

Navigating the Valley of Despair

Roles and Goals for Successful
Project Management Tech Adoption



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OPTIMISM

Why Tech Adoption Feels Hard (Before It Pays Off)

When adopting technology, people often pass through the valley of despair: a well-known stage in change management, where initial optimism gives way to frustration before success is achieved.

You've probably experienced this yourself when your company onboarded new software: Someone pitches a software solution that has great potential to solve workflow problems. At first, the team is excited! When the time comes to implement and get trained, that excitement gives way to anxiety ... it's not that easy. That's when the "valley of despair" sets in: Many people don't want to change their workflows or spend time onboarding the new tool, and they stop leveraging your organization's new investment.

Sound familiar? This can be particularly true for project management software.

A PM tool is necessary for any agency owner or general contractor organization, so everyone has one. But as organizations grow and evolve, the software must become more sophisticated and flexible to work for automated, digital, and complex construction workflows. And successful tech adoption isn't just about the tool. It takes proper change management: educating and engaging your people and your processes to make it work for them.

Transitioning to a new system can be hard for teams, especially in complex program environments. It requires clear roles, ongoing communication and training, and buy-in from the team. That's how you get from the valley of despair to determination—and ultimately, successful adoption, which leads to more efficient projects.

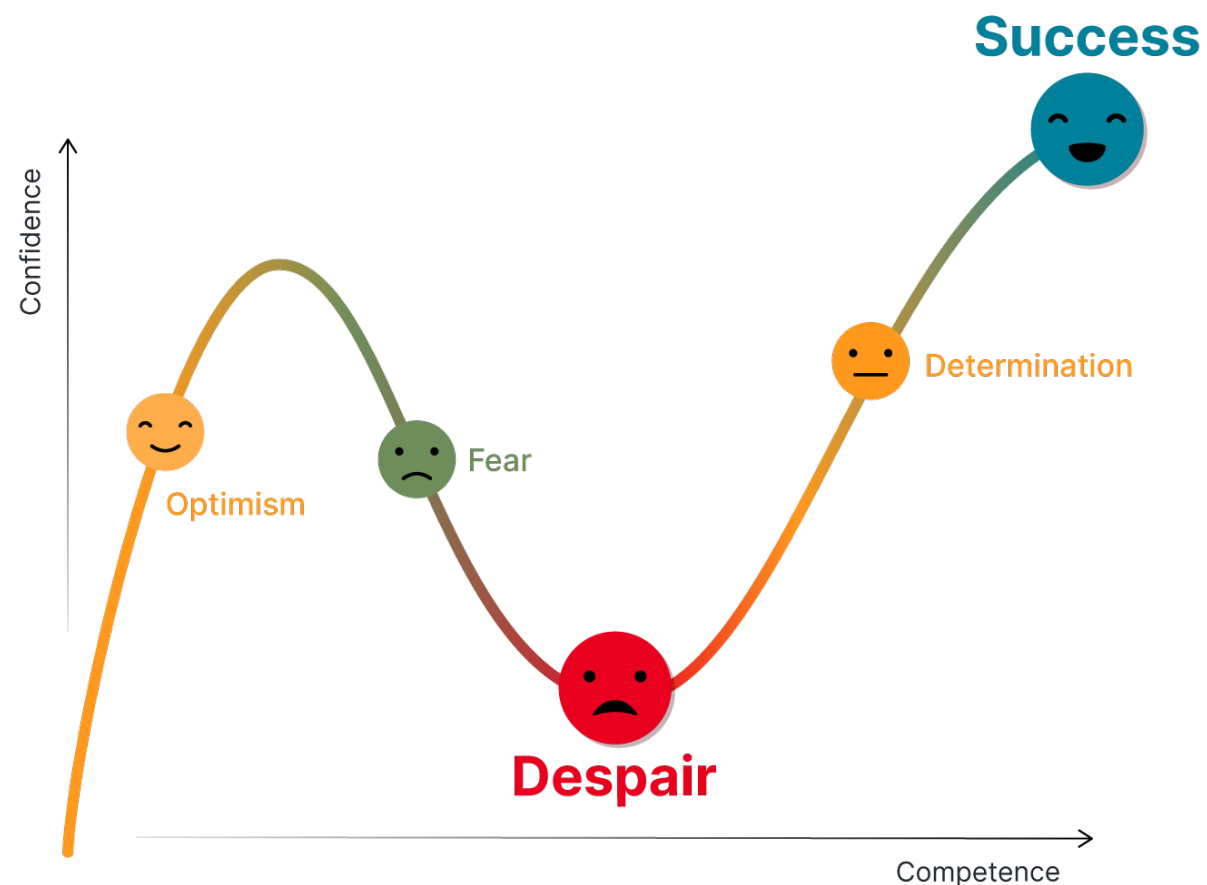
Read on to see how to manage your people and processes through the challenges of adopting new project management software.



Emotional Stages of Tech Adoption

Excitement, despair, and eagerness surrounding a new direction aren't unique to construction. They're common to any organization adopting new technology, workflows, and even leadership. Recognizing the common pattern is the first step in a realistic plan to lead teams through the process to success.

Here are the common stages of new technology adoption, which are as emotional as they are technical.



Optimism

Early peak excitement sets in as teams anticipate better tools and new efficiencies.

Fear

As the reality of change becomes clearer, team members may worry about changing their established process, learning something new, and maybe even losing mastery of their processes and job.

Despair

Processes feel unfamiliar, onboarding may be lacking, adoption is frustrating, and confidence in both the new tool and one's ability to use it dips. Without flexibility and support, people may feel disconnected from the purpose of the change.

Determination

Time passes, the team gets used to new processes, and small wins start to build. Maybe this could be a good thing.

