

ACMP CHANGE CHICAGO CONFERENCE CONVERSATIONS

Findings from the AI Diary conversations
taken during **#ChangeChicago25**





AI DIARY FACT-SHEET

Our Panda AI Platform uses systemic coaching featuring expert-curated content. Plus, harnessing generative AI, Pandatron provides actionable insights, identifies systemic issues, and uncovers growth opportunities for sustainable success.

With Pandatron we can support a broad range of initiatives, including:

- *AI Adoption*
- *Digital Transformation*
- *Cultural Transformation*
- *Breaking Down Silos*
- *Building a Culture of Innovation*
- *Leadership Development*
- *Driving Employee Engagement*

“

1,000s

of employees

gain clarity, overcome challenges, and set goals with the Panda AI Platform

ENGAGEMENT PATTERNS:

High Engagement Quality:

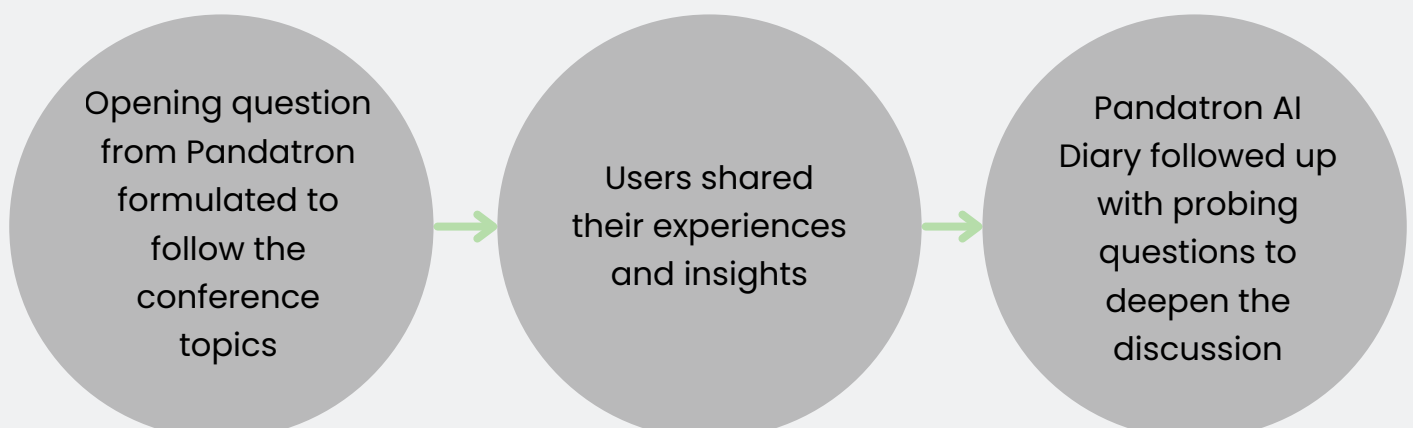
- Participants provided detailed, specific examples and engaged deeply with complex workplace challenges.
- Conversations averaged 10-15 exchanges with substantial depth.

Vulnerability and Trust:

- Despite anonymity, participants shared sensitive workplace concerns including fear of job loss, relationship conflicts, and organizational dysfunction.

Solution-Seeking Behavior:

- Most participants moved beyond venting toward practical problem-solving, requesting specific strategies and frameworks.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In a nutshell

- **#ChangeChicago25**
- **Pandatron's AI Diary platform** facilitated in-depth conversations among hundreds of change management professionals, revealing critical systemic challenges.
- **Barriers to successful change are rooted in organizational dynamics**
 - ineffective resource planning
 - insufficient psychological safety
 - communication breakdowns
- Insight underscores that **meaningful transformation requires addressing deep-seated cultural and leadership gaps**, rather than solely focusing on technological fixes.

Impact and Experience in Change Leadership:

- **Advanced competencies** in systems thinking, human-centered problem solving, strategic communication, and risk awareness.
- **Resilience under pressure**, balancing empathy with organizational demands.
- Change **professionals operate within inverse authority structures**—being both essential and often invisible—highlighting the paradoxes faced in navigating organizational politics.
- **Emerging trends**—such as AI-enabled predictive analytics, agile change methodologies, and human-centered technology deployment—are **revolutionizing change practice**.
- Practitioners **operate at the intersection of business impact and human experience**, emphasizing that true transformation demands psychological safety, leadership development, and systemic capacity building.



