Culture Amp

A step-by-step guide to implementing a new *performance management* system

Tips and frameworks to gain and maintain buy-in

Contents

Introduction

Performance management is more than just a tick-the-box exercise for employees and managers. Done well, it can give your organisation a competitive advantage.

But how can you 'do it well'? At Culture Amp, we believe effective performance management does four things:

◔	Provides you with data-driven insights.
👥	Helps you make informed decisions about your people.
★	Enhances performance levels across your business.
→	Drives the achievement of your organisation's goals and objectives.

In today's business environment, performance management has become more important than ever. Understanding what motivates your top performers puts you in a strong position to develop a healthy talent pipeline and infuse energy into your star players.

On the flip side, it's equally important to have a bird's-eye view of which employees may need additional support. By nipping performance challenges in the bud, you avoid costly mistakes down the line, such as sluggish productivity rates, a lack of innovation, or an inability to foster cohesion, creativity, and innovation.

Setting up a performance management system that aligns with your business's specific needs doesn't have to be a mammoth task.

This guide offers a step-by-step process to gain leadership buy-in for investment in a performance management approach tailored to your business's needs. It includes advice to help you navigate the change management process and offers a comprehensive roadmap for rolling out a dedicated performance solution one step at a time.

To get things started, allow us to introduce you to Mackenzie.

Meet Mackenzie

Mackenzie has worked in HR for nearly ten years. When it comes to performance management, she has seen it all: frazzled managers struggling with the process, stressed-out employees avoiding difficult conversations, and clunky, confusing systems that fail to capture crucial insights.

Employee surveys show her that people don't feel supported in their work.

Her company lacks a fit-for-purpose performance management system.

She is the HR lead for an 800-person organisation.

Her company has ambitious growth goals.

Her company has not hit growth targets for the past four quarters.

She is facing pressure to cut costs from leadership.

Mackenzie's conundrum

A recent business strategy review has revealed that Mackenzie's organisation is far off reaching its performance targets for the financial year, and separate surveys reveal that employees don't have enough clarity around how their work is contributing to broader business goals.

On top of this, exit interview data has shown Mackenzie that a large portion of employees have cited the company's poor and inequitable performance management approach as a key reason for leaving.

Meanwhile, the CEO is reducing budgets as the organisation restructures to focus on new markets.

This makes Mackenzie's proposed solution – investing in an intuitive performance management system – a hard sell. When she first pitched the idea to the executive team, they suggested using spreadsheets for managers to map their team's performance metrics and goals.

Mackenzie explained that manual processes don't lead to long-term success. They can result in missed opportunities, lack comprehensive data for benchmarking and tracking changes, and leave managers underprepared for difficult conversations.

The executives then suggested utilising the existing HR Information System (HRIS), which manages recruitment, payroll, and onboarding processes. However, Mackenzie knows that an intuitive, purpose-built platform is essential to fostering a culture of continuous feedback and facilitating personalised plans for each employee.

She also understands that employees who perceive performance processes as inequitable and unfair are twice as likely to leave the organisation.

Mackenzie suspects that the company's lack of a fit-for-purpose performance tool could be the reason behind the company missing growth targets for the past four quarters. Before presenting her concerns to the CEO, she needs to find compelling data to support this.

Sound familiar?

HR practitioners are often asked to do more with less while solving some of the organisation's most complex people challenges. During times of uncertainty, growth, and disruption, it's wise to focus on people strategies. Culture, engagement, and performance initiatives form the foundation of organisational success.

So, how can Mackenzie gain leadership approval? **Read on to find out.**

PART ONE:

Assessing where you're at on your journey

Organisations in the early stages of their performance journey typically fall into one of two categories: beginning or striving. Identifying your organisation's stage will help determine the length and depth of your buy-in process, influence how you communicate changes to key stakeholders and offer valuable lessons on maximising your performance management system.

How can you tell if your organisation is at the beginning or striving stage? **Use this chart to assess which category best reflects your experience.**

	Beginning	Striving
Approach to performance management	Unstructured	Foundational
Process	No formal process	There is a process in place, but it's unstructured and inconsistent
Feedback cadence	Unstructured	Annual, measurement-focused reviews
System	Manual (e.g. spreadsheet)	HRIS
Key challenge	Employees don't set formal goals, and their performance isn't measured in a standardised way	The system isn't widely used by employees or managers, and you receive feedback that current performance management causes employees to feel anxious

From striving to thriving

Mackenzie identified that her organisation was in 'striving' mode and she wants to take it a step further into 'thriving' mode. To do this, she will need to take a phased approach because she knows that effective performance management implementation is not a quick-fix solution.
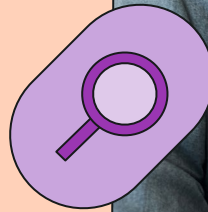
She also knows that for it to be successful, the business must consider the reasons behind its changes to the performance management approach. Implementing a new technology platform is beneficial, but for true success, cultural transformation is essential.

In addition to executing her performance management change plan, Mackenzie focuses on crucial cultural shifts, such as normalising real-time feedback within teams, fostering mutual accountability for goal achievement, and embedding performance discussions into regular 1-on-1 meetings between managers and their teams.

