working with your team to create the case for change. Because the changes associated with Umoja may be different for each of your people, it is strongly advised that you think through your own answers to these questions and share them with your team as the starting point for the development of both the case for change for your department, office, section or unit and each person's individual case for change.
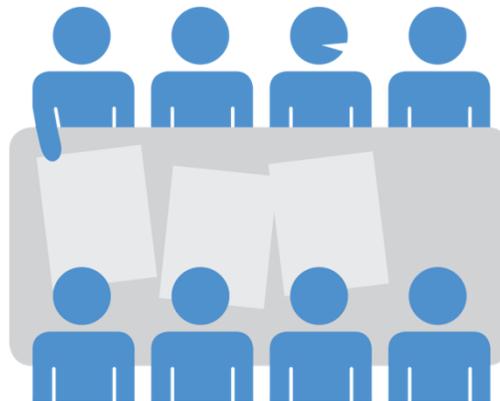
1. Why is Umoja necessary?
2. What will Umoja enable us to do that we would not be able to do without it?
3. How will I as an individual benefit from Umoja?
4. How will my Department/Office/Section/ Unit benefit from Umoja?
5. How will the UN Secretariat as a whole benefit from Umoja ?
6. What would be the implication of continuing the status quo as opposed to implementing the change?

Managing the Change Project - Planning

As is true with any project, the key to managing the changes associated with Umoja is adequate planning and commitment to carrying out the plan. The planning must take into consideration the fact that the approach to the deployment of Umoja is a phased approach by functionality and location.
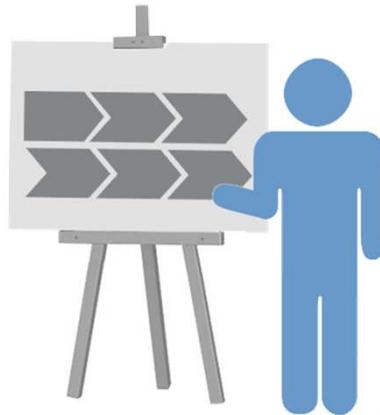
As with any other project, the plan should include:

- ✓ A timeline for the UN Secretariat
- ✓ Allocation of resources
- ✓ Required tools
- ✓ Possible additional sources of support

The Timeline

1

It is important to recognize that projects of such magnitude as Umoja almost always require more time to implement than initially anticipated. Because people will use the timeline as a gauge of not only the success of Umoja but also the UN Secretariat's commitment to it, it is important to be as realistic as possible when announcing planned timelines for introduction and deployment.
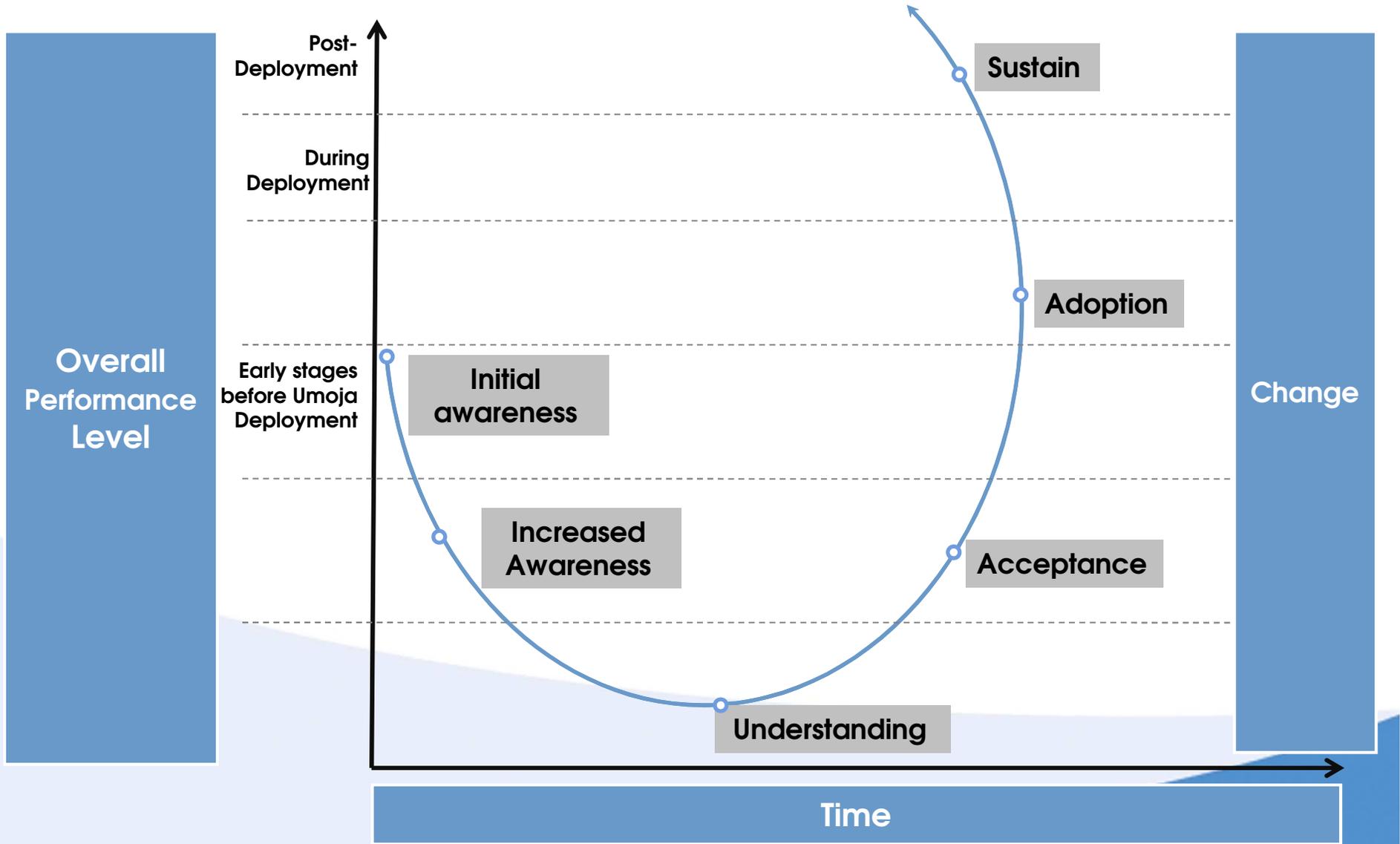
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Managers should also be aware of the potential implications of 'the change curve' on the timeline and project plan for Umoja. 'The change curve' is a depiction of the **initial** decline of overall performance that always accompanies a significant organizational change – individual/ team outputs naturally decline as they undergo the process of learning associated with the full integration of the change into their daily work only to rise above previous levels when the change has become fully integrated into the work. The change curve is illustrated on Slide 7.

