

Often the real barriers to organizational change are lurking beneath the surface. Use the table below to select the tool(s) that will help you understand what the deeply-rooted barriers to change are in your organization so you can take appropriate action.

What's Derailing Your Company's Transformation

| Tool | Description | What You Might Learn |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Analysis of qualitative "breadcrumbs" | Sift out signals in unstructured qualitative data suggesting lived behaviors (vs. aspirational values). | All companies have values, but these aren't necessarily being lived especially in employee's eyes. |
| Observational study | Do a deep-dive observation of a key organization ritual. | Body language, tonality and the vibe of a room can shift drastically when specific people enter the room or certain topics are introduced. |
| Diaries | Capture in-the-moment feelings. | Pre-meeting reflections, such as one person questioning the purpose of creating numerous slides and a leader wondering if everyone is expected to thoroughly review those slides, reveal opportunities for reevaluating the way meetings are conducted and how preparation can be improved. |
| Historical analysis | Review critical moments (founding, big successes, traumatic events) in the organization's history. To learn more about organizational "ghosts" see: "What Lies Beneath" by SD Anthony, K Colella, E Ottman, and A Waldeck, Duke Corporate Education 2023). | Resistance to change is often a subconscious fear stemming from past organizational trauma, like a headcount reduction that people don't talk about but still feel. |
| Image elicitation (drawings) | Tease out subtle dimensions of culture by giving people ways to surface complex, subtle issues and/or emotions that are hard to describe. | Drawings of fragmented groups and weak connection points can highlight the absence of a shared aspiration and purpose that unites the efforts of every individual. |
| In-depth interviews | Conduct 60- to 90-minute discussions to probe deeper, get more specific examples, and surface unstated challenges. | When people refer to their role or function as "just the..." it reveals the hierarchy mentality between functions, which can reveal why some functions and roles are less engaged in a change effort. |
| Surveys | Get perceptions about the degree to which desired behaviors are being regularly followed, and what's getting in the way. | When you ask people to rate the degree to which they live organizational values or believe in the strategy and the degree to which the team does, you may (and will likely) get very different answers (I'm not the problem; everyone else is). |