She also needs to secure buy-in from her key stakeholders.

Read on to learn how Mackenzie plans to do that.

Gaining leadership buy-in

With years of experience under her belt, Mackenzie has a clear sense of what the company needs to do next. However, even the most seasoned HR leaders can't rely solely on gut instinct. It's crucial to challenge assumptions with data and insights and follow a structured approach to secure leadership buy-in.

To align leaders behind her recommendations and demonstrate a future return on investment, Mackenzie follows the **six stages** of the leadership buy-in process.

1	**Discover:** Utilise multiple sources to thoroughly understand the problem you're trying to fix. This will give you a well-rounded perspective and either challenge or confirm your assumptions.
2	**Consult:** Identify the key stakeholders whose support you need and learn as much as you can about them. What do they care about? How do they see the world? What keeps them up at night?
3	**Define and refine:** To articulate the 'why' of your pitch, collect a range of proof points to support your claims. Use this data to connect your pitch to your organisation's goals.
4	**Collaborate:** Successful change programs can't happen solely at the leadership level. To ensure diversity of thought and that your solution resonates with end users, consult with employees and managers to validate your approach.
5	**Choose the technology:** With all this rich data in hand, find a technology platform that addresses your organisation's pain points. Consider usability, scalability and integration with your existing tech stack.
6	**Set the business case:** Develop a robust business case and present it to the executive team using language, logic and framing that resonates with them.

Tip

If you jump straight to step six, you might miss critical information that shapes your recommendation or informs how you present it to the executive team. Don't rush the outcome–take the time to get it right.

Let's see how Mackenzie put these steps into action.

STEP ONE:

Discover

Mackenzie has learned from previous failed pitches that relying on a single source of data to build a business case is not enough, as executives might find weaknesses in the data or feel it lacks a compelling narrative.

Now, she casts a wide net to gather multiple data points. She starts by identifying the main stakeholders who will be impacted by the new performance system: employees, middle managers and her HR team.

Next, she breaks this stakeholder group down further, categorising them into two groups:

Who stands to gain the most from this?	Who are likely to be my biggest resistors?
Mackenzie identifies three key groups: disgruntled high-performing employees seeking clarity on what's expected of them, the overwhelmed HR team struggling to address performance concerns raised by managers, and employees whose performance has been declining.	Mackenzie knows that the middle managers in her organisation have been resistant to change. They are stressed, busy and have a low tolerance for new initiatives being added to their to-do list. She assumes she will need to convince this group of the value a performance management solution will provide.

To learn more about these key groups, Mackenzie can:

- Analyse and collate data from the quarterly employee engagement survey.

- Look for trends and patterns in employee 'stay interviews'.

- Set up 1-on-1 meetings with influential middle managers in the business.

- Review comments from former employees in exit surveys, paying close attention to high-performers and those who struggled.

- Run a deep-dive discovery session with her HR peers to learn about the impacts of not having a robust performance management system (e.g. how much time is being wasted and how does that equate to financial loss for the business?).

What Mackenzie learned:

- **Stay interviews, pulse surveys and employee engagement data** told her that employees have concerns about inconsistent feedback and perceived favouritism in performance evaluations.

- Her deep-dive session with HR revealed that **a quarter of HR's time each week** is spent equipping managers with tools and advice to navigate performance concerns, preventing them from focusing on an important skills-mapping exercise to help future-proof the business.

- **Exit interview data** showed her that a staggering 25% of high-performing, high-potential employees had left the organisation in the past three years due to a lack of recognition, unclear goals and inconsistent feedback.

- In **1-on-1s**, she learned that most middle managers would happily embrace a new performance management tool; they just don't want to have to navigate a complex, cumbersome process. They need quick fixes to help them help their teams.

Now Mackenzie has enough information to **progress to step two.**

Consult

When trying to secure executive buy-in, a good rule of thumb is: don't try to make them see things from your perspective; instead, provide a solution to a key pain point from their perspective.

Mackenzie needs to understand their viewpoints. What concerns them? What is their awareness level and experience with performance management tools? What goals are they trying to achieve?

To learn this, Mackenzie:

- Schedules a 1-on-1 meeting with the CEO with the sole intent of listening deeply to her pain points, concerns, and goals. Mackenzie notes the language the CEO uses so she can weave this into her own business case when she presents it back.
- Analyses previous communications from the CEO to learn how she structures her messaging, e.g. does she rely heavily on data, visual cues or quick, snappy proof points?
- Conducts a round-table discussion with other executives to sense-check the CEO's responses and see if the team aligns with them.

