

# KSA Transformation Effectiveness Survey Report

How impactful are your  
organizational transformation  
initiatives?

March 2025

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# Table of contents

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01	Foreword	03
02	Executive summary	04
03	Participants' demographics	06
04	Methodology	07
05	Areas	08
	<hr/>	
	<b>A</b> Transformation strategic view	08
	<b>B</b> Transformation governance bodies	11
	<b>C</b> Transformation delivery approach	14
	<b>D</b> Transformation tools and enablers	18
	<b>E</b> Transformation metrics and impact	22
	<hr/>	
06	Brief about Transformation Delivery services	25
07	EY and PMI KSA Chapter Survey team	26



# 01 | Foreword

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I am proud to present this pivotal report, produced in collaboration with the PMI-KSA Chapter. Our goal is to illuminate the transformation delivery landscape in Saudi Arabia, a mission critical to the success of visions and strategies.

Our survey, identifies five key areas essential to transformation delivery: strategy, delivery, governance, enablers and impact. These areas frame our investigation into the factors that drive strategic decisions and the effectiveness of transformation initiatives.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative survey methods has yielded rich insights, offering Saudi organizations a lens to view and refine their transformation approaches. The report underscores the importance of tailoring delivery methods, establishing robust governance, leveraging success enablers and measuring impact to ensure transformation success.

Credibility of the information in this report comes from the participants who were involved in KSA transformation efforts and provided valuable information as well as from collaboration with the PMI KSA Chapter. Furthermore, the information in the report aligns with our observations accumulated through EY MENA driving many transformation initiatives across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

This report not only reflects the current state of transformation delivery but also provides a guide for future excellence.

May this report inspire and inform your transformation efforts!



**Tariq Abu Obaid**

EY MENA Transformation Delivery Leader  
Managing Director – EY Business Services



# 02 | Executive summary

## Objective

To explore the current transformation delivery practices, trends, opportunities and challenges and raise awareness among the KSA transformation community.

## Methodology

The study focused on five main areas and targeted respondents from diverse profiles and sectors, employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions to gather comprehensive data. This approach provides the findings offered a thorough understanding of transformation delivery practices across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

## Areas\*

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Transformation strategy

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Transformation delivery

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Transformation governance

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Transformation enablers

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Transformation impact and metrics

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## Respondents\*

The survey received responses from both public and private, and more than 16 sectors, providing a broad and diverse perspective on transformation delivery practices:

- Agriculture and food processing
- Pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, chemicals
- Aerospace and defense
- Health care and life sciences
- Mining and metals
- Environment services
- Transport and logistics
- Industrial and manufacturing
- Real estate
- Financial services
- Tourism and quality of life
- Human capital innovating
- Urban infrastructure
- Energy
- Information and communications technology



## Key highlights

### Transformation strategic view

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Having a clear north star is essential for long-term transformations, as it aligns objectives, enhances motivation, and guides decision-making.

Sixty percent of transformation programs focused on internal optimization, which is key to achieving organizational goals.

### Transformation delivery approach

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Traditional project management methods were adapted to better allocate responsibilities.

Common challenges included resistance to change and insufficient resources, often due to insufficient time for planning.

### Transformation governance bodies

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Effective governance in transformations should involve top management throughout the process.

Due to the varied nature and priorities of transformation initiatives, many organizations are adopting hybrid models for more effective management and delivery.

### Transformation success enablers

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Identifying and understanding the right enablers is crucial for successful transformation delivery.

Stakeholder engagement in large transformation initiatives is key to their success.

It is becoming a necessity rather than a luxury to employ technology for more efficient transformation delivery.

### Transformation impact and metrics

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A robust framework for defining and monitoring impact from the initiation stage ensures that achievements align with objectives.

Organizations often neglect to establish mechanisms to sustain impact long term, risking wasted investments and efforts.