Table of Contents

AI-Diary Fact Sheet	2
Executive Summary	3
Impact of the AI Diary	5
Unique Strengths of an ACMP Member	7
The Findings & Actionable Insights	8
Analysis of the Tracks	12
Barriers to success	18
Community promises	19



THE IMPACT OF THE AI DIARY



During Change Chicago, Pandatron provided a total of 105 AI Coaching / Reflection sessions.



WITH PANDATRON, THE USERS WERE ABLE TO:

- Have diary of their most valuable findings and ideas
- Plan for the implementation of the ideas into their own organizations - *Let's face it, we all come to these events full of ideas, but no capacity to execute on them.*
- Identify, and thus prepare for, barriers and obstacles from the organization
- Get actionable advice from the coach in their pocket!

The Pandatron AI Diary was integrated into the ACMP Conference app and available on mobile, tablet and desktop and the conversations followed flawlessly between the devices.

Users received practical tools, including practising difficult conversations and questions. Many reported feeling validated, realising their **challenges were professional rather than personal.**

Participants **reframed issues** like time constraints and gained insights into organisational dynamics.

Users committed to specific actions, such as **practising active listening and discussing systemic impacts** with supervisors, boosting their confidence in seeking support.

The findings

**IF WE WOULD
ANALYSE, HOW
CHANGE
MANAGEMENT
PROFESSIONALS
SPEAK, WOULD WE BE
ABLE TO TELL, HOW
THEY ARE DIFFERENT
FROM OTHER
LEADERS?**

Analysis from
#ChangeChicago25



Change Management
Professionals

The Real Business Differentiators

The AI Diary Conversations revealed distinctive professional capabilities that set ACMP members apart. Here we highlight some of those strengths.

Foresight ability - Systems Thinking and Root Cause Analysis

1.

- **Recognizing early warning signs** of resistance
- Identifying behaviors, which act as barriers to change
- Understanding that resistance often signals deeper implementation barriers rather than attitude problems

Human-Centered Problem Solving

The ability to prioritize people over process

2.

- Focusing on protecting client relationships during technology transitions
- Advocating for end users as a core professional identity
- Recognizing that psychological safety is essential for honest feedback and successful adoption

Risk-Aware Strategic Communication

- Translating stakeholder concerns into **quantifiable business risks** by calculating time lost per workflow change to illustrate productivity impact
- **Positioning feedback as safeguarding** organizational interests rather than personal criticism
- Framing recommendations around future opportunities and mitigation strategies instead of focusing on past errors
- Anticipating and articulating trust and retention threats arising from poorly planned rollouts

3.

Example of the different way of thinking: "Dismissive leadership reactions stem from intimidation and vulnerability beneath positional authority..."