Following these meetings, she identifies any **'champions of change'** – that is, executives who seem to support her plan and can help influence their peers.
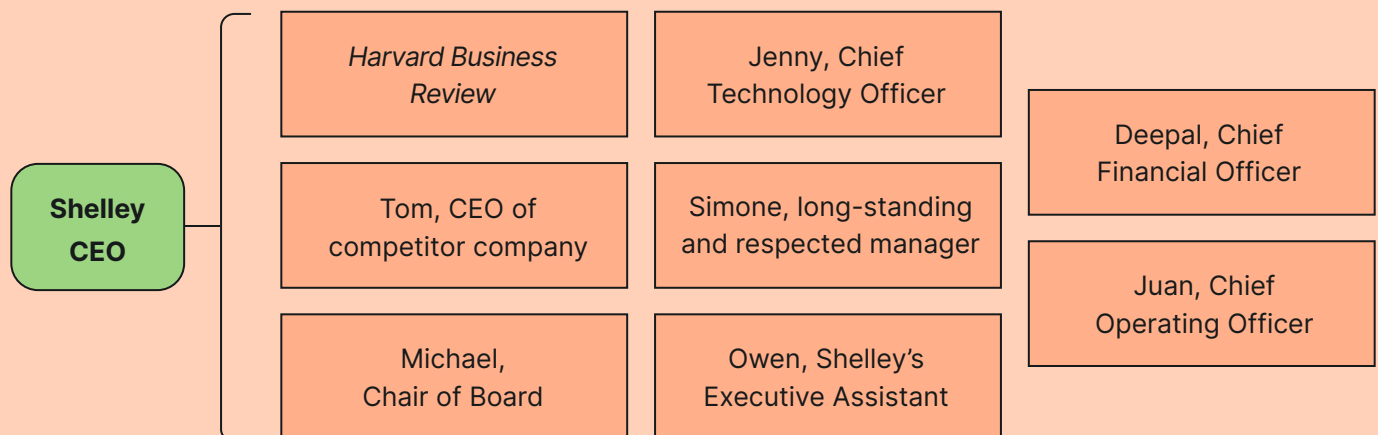
Additional resource

Current Culture Amp Engagement customer? Check out the Guide to Culture Amp's Performance Diagnostic Survey, which measures the core factors found in successful approaches to performance management systems.

Exercise: Create an influence map

To enhance her influence, Mackenzie assesses the factors and individuals that impact the key decision-maker – the CEO. This helps her identify who else she needs to gain support from and which channels or data sources to utilise. To achieve this, she conducts an 'influence map' exercise.

1. Who is the key decision-maker? Shelley Guztallo, CEO

2. Who/what influences the key decision-maker?

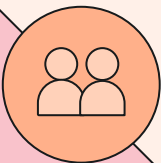| Shelley CEO	*Harvard Business Review*	Jenny, Chief Technology Officer	
	Tom, CEO of competitor company	Simone, long-standing and respected manager	Deepal, Chief Financial Officer
	Michael, Chair of Board	Owen, Shelley's Executive Assistant	Juan, Chief Operating Officer

3. What do we know about these key influencing factors?

- The Chief Operating Officer recently got budget approval for a new office location.
- The CEO reads *Harvard Business Review* cover-to-cover each month.
- The Chief Financial Officer is known to resist change.
- The CEO respects Simone's opinions and perspectives. She often has lunch with her to learn how the teams are doing.

✅ What Mackenzie learned:

- The company's Chief Operating Officer is a **strong advocate for change** and has recent experience getting his business cases approved. He also has a close relationship with the CEO, so Mackenzie will collaborate with him to distribute and reinforce her message.

- The CEO is **concerned about potential legal or compliance risks** associated with changing performance management practices. She also worries about the impact on employee morale and productivity if the wrong program is implemented. Additionally, she is **driving a hyper-growth plan** for the business.

- The CEO is often **influenced by competitors' actions** and frequently cites external data from reputable industry publications when proposing new initiatives.

- The broader executive team is deeply **concerned about the company not meeting growth targets for four consecutive quarters**. They also want to ensure the organisation can improve the performance and impact of their teams, and attract a robust talent pipeline.

Define and refine

Having collected internal data and insights, Mackenzie now needs to incorporate external data sources to demonstrate a strong return on investment. She will seek data points that align with the key concerns of the CEO and executive team, using this information to define and refine her pitch.

⭐ Proof points she could utilise:

- Employees who feel their performance review process is fair are <u>46% more engaged</u>.

- Productivity levels <u>increase by as much as 56%</u> when companies adequately manage performance.

- Employees are <u>3.6X more engaged</u> when they feel they have a voice in setting their own goals and aligning them with company initiatives.

- <u>95% of managers are dissatisfied</u> with current performance management processes.

- Continuous performance cycles can <u>significantly increase</u> managers' inclination to provide helpful feedback.

What does Mackenzie do next?

Mackenzie compiles her internal and external data to craft a compelling narrative that supports her pitch. This allows her to clearly articulate her 'why' and create a persuasive elevator pitch, which might look something like this:

Performance management elevator pitch
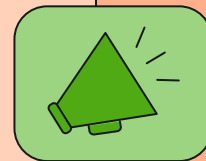
What's the purpose of this initiative?

- Modernise and streamline our approach to how performance is assessed, managed and developed.

- Create a fair, transparent and employee-centric approach to performance management.

- Redeploy the HR team's attention onto more strategic business outcomes.

- Get rich, big-picture insights into our organisation's performance and productivity rates.

What are our main objectives?

- Identify who our high-performing employees are so we can pay attention to their development and retention.

- Standardise our recognition and performance cycle processes.

- Remedy performance issues before they snowball into productivity drains.

- Empower managers to have critical and impactful performance conversations with their teams and champion a culture of continuous feedback.