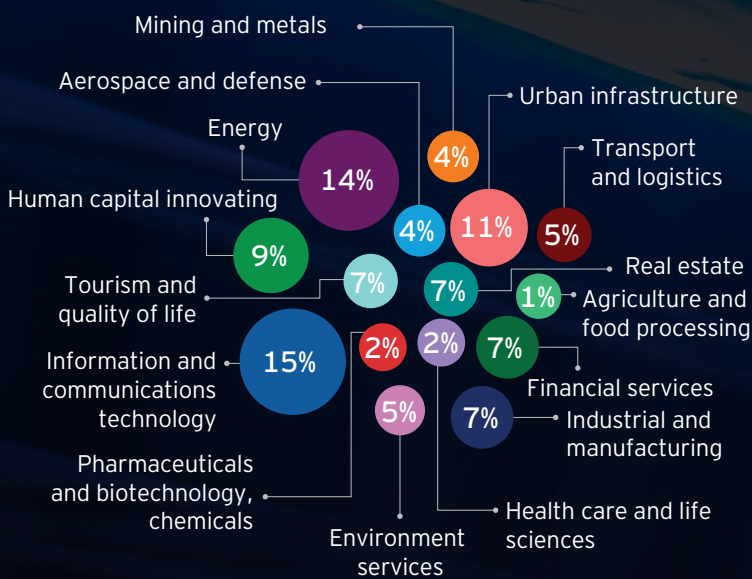


# 03

## Participants' demographics

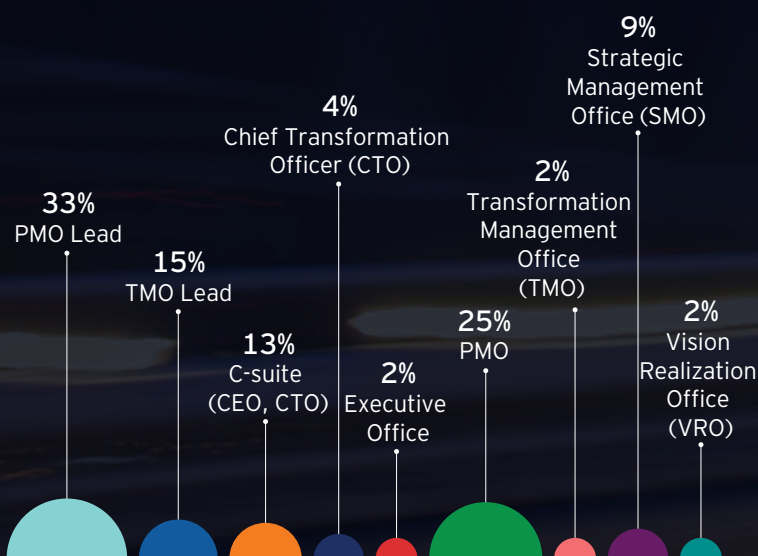
### Survey results show varied industry participation and profiles

#### Survey respondents' industries



The survey featured diverse industry representation, which offered a multisector input. **Fifteen percent** of the participants work in the **communication and technology industry**, and **14%** in the **energy industry**.

#### Survey respondents' profiles



The data, with significant contribution from **project management office (PMO)** and TMO leads along with PMO staff, offers a comprehensive view of transformation delivery practices in the KSA. The presence of **C-suite** professionals is equally important to gain a comprehensive view of transformation across all levels. This is to allow the conclusions of the report are and reflective of the industry's current state.



# 04 | Methodology

**This survey analyzes trends in transformation delivery to enhance strategic success within the KSA transformation initiatives.**

Transformation delivery plays a crucial role in the success of organizational transformation initiatives. It also helps in achieving strategic objectives efficiently and effectively. This report aims at exploring current trends and practices in transformation delivery and raise awareness among the KSA transformation community across both private and public sectors.

To explore current trends and practices driving transformation delivery in the KSA, we launched a survey in 2024 using a web-based approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative insights. This method provides a comprehensive analysis, offering statistical data and in-depth perspectives on transformation delivery.

**Our survey identified five key areas crucial to transformation delivery, which guided our exploration:**

## **Transformation strategic view**

Helps identify external and internal factors shaping strategic decisions and transformation initiatives. By understanding these factors, organizations can develop more robust strategies that align with their overall objectives.

