



ray sono

# Driving change in complex environments: A human-centric approach

# Table of contents

- 3 The challenge: resistance to change**
- 4 Guiding principles for successful change**
- 5 From theory to practice: the Minimum Viable Change framework**
- 6 Client results**
- 9 Let's get started: scope your challenge, make a plan**
- 10 Get in touch**

**“ True innovation begins with those who adapt, lead and inspire others. It’s the people who are willing to embrace new ways of working that drive lasting results. After all, change isn’t about processes or tools – it always starts with people.**



Dr Franz Steinberger  
**Lead Strategy & Digital Transformation**  
**Ray Sono AG**

# The challenge: resistance to change

Companies today face a landscape defined by constant change, in which the ability to turn change into opportunity has become essential for survival and growth. The goal is to transform unpredictable forces into intelligent tactics, forward-thinking strategies and impactful innovations. However, according to a survey by the *Harvard Business Review*, more than 40% of senior executives admit that they find it difficult to integrate innovative initiatives into their core operations. A Gartner survey underlines this concerning trend: the willingness of employees to support organisational change has dropped from 74% in 2016 to just 43% in 2022.

**The core barrier to change? Not technology – but a failure to engage people.**

How can organisations ignite curiosity and empower their teams to drive change?

**Human-first innovation: the key to lasting change**

Based on our experience with over 100 change projects at Voith, Deutsche Bahn, BMW and DACHSER, we have gained an important insight: two in three initiatives that disregard the human element fail. This highlights the critical importance of prioritising people in successful transformations. While technical innovation provides the spark, sustainable implementation requires a people-first environment.

## Ray Sono's change and transformation approach is built on two key questions:

**#1 How do we secure buy-in for innovation at every level?**

**#2 How do we effectively identify and develop the right projects?**

By focusing on people, our clients move from concept to implementation significantly faster than the industry standard. Why does this make a difference? We tackle the real challenges and uncover obstacles early on, which saves both time and resources. These 'soft' factors lead to hard results. Even in the most complex change projects we lead, our success rate consistently exceeds industry benchmarks and ensures long-term, sustainable impact.



# Guiding principles for successful change

## #1 Change is a marathon, not a sprint

Successful change requires both long-term vision and short-term action. By defining a desirable future and incorporating both – immediate, actionable steps and the larger goal – organisations ensure steady progress without losing sight of where they want to go.

## #2 People over processes

People drive change. Initiatives fail not because of poor strategy, but due to a lack of engagement and commitment from the broader workforce. Understanding employee needs and fostering joint teams for fruitful collaboration and involvement in the change process helps build trust and is essential for lasting success.

## #3 Leverage early adopters

It's natural to focus on the majority when leading change. However, we've learned that it's more effective to engage early adopters – those who would embrace change even if they didn't have to. These individuals need space to gain momentum, because change requires both people and room to grow.

## #4 Empower change champions

Change needs to resonate across the entire organisation, not just at the top. But when everyone is responsible, no one feels accountable. Identifying and empowering change champions at every level helps build widespread support, ensuring that change is embraced and successfully implemented.

## #5 Small wins, big impact

Large-scale transformations can overwhelm organisations. A Minimum Viable Change approach – testing and iterating small, manageable shifts – helps build momentum, reduces risks and creates a culture of continuous improvement.