The findings

**WHAT DID CHANGE
MANAGEMENT
PROFESSIONALS TALK
ABOUT IN CHICAGO?**

**WHAT WILL THEY DO
NEXT?**

Analysis from
#ChangeChicago25

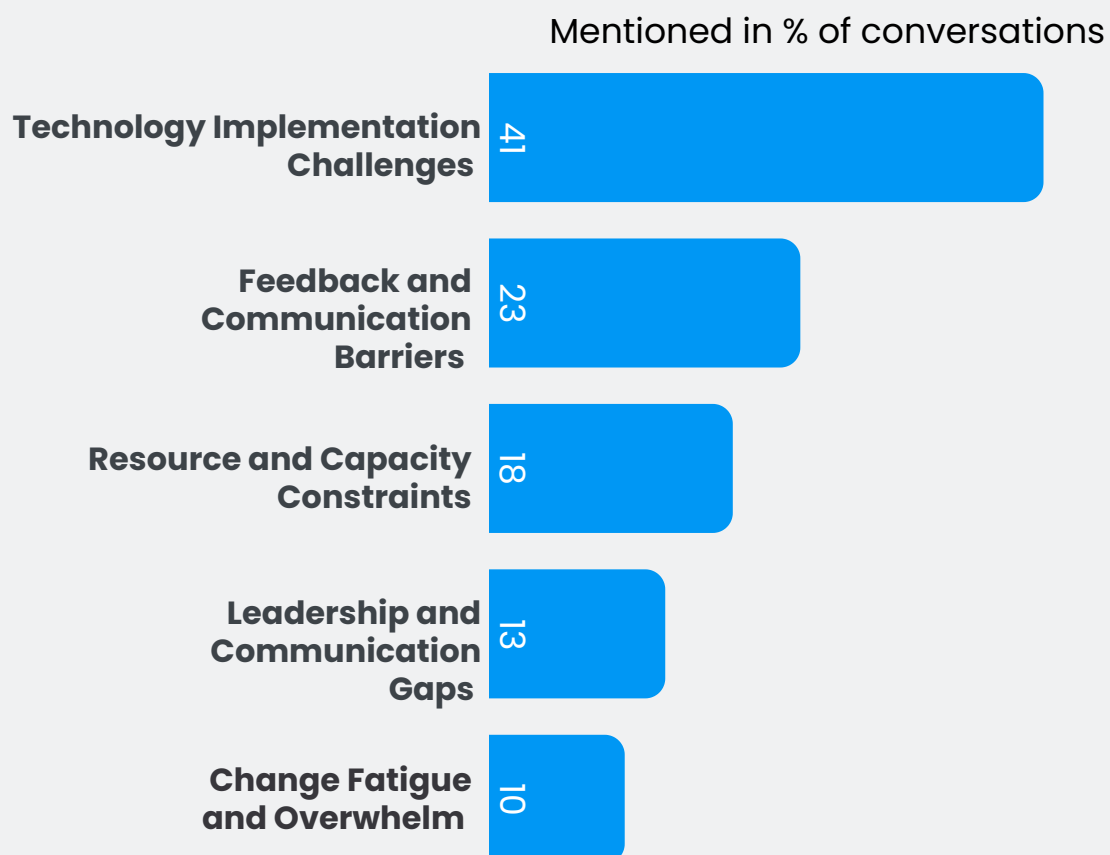


KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED

The conversations were divided into 6 different main tracks, which also formulated the backbone of the Key Notes at the event. The tracks were:

- Critical Change Foundations
- Trends & Innovation
- Professional Growth & Leadership
- Psychology & Neuroscience
- Data-Analytics
- Diversity & Culture

During the conversations the following **Key Topics** were mentioned the most:



Participants talked about issues in implementation of new systems, communication challenges and resource constraints.



ACTIONABLE IDEAS

When interacting with the AI Diary, many participants shared not only insightful, but **actionable ideas for how to start making progress on the most pressing change management issues**. Here we highlight some of those ideas.

1

IMPLEMENT FEEDBACK FRAMING & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES



1. Position concerns as business improvements rather than criticism
2. Frame feedback around business outcomes and risk mitigation
3. Utilize focus groups, informal conversations, and multi-channel communication
4. Start with small, private conversations before formal channels

2

ESTABLISH CAPACITY MANAGEMENT & CHANGE READINESS TRACKING



1. Take into account the need to adjust requirements to meet the resources at hand during technology transitions
2. Protect dedicated training time without productivity penalties
3. Create workload prioritization guidance for multiple simultaneous changes
4. Deploy AI enhanced conversational surveys and pulse checks for change readiness assessment



ACTIONABLE IDEAS

3

BUILD PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY & PEER SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE



1. Develop psychological safety assessment tools for change readiness
2. Create peer support systems during technology transitions
3. Establish anonymous feedback infrastructure with guaranteed confidentiality
4. Implement informal signal detection mechanisms for early resistance identification

4

DEVELOP CHANGE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY



1. Create leadership change management competency standards
2. Include certified change managers in strategic technology decisions
3. Establish user involvement protocols before comprehensive system investments
4. Address AI anxiety with concrete job evolution planning rather than generic reassurance

5

CREATE SYSTEMATIC CHANGE PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT



1. Build capacity management frameworks for change portfolios
2. Establish change prioritization criteria to prevent overwhelm
3. Implement transition buddy systems for major technology adoptions
4. Develop multi-channel communication approaches for diverse learning styles

These ideas stand out for their practical applicability and potential for immediate implementation in organizational improvement efforts.

The findings

ANALYSES OF ALL THE FINDINGS PER TOPIC

- CRITICAL CHANGE FOUNDATIONS
- TRENDS & INNOVATION
- PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & LEADERSHIP
- PSYCHOLOGY & NEUROSCIENCE
- DATA-ANALYTICS
- DIVERSITY & CULTURE (0 RESPONSES)

The conversations demonstrate how Pandatron effectively guides users through complex organizational challenges while maintaining focus on practical, actionable solutions.

Analysis from
#ChangeChicago25



ANALYSIS OF **CRITICAL CHANGE FOUNDATIONS** SESSIONS REVEALS SEVERAL KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Successful change foundations require **navigating complex organizational politics while consistently demonstrating business value**. Change professionals must become skilled organizational anthropologists who understand informal power structures and translate change management value into language and metrics that resonate with existing leadership priorities.