## **Transformation delivery approach**

Assesses the effectiveness and adaptability of methodologies to the given context, influencing the success of portfolio or program. Understanding how delivery methods can be tailored to specific contexts is vital for increasing successful transformation initiatives in the KSA organizations.

## **Transformation governance bodies**

Provides insights into the framework guiding transformational activities. Effective

governance helps to manage transformation initiatives efficiently, reducing risks and offering accountability.

## **Transformation success enablers**

Focuses on understanding the supportive elements crucial for implementation. Identifying and leveraging these enablers can accelerate the pace of transformation and help overcome barriers.

## **Transformation impact and metrics**

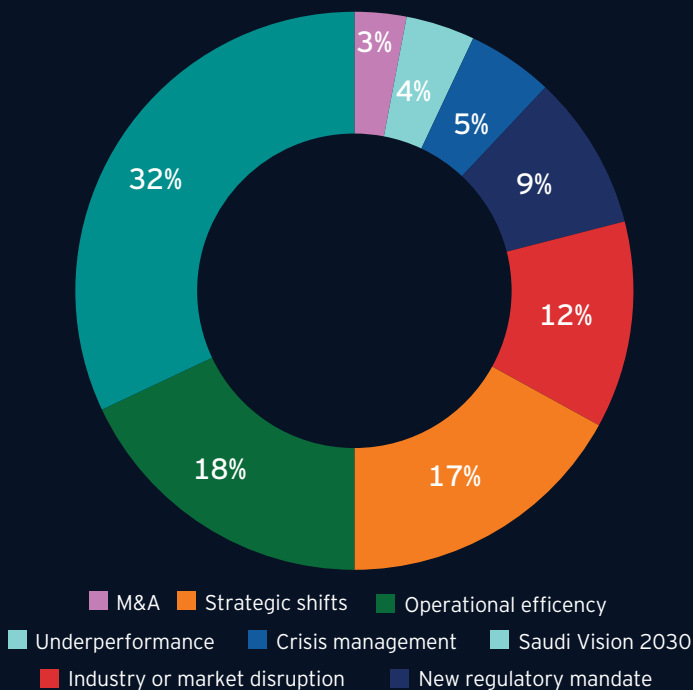
Provides a framework for assessing the effectiveness and outcomes of transformation initiatives in the KSA organizations. Measuring impact is essential for demonstrating the value of transformation efforts and informing future decision-making.



# 05 | Areas

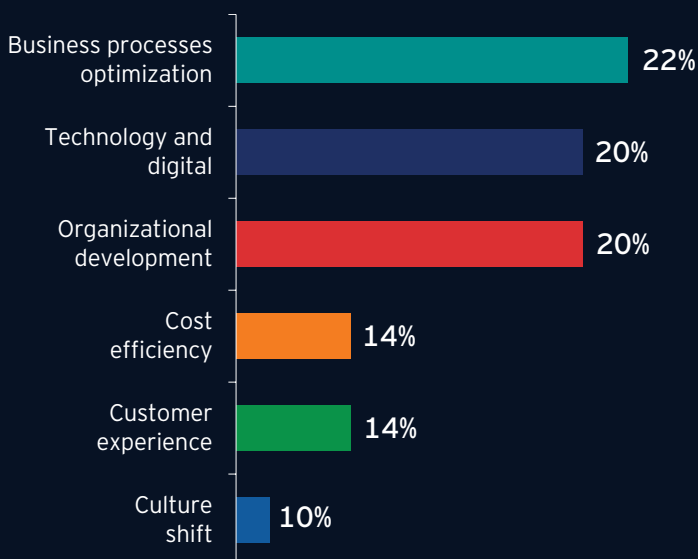
## A Transformation strategic view

### Transformation triggers



- The launch of **Saudi Vision 2030** was a major catalyst for transformation, driving **32%** of initiatives, while **operational efficiency** and **strategic shifts** followed with **18%** and **17%**, respectively. **New regulatory mandates** were accounted for **9%** and **underperformance** for **4%**, highlighting the influence of internal motivations for change.
- External forces as motivators for transformation were moderate, with **12%** focused on industry or **market disruption**.
- Lesser drivers such as **crisis management** at **5%** and **mergers and acquisitions (M&A)** at **3%** suggested a preference for proactive over reactive transformation strategies within the KSA companies.