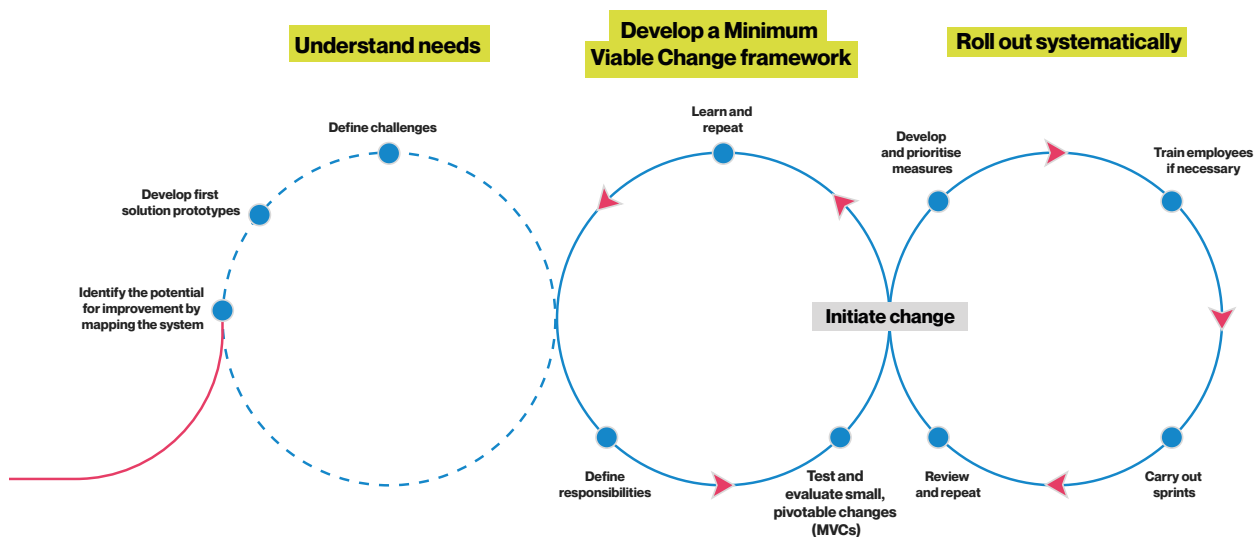
## #6 It's not a one-off project

For change to stick, it must be integrated into the organisation's core. Sustainable change requires embedding new behaviours into the culture as well as aligning systems, processes and policies with this direction. Leaders play a crucial role in reinforcing new practices and making change an ongoing, evolving part of everyday operations.

# From theory to practice: the Minimum Viable Change framework

Designed to navigate the complexities of organisational change, the MVC framework focuses on small, iterative shifts that are human-centred and adaptable. Unlike traditional top-down methods, it integrates change into the core of the organisation and is driven by real needs and behaviours as well as a structured yet flexible approach. One of the key advantages of the MVC framework is its ability to address common pitfalls that derail many change initiatives – such as the lack of clear vision, or too much focus on short-term wins without building a sustainable foundation for long-term success.. To overcome these challenges, the MVC approach breaks change into manageable steps that it constantly iterates. Each small step is tested, refined and aligned with long-term objectives, ensuring both short-term success and sustainable transformation.

## Minimum Viable Change framework (MVC):



### Step 1: understand needs

Change starts with a deep understanding of your organisation's unique challenges. By identifying pain points, we uncover key areas for improvement. This step ensures that solutions are grounded in practical, real-world insights that resonate with employees.

### Step 2: develop and iterate

Through continuous learning cycles, we test and refine Minimum Viable Changes, reducing risks while aligning with employee needs and organisational goals. This iterative process is highly flexible and prevents the common failure of rigid, one-size-fits-all solutions. It also ensures that early wins are not only celebrated, but built upon, helping to maintain momentum without losing sight of the broader transformation.

### Step 3: systematic roll-out

Once validated, MVCs are systematically rolled out with clear prioritisation and measurable milestones. This ensures that change doesn't just happen in isolation, but becomes embedded in the organisation's culture. By focusing on small, strategic changes that lead to larger shifts, we avoid the trap of short-term wins that don't contribute to long-term success. Our MVC approach builds sustainable, scalable transformation that sticks.



**To truly address challenges and drive progress, we avoid the myth of a 'silver bullet'. Instead, we adopt a 'silver buckshot' approach – small, targeted interventions across the organisation that collectively create significant impact. These smaller, iterative changes reduce disruption while building momentum. By transforming the day-to-day experiences of employees – shifting their perspectives, enhancing capabilities and unlocking new opportunities – we aim to create resilient, high-performance environments that sustain long-term success.**

Dr Franz Steinberger, **Lead Strategy & Digital Transformation, Ray Sono AG**

# Client results

## Implementing change at B&O Service

B&O Service, a leader in service solutions for the housing industry, embarked on a journey of rapid digitalisation to improve operational efficiency.

### The challenge:

The digital shift had led to communication barriers and declining employee engagement, which was endangering the company's ability to fully adapt to new processes and technologies.

### What we did:

We conducted extensive field research to uncover the root causes of these issues and implemented three key interventions:

1. Introduction of MS Teams as the central tool for internal communication and collaboration across all levels of the organisation – enabling 1,000 technicians to collaborate seamlessly.
2. Regular, methodologically enhanced team meetings to increase transparency, improve accountability and ensure better communication among teams.
3. Building a central user community that aligned IT solutions more closely with the actual needs of employees and ensured technology supported rather than hindered their work.