BUILDING A COALITION

- **Build coalitions by understanding individual motivations and authentic connection points** rather than relying on formal authority alone
 - Direct reporting relationships often defer to informal influencers, creating barriers to expert input and guidance
 - Change experts are sometimes excluded from strategic planning

VALUE DEMONSTRATION THROUGH BUSINESS IMPACT FOCUS

- **Translate change management activities into concrete business metrics** that leadership already prioritizes
 - Calculating specific productivity losses (e.g., 10 hours per week from poor system design) captures leadership attention more effectively than change management theory
- **Position change management as business enablement** rather than a separate discipline requiring additional investment

COMMUNICATION TIMING AND SEQUENCING

- Develop systematic message sequencing protocols that consistently prioritize internal stakeholders before external communications
 - Poor communication timing generates trust deficits that are difficult to recover from and can derail otherwise sound change initiatives

Discussions centered on defining KPIs that generate value for the company. Participants explored various metrics and measurement approaches, with emphasis on ensuring these measures directly contribute to organizational success. One key insight was the importance of aligning metrics with strategic objectives.



ANALYSIS OF **TRENDS AND INNOVATION** SESSIONS REVEALS SEVERAL KEY TAKE-AWAYS:

Organizations are moving toward predictive, data-driven change management while learning that advanced analytics only succeed when **paired with genuine user involvement and psychological safety for honest feedback.**

AI INTEGRATION FOR PREDICTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT

- **Leverage business intelligence tools to visualize change metrics and identify early warning signs through anomaly detection**
- Use AI to analyze communication patterns and language for underlying resistance or concerns before they surface
- Implement AI-driven message consistency checks across all change communication channels

AGILE-CHANGE MANAGEMENT INTEGRATION

- **Replace milestone-based approaches** with shorter feedback loops embedded directly into work cycles
- Build change activities into development sprints, including post-release pulse surveys and **real-time user feedback**
- Adopt **experimental mindsets** that allow for rapid iteration based on continuous measurement

HUMAN-CENTERED TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

- **Mandate user consultation** before any technology rollout to prevent workflow disruptions and resistance
- Create **anonymous feedback channels** that protect employees from being labelled as resistant to change
- Audit new systems for **actual efficiency gains versus promised benefits**, especially around automation features

These discussions explored cutting-edge applications of technology and methodology in change management practice.



ANALYSIS OF **PSYCHOLOGY & NEUROSCIENCE** SESSIONS REVEALS SEVERAL KEY TAKE-AWAYS:

Resistance typically originates from systemic psychological issues rather than individual attitudes. Organizations must build leadership change capabilities and establish psychological safety before launching change initiatives, as fear-based responses create cascading effects that can derail even well-designed efforts.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE GAPS CREATE SYSTEMIC RESISTANCE

- Equip Senior leaders with fundamental change management skills, creating **predictable resistance patterns throughout organizations**
 - Leaders exhibit fear-based responses when overwhelmed by change complexity, including dismissive behavior and mental disengagement
 - Leadership intimidation cascades downward, undermining change initiatives regardless of their technical merit

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS

- **Constant organizational change creates cumulative stress**
 - Change practitioners report physical symptoms (headaches, stomach tension, chest pressure) indicating real physiological costs of poor change management
 - Informal peer interactions and small-group settings provide psychological safety that formal change processes typically fail to deliver

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SUSTAINABLE CHANGE LEADERSHIP

- **Monitor team energy** through subtle cues like reduced enthusiasm and engagement levels
- **Create structured dialogue** opportunities while recognizing the emotional toll this places on change leaders themselves
- **Develop specific intervention strategies** to interrupt reactive leadership patterns during high-stress periods

These discussions reveal that change capability and the feeling of safety are the pivotal factors in change success.



ANALYSIS OF **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & LEADERSHIP** SESSIONS REVEALS THESE KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Professional growth in change leadership requires **mastering the tension between directive efficiency and collaborative engagement**. Leaders need practical, physical intervention strategies to maintain listening presence during high-pressure periods, combined with communication approaches that clearly articulate personal impact and provide concrete support resources for those affected by change.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LISTENING AS ENGAGEMENT CATALYST

- **Practice patience, avoid rushed interactions, and ask thoughtful questions** about team decisions rather than providing immediate direction
- Leverage early morning hours for critical conversations when decision fatigue and daily pressures are reduced
- Genuine listening presence directly increases team passion and active participation in change initiatives

COMMUNICATION CLARITY AROUND PERSONAL IMPACT

- **Structure change messages** to include the change itself, rationale, personal impact, and specific support resources
 - Finding: Anxiety often stems from uncertainty about personal consequences rather than actual resistance to change
- **Address the "what does this mean for me" question explicitly rather than assuming people will connect the dots**

MANAGING PRESSURE-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP SHIFT

- **Develop active pauses and brief physical movement** strategies to reset attention and break anxiety cycles
- Communicate transparently with teams about **intentional behaviors designed to maintain presence and connection** during high-stress periods
 - Leaders unconsciously shift from listening mode to directive mode when overwhelmed by daily pressures

These discussions explored cutting-edge applications of technology and methodology in change management practice.