- Ensure that all performance goals ladder up to organisational goals.

What are the expected outcomes?

- Improved individual and team performance.

- Boost in retention rates, particularly among high-performing/high-potential employees.

- Increase in managers' confidence in their ability to offer feedback.

- Individual performance plans ladder up to organisational goals, and employees are clear about how their goals contribute to organisational growth.

What are the potential roadblocks?

- Budget constraints.

- Competing priorities for HR and executive teams.

- Leadership perceives middle managers as change-resistant.

How will we measure success?

- Meet growth targets in three out of four consecutive quarters.

- Establishment of a manager training program to increase feedback capabilities across the business.

- 10% uptick in organisation-wide productivity rates.

Collaborate

Mackenzie strongly believes in the importance of diversity of thought. Employees and managers deserve a voice in decisions that affect their daily lives.

Before searching for a performance platform, Mackenzie aims to identify the 'must-have' features according to employees and managers. This will help her narrow the search and select a solution that is fit-for-purpose for its primary users.

To achieve this, she could:

Conduct a small focus group:

Mackenzie could ask managers to nominate 4-6 employees from different business units to tell her what motivates, energises, and frustrates them at work.

Run a listening session:

This could encompass a larger group of diverse employees from different business units. Mackenzie could ask questions such as: 'Do you know how your work and performance align to the organisation's goals?' or 'If you were your own manager, what changes would you make?' and encourage employees to share their perspectives in an unstructured conversation.

✅ What Mackenzie learned:

She opts for a focus group, as she's interested in getting deep insights from the employees. She believes this will help her better understand why they are not achieving their targets.

She learns that:

- Employees are highly motivated when they know they are contributing to the organisation's overall success.
- Current performance management approaches are something they dread.
- Employees don't receive enough critical and timely feedback from their managers.
- They would appreciate a personalised approach to their development plans.

Choose the technology

With a clear understanding of her 'why' and the ability to articulate it effectively, Mackenzie is now ready to evaluate which performance management platform best suits her organisation. Based on the insights she has gathered, she has compiled a checklist of must-have features, which include:

- ✓ <u>Integration with the company's existing tech stack</u>.

- ✓ Easy to implement and user-friendly.

- ✓ Scalable and customisable.

- ✓ Rich insights and data that tells a compelling story.

- ✓ Links performance with engagement metrics.

- ✓ Bias-reducing features.

- ✓ Employees and managers can set and track goals.

- ✓ Personalised development plans.

- ✓ Enables managers to have more impactful 1-on-1s.

- ✓ Employee performance dashboard to see which teams are thriving and which teams need additional support.

- ✓ Enables a culture of continuous feedback and improvement.

- ✓ Helps build a stronger recognition culture.

- ✓ Enables a 360 approach to feedback.

- ✓ Intuitive automated workflow to keep teams on track and hold managers accountable for supporting teams.

- ✓ Micro-learning opportunities to upskill employees.

- ✓ Empowers managers and leaders to listen, measure, and act.

After engaging in thorough market research and testing different platforms, Mackenzie landed on Culture Amp Perform, which ticked all the boxes on her checklist.

STEP SIX:

Set the business case

Mackenzie has spent the past three months in fact-finding mode. Now she's ready to consolidate her stakeholder feedback, data analysis, elevator pitch and platform recommendations into a comprehensive business case.

Performance management business case

Executive summary

To achieve our FY25 business growth goals and successfully enter three new key markets, it is imperative to modernise and streamline our performance management approach.

Currently, our HR team spends over 500 hours annually helping managers navigate performance issues. This significant time investment detracts from addressing our critical talent needs and empowering managers.

Introducing a new performance management system will create a fair, transparent, and employee-centric approach, resulting in improved performance across the organisation and a fair and equitable reward and recognition program.

Additionally, it will provide an organisation-wide view of productivity levels and boost high-performing employees across the company. This transformation will enable our HR team to focus on strategic talent management, which is essential for our business's success in the coming years.

Introduction

In today's competitive business landscape, a fit-for-purpose performance management system is crucial for driving organisational success and maintaining a competitive edge. Modernising our performance management approach is not only a strategic imperative for meeting our FY25 business growth goals and expanding into new markets, but also essential for ensuring compliance, mitigating risks, and aligning with industry best practices.

A fit-for-purpose performance management system addresses significant legal risks. Our current system lacks the rigour and transparency needed to ensure fair and consistent performance evaluations, potentially exposing us to legal challenges and compliance issues.

A modern system will provide a structured framework for performance assessments, reducing the risk of bias and ensuring compliance with employment laws and regulations.

Moreover, the fact that we've missed growth targets for the past four quarters is worrying. A new system will improve the performance and impact of our teams, and will save managers valuable time and effort via intuitive automation.

In terms of competitive positioning, it is noteworthy that several of our key competitors have recently adopted advanced performance management systems, reaping significant benefits in terms of employee productivity and organisational efficiency.

By lagging in this area, we risk falling behind. Implementing a new system will keep us on par with our competitors while enabling us to leverage best practices and drive superior performance across the organisation.

Objectives

- Free up over 500 hours annually for our HR team, allowing them to focus on strategic talent management and support for critical business needs.