### Transformation focus areas



- **Business process optimization** led with **22%**, indicating a focus on enhancing operational efficiency.
- **Technology and digital transformations**, and **organizational development** followed at **20%**, suggesting a balanced advancement of technology adoption and team dynamics.
- **Cost efficiency** and **customer experience**, both at **14%**, reflected strategic efforts to fortify financial health and deepen customer engagement.



## Transformation objectives





## Transformation strategic view: key takeaways

01

Establishing a north star is fundamental to any transformation, especially for long, multiyear transformation. Having clear objectives for transformation provides unity, which leads to focus of efforts, motivation and effective decision-making throughout the journey. Applying this to Saudi Vision 2030, it has aligned organizations across various sectors to work toward a common goal and destination.

02

Sixty percent of transformation programs focused on internal optimization of processes, organizational development and operational efficiency. This indicates that organizations recognize the importance of providing efficiency in their service delivery models and internal process with efficiency delivery capabilities as key enablers to achieve their intended transformation goals.

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Transformation is an ongoing journey; the only constant is the defined north star, guiding every decision and action and streamlining operations, organizational capabilities and leadership to steer change effectively.

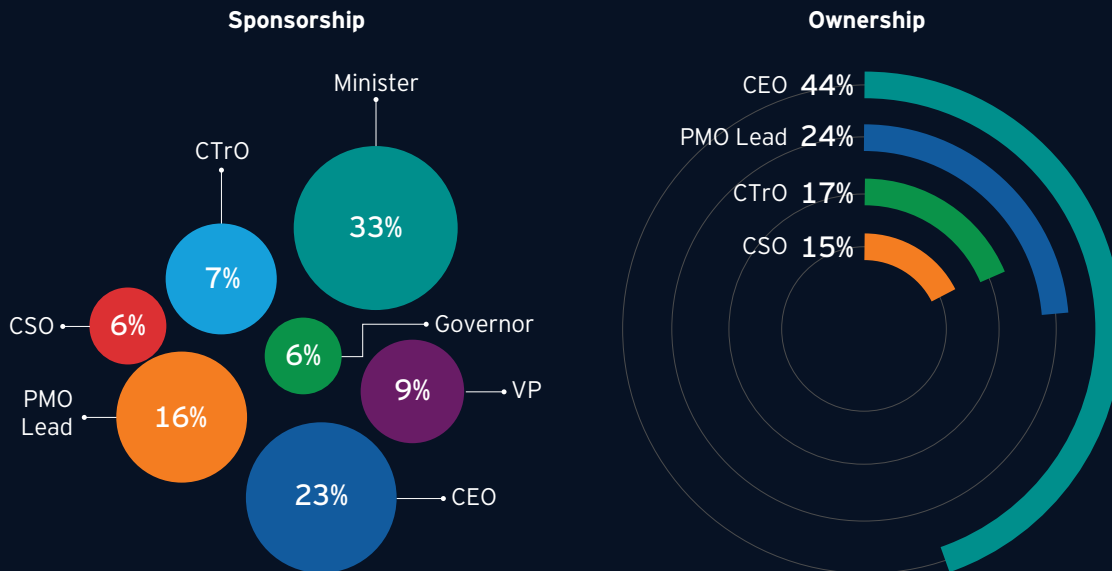


**Elie Barnaba**

EY MENA Business Transformation Leader  
Senior Principal – EY CONSULTING LLC



## Transformation sponsorship and ownership



- The responses indicated that over **33%** of transformation initiatives were sponsored by **ministers** and **23%** by **CEOs**. This emphasized the importance of transformation.