Illustration of a Change Curve

Overall Performance Level

Post-Deployment

During Deployment

Early stages before Umoja Deployment

Sustain

Adoption

Initial awareness

Acceptance

Increased Awareness

Understanding

Change

Time

Allocation of Resources

1

The change curve requires that managers be prepared to frontload resource allocation to the change project – the early stages will require greater concentration of dedicated resources than the later stages

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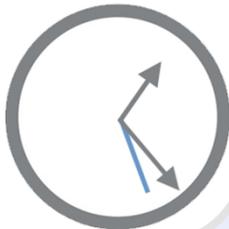
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As managers, one of our most limited resources is our own time and involvement. Periods of change put additional demands on that scarce resource at a time in which demands on our time are often greater than usual. Managers should understand that budgeting their time enables them to help people accommodate the changes associated with Umoja. This is one of the most effective methods for reducing the cost of the change curve to individual/ team output.

3

Thirdly, managers need to allocate sufficient time for themselves and their people to become proficient in the new way of working before assessing the impact of the system.

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Required Tools

As a part of the planning process, managers should realistically assess the needs of individuals in accomplishing the change over to Umoja.

The tools required may include such things as:

- Connectivity
- Stable internet access
- Substantive knowledge of processes and policies to which Umoja applies
- Performance objectives that include the use of Umoja

Possible Sources of Support

1

To find sources of supporting people in the introduction and deployment of Umoja, managers can look up, down and across the Organization.

2

- **Looking upwards,** senior managers may be the source of additional resources, organizational support, refocusing of strategies and/or objectives, and information.

- **Looking downwards,** early adapters among our own teams can provide a great deal of support amongst their peers and thus help achieve and/or maintain the momentum of the project.

- **Looking outwards,** think about your HR office, or other parts of the Organization that may have been involved with the Umoja process earlier than you have, and other sources of support within the Organization.

Supporting People during Change

1   The most critical factor for managers to recognize while dealing with their teams during times of change such as that ushered in by Umoja is that they can mandate change but not the response of individuals to the change. Change is external but the individual's response to that event is an internal and often emotional process.

2 For example: The moment I pick up my new smart phone represents a change but just because I have it doesn't mean I am comfortable using it. Becoming proficient with the new phone is a process.

3   This process through which individuals accommodate change is often called 'transition'.

4 Managers can facilitate transition by:

- Demonstrating their own commitment to the change
- Developing a persuasive case for change with input from staff
- Removing barriers to the success of the change
- Providing appropriate time and resources
- Maximizing trust in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty associated with change

Demonstrating Commitment to Change

Managers should recognize that their teams pay more attention to what they say and do than to any other source of information in the organization. Managers must therefore speak and especially act consistently with the vision and case for change they have developed with the input of their teams. In other words, they should act as a role model/agent of change:

- Take particular care to ensure they avoid giving the impression that there is any possibility that the Umoja project may be cancelled or otherwise derailed

- Ensure that Umoja remains a key element of their own attention and communications

- Recognize and reward those early adapters

- Take personal responsibility for solving any issues that may be interfering with staff implementation of utilization of Umoja

- Give priority to overcoming any concerns they may have about their personal approach to Umoja.

- Work to overcome objections such as: The current systems works very well for me, why do we need to change it?

Developing a Case for Change with Staff Input

1

What's in it for me?