- Meet growth targets in three out of four consecutive quarters.

- 15% increase in employee engagement rates over the next 12 months.

- Establishment of a manager training program to increase feedback capabilities across the business.

- 10% uptick in organisation-wide productivity rates.

Roles and responsibilities

Name	Responsible for
Chief Executive Officer	Endorsing the overall initiative, providing strategic direction and ensuring alignment with business goals.
HR Manager (Mackenzie)	Leading the project, overseeing HR team activities and ensuring the initiative addresses HR challenges effectively.
Chief Financial Officer	Allocating budget, approving financial plans and ensuring cost-effectiveness of the new system.
Technology Lead	Ensuring the selected platform integrates seamlessly with existing technology infrastructure.
Chief Operating Officer	Facilitating operational alignment, supporting change management and overseeing implementation logistics.

Implementation plan

In the first year, the HR team will identify challenges in our current performance management processes and conduct detailed research to validate these findings. With leadership buy-in, we will undertake rigorous market testing to identify a platform that aligns with our business needs and objectives.

Upon securing approval, we will collaborate closely with the procurement team to ensure compliance. Subsequently, we will initiate a 12-week change management, formal training, and rollout phase. This will conclude with a comprehensive feedback collection phase to set future goals and ensure continuous improvement.

Technology recommendation

Integrates with existing tech stack

Easy to implement and user-friendly

Scalable and customisable

Provides rich insights and data for executive reporting

Links performance with engagement metrics

Facilitates equitable performance management with bias-reducing features

Supports goal setting and tracking for employees and managers

Offers clear, personalised development plans for employees

Promotes a culture of continuous feedback and improvement

Enables 360 feedback (manager, peer, self-reflection)

Risks and mitigation strategies

Risk	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Resistance to Change	Low employee adoption, project delays	Implement a comprehensive change management plan, including clear communication, training and support.
Cost Overruns	Budget strain, potential project halt	Conduct thorough cost analysis, set a realistic budget and establish contingency funds for unexpected expenses.
Integration Issues	Disruption to existing systems	Engage IT early in the process, perform rigorous testing and select a platform known for seamless integration.
Data Security and Privacy Concerns	Potential data breaches	Ensure the platform complies with data protection regulations, conduct regular security audits and provide training.
Compliance Risks	Legal and regulatory penalties	Ensure the platform meets all relevant compliance standards, and conduct regular compliance reviews.

PART THREE:

Implementing your new performance management system
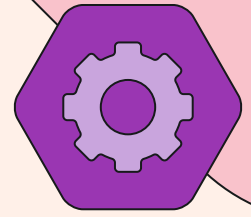
Mackenzie's business case was a success, and the executive team approved the additional budget for the new performance management system. Now, she is ready to move into implementation mode.

STEP ONE:

Consult with a diverse stakeholder group

Person	Business Unit	Input
Juan, Chief Operating Officer	Executive team	Seek advice and support regarding the operational rollout of the new platform.
Simone, Senior Manager	Communications	Sense check the communication plan to keep employees informed across the changes and secure their buy-in.
Mei, HR Coordinator	Human Resources	Shadow Mackenzie and collate weekly progress reports for the executive team.
Alison, IT and Customer Experience	Technology	Support with rollout of technology platform and development of training materials.
Mackenzie, HR Manager	Human Resources	Develop and maintain alignment with key milestones. Develop and execute employee platform training.

Utilise a change management framework

Now Mackenzie needs to choose a structure for this change management project. She chooses the ADKAR model, which stands for Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. This provides a framework for understanding and managing change at an individual level, focusing on the essential elements needed for change to be successful.

Awareness

Communicate the need for change: Clearly articulate why the organisation is transitioning to a new performance system with a detailed and phased communication plan. Highlight the benefits for employees and managers and the key functionalities being added. Address any misconceptions, such as concerns about peers accessing their performance plans.

For Mackenzie's detailed communication plan, .

Desire

Create a compelling case for change: Highlight the shortcomings of the current system and how the new platform will offer career growth, fairer evaluations and increased transparency.

Address concerns and resistance by encouraging open dialogue and feedback.

Mackenzie and Mei schedule fortnightly 'ask me anything' sessions for employees to learn about the new performance management system and ask any questions they may have.

Knowledge

Provide training and resources: Offer comprehensive training programs, such as Culture Amp Training, to ensure employees understand how to use the new performance system effectively.

Mackenzie runs a company-wide training session followed by targeted programs for the company's 100+ managers, empowering them to coach their teams. She aims to make managers the biggest champions of the new platform, investing time and energy to get them excited about it.

Ability

Encourage learning and monitor progress: Provide ongoing support to help employees develop proficiency with the new performance management system.

Mackenzie records all 'ask me anything' sessions and the initial company-wide training program, storing them on the company server for easy access and refresher training.