- Additionally, **44%** of initiatives were directly supervised by **CEOs** and **24%** by **PMO leads**, underscoring the importance of top-level management in driving transformation.

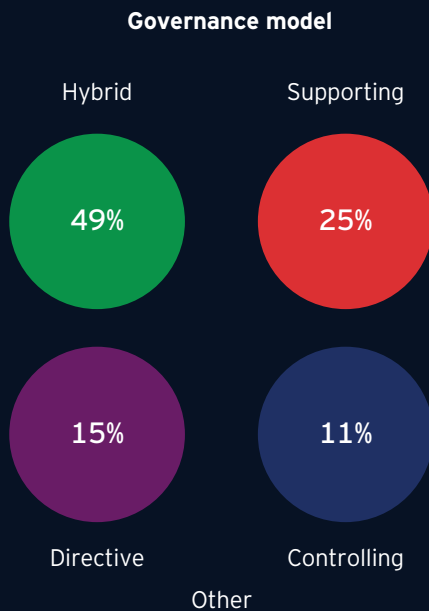
## Transformation management



- When it came to managing these initiatives, about **31%** of transformation initiatives were **led by PMO leads**. Interestingly, **14%** of transformation initiatives were **managed directly** by the **CEO**. Both **Chief Strategy Officers (CSO)** and **Chief Transformation Officers (CTrO)** managed **13%** of the transformation initiatives, while **program managers** handled **11%** of the initiatives.



### Transformation management style



- This trend was further supported by the findings that nearly **half of the respondents** reported a hybrid management approach to transformation, where PMO roles varied from project to project based on the nature of each project.
- The survey indicated that **25%** of transformation initiatives were adopting **the supporting model**, while **15%** were **directly delivering the projects** and **11%** used the **controlling PMO** to monitor and oversee the implementation.





## Transformation governance bodies: key takeaways

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01

Due to the diversification of transformation initiative within each sector, where the nature, importance and priority of the initiatives enforces many entities to create a hybrid model to enable delivery.

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02

Proper governance for transformations enables smooth decision-making, where top management are involved and engaged throughout the process and allowing for delegation to middle management. On the other hand, lack of oversight from top management can lead to poor outcomes, duplications of efforts and inefficient use of resources.

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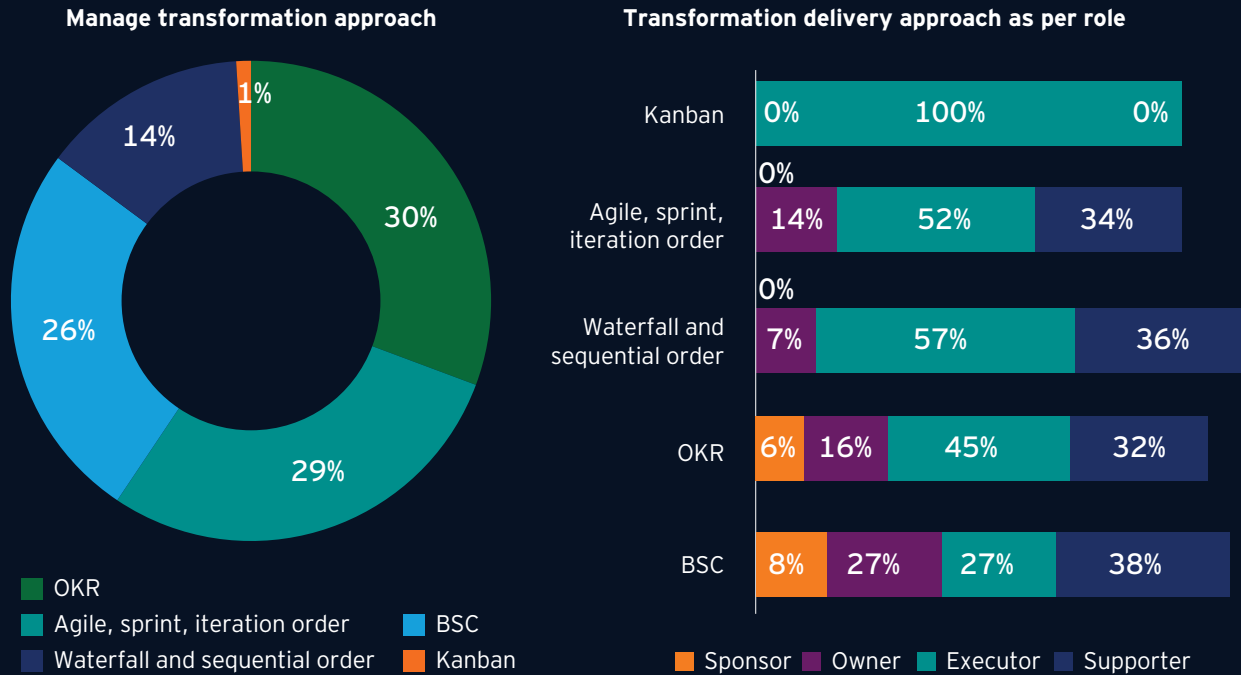
Active engagement of top management is essential for the success of strategic transformations, in order to provide clarity and direction that empowers initiatives owners and team members to execute initiatives successfully. Their involvement and the establishment of proper governance should streamline efforts and communication toward successful delivery.



