

Using ABO (Awareness, Buy-In, Ownership) Model to design and guide your change process

The ABO model¹ is a useful tool for guiding the design and execution of change: A = Awareness, B = Buy-in, O = Ownership. These are different stages of an engagement process where people move from learning about something; to acting on what they have learnt committing their time and resources; and then assuming responsibility often recruiting and initiating others to the cause. The assumption is that people are more likely to embrace change if they are able to contribute to and influence the change. As they understand and value the benefits of the change, they are more likely to accept the cost of changing and act to change.

	Awareness	Buy-in	Ownership
<i>Principal objective for individual/group</i>	To (re)think; To learn	To act; to commit to future action	To lead
<i>Principal activity for change team</i>	To persuade; to educate; to build trust and ease anxiety	To support; to remove obstacles; to affirm desired behaviour; to evaluate & improve	To enhance; to inspire
<i>Evidence of success from the phase</i>	Individual/group has acquired personal knowledge about the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of the desired action and effects	Individual/group applies knowledge, performs the desired actions with increasing mastery and increasingly as common behaviour that achieves the desired effect	Individual engages and recruits others to increase their awareness and action
<i>Individual's change activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend information sessions Read information material Seek answers to important questions Participate in learning opportunities (Re)evaluate beliefs and habits Plan and execute preparatory activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform new/changed actions Develop new habits; drop old habits Participate in continual learning opportunities Seek assistance when required Evaluate actions of self Respond to feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach colleagues Model desired behaviours to others Provide practical and emotional support to colleagues Monitor activity; provide feedback to colleagues Share stories about progress
<i>Things to enable the change process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspired and prepared change leaders Empathetic and informed change agents Valid and stable description of the change Clear simple honest messages Policy statements and associated resources Variety and repetition of 'what-is' + 'why' + 'how-to' learning opportunities Variety and frequency of communication and promotional engagements Stakeholder 'analysis & design' workshops Defined deployment/rollout strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledgeable experts Valid and stable description of the new/changed actions Prepared and committed managers/team leaders Variety and repetition of 'how-to' learning opportunities and resources Variety of post-learning support mechanisms including peer-champions Evaluation and feedback mechanisms Community mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership mechanisms Professional development and support for potential leaders
<i>Challenges for change process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcome disbelief and anxiety Dispel resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letting go of existing habits and knowledge Creating new thoughts and habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedding the new behaviours as norms Finding and sustaining change champions

¹ The ABO Continuum is a concept developed by Anderson Consulting: Hiebelar, R., Kelly, T. & Katteman, C. (1998). Best Practices Building Your Business with Customer Focussed Solutions. Simon and Schuster: New York, NY

Tips in applying the ABO model

1. If you want people in your organisation to 'buy-in' to the change that is promoted, you first need to move them through the Awareness phase. Many change implementations fail to adequately move people from Awareness to Buy-in phase.
2. Lack of achieving Buy-in can be attributed to insufficient attention, or insufficient investment of resources for the Buy-in phase. Providing/Attending training is an Awareness activity; Buy-in activities focus on the *application of the knowledge gained in training* such that people are following the new actions without frequent reminder or intensive support. Additional activities are usually required to provide opportunities to practice, and to develop new habits.
3. If part of your change strategy is to enable local self-perpetuating change, you will need to pass some people through the Ownership phase. It is important to maintain a constant eye out for potential champions/owners of the change from the start of the change process, and cultivate their motivation and ability.

For specific ideas, activities and resources to utilise in designing your change process, contact Questo.

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