Success

Teams make the new software work for them: They take ownership, and the new way of working becomes routine. And it really is faster and easier!

Change Management Takes Time and Determination

To help teams move through the valley of despair and see efficiencies with new project management software, owners and leaders must focus on a few key elements that drive successful adoption:

Buy-in from Leadership

Executives must be steadfast cheerleaders for change. They can't stop pushing for adoption, and this sets the tone for the entire organization.

Clear Strategy

What does "success" look like? Set expectations early and ensure everyone understands their role and goal.

Concise, Frequent Communication

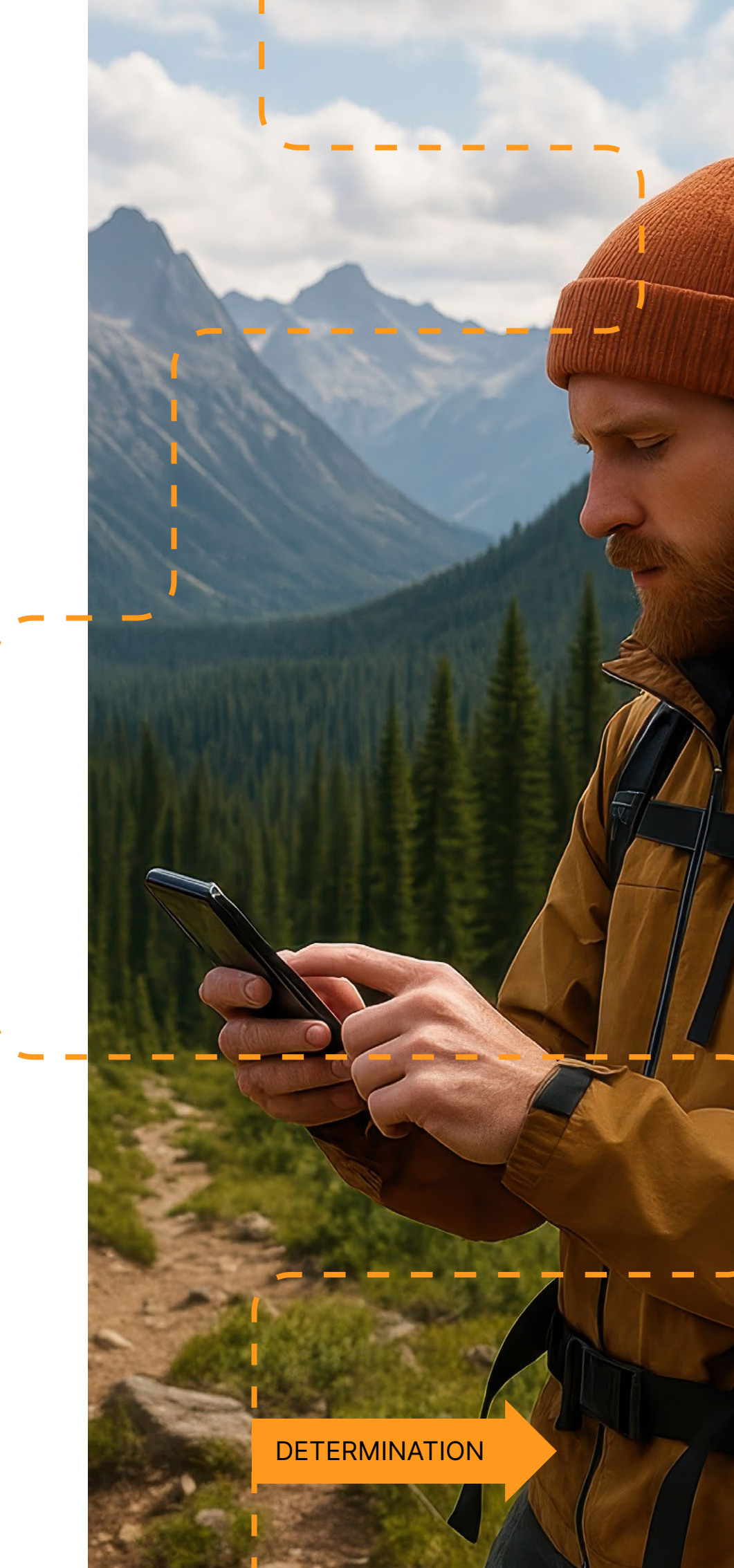
Keep everyone informed with open feedback loops, especially during periods of uncertainty.

Review Points and Gates

Celebrate wins and regularly check in with users. Build momentum, and above all, don't let up when enthusiasm fades and apathy sets in.



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Change with Purpose: Define Roles and Goals

All internal and external teams using the project management system must be part of the tech adoption loop. This includes all groups in a capital program lifecycle:

- Capital planning
- Project controls
- Finance
- Engineering
- Materials
- Design & Construction
- Operations & Maintenance



The organization must understand and define what is expected of each person. Set clear deadlines and expectations. Define roles so that team members feel like they're part of the process, and necessary, active participants.

Identify software “champions”—the new software power users—who can encourage hesitant peers and help pull them through the valley. Peer support and enthusiasm is just as critical as executive backing.



From Resistance to Results

Change is scary, and everyone processes it differently. It is hard to take responsibility for onboarding new software.

Organizations who support their teams with training, support, and clear roles and goals will break through that valley of despair, fully adopt a new project management tool, and ultimately see ROI from their investment in terms of time and money saved.

Help your team move from resistance to change toward ownership of results. Your employees, peers, and customers will thank you.

[Kahua](#) is a leading-edge construction project management tool that is built to be infinitely flexible and able to be configured for the most complex workflows—or deliver quick wins out of the box.

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