



# Bridging the gap: How human-centred change communication can maximise EdTech's impact in schools

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## Executive summary

Educational technology (EdTech) holds the promise of transforming education by streamlining operations, enhancing learning, and fostering collaboration. However, **70% of digital transformation projects fail** due to a lack of planning, user adoption, and cultural alignment. A human-centred approach can bridge these gaps by addressing the unique needs of stakeholders and ensuring that technology is fully integrated into the school's culture. This guide outlines four pillars for successful EdTech adoption, offering actionable steps, templates, and practical insights.

## Four steps to successful EdTech adoption

### 1. Make it personal

Implementing EdTech is not a one-size-fits-all process. Each school community is made up of individuals with different roles, needs, and motivations. Teachers might view technology as an administrative burden or a tool to save time. Students might be eager adopters but face accessibility issues. Parents might appreciate new communication tools but struggle with technical literacy. Tailoring the approach to each group ensures that EdTech becomes an integral and accepted part of the school culture, rather than an imposed obligation.

### Key actions

1. **User segmentation:** Break stakeholders into targeted groups:
  - **Teachers:** Differentiate between tech enthusiasts and reluctant adopters.
  - **Students:** Consider age-specific requirements and accessibility needs.
  - **Parents:** Address the gap between tech-savvy and low-literacy users.
  - **Admin staff:** Recognise varying engagement levels based on task frequency.
2. **Champion networks:** Identify and empower influential users within each group to advocate for the technology.
3. **Empathy mapping:** Use surveys and focus groups to explore pain points, needs, and motivations.

### For example:

If a school introduces an online grading system, teachers with limited tech experience might view it as overly complex. By assigning tech-savvy peers as mentors and providing targeted training sessions, the school can alleviate concerns and foster confidence.



### Template: User persona mapping

| User group | Goals                   | Challenges                | Preferred support        |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Teachers   | Simplify grading        | Time constraints          | Short, task-based videos |
| Students   | Access resources easily | Limited access to devices | Offline functionality    |
| Parents    | Track student progress  | Low tech confidence       | In-person Q&A sessions   |

## 2. Provide tools and knowledge

For EdTech to succeed, users must feel confident and capable in using it. **39%** of people in organisations feel resistant due to a lack of understanding about why the change is happening and **38%** are hesitant to embrace change due to uncertainty about its implications. Simply providing access to technology isn't enough—ongoing support, accessible resources, and clear communication are vital.

### Key actions

- Tailored training:** Design role-specific training sessions, such as:
  - '5-minute guide to tracking attendance' for teachers.
  - 'How to use the parent portal' for parents.
- Accessible resources:** Provide resources in various formats, including videos, infographics, and PDFs, to accommodate different learning styles.
- Incentives:** Recognise early adopters and consistent users through certificates, newsletters, or small rewards.

### For example:

If a school rolls out a parent communication app, training sessions could be offered during PTA meetings, accompanied by quick-start guides and recorded tutorials available online for on-demand access.

### Template: Training plan

| Training type       | Audience | Delivery method | Frequency | Follow-up          |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Onboarding workshop | Teachers | In-person       | Monthly   | Feedback survey    |
| Parent tutorials    | Parents  | Online videos   | On-demand | Live Q&A           |
| Peer-led meetups    | Students | Weekly meetups  | Weekly    | Poll on usefulness |

### 3. Create a desire to change

Resistance to change is natural, especially when it involves new technology. Change initiatives are **six times more likely to succeed** when both emotional and rational needs are addressed. Building a compelling case for change involves communicating clear benefits, addressing pain points, and creating excitement around new opportunities.

#### Key actions

1. **Storytelling:** Share relatable success stories from schools that have benefited from similar initiatives.
2. **Highlight inefficiencies:** Use data to illustrate the limitations of current systems (e.g., “Teachers spend 5+ hours per week on manual admin tasks”).
3. **Engage stakeholders:** Involve teachers, parents, and students in co-designing features or workflows to ensure relevance and buy-in.

#### For example:

If a school introduces a digital homework system, it could host a showcase event where students demonstrate the tool to parents and teachers, highlighting how it simplifies the submission and feedback process.

#### Statistics for motivation

- **84% of digital transformation projects fail without proper planning and cultural alignment.**
- **Clear communication before launch and training can increase adoption rates by 3.5 times.**

### 4. Live it, learn it, improve it

EdTech adoption doesn't end with implementation. Continuous refinement, based on user feedback, ensures the technology remains relevant and effective. Schools must model technology use from the top down, while maintaining open communication channels to address emerging challenges.

#### Key actions

1. **Role modelling:** Leaders should use the technology consistently to demonstrate its value.
2. **Feedback loops:** Regularly gather insights through surveys, polls, and informal conversations.
3. **Celebrate success:** Recognise milestones, such as ‘100% parent registration’, to foster enthusiasm and community.