Reinforcement

Embed new practices and recognise change champions: Update policies, procedures, and performance expectations to reflect the new system. Solicit feedback from employees and managers to make necessary adjustments.
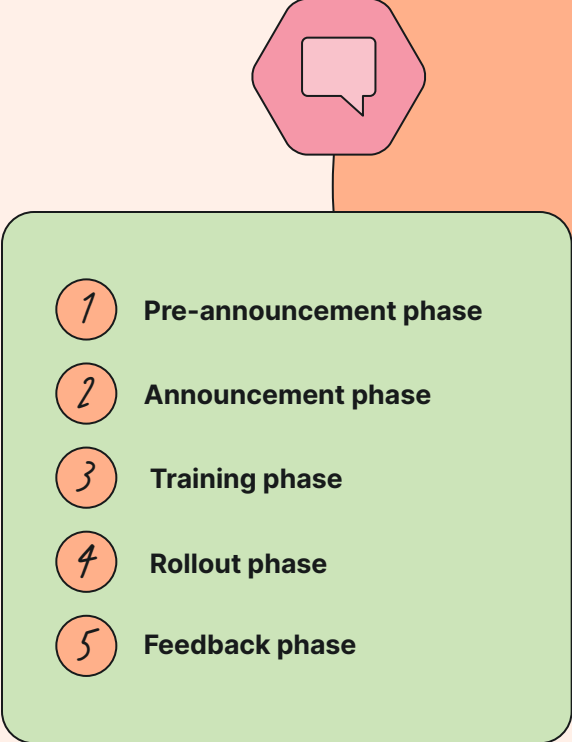
Mackenzie and Mei use the performance management system's 'shout out' feature to acknowledge and reward teams who have actively engaged with the platform and provided valuable feedback.

STEP THREE:

Communicating your message

In the past, Mackenzie made the mistake of rushing the communication stage of her project rollout. She spent months in the discovery and buy-in stages, only to lose momentum during the critical rollout period due to a lack of a structured communication process.

Determined not to repeat this mistake, she maps out a five-stage communication strategy, which includes:

1. Pre-announcement phase
2. Announcement phase
3. Training phase
4. Rollout phase
5. Feedback phase

① Pre-announcement phase

Mackenzie's plan on a page:

Communication Goal	Inform employees that a new performance management system is coming and get them excited about how it could improve their experience at work.
Target Audience	All employees
Communication Channels	• 1-on-1 meetings between managers and their teams • Dedicated internal communication channel for the rollout
Key Messages	• We have heard your pain points: the current performance management processes are stressful, clunky, and impersonal. Leadership is committed to addressing these issues. • We know employees want their goals to align with organisational objectives and that they seek more timely and constructive feedback from managers. Our new program is designed to meet these needs.
Timeline	2 weeks prior to the formal announcement.
Success Metrics	• Manager email-open rates above 70% • Good post engagements/reactions on internal communication channel

Example rollout

Date	Activity	Channel
Week one: Monday	Brief managers to discuss the new performance system in their 1-on-1s this week. Give them high-level information about the pain points the new platform will solve. Ask them to tell employees that more information is coming, formal training will be provided and to reinforce the benefits they will gain from interacting with the new platform.	Email
Week two: Thursday	Create an all-access channel dedicated to the new performance platform. Appoint a small group of change champions at a management level to drip-feed information over a specific period of time so you don't overwhelm people. This could include product features or outlining specific pain points that will be addressed. For example: 'I'm keen to try out the new feature that allows employees to rate elements such as their workload, work-life balance and motivation levels ahead of each meeting, so we can benchmark progress over time and ensure you get what you need out of our 1-on-1s.'	Internal communication channel

Tip

Think of your managers as a communication channel. They often have the most influence when it comes to getting employee buy-in.

② Announcement phase

Mackenzie's plan on a page:

Communication Goal	Give employees comprehensive details about the new platform and let them know what to expect next.
Target Audience	All employees
Communication Channels	• Company meeting • Dedicated internal communication channel • Email
Key Messages	• Explain the 'what's in it for me' angle: 'We've invested in this new platform to align with our organisational goal to grow and retain the best talent and to create a more engaging employee experience for you.' • Address what you learned in our discovery phase: 'We understand that our employees want their goals to contribute to our organisational goals, and that they seek more critical and timely feedback from their managers. Our new platform will address this.' • Be realistic about the process: 'It will take us a few months to get this right, but it's important that you engage with the training and utilise the platform, as this platform will become a key pillar of your personal development here.'
Timeline	Day of announcement.
Success Metrics	• Email open rates above 60% • 50% of clicks on product demo video watch all the way through

Example rollout

Date	Activity	Channel
Announcement day	Share headline details, explain that you will be scheduling training sessions in the following week, and tell employees to watch their inboxes for a detailed email.	Company meeting
Announcement day	Share a product demo/hype reel video on your dedicated internal communication channel to give people a better sense of the platform's layout and features.	Internal communication channel
Announcement day	Ask your change champions (influential/ senior people in the business) to engage with the video and tag their teams in it.	Senior leaders

3 Training phase

Mackenzie's plan on a page:

Communication Goal	Facilitate comprehensive training for employees and managers on the use of the new platform to ensure maximum engagement.
Target Audience	Managers and Employees
Communication Channels	• Email • Internal communication channel • On-demand webinar
Key Messages	• Provide details about when training will take place, how long it will take and the learning outcomes employees can expect to achieve, such as how to set goals and monitor them over time, how to shout-out your peers' great work and how to give, receive and act on feedback. • Set clear expectations about attendance and link this back to the 'what's in it for me' messaging used in the announcement phase. • Clarify that there will be on-demand content for those who'd like to refresh their learnings over time.
Timeline	One week ahead of training and two days post training
Success Metrics	• Email open rates above 60% • 90% of employees attend training session • 80% of employees engage with on-demand content