**Tariq Abu Obaid**  
EY MENA Transformation Delivery Leader  
Managing Director – EY Business Services



## Transformation delivery approach



- According to the survey respondents, **30% employed OKR** as their method for managing transformation. **Agile methodology** was nearly as popular, with **29%** indicating its use for transformation management. Following closely, **BSC** were used by **26%** for managing initiatives.

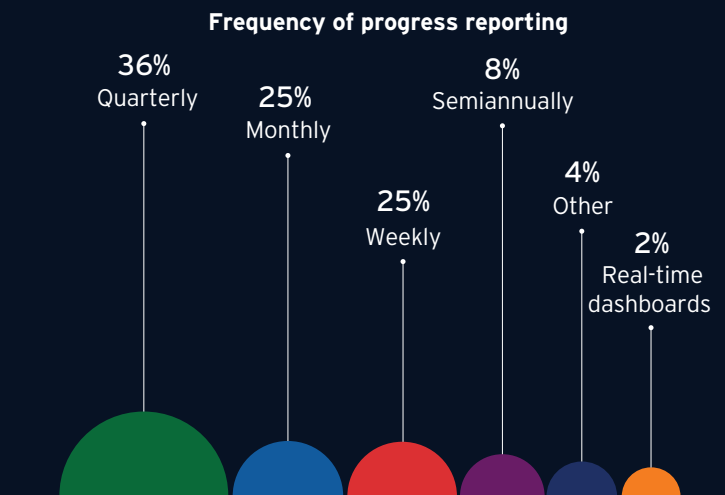
## Assigning responsibilities in transformation



- The survey revealed that **43%** of organizations assigned initiative responsibilities according to the **portfolio, P3M framework**, while **33%** delegated transformation responsibilities through **cross-functional workstreams**. Meanwhile, **24%** adhered to a **conventional task list approach** for assigning duties.