### For example:

If a school implements a new classroom management tool, regular check-ins with teachers could reveal areas for improvement, such as adding new features or simplifying the interface. Acting on this feedback builds trust and sustains engagement.

### Template: Feedback tracker

| Feedback source | Issue                | Suggested solution         | Action taken | Follow-up           |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Teacher survey  | Difficult login      | Simplified authentication  | Implemented  | Check satisfaction  |
| Parent forum    | Overwhelming updates | Consolidated notifications | Planned      | Portal usage review |

### Measuring success

Effective measurement ensures accountability and highlights progress. Schools should track:

- **Adoption rates:** Percentage of users actively engaging with the technology.
- **Engagement metrics:** Frequency of use, time saved, and user feedback.
- **Outcome metrics:** Improved student performance, reduced teacher workload, and increased parent satisfaction.

### For example:

A school measuring logins to its parent portal could identify that simplifying navigation led to a **30% increase in usage within three months**.

### Conclusion: Building a shared vision


EdTech's success depends on aligning technology with the needs of its users. By focusing on the four pillars of adoption, schools can create environments where technology empowers educators, engages students, and supports parents. With empathy, collaboration, and continuous improvement, EdTech can transform education for all.

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## You've bought new technology for your school but how do you ensure people use it?

Here's a simple step by step checklist. Contact [hello@fit2communicate.com](mailto:hello@fit2communicate.com) for more support.

| Step 1  | Step 2  | Step 3   | Step 4   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Create a desire to change</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be clear about how this technology will help your school achieve its vision.</li> <li>Articulate why what you're doing now isn't working and what will be better in the future.</li> <li>Reflect on what you can learn and celebrate from the past.</li> <li>Think about the people who need to use the technology. What will motivate them and be their concerns? Better still ask them and listen!</li> <li>Find facts about how it works in other schools.</li> <li>Build the change story with your leadership team so you believe it and speak with one voice.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Make it personal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define different groups of people who need to use the technology.</li> <li>Think about other things happening in their 'worlds' and what this means for how you support them.</li> <li>Identify support and training they need – technical, mindset and behaviours.</li> <li>Understand who will influence them to want to use it, so it becomes the norm.</li> <li>Agree who will support this, early on, and be your champions. Make their role formal in the change.</li> <li>Share evidence that it will make their jobs easier.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Provide tools &amp; knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a simple communication plan. Be clear about who you are communicating with, how, when and why.</li> <li>Offer bite size training or coaching.</li> <li>Celebrate the new technology being introduced.</li> <li>Provide at a glance documents as reminders for daily work.</li> <li>Support your champions to help their colleagues.</li> <li>Thank and reward champions.</li> <li>Visibly and regularly ask for feedback. Act on what you find out.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Live it, learn and improve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the technology as a leader role model.</li> <li>Make it part of daily school conversations.</li> <li>Recognise people for using it.</li> <li>Measure who is and isn't using it and support those who need more help.</li> <li>Learn from the change so you can use the experience for the future.</li> <li>Share stories about how it's helping people to do their jobs and the benefit to your school.</li> <li>Celebrate successes!</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Remember</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Humans don't like change. It requires us to 'rewire' our brains.</li> <li>» Good communication (not just information) is critical to your success.</li> <li>» Don't try to change too much or too fast.</li> <li>» Change is <b>six times more likely</b> to succeed when the people side is managed well.</li> </ul>   |   |  |  |


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### Sources:

2020 study by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) found that 70% of digital transformation projects fail to achieve their objectives.

McKinsey & Company has reported that around 70% of complex, large-scale change programs, which include digital transformations, do not reach their goals.

39% of employees feel resistant due to a lack of understanding about why the change is happening ([Oak Engage, 2023](#)).

Fear of the unknown further fuels resistance, with 38% of employees hesitant to embrace change due to uncertainty about its implications ([Oak Engage, 2023](#)).

Forbes reported in 2016 that the risk of failure in digital transformation efforts is approximately 84%.

In digital transformations, success rates increase 3.5-fold when companies clearly communicate desired outcomes before launching solutions ([McKinsey & Company, 2018](#)).

