AVION CONSULTING

EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Organizations Are Running More Change Than People Can Absorb

Change used to be episodic, with a beginning, middle, and end. Most operating models still act as if that's still true.

73%

Of organizations are already at change saturation, meaning they are managing more change than their people can absorb

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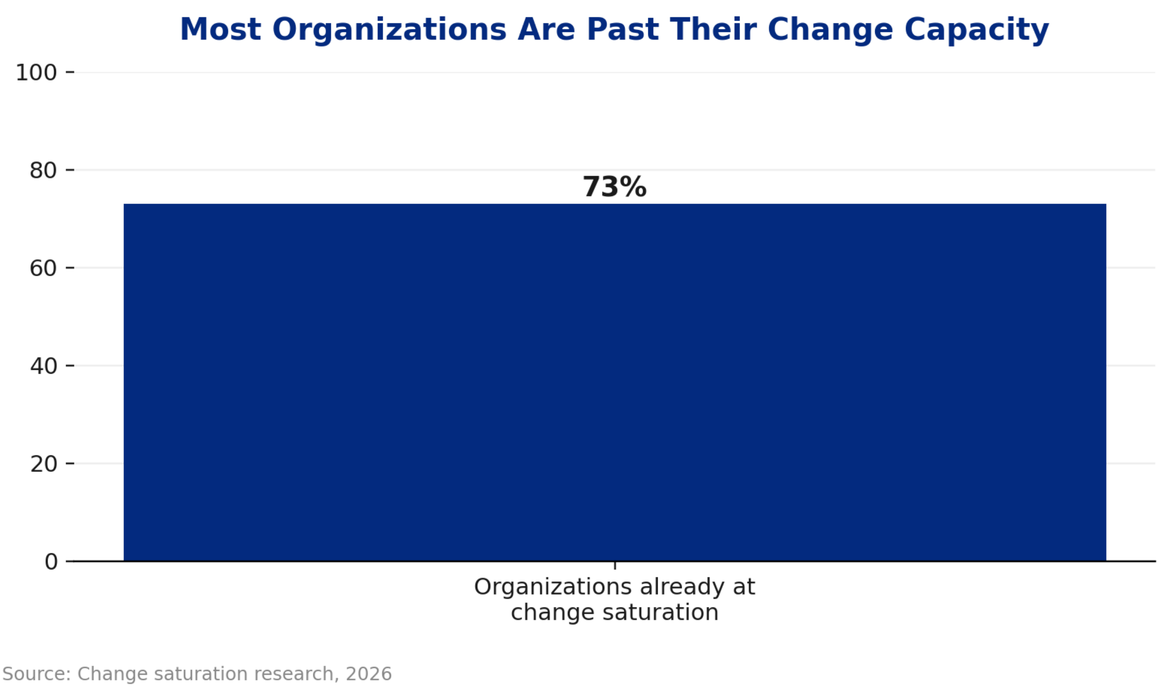
Change Stopped Being a Project With an End Date

The traditional change management model assumes a defined initiative with a start, a middle, and an end, after which the organization returns to a stable state until the next initiative begins. That model describes very few organizations accurately anymore. A large majority, an estimated 73 percent, are already at change saturation, running more simultaneous change initiatives than their people have the capacity to absorb.