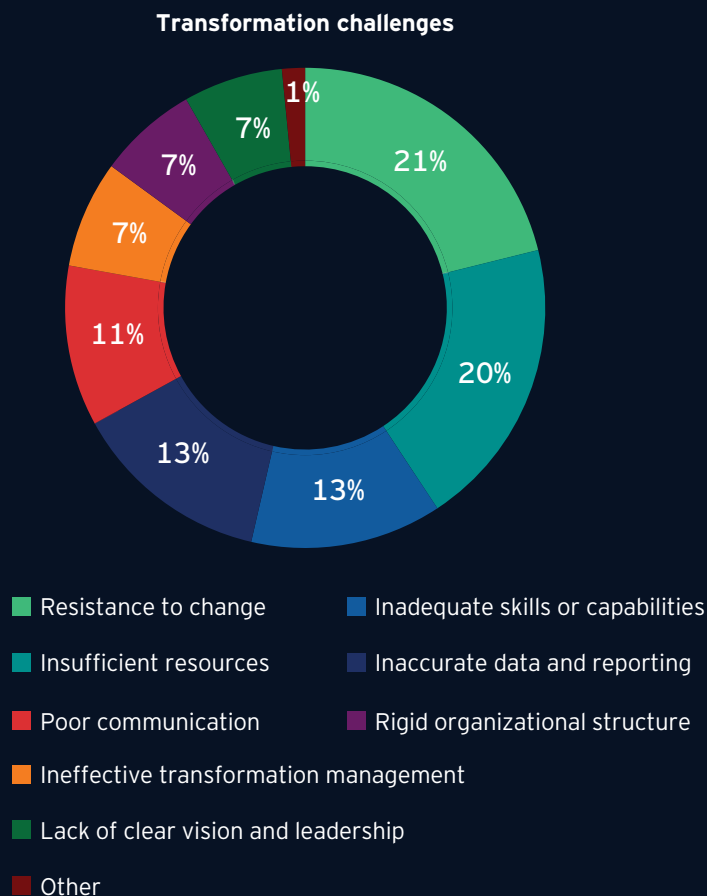


## Frequency of status update reporting



- The survey highlighted that **36%** of the respondents stated they shared transformation reports **quarterly** with initiative owners and sponsors. Another **25%** reported **weekly** and an additional **25%** reported **monthly**, which made up **half** of the respondents reporting more regularly.
- **Frequent reporting** on transformation initiatives was crucial to drive **transparency, accountability, inform timely decisions, stakeholders' engagement, proper risk management**, and help in alignment and adaptability in organizational transformation initiatives.

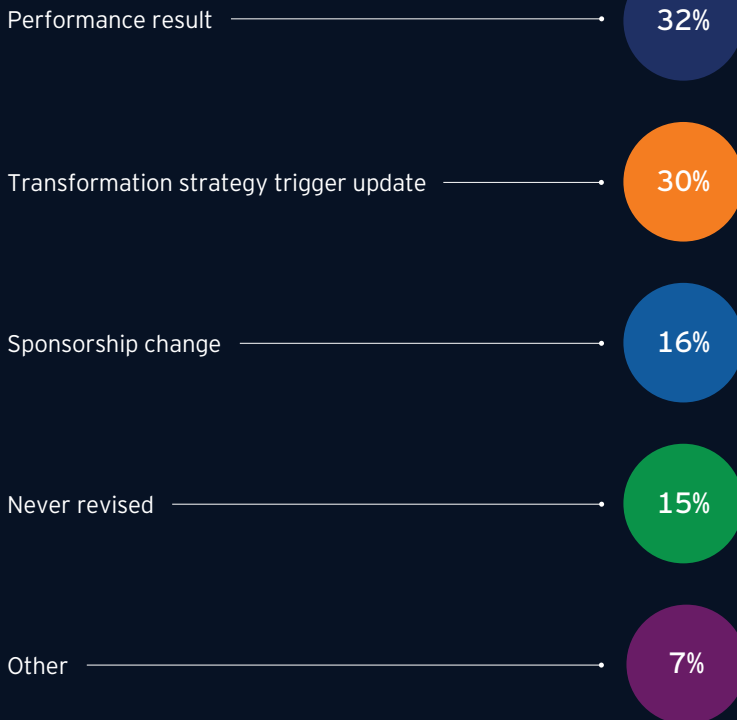
## Transformation challenges



- Challenges in transformation emerged as projects unfolded. Participants indicated that **resistance to change and lack of resources** were the **primary obstacles** encountered during execution. This was common since transformation efforts often received approval without adequate resources to support and implement a change management strategy.
- Following these, **incorrect data** and reporting, along with insufficient skills or capabilities, presented further hurdles that impeded the success of transformation. Additionally, the availability of **skilled resources** was crucial for the effective implementation of transformation.