Example rollout:

Date	Activity	Channel
Week prior to training	Send a formal training email with key information about when the training will take place and how long it will take to complete.	Email
Day before training	Send a reminder to employees about the upcoming training. You could say something like: "Looking forward to walking you all through the platform tomorrow. Make sure you come prepared to ask a lot of questions!"	Internal communication channel
Two days after training	After giving employees a day to soak in what they've learned, share a link to a recorded training session that employees can access at their convenience. You could say something like: "Thanks to everyone who came to the training session. It was great to see so many of you engage with this important new platform. If you'd like to refresh yourself on how to use the platform at any time, you can watch this 15-minute training video. Also feel free to come to me or your manager with any questions."	On-demand webinar via internal communication channel

⚡ Rollout phase

Mackenzie's plan on a page:

Communication Goal	Inform employees about the official rollout of the new system and provide guidance on how to access and navigate it. Offer ongoing support and resources to facilitate adoption.
Target Audience	Managers and Employees
Communication Channels	• Email • Managers • FAQ thread on internal communication channel
Key Messages	• Let employees know the new platform is live and ready for them to use. By now, employees should have all log-in details and training refresher materials. • Encourage employees to jump into the platform and experiment with its features. • Ask employees to share any questions they have about how to use the platform's features. • Share the news that you have developed a specific FAQ thread on your internal communication channel to address employees' queries. • Reuse your 'what's in it for me' messaging to reiterate the benefits of the new program.
Timeline	Day of rollout and 2-3 days following.
Success Metrics	• Email open rates above 60% • 90% of employees log into the system • Positive sentiment from pulse survey sent out via internal communication channel to assess employees' thoughts about the level of support provided.

Tip

People typically need to hear a key message 5-7 times before it sticks, so don't be concerned about repeating yourself.

Example rollout:

Date	Activity	Channel
Rollout day	Email all employees announcing the official launch of the performance platform and sharing information about how to set up their account. Include access to the on-demand training webinar for those seeking a refresher on the training.	Email
Rollout day	Send out a message updating people about how many of their peers have already engaged with the platform. It could read something like: "So great to see that 47% of employees have already created their account and jumped in to explore the new performance management platform. Shout out to the marketing team who have an 88% sign-up rate already."	Internal communication channel
Two days after training	Have managers check in with their teams to see who hasn't yet created an account and/or explored the platform.	Managers
Three days after training	Set up an FAQ thread and encourage your change champions to jump in and start the conversation to encourage others to ask their questions.	Internal communication channel

Tip

It's usually more effective to recognise the people who have engaged with the initiative than to call out those who haven't.

Additional resource

Learn <u>how open and honest communication impacts employee engagement</u> with this practical article.

⑤ Feedback phase

Mackenzie's plan on a page:

Communication Goal	Gather feedback from employees and managers about their experience with the new system, encourage open communication, and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.
Target Audience	• Employees who have used the system (to learn what they like/don't like). • Employees who haven't yet used the system (to learn what's preventing them from accessing it).
Communication Channels	• Employee survey • Managers
Key Messages	• Stress the importance of continuous improvement, and let employees know that you are open and receptive to feedback. • Communicate the benefits of receiving employee feedback (e.g. it makes it easy for us to tweak the platform to better suit you, or, it helps guide your managers to make your 1-on-1s more valuable). • Assure employees that their anonymity will be protected when they engage with the employee feedback form. • Give employees the opportunity to provide feedback face-to-face if they prefer. • Be transparent about the feedback you receive and share the results with the whole company. • Communicate a plan for how you'll respond to the feedback, and follow up quickly.
Timeline	One month after rollout.
Success Metrics	• Less than 10% of staff have not yet created a profile. • Over 50% of staff report having a positive experience with the new platform.

Tips

1 You have just as much to learn from disengaged employees as you do from the engaged ones – if not more!

2 Create a sense of urgency by putting a time limit on the availability of the feedback survey.

Example rollout:

Date	Activity	Channel
One month after rollout	Send an email to all employees inviting them to share their perspectives on the system so far. You could say something like: "We want to make sure this platform is delivering on its purpose and enhancing your experience at work. Prior to implementing this new system, you told us that you felt you had a lack of clarity on what's expected of your roles, not enough critical feedback and a lack of recognition for your hard work. Tell us how you're feeling now – take this 5-minute survey."	Email
The following day	Send out a message on your dedicated internal communication channel reminding people to share their feedback. You could say something like: "We've already had some great feedback coming in from yesterday's survey. You've told us that you're really enjoying the structure this platform is adding to your 1-on-1 meetings with your manager, but you're still seeking clarity on how it can enable a better feedback culture. Watch this video about how the platform enables peer feedback, 360 feedback and self-reflection options. There's still time to have your say! The survey is open for another 48 hours."	Internal communication channel

PART FOUR:

Your performance management road map

Mackenzie developed a high-level, three-year roadmap for herself and her team to ensure the new performance management system's success. The primary goal for the first year of this project should be to establish a solid foundation for an effective performance process. This includes initiating the integration of essential leadership capabilities that are needed both now and as the process evolves in the future.