### Takeaway:

Rather than slowing productivity, more meetings actually boosted collaboration. The improved human interaction led to stronger teamwork and, ultimately, better results.

**“ We’ve significantly enhanced our internal communications and fostered a robust sense of community within our digital environment. Ray Sono’s approach, based on small, iterative changes and direct employee involvement at all levels, has led to improved engagement, a streamlined information flow and a more cohesive organisational culture.**

Rabih Kanaan  
**CEO**  
**B&O Service AG**

**B&O**  
**SERVICE**

[Learn more](#)

# Client results

## Strategic innovation management at AUDI

AUDI, known for pushing the boundaries of technology and design, wanted to accelerate innovation across its R & D processes and digital initiatives. We helped them implement a unified Stage-Gate process that streamlined both highly complex research and disruptive digital innovations.

### **The challenge:**

AUDI needed to balance the agility required for fast-paced digital innovation with the structured rigour of traditional R & D, without losing momentum.

### **What we did:**

To cut through lengthy process discussions, we co-created a functional prototype instead of relying on static charts and templates. This approach allowed for faster, more actionable feedback and hands-on validation.

During testing, we realised that employees misunderstood the wireframe as a final product. By quickly iterating and involving employees in the process, we refined the tool, ensuring it met the team's expectations and could scale across the organisation.

### **Takeaway:**

Even in early-stage prototyping, attention to technical details and clear communication are key. Engineers, in particular, couldn't overlook technical specifics or wording. This highlighted the need for prototypes that work not just visually but also functionally.





# Client results

## Innovating human-machine interaction at Voith

Voith Paper, a leader in industrial solutions, wanted to rethink how operators interact with their paper mills to boost efficiency.

### **The challenge:**

To create a vision for a more intuitive and efficient operator experience and bring it to life.

### **What we did:**

Rather than introducing complex technologies like AR or VR, we developed a Smart Button as a technical prototype. This simple yet powerful device was based on familiar industry standards, but introduced new capabilities. Portable and intuitive, the Smart Button allowed operators to control machines remotely, minimising physical effort while maintaining a seamless user experience.

### **The result:**

The Smart Button successfully showcased a new vision for machine interaction. As a technical prototype, it demonstrated the potential to improve operational efficiency, gaining strong support from stakeholders and laying the groundwork for future innovations in HMI systems.

### **Takeaway:**

Sometimes, innovation doesn't require disruptive technology. The best solutions are often familiar tools that simplify daily operations and meet real human needs. In this case, the Smart Button was a means to showcase a vision, proving that even simple, intuitive tools can drive significant improvements when aligned with users' needs.

# VOITH

[Learn more](#)

# Let's get started: scope your challenge, make a plan

If you want to create lasting and successful change, it all starts with a solid plan. Let's get started together:

## #1 Identify your challenges

In a scoping session of up to three hours

Tell us about your challenge, where you want to be next year and who we should talk to first.

## #2 Validate problems and potential

Through interviews

We'll speak up to five key stakeholders across various levels of your company to gain a deeper understanding of both the problems and opportunities.

## #3 Set up MVCs

In a change vision workshop

By leveraging structured frameworks like the Minimum Viable Change (MVC) approach and fostering a culture of collaboration and adaptability, we can help your company turn complex challenges into opportunities for growth.

# About Ray Sono

Ray Sono, founded in 1992, shapes the digital world of businesses and organisations of all sizes and industries. Locally, nationally, and globally. In the interplay of strategy, concept, design and technology, the digital expert transforms ambitious ideas into tangible digital content, products, and services. Ray Sono continuously develops this in the digital ecosystem of its customers and ensures smooth operation.

Ray Sono counts leading brands such as AUDI, Austrian Airlines, PAUL HARTMANN, Telefónica, Voith, WMF, ZEISS, and Zeppelin among its customers.

Dive deeper on [raysono.com](https://raysono.com)

Get in touch



Sebastian Sorger  
**Director Business Development, Ray Sono AG**  
[sebastian.sorger@raysono.com](mailto:sebastian.sorger@raysono.com)

Author



Dr Franz Steinberger  
**Lead Strategy & Digital Transformation**  
**Ray Sono AG**