## Factors for reassessing transformation

### Reassessing transformation factors



- To highlight the factors that compelled organizations to re-evaluate and modify their transformation goals during implementation, over **32%** of respondents shared that **inadequate performance** results triggered the reassessment of transformation objectives.
- **Thirty percent** of respondents identified a **strategic update** as the main reason for reassessing their transformation objectives.
- **A change in project sponsorship** was the cause for re-evaluating transformation goals for **16%** of those surveyed.
- Meanwhile, **15%** reported that their transformation initiatives had **remained unchanged**.





## Transformation delivery approach: key takeaways

01

The survey results suggested that traditional project management methodologies were not strictly followed when allocating responsibilities for initiatives. Additionally, the importance of engaging cross-functional teams in transformational efforts was underscored, highlighting the need for collaboration across various functions typical of transformative processes.

02

As transformations are becoming more complex, organizations are evolving by adopting hybrid delivery approaches. These approaches should align with the nature of the change initiatives and should address the problem at hand. Organizations should address by first understanding what problem they are trying to solve. Hence, it is not surprising to see organizations adopting hybrid models or customized models tailored to their needs.

03

Challenges in transformation emerged as projects unfolded. Participants indicated that resistance to change and a lack of resources were the primary obstacles encountered during execution. This was common since transformation efforts often received approval without sufficient resources to support and implement a change management strategy. Subsequently, change initiatives should include change management activities to address the human factor, manage resistance and create a more collaborative environment for success.

04

Through accurate and frequent reporting on the result of transformation performance, we can identify challenges and factors that will lead to transformation reassessment.

05

There is a need for enhanced program management, as it is highly recommended for managing most transformative initiatives.

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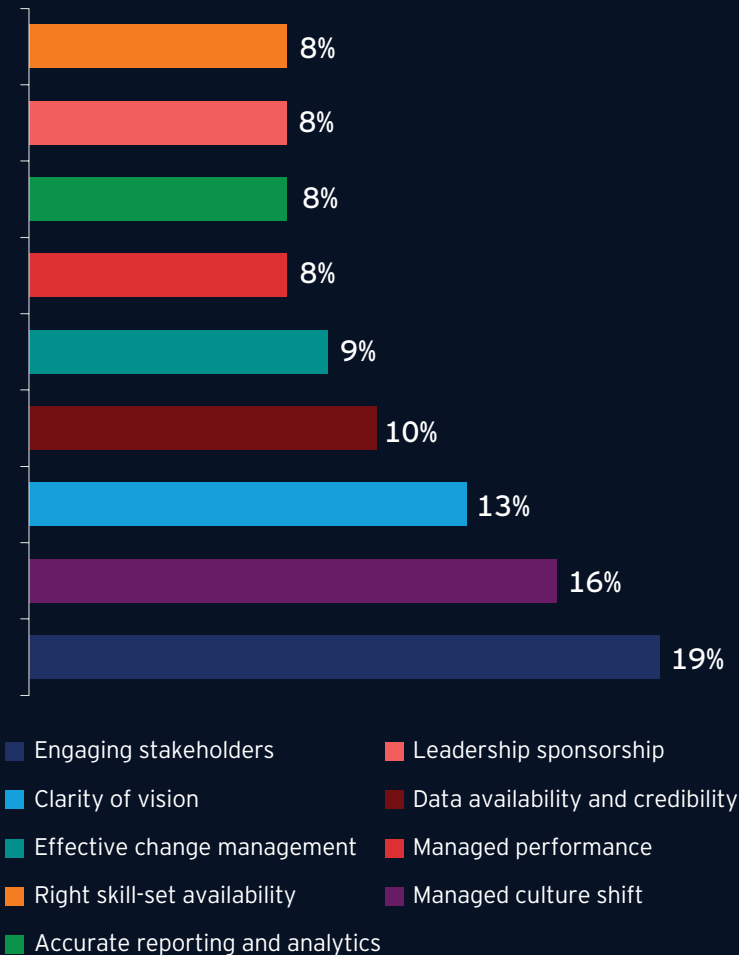
A core