She outlined the following key milestones and timeframes:

Each organisation's road map will look different. Here is MacKenzie's rollout plan, which acts as an example of what your organisation could do:

Year 1

1

Timeframe: 2-3 weeks

Plan: As an HR team, come together to form a hypothesis about the challenges the organisation is facing due to ineffective performance management processes. Assess these challenges from the perspective of managers, leaders and employees. Then, take those assumptions into a detailed research and discovery phase and prepare to have them challenged.

2

Timeframe: 6-8 weeks

Plan: Follow the six steps to achieve leadership buy-in process (see page 8 for framework).

3

Timeframe: 6-8 weeks

Plan: Develop a list of must-have features based on the insights gleaned during the buy-in stages. Then, trial a variety of performance management tools to see which ones align with your business needs.

4

Timeframe: 4 weeks

Plan: Pre-announcement and announcement phases of change management (see pages 25-28 for tips).

5

Timeframe: 2 weeks

Plan: Formal training phase commences (with ongoing training provided at various stages following this. See pages 29-30).

6

Timeframe: 4-6 weeks

Plan: Rollout phase (see pages 31-33) of the following Culture Amp modules:

- 360 feedback: annual review – self reflection, peer feedback, manager reviews.
- Annual goal setting.

7

Timeframe: 2 weeks

Plan: Feedback collection phase (see pages 34-35 for tips).

Based on insights from the feedback, set goals that you hope to meet over the following 6-12 months, such as getting a 10% increase in engagement with the platform.

Go deeper

360-degree feedback enhances the fairness and transparency of performance management for employees by including self-reflection, peer input and manager evaluations in the review process.

Goal setting fosters clear alignment on priorities, ensuring that managers and employees collaborate to establish goals. This clarifies expectations and aligns individual objectives with those of the company. This collaborative approach is particularly beneficial for organisations initiating the implementation of goal-setting frameworks such as OKRs, SMART goals or formal KPIs.

Year 2

①

Timeframe: 4 weeks

Plan: New modules pre-announcement and announcement phases of change management (see pages 25-28 for tips).

②

Timeframe: 2 weeks

Plan: New modules formal training phase commences with ongoing training provided at various stages following this (see pages 29-30 for tips).

③

Timeframe: 4-6 weeks (then ongoing after initial rollout)

Plan: Rollout phase (see pages 31-33 for tips) of these Culture Amp modules:

- 360 feedback: **bi-annual** review – self-reflection, peer feedback, manager reviews
- **Bi-annual** goal setting
- 1-on-1s
- Calibrations

④

Timeframe: 2 weeks

Plan: Feedback collection phase (see pages 34-35 for tips).

Go deeper

Calibrations: Regular quarterly check-ins and semi-annual reviews ensure alignment across the board. These sessions help mitigate bias by enhancing accountability and promoting fairness and consistency in the process. Additionally, they empower leaders to consider factors beyond just goals when making talent-related decisions.

1-on-1 conversations: These meetings are pivotal for fostering employee engagement and providing necessary communication, guidance and rapport to optimise performance. They serve as ideal opportunities for managers and employees to explore career advancement, review progress towards goals and address any obstacles.

Year 3

①

Timeframe: 4 weeks

Plan: New modules pre-announcement and announcement phases of change management (see pages 25-28 for tips).

②

Timeframe: 2 weeks

Plan: New modules formal training phase commences with ongoing training provided at various stages following this (see pages 29-30 for tips).

③

Timeframe: 4-6 weeks (then ongoing after initial rollout)

Plan: Rollout phase (see pages 31-33 for tips) of these Culture Amp modules:

- Regular/consistent 1-on-1s
- Continuous feedback
- Bi-annual goal progress

④

Timeframe: 2 weeks

Plan: Feedback collection phase (see pages 34-35 for tips).

Go deeper

Continuous feedback: Foster a company culture that embraces ongoing feedback. Encourage all members of your organisation to initiate and engage in continual feedback dialogues. This empowerment enables individuals to gain deeper insights into their strengths and areas for development, ultimately driving personal growth.

Summary

By adhering to a detailed change management and communication plan, Mackenzie successfully implemented the new performance management approach, achieving fantastic results, including:

- More projects completed successfully with employees feeling secure and supported in their work and achievement of goals.
- Managers integrating the new performance system into their weekly 1-on-1s.
- The HR team gained more time to focus on strategic business goals.

⭐ Mackenzie's key lessons:

- Change management is easier when you have a solid strategy in place.
- Securing buy-in from all levels of the organisation is critical for the success of such initiatives.
- A fit-for-purpose performance management system can address various business challenges, such as employee efficiency and engagement rates, while creating goal alignment that supports the business in achieving its growth targets.
- Successfully implementing initiatives like this requires time and care.

Culture Amp

If you're a current customer looking for support, please contact **support@cultureamp.com**

Learn how **Culture Amp** can help you create a culture of continuous feedback and enhance your performance management approach.