Leveraging 'middle management' for sustainable organisational change

3rd annual

Women in Mining 2025

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26-28 August 2025 | Cloudland | Brisbane

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Session: Achieving buy-in from middle management to build true support for change

Acknowledgement of Country

Scope of this presentation

- How middle managers can connect corporate strategy and operational results

- Focus on organisational change related to corporate strategy and processes (not culture and people)

- Consider the unique landscape for mining companies in approaching organisational change

- Case study will provide examples and tools to improve change management outcomes

Organisational change

- Actions taken to modify or adjust a significant component of an organisation to adapt to changing internal or external environments

- Triggers for change and approach will vary dependent on the organisation

- Unsuccessful change management can result in decreased moral and productivity, impacting performance

Examples of change impacting the organisation[1]

Strategic
Internal: Changing business models
External: Expanding into a new market

Structural
Internal: Restructuring business units
External: Mergers and acquisitions

Processes
Internal: Upgrading systems
External: Adapting to new technology

Cultural
Internal: Improving staff motivation
External: Being competitive for talent

Approaches to change[2]

Adaptive
Small, incremental changes that are adopted to address needs that evolve over time. Focus is on fine-tuning existing operations.

Transformational
Major shifts in components of an organisation that require significant resources. Requires a shift in mindset and enterprise wide buy-in.

1 Burke WW, Litwin GH. A causal model of organizational performance and change, 1992; Armstrong, M. Armstrong's Handbook of Management and leadership, 2009.
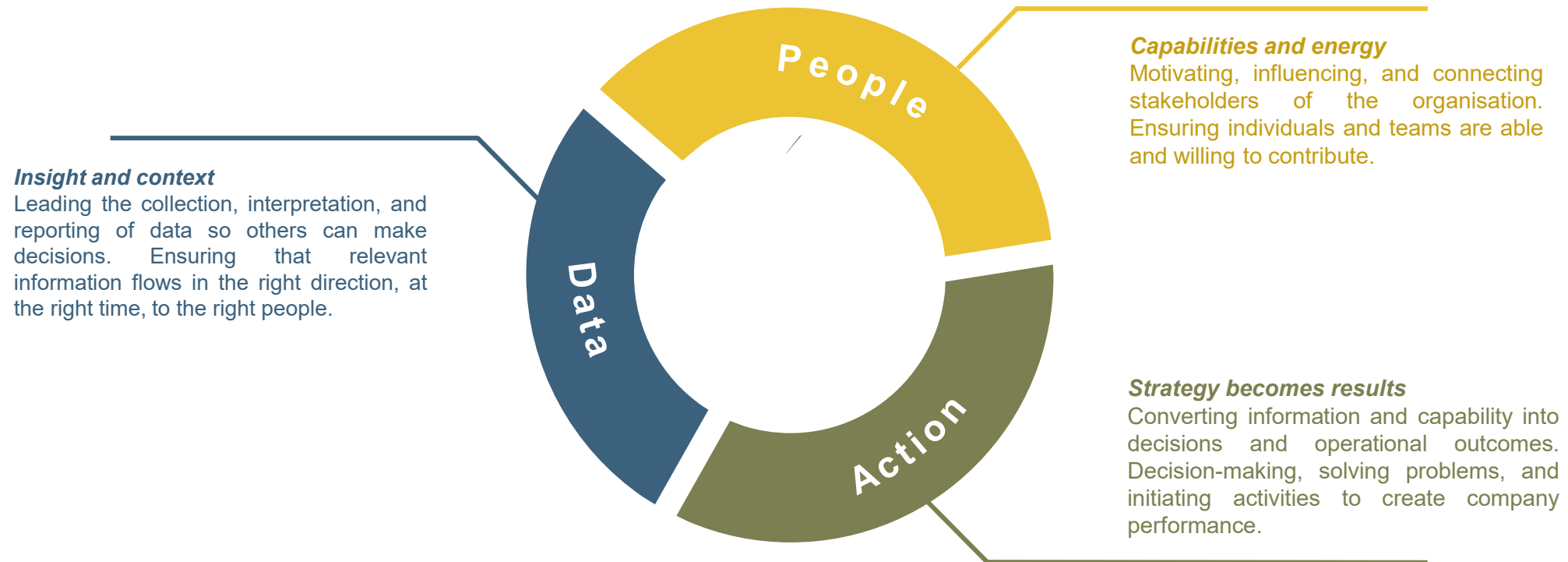2 Harvard Business School (Online), https://online.hbs.edu/, 2020.

