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## **A MULTIDIMENSIONAL DIAGNOSIS OF CHANGE FAILURE IN IT ORGANIZATIONS**

Organizational change initiatives in IT companies continues to fail with striking regularity. Global surveys consistently report failure rates of 60–80% despite decades of evolving change management methodologies [4; 5]. Both traditional models (Lewin, Kotter, ADKAR) and modern frameworks (Agile, SAFe, DevOps) have attempted to provide systematic approaches to transformation, yet large-scale initiatives still collapse. The central reason lies not in executional insufficiency but in categorical misdiagnosis: change is framed as a technical project, whereas in practice it represents an adaptive challenge that threatens identity, disrupts cultural patterns, and exposes unresolved paradoxes [1; 2; 3].

This study applies a hybrid methodology. First, a meta-analysis of empirical data was conducted, drawing on leading sources including McKinsey, Gartner, Standish Group, Scrum Inc., and Radixweb [4; 5]. Second, theoretical triangulation was applied, integrating insights from identity theory [1], paradox theory [2], and the Adaptive Change Model [3]. This approach allows for a multidimensional diagnosis of systemic failure patterns in IT organizations.

**High-Frequency Causes of Failure.** Industry data reveals recurring patterns in why transformations collapse. Table 1 summarizes the most frequently cited causes, along with their reported frequency, impact, and effects.

Table 1

### High-Frequency Causes of Change Failure in IT Companies

| Cause                         | Frequency | Impact   | Core Effect                              |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|--|
| Inadequate Communication      | 67%       | High     | Ambiguity, misalignment, disengagement   |
| Lack of Leadership Commitment | 62%       | High     | Weak sponsorship, reduced credibility    |
| Resistance to Change          | 58%       | High     | Identity defense, covert sabotage        |
| Misaligned Goals and Values   | 55%       | High     | Strategic incoherence, motivational loss |
| Agile Misapplication          | 48%       | Med–High | Ritual compliance, no mindset shift      |
| Cultural Incompatibility      | 45%       | High     | Friction during scale or integration     |
| Unclear Roles and Ownership   | 42%       | Medium   | Accountability gaps, decision friction   |
| Tool-Over-People Focus        | 38%       | Medium   | Process fetishism, cultural neglect      |

*Source: compiled by the authors based on McKinsey [4], Gartner, Standish Group reports [5]*

While these causes are widely reported, they remain largely descriptive. A deeper diagnostic perspective is required to understand how failures accumulate and reinforce each other.

**Five-Dimensional Diagnostic Rubric.** To move beyond surface explanations, the study introduces a diagnostic framework that integrates five key dimensions: organizational level, type of change, temporal phase, visibility, and causal clustering. This rubric structures how breakdowns occur across different layers of the system.

This framework demonstrates that failure cannot be reduced to a single point of breakdown. It emerges as a pattern of interrelated disruptions across multiple dimensions, compounding over time.

**Root Cause Clusters.** Beneath the surface-level issues lie five recurring root domains that explain why change initiatives fail. These clusters are shown in Table 3.

Table 2

### Five-Dimensional Diagnostic Rubric for Change Failure

| Dimension            | Core Question                      | Failure Variants  | What to Diagnose                        |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Organizational Level | Where does resistance concentrate? | Executive misalignment, frozen middle, team disengagement                           | Role-specific breakdown                 |
| Type of Change       | What kind of transformation        | Process, Structural, Cultural, Digital  | Psychological depth and disruption risk |
| Temporal Phase       | When does failure emerge?          | Initiation stagnation, transition friction, sustainment decay                       | Phase-specific vulnerabilities          |
| Visibility           | How visible is the failure?        | Overt collapse, covert compliance, latent erosion                                   | Misleading signals and undetected decay |
| Causal               | Why does change collapse           | Identity threat, cultural misfit, paradox denial, structural block, execution decay | Interlocking failure loops              |

*Source: author's original construct from cross-source empirical review and theoretical alignment*

The synthesis highlights three deep mechanisms: identity conflict (change threatens self-concept and belonging) [1], paradox denial (leaders avoid or suppress tensions instead of navigating them) [2], and project framing misfit (change treated as a finite project rather than long-cycle identity reinforcement) [3; 4].

**Conclusion.** The findings demonstrate that change in IT companies fails not because of inadequate tools or poor intentions but because organizations misdiagnose the nature of transformation. Traditional and modern frameworks alike remain technically correct but humanly insufficient. Sustainable transformation requires new models that:

- embed change into lived identity [1];
- tolerate paradox as a natural terrain of adaptation [2];
- reinforce new behaviors through long-term rhythm rather than short-term projects [3].

### Root Cause Clusters of Change Failure

| Cluster                              | Definition & Examples   | Impact                               | Insight   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Cognitive and Communication Gaps     | Vague vision, contradictory narratives, jargon overload                 | Misalignment, disengagement          | If the “why” is unclear, the “how” doesn’t matter                     |
| Identity-Based Resistance            | Defense of roles, status, belonging; hidden fear of irrelevance         | Surface compliance, covert rejection | People don’t resist change – they resist being changed                |
| Cultural and Systemic Misfit         | Imported models clash with local norms and power dynamics               | Deep rejection, silent sabotage      | Culture is infrastructure – misalign it and nothing holds             |
| Structural Misalignment              | Roles, authority, and incentives contradict the intended transformation | Execution stalls, blocked actors     | Even willing participants are constrained without authority alignment |
| Execution and Reinforcement Failures | Weak feedback loops, fading leadership energy, no habit anchoring       | Relapse, symbolic compliance         | Change is not an event but a rhythm – when rhythm breaks, change dies |

*Source: compiled by the authors based on industry reports*

This research provides both empirical grounding and conceptual scaffolding for the development of identity-centered transformation architectures, currently under construction, which can overcome chronic failure and enable adaptive capacity in IT organizations.

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