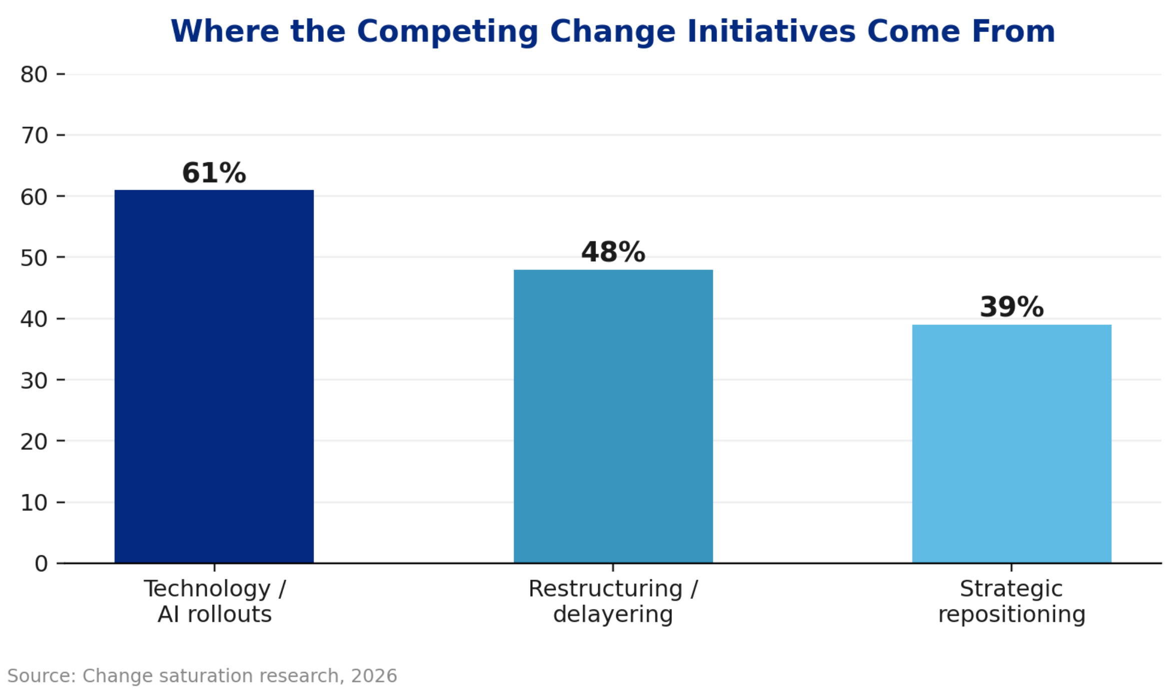
Most organizations have exceeded their change capacity.

Why the Twenty-Year-Old Failure Rate Still Applies

The roughly 70 percent change failure rate, cited so often it has become wallpaper, has held steady across decades despite new methodologies and new tools. Saturation is a large part of why. A workforce absorbing a reorganization, a technology rollout, and a strategic pivot simultaneously does not have a fourth reservoir of attention available for whatever comes next, no matter how well that fourth initiative is designed or communicated.

The Numbers at a Glance

Metric	Figure	Source
Organizations at change saturation	73%	Change saturation research, 2026
Standard change initiatives falling short of stated goals	~70%, unchanged for decades	Change management research compilation



Multiple large initiatives are typically running at once, competing for the same attention.

The Sequencing Mistake Behind Most Failed Change

Most transformation planning treats each initiative as if it were the only demand on the organization's attention that quarter. Roadmaps get built in isolation by the function sponsoring them, without a shared view across the enterprise of everything else already competing for the same managers' and employees' bandwidth. The result is initiatives that are individually well designed and collectively unsustainable.

Two Different Jobs to Do

For the CEO

Before approving the next major initiative, ask for a consolidated view of every other significant change currently in flight across the organization, not just the one in front of you. Sequencing and pacing decisions belong at the enterprise level, not left to whichever function is loudest this quarter.

For the CHRO

Build and maintain that consolidated change inventory as a standing capability, not a one-time exercise. It is the only way to give the CEO and the board an honest answer about how much more the organization can actually absorb before something breaks.

The Shift This Actually Requires

Change capacity needs to be managed as a finite organizational resource, the same way capital or headcount is managed, rather than treated as infinitely available because each individual initiative is well justified on its own. The organizations getting ahead of this are the ones sequencing deliberately, not the ones with the most sophisticated change management methodology on paper.

References

1. Change saturation research compilation, citing organizational capacity studies, 2026.
2. Change management failure rate research, aggregating multi-decade studies on transformation outcomes.