ANALYSIS OF **DATA-ANALYTICS** SESSIONS REVEALS SEVERAL KEY TAKE-AWAYS

The evolution toward predictive analytics enables proactive change management rather than reactive reporting. **The primary business value lies in early detection systems that identify resistance patterns before they become organizational barriers**, allowing change managers to maintain momentum through data-driven insights rather than intuition-based responses.

AI-ENHANCED TRACKING SOLUTIONS

- **Move beyond static reporting to AI-powered pattern recognition** in training completion and participation rates
 - Change practitioners want AI to interpret metrics and provide insights, not just visualize data
- Focus on detecting unusual timing patterns and department-specific resistance before they escalate into major barriers

SPEED OF DETECTION AS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

- **Use Rapid detection** to maintain change momentum by addressing adoption issues before they crystallize into organizational resistance
 - Real-time insight delivery is equally important as the quality of the insights themselves
 - Early warning systems enable proactive intervention rather than reactive damage control

MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK MODERNIZATION

- **Develop specific, actionable signals** that indicate change traction without creating measurement burden
- Replace comprehensive framework assessments with shorter feedback loops and frequent adoption pulse checks
 - Traditional change frameworks struggle with continuous measurement despite their conceptual strengths

These discussions focused on developing personal and fast AI enabled capabilities for effective change leadership.



BARRIERS TO SUCCESS:

WHY CAN'T WE DO IT? WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES?

The conversations reveal that while technical barriers exist, many of the most significant obstacles are related to organizational dynamics, resource allocation, and cultural factors.

1

RESOURCE-RELATED BARRIERS

- Change expectations without corresponding resource adjustments
- Training time allocated but other hours not adjusted
- Revenue-producing work time demanded for system learning

2

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

- Technology purchases completed before user needs assessment
- Leaders admitting lack of change management understanding
- Communication silos between technical teams and end users

3

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL OBSTACLES

- Fear of professional retaliation for providing feedback
- Risk-averse cultures that punish constructive criticism
- AI anxiety and job displacement concerns
- Past negative experiences with feedback being traced back to individuals

4

PROCESS-RELATED OBSTACLES

- Sunk cost fallacy ("We already bought it, you have to use it")
- Poor stakeholder consultation processes
- Inadequate measurement of change impact on daily work
- Misaligned incentives between efficiency goals and learning time
- Multiple simultaneous changes without prioritization guidance

5

CAPACITY AND COMPETENCY GAPS

- Change fatigue from multiple simultaneous initiatives
- Insufficient training time within existing work schedules
- Lack of clear WIIFM (What's In It For Me) communication
- Middle management squeeze between implementation and decision authority

COMMUNITY PROMISES



HOW DO WE OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES?

1 Communication and Engagement Steps:

- Ask clarifying questions about change goals and expected benefits
- Frame feedback positively around business outcomes rather than complaints
- Engage in informal conversations with colleagues about shared challenges
- Establish multi-channel communication approaches for diverse learning styles

THESE WERE THE STEPS THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE ACMP CHICAGO CHANGE CONFERENCE PROMISED TO TAKE TO REACH THE GOALS MENTIONED IN THE COACHING CONVERSATIONS:

2 Leadership Development Steps:

- Develop change management literacy programs for senior leaders
- Build relationships with informal organizational influencers
- Create stakeholder engagement techniques for authentic user feedback
- Implement psychological safety creation methodologies

3 Change Management Steps:

- Create a clear vision for transformation
- Ensure executive team engagement and commitment
- Cascade strategy to all levels of organization
- Maintain open and transparent communication
- Implement "walking the walk" practice

The conversations emphasize a gradual, structured approach to implementation, starting with immediate relationship-building and documentation while building toward systemic organizational change through improved communication and leadership development throughout the process.

**Thank you for the
conversations,
industry leaders!**

Official Partner.



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