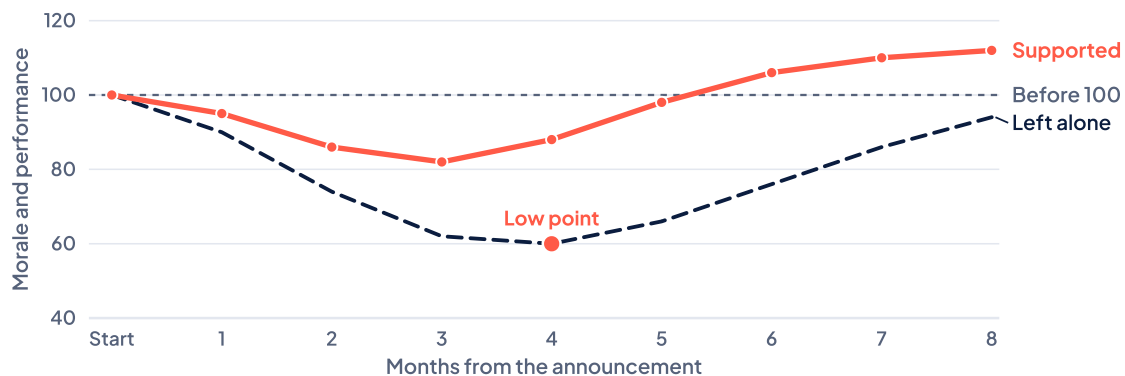


Change curve

Expect how people often react to a change over time, and plan support so that the dip is shallower and shorter.



Illustrative index, our own curve. Not the Kübler-Ross Change Curve®, a registered trademark of the Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Family Limited Partnership.

WHAT IT IS

A change curve pictures how people often feel and perform after a change is announced: doubt, frustration and loss, a low point, then the new way becoming routine. It adapts the stages of reaction that **Elisabeth Kübler-Ross** (1969) described in dying patients; later writers drew the curve (Holdsworth and Bridgman, 2025). It is not a timetable. Your job: a **shallower, shorter** dip.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01 Before: what changes for each group, what stays, and why.
- 02 Doubt and loss: repeat the facts, listen, fix real flaws.
- 03 Low point: train close to use; help on the spot.
- 04 New routine: share wins, switch the old way off, measure use.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has 8 months to move resident parking permits online; 40 wardens move to plate checks on handhelds, and 18 service-desk staff lose most counter visits.

The project manager expects the dip at go-live, a few weeks before most residents renew in January. Training comes in the last 2 weeks, supervisors help on the street, and she stays through January.

In the exam: Name the stage people were in, what you did at that stage, and how you kept the dip short and shallow.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, in 3 groups of services; counter staff move to digital help.

The project manager plans one curve per staff group and switch-over, so the dips do not stack. Staff are consulted through their union first. The board agrees that a short dip after each switch is expected.

In the exam: Show that you planned several curves, set the board's expectations for the dip, and measured use of the new way, not only go-live.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4

4.5.13: impact of change on individuals (p. 151); sustain it, avoid falling back (4.5.13.4, p. 153)

PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM

Guide: no change curve; change management, current to future state (p. 266). Exam outline: Business Environment, task 7

APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM

BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §1.3.2 (resistance is the default), §1.3.3 (support people emotionally). PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) objective 8

Sources: Kübler-Ross, On Death and Dying (1969); Holdsworth & Bridgman (2025); IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

Key: IPMA = International Project Management Association; ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline (4.5.13 etc.: its competence elements); PMI = Project Management Institute; PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional; APM = Association for Project Management. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on pmi.org. APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects. Levels (this series' labels): Mid-level = moderately complex projects (IPMA Level C, PMI's PMP®); Senior = complex projects and people (IPMA Level B, APM's Chartered Project Professional).

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