This question is a concern of every person facing the changes associated with Umoja. Managers can share with their people the UN Secretariat's assessment of the benefits associated with the initiative. They can further refine this vision by relating it to the situation faced by their Departments, Offices, Sections or Units. However, they must seek input from their teams honestly and openly so that individuals can create their own vision for the initiative.

2

Managers should:

- Share their own ideas about the value of Umoja

- Actively seek out people's questions and issues regarding Umoja

- Give people the opportunity to discuss Umoja as a team

- Meet individually with people who need a more private forum

- Accept that people's concerns are real and meaningful even when they may seem to be merely excuses

3

You may wish to work with a trusted management peer and facilitate these conversations with one another's teams in order to increase people's willingness to share their true opinions.

Removing Barriers to the Change

One of the most important tasks of the manager during a period of change such as that brought on by Umoja is to act personally to remove barriers which may be hindering people's acceptance of the initiative. It is important for managers to recognize that there are two different types of barriers to change initiatives and that the removal of each needs to be approached differently.

The two types of barriers:

Obstacles

Factors of the work environment that prevent the individual from accepting and implementing the change. For example: the individual does not have dependable internet access.

Objections

Factors of the work environment that cause the individual to decide that s/he does not wish to accept and / or implement the change. For example: the individual feels the current way of doing things works well so why change it?

Removing Obstacles

Removing the obstacles that hinder the implementation of a change initiative such as Umoja is a legitimate use of the manager's authority.

Examples of obstacles include:

- Lack of resources
- Conflicting priorities
- Lack of qualified staff or other personnel

Managers' options in removing the obstacles to change include:

- Adjusting Department, Office, Section, Unit priorities to include and/or emphasize the importance of the change initiative

- Adjusting budgets to provide additional resources to the change initiative

- Arranging skill development opportunities such as training, coaching and additional practice opportunities for staff

- Providing people with the opportunity to develop the substantive knowledge to make decisions that previously would have been made by others

- "Renting" required skills by adding temporary staff or other personnel who already possess the required skills
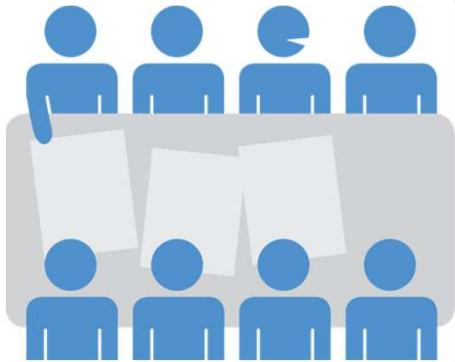
Removing Objections

1

People's objections are often much more difficult to remove than are obstacles because managers cannot do so merely through the use of their legitimate positional power. You cannot simply tell a colleague that his/her objection to the initiative is invalid and expect it to go away.

2 Dealing with people's objections requires that managers:

- Avoid approaching objections in an overtly confrontational manner

- Recognize the validity of the individual's concerns

- Commit to holding change discussions with people – individually and as a group

- Create a timeline for holding discussions with people – individually and as a group

- Avoid the temptation to simply tell the individual, "That's wrong," and assume the objection will be dropped

- Demonstrate patience and sympathy for the other person's point of view

- Ask questions to ensure they have full understanding of the colleague's point of view before advocating for their own opinions

- Offer constructive alternatives to enable the colleague to make his/her own choice to drop the objection

- Seek the help of colleagues such as HR or Staff Counsellor if they feel they do not have the skillset required to help their staff overcome the objections to the change initiative

Provision of Time and Resources

Providing staff and other personnel with the assurance that they will be provided with adequate time and resources to accomplish the changes associated with initiatives such as Umoja is a critical success factor in overcoming people's reluctance to embrace the change.

1 Managers should recognize that people facing change:

- Must be given the time and opportunity to develop the ability to use the new system with both accuracy and fluency before the change can be judged to be successful
    - Accuracy can be defined as doing the task correctly
    - Fluency can be defined as doing the task at the pace required by job outcomes

2

- Must be given the appropriate training and equipment to utilize the new system
- Must be supported by their management in the event that use of the new system results in slowdowns and/or additional mistakes
- Must have performance objectives that are aligned with and not inconsistent with the use of the new system
- Must be provided with the means of developing the substantive knowledge associated with the deployment of Umoja

Creation of an Atmosphere of Trust

The breakdown of mutual trust is often one of the unintended consequences of organizational change. In order to secure the success of Umoja, Managers should be especially concerned with maintaining trust in their Departments/Offices/Sections/Units. The timely and conscientious use of the **Managers Tool Kit** is one of the keys to ensuring that mutual trust is maintained during the disruptions associated with change.

The enhancement of trust can be seen as the result of:

- **Presence** – trust is not formed remotely – it develops when we make ourselves available to one another
- **Communication** – trust requires that we listen carefully and speak honestly
- **Concern** – trust is based on the belief that our mutual success is important to each of us
- **Commitment** – trust can develop only when we do what we say we will do and we do not do what we say we will not do
- **Confidentiality** – trust is dependent upon our being explicit about what we will and will not keep confidential and our doing so
- **Capability** – trust is developed when others recognize that we are capable of doing what we say we will do