The mining industry context

The mining industry has unique complexities that impact the approach to and results of effective change management

Complex structures with wide range of internal and external stakeholders

Remote, decentralised, transient workforce

High-risk operating culture

Limited labour pool

Highly regulated existing systems

Multi-layered regulatory environment across jurisdictions

Commodity-driven market

Increasing ESG expectations

The role of 'middle management'

- Middle managers are appropriately placed to implement change as they hold leverage across key drivers[1]

- Can only achieve effective change with appropriate resources, capability and motivation

- Matches the complex and dynamic change environment faced by mining companies

Capabilities and energy
Motivating, influencing, and connecting stakeholders of the organisation. Ensuring individuals and teams are able and willing to contribute.

Insight and context
Leading the collection, interpretation, and reporting of data so others can make decisions. Ensuring that relevant information flows in the right direction, at the right time, to the right people.

Strategy becomes results
Converting information and capability into decisions and operational outcomes. Decision-making, solving problems, and initiating activities to create company performance.

People

Data

Action

1 Mintzberg, H. The nature of managerial work, (1973).

Case study:
Preparing for mandatory climate reporting

Key information

Type of change	**External** pressures (Regulatory change) created **Structural** and **Process**-oriented impacts
Approach to change	**Adaptive** change focused on incremental uplift of existing processes and leveraging existing capabilities
Business impact	**Strategy, risk** and **decision-making** areas All sites' **operational teams** **Board of Directors**
Key challenges	**Decentralised**, fragmented data collection and reporting processes and perceived **misalignment with core business** model and strategy
Outcomes	Voluntary reporting **achieved 1 year early** with improved data processes and methods

MEDIA RELEASE   (24-205MR)

ASIC urges businesses to prepare for mandatory climate reporting

Published **18 September 2024**
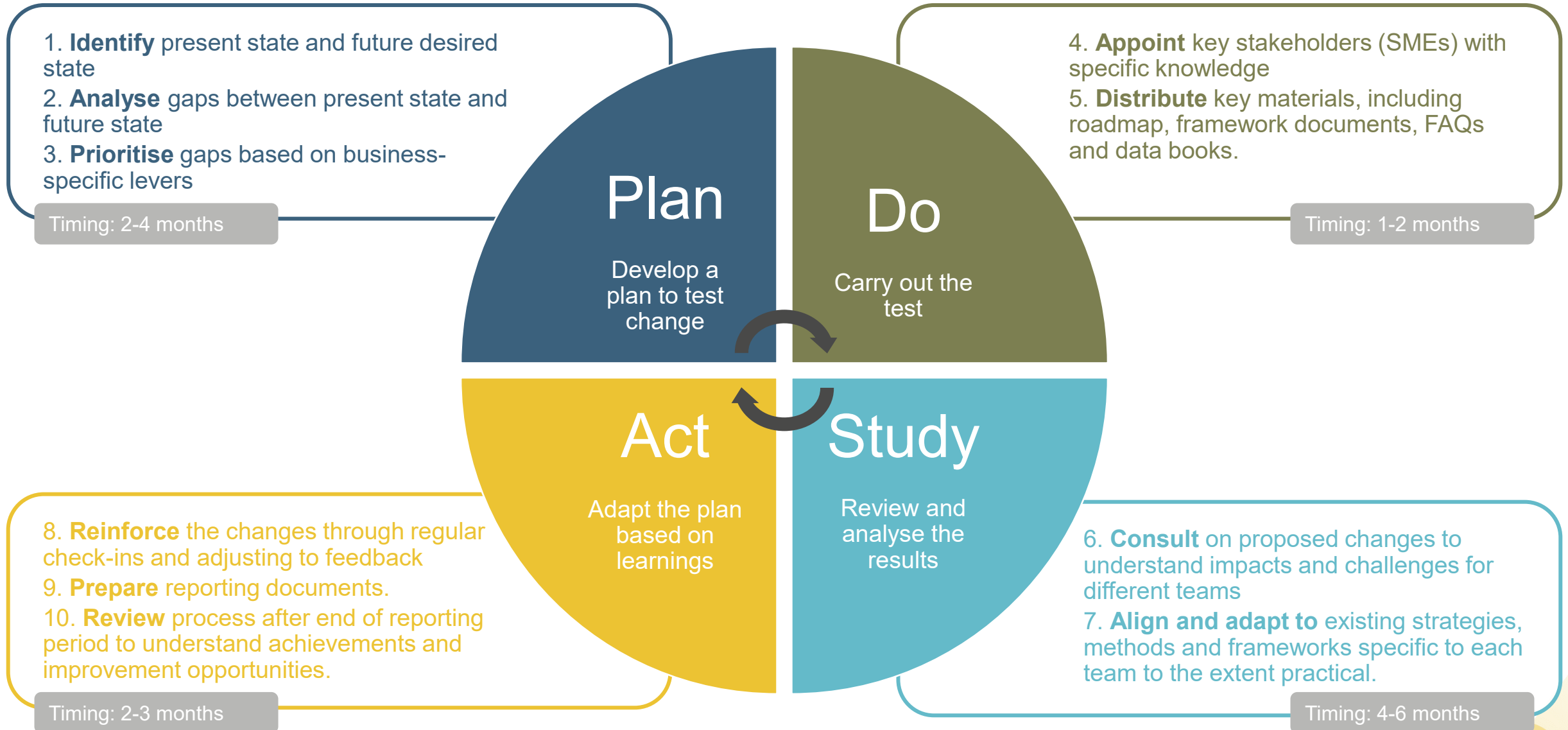
ABC NEWS   Search...   Log in