## Example: EdTech Change Communication Action Plan

This action plan demonstrates how to integrate sensitivity and tailored communication to address the needs, emotions, and concerns of different audiences, ensuring a human-centred approach throughout the EdTech introduction process.

| When   | What                         | How   | Who                          | The Human Factor   | Outcome   |
|--------|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|---|
| Week 1 | Announce new technology      | Tailored face-to-face meetings (staff), emails (parents), assemblies (students) | Headteacher, Leadership Team | <b>Acknowledge concerns about change:</b> Reassure staff and parents by framing the change as collaborative (e.g., "We're introducing this together to make life easier"). Recognise concerns, such as increased workload or tech barriers, and emphasise support systems. | All groups understand the purpose, benefits, and next steps for the new system. |
| Week 2 | Gather user insights         | Surveys (digital and paper for accessibility), focus groups, informal chats     | Leadership Team, Champions   | <b>Engage through empathy:</b> Position feedback as a collaboration (e.g., "Your voice is essential to making this a success"). Acknowledge diverse tech skills and create safe spaces for sharing concerns without judgment.  | Insights identify potential pain points and user-specific needs.                |
| Week 3 | Introduce Champions          | Personal invitations to potential Champions, meeting to empower them            | Leadership Team              | <b>Empower trusted individuals:</b> Highlight how their leadership can inspire others (e.g., "Your expertise will help your peers feel confident"). Offer ongoing training to build their confidence and recognise their contributions publicly.                           | Champions feel confident, motivated, and supported in their role.               |
| Week 4 | Create excitement for launch | Small group demos, teasers (e.g., "How this can save 5                          | Marketing Team, Champions    | <b>Generate excitement without pressure:</b> Frame the system as an opportunity, not an  | Build anticipation and positive curiosity                                       |

| When                                | What                                      | How   | Who                              | The Human Factor  | Outcome   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
|                                     |   | hours a week!")<br>on social media<br>and newsletters   |                                  | obligation. Emphasise<br>how it addresses specific<br>pain points (e.g., less<br>admin for teachers, easy<br>access for parents).   | among all<br>audiences.   |
| <b>Week 5</b>                       | Conduct<br>training<br>sessions           | Hands-on<br>workshops<br>(teachers,<br>admin), drop-in<br>Q&A for<br>parents, peer-<br>led demos for<br>students                  | IT Lead,<br>Champions            | <b>Respect individual<br/>learning styles:</b> Offer<br>varied formats like<br>interactive sessions,<br>videos, and written<br>guides. Encourage<br>questions and create a<br>non-judgmental learning<br>environment. | Users feel<br>equipped<br>and<br>confident to<br>start using<br>the<br>technology.                |
| <b>Week 6<br/>(Launch<br/>Week)</b> | Launch the<br>technology                  | Showcase<br>events<br>(students<br>demoing for<br>parents),<br>celebratory<br>assembly, live<br>updates on<br>school<br>platforms | Leadership<br>Team,<br>Champions | <b>Celebrate progress as a<br/>community:</b> Recognise<br>collective efforts and<br>early adopters. Address<br>any concerns<br>immediately to maintain<br>trust. Keep the tone<br>positive and inclusive.            | Technology<br>introduced<br>with<br>excitement<br>and clear<br>instructions<br>for next<br>steps. |
| <b>Week 7</b>                       | Collect<br>initial<br>feedback            | Informal coffee<br>chats (teachers,<br>admin), quick<br>polls (parents,<br>students)  | Champions,<br>Leadership<br>Team | <b>Foster trust through<br/>follow-up:</b> Assure users<br>their feedback is valued<br>and will lead to action.<br>Avoid defensiveness<br>when challenges are<br>raised; instead, thank<br>them for their honesty.    | Early issues<br>identified<br>and<br>adjustments<br>made to<br>improve user<br>experience.        |
| <b>Month<br/>2-3</b>                | Monitor<br>usage and<br>address<br>issues | Regular check-<br>ins with<br>Champions,<br>feedback<br>sessions,<br>follow-up<br>training as<br>needed                           | IT Lead,<br>Champions            | <b>Normalise the learning<br/>curve:</b> Reassure users<br>that it's okay to need<br>additional help (e.g.,<br>"We're all learning<br>together - let us know<br>how we can support you<br>better.>").                 | Users feel<br>supported<br>and issues<br>are resolved<br>in a timely<br>manner.                   |



| When      | What                 | How   | Who                             | The Human Factor   | Outcome   |
|-----------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Month 3-6 | Celebrate milestones | Public recognition (assemblies, newsletters), personalised thank-you notes                    | Leadership Team, Marketing Team | <p><b>Highlight collective achievements:</b> Celebrate wins (e.g., "Over 90% of parents are now using the portal!") while encouraging those still learning. Use inclusive language to avoid creating divides.</p> <p><b>Demonstrate continuous care:</b> Regularly share updates on improvements based on feedback. Keep communication transparent to reinforce trust and show commitment to users' needs.</p> | Builds morale and sustains momentum for continued adoption. Users trust that their input matters, sustaining engagement and satisfaction. |
| Ongoing   | Evaluate and refine  | Quarterly feedback surveys, success metrics tracking, updates to the system based on feedback | Leadership Team, IT Lead        |  |   |