Change Adoption Lab

Facilitator guide · 🟢 SOLO 🔵 TEAM

🟢 SOLO · 🔵 TEAM — how to read this guide

Sections marked 🟢 SOLO or 🔵 TEAM apply to that mode only; BOTH sections apply to everyone. If you're planning a rollout on your own, you can skip anything marked 🔵 **TEAM only**.

Your job: take one real change about to roll out and map it group by group, so the plan leaves with one specific adoption move per group — each with an owner and a date. You keep the groups distinct and hold the team to a real move per group; you don't design the rollout for them. BOTH

The one idea: a single rollout rarely works, because different groups experience the same change in different ways. Announced once, the same way to everyone, a change reaches no one in particular — and some groups never adopt it. This activity makes the differences visible group by group, so each gets the one move that helps that group adopt the change.

· WHEN DO I USE THIS?

Use this when BOTH

GOOD FIT

A new system, process or policy about to roll out to several different teams. A past rollout that stalled because some groups never came along. A change you can already sense some teams will take harder than others.

WRONG TOOL

Already resisting, cause unknown › Surface Honest Resistance (bring the result back here). Plan agreed, needs driving › Execution Alignment Lab. Change not yet decided › Decide Under Pressure. Affects only one group › you don't need a grid.

The one test before you start: can you name the distinct groups this change affects, and is it actually happening? If you can't name distinct groups, this isn't the tool. If it's not yet decided, decide first, then design the rollout.

· WHAT WILL YOU LEAVE WITH?

What you'll leave with BOTH

WHAT YOU GET

A rollout plan with a different adoption strategy for every affected group. The likely resistance from each group, named in advance. And one specific adoption move per group — each with a named owner and a date.

WHY IT MATTERS

The "one change" turns out to be several different changes. Resistance starts to look predictable, not personal — and the plan gets sharper as it gets more specific. No group is left on the default plan.

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PART 1 BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

get ready

1 · WHAT IS MY JOB HERE?

Your job BOTH

You are running this to one outcome: one rollout plan with a specific adoption move per group, owner and date on each. Your job is to:

- keep the groups **genuinely distinct** — the moment columns look alike, they've merged into "everyone"
- hold the team on the **need before the move** — a vague need produces a vague move
- drive **one specific move per group** — who does it, and when
- put an **owner and a date** on every move — not just the first

THE ONE RULE

Different needs deserve different moves. If every column looks the same, start again. The test for whether two groups are really one: **if they would receive exactly the same adoption move, combine them; if they need different moves, keep them separate.** The whole tool is the difference between columns; protect it.

2 · WHO DOES WHAT?

Roles BOTH

🟢 SOLO — for yourself

You build the grid yourself: name the groups, and work each column — experience, resistance, need, move. Where you don't know a group well, make your best honest estimate and mark it to verify with them before go-live. 45–60 minutes.

🔵 TEAM — you facilitate

You (facilitator) brief the team, keep time, keep the groups distinct, hold them to one move per group. Participants fill each column; where they know a group well they speak for it, where they don't they estimate and mark to verify. 60–90 minutes.

🔵 TEAM ONLY — skip if you're running solo

Brief the team in 2–3 minutes, in your own words. Say: "We're taking one real change we're about to roll out, and planning it group by group instead of all at once. We'll find that the same change means different things to different teams — and give each the one move that supports its adoption." Don't read the app page aloud.

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3 · HOW DO I PREPARE?

Setup and materials BOTH

THE GROUP GRID — ONE COLUMN PER GROUP, FOUR ROWS DOWN THE SIDE

THE CHANGE BRIEF — one plain statement, anchors every column				
	Field sales	Finance	Support	Managers
Experience gain / lose / do				
Resistance what they protect				
Need to adopt it				
Move who & when				

Work one column fully before the next. Read across at the end = one rollout plan, one move per group.

What	What it is, and when you use it
The change brief	A short, plain statement of the change being rolled out. Write it at the top before you start — it anchors every column. The critical ingredient.
A board or wall (the grid)	Room for one column per affected group, side by side, with four rows down the side: experience, resistance, need, move.
A few markers	For filling the grid in together. One colour is enough.
Capture space	Where the finished plan is read across and photographed — the artefact the team keeps.

Get the right people in the room. 🔵 TEAM people who know the affected groups well enough to speak for them — or to estimate honestly and mark it to verify. 60–90 minutes for a team, 45–60 solo. Protect Step 4 (the need) and Step 5 (the move) above all.

PART 2 DURING THE ACTIVITY

run it

Before you begin — 30-second check

- ✓ The change is real, decided, and about to roll out — not still being decided
- ✓ You can name several distinct groups it affects
- ✓ The change brief is written at the top of the grid
- ✓ You're ready to hold the room on the need before the move

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4 · HOW DO I RUN IT?

How to run it BOTH

The same grid, whether you plan it alone or facilitate a team. Build it left to right — one group completely before the next.

🟢 SOLO — for yourself

1. Name the groups (5–10). Every group the change affects, by team/role/function. One column each. Be specific.

2. See it through their eyes (10–15). For each: gain, lose, do differently. One group completely first.

3. Name the resistance (8–12). What each protects when the change is received.

4. Name the need (8–12). Understanding, capability, confidence or ownership.

5. Design the move (10–15). The smallest move that meets that need — who & when.

6. Assemble (5–10). Read across as one plan; owner + date on each.

🔵 TEAM — you facilitate

1. Name the groups (5–10). Team lists them; you ask for specific, not "staff". Don't combine groups that experience the change differently.

2. See it through their eyes (10–15). Ask: "if you were in this group on Monday morning, what would worry you most about this change?" Cap the discussion; one group completely before the next.

3. Name the resistance (8–12). Ask "what are they protecting?", not "why difficult?"

4. Name the need (8–12). Hold the room here — the hinge. Push past "more training".

5. Design the move (10–15). One per group, minimum. Protect this step's time.

6. Assemble & commit (5–10). Read across; owner + date on every move; photograph and send.

These times are indicative and will depend on the nature of the problem and the size of the team. The step that overruns is Step 2 (see it through their eyes) — cap it. The step that gets squeezed is Step 5 (the move) — and that's the step that produces the actual plan. Protect it: a grid full of insight with no moves is just analysis; the moves are the rollout.

5 · WHAT IS THE HINGE STEP?

The adoption need — where it's won or lost BOTH

Step 4 is the hinge. A vague need ("more training") produces a vague move; a sharp need names the move for you. Push every group's need to one of four. If the room disagrees on a group's need — say confidence versus capability — choose the need that would change the rollout most. If unsure, ask: "if we solved only one of these, which would make adoption most likely?"

THE FOUR ADOPTION NEEDS — PUSH PAST "MORE TRAINING" TO ONE OF THESE

UNDERSTANDING	CAPABILITY	CONFIDENCE	OWNERSHIP
see why it's happening	the skill & tools to work the new way	trust it'll work & they won't be blamed	a say in how it lands
the reason, not just the news	*can they actually do it?*	*is it safe to get it wrong?*	*done with them, not to them*

The need names the move. A vague need ("more training") produces a vague move.

On resistance (Step 3), ask "what are they protecting?" — not "why are they difficult?" Protection is concrete and predictable: their time, a tool they rely on, their status, a way of working that suits them. "Difficult" drifts into personality and teaches nothing.

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When to step in — and when not to · a principle, not a step 🔵 TEAM

STEP IN

The team writes a move for “everyone” → stop them; split it by group.

A group is too broad to need its own move → push to split it.

They jump to the move before naming the need → back to the need.

They stop at describing groups and call it done → drive to the move.

STAY OUT

The team argues how a group really feels → that’s the raw material.

A group’s reality is uncomfortable to admit → let it be heard.

They’re surprised the “one change” was several → let the surprise work.

The merge into one plan is slow but moving → leave it.

The clearest tell it’s time to step in: the columns start looking identical. That means the groups have merged back into “everyone” — send the team back to split them again.

PART 3 AFTER THE ACTIVITY

make it stick

6 · DID WE GET A GOOD RESULT?

What good looks like BOTH

A GOOD RUN

One column per group, each with a concrete need and one specific move; every move has an owner and a date. The team can point at the grid and say: “these are genuinely different — we needed several rollouts, not one.”

A HOLLOW RUN

Two or three vague groups; moves that are really one plan repeated (“communicate clearly to everyone”); no owners, no dates. If it looks like this, the columns aren’t different enough — ask for sharper groups and a distinct move per group.

7 · WHY DOES THIS WORK?

The idea underneath BOTH

The same change creates different gains, losses and uncertainties for different groups. Planning one rollout for everyone assumes they all need the same thing — they don’t. Planning each group separately, from its own resistance and its own need, makes adoption much more likely. The grid’s discipline — one column at a time — is what forces the differences into the open, where you can design for them.

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ONE CHANGE LANDS AS SEVERAL DIFFERENT CHANGES



Same email to all four = you lose half of them. The grid makes the difference impossible to ignore.

Before you finish — the check

- ✓ One column per group — each genuinely distinct, none merged into "everyone"
- ✓ Each group has a concrete need, named to one of the four
- ✓ Each group has one specific adoption move that meets that need
- ✓ No two groups share the same move (if they do, the need wasn't understood)
- ✓ Every move has a named owner and a date — not just the first
- ✓ The grid has been read across as one plan, photographed and sent round

8 · HOW DO I MAKE THIS A HABIT?

Take it back to work BOTH

THE HABIT

"Who are the distinct groups this change affects — and what does each one need to adopt it?"

The lasting change: teams stop writing "all-staff" rollouts and start designing a move per group. One change. Many experiences. Plan for each one. Keep the grid — it's the rollout plan, with an owner and date on every move.

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Appendix · Reference

You should not need this while you run the activity. Read it before, or use it if a run goes sideways.

9 · A WORKED RUN

Watch the reveal land BOTH

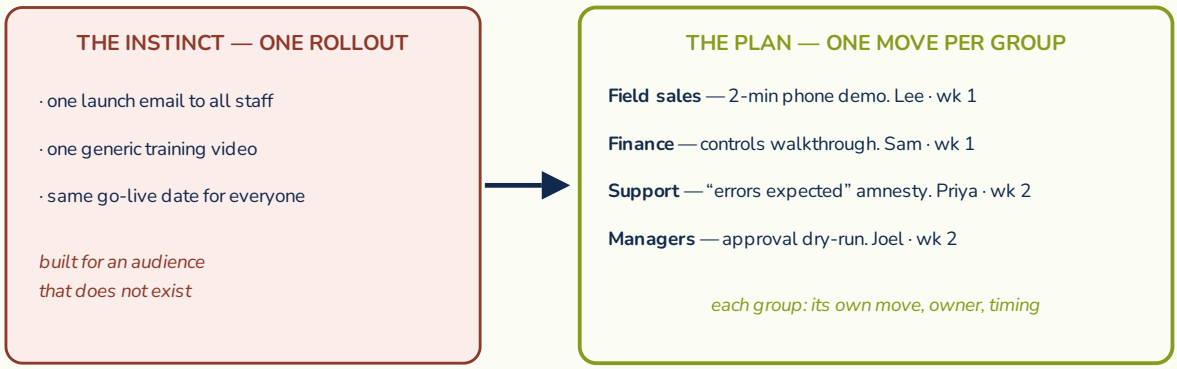
The change: a company moves expense claims to a new automated system next month. The instinct: one launch email, one training video, same for everyone.

Naming The team names four affected groups and works each column. Finance gains accuracy, loses manual control. Field sales file on phones, hate forms, will simply stop claiming. Support fear being blamed for errors. Managers must approve in a new flow they've not seen.

The push When the team wrote "clear communication" in two columns, the facilitator pushed: "that's the same move twice — what does field sales need that finance doesn't?"

The reveal: working group by group, the team sees the "one rollout" was really four. "We were about to send the same email to people who need completely different things. We'd have lost half of them." (A question that helps a room articulate this itself: "what would have happened if we'd sent the same launch email to everyone?") The push forced the real difference: field sales needed a 2-minute phone demo; finance needed a controls walkthrough. Every column ended with a different move.

FROM ONE INSTINCT TO ONE MOVE PER GROUP



Extracted by working the grid column by column — not by writing one plan for "everyone".

10 · WHAT GOES WRONG MOST OFTEN?

Common mistakes BOTH

Mistake	Why it fails the run
Planning for “everyone”	A move written for “all staff” means the columns merged into one. Force a separate move per group.
Groups that are too broad	“Staff” or “the business” hides the differences the tool exists to find. Split until each column needs a different move.
Jumping to the move	Designing the move before naming the need produces generic actions. Hold the room on the need first.
Stopping at description	“This is just stakeholder mapping.” Mapping stops at who’s affected; this tool only works once every group has a specific, owned move.

11 · WHAT IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

Edge cases BOTH

What happens	What to do
Every group’s move looks the same	The groups are too broad or the needs too vague. Either the change truly affects everyone equally (rare — you may not need this tool), or split the groups further.
The team names only one or two groups	Probe: does no one else touch this change? If it really affects one group, this is the wrong tool — design that one rollout directly.
The team doesn’t know a group well	Make the best honest estimate, mark the cell to verify, and name who will check it with that group before go-live.
Disagreement on a group’s move	Check the need is concrete first. Keep the move that group would most likely respond to. Cap debate at 3 minutes; the change owner decides.
The team invents moves before agreeing the need	The most common failure mode. Stop them and go back a row: “before the move — what does this group actually need to adopt the change?” The need names the move; a move without a named need is a guess.
Time runs out mid-grid	Finish a move for every group at a shallow level rather than perfecting two columns. A move for each group beats a deep plan for half of them.

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12 · WHERE DOES THIS FIT?

Where this sits in the Gym BOTH

If instead...	Use this
teams are already resisting and you don't know why	**Surface Honest Resistance** — discover what each group is protecting, then bring that back here as input.
the rollout plan is agreed and needs driving through	**Execution Alignment Lab** — turn the plan into owned, sequenced delivery.
the change itself isn't yet decided	**Decide Under Pressure** — choose whether and what to change first.

Rule of thumb: Change Adoption Lab plans *how* to roll a decided change out, group by group. Surface Honest Resistance finds *what's* being protected when resistance is already live; Execution Alignment Lab drives an agreed plan into delivery. Different jobs, different tools.

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