Mandatory climate reporting begins this year, marking generational change for corporate Australia

By national regional reporter Clint Jasper

Corporate Governance

Thu 2 Jan

Change management approach[1]

1. **Identify** present state and future desired state
2. **Analyse** gaps between present state and future state
3. **Prioritise** gaps based on business-specific levers

Timing: 2-4 months

Plan
Develop a plan to test change

Do
Carry out the test

4. **Appoint** key stakeholders (SMEs) with specific knowledge
5. **Distribute** key materials, including roadmap, framework documents, FAQs and data books.

Timing: 1-2 months

Act
Adapt the plan based on learnings

Study
Review and analyse the results

8. **Reinforce** the changes through regular check-ins and adjusting to feedback
9. **Prepare** reporting documents.
10. **Review** process after end of reporting period to understand achievements and improvement opportunities.

Timing: 2-3 months

6. **Consult** on proposed changes to understand impacts and challenges for different teams
7. **Align and adapt to** existing strategies, methods and frameworks specific to each team to the extent practical.

Timing: 4-6 months

Practical takeaways

Leverage the key drivers for middle managers to create effective, sustainable change

People

- **Engage early**. Workshops were conducted for information gathering with middle managers to understand awareness and motivation.
- **Build rapport**. Engagement was conducted on an individual basis and in-person, on-site.
- **Define roles**. Roles and responsibilities were defined clearly.
- **Find allies.** 'Champions' were identified in each business unit and brought together in a taskforce to increase visibility and engagement.
- **Create ownership**. Individual staff were assigned to each role to increase accountability.
- **Be accessible**. Fortnightly optional "drop-in" sessions were scheduled with all stakeholders.
- **Leverage skills.** Identifying key stakeholders focused on skills and motivation rather than specific organisational roles.

Data

- **Consult broadly**. Once roles were identified, multiple meetings were conducted to understand existing data and processes impacted by change.
- **Bolt-on, don't re-create.** Existing policies, processes and systems were leveraged with incremental changes where possible to reduce change impacts and recognise mutual benefits.
- **Build accessible tools**. Following consultation, Microsoft Excel via Teams continued to be utilised in favour of a third-party AI-focussed solution.
- **Limit access.** Data books were created per individual topic and relevant role-holder, instead of across operations or business units to focus access on specific SMEs.
- **Document every interaction**. Throughout consultation every query, comment, assumption, change and decision was recorded to guide future improvement.

Action

- **Strategy first**. Identify how the purpose and desire for change aligns with existing business strategy to increase buy-in from all stakeholders – including the Board.
- **Leverage governance frameworks.** Incorporating changes into current governance frameworks and responsibilities makes decision-making more efficient and reduces resistance.
- **Use KPIs and targets wisely.** Understand people and data before you measure results. KPIs can create a false 'ceiling' on performance before capability is clear.
- **Keep the Board engaged.** Report to the Board regularly, focussing on how the change aligns with strategic objectives and improves value and performance – this will help to identify deficiencies from a top-level perspective.

In closing

- Focus on each lever driven by middle managers: people (relationships), information (data, systems and processes) and action (strategy, decision-making and results)

- Adaptive change processes takes more time and effort however achieves less resistance in mining context

- Change is inevitable – ensure you are resilient by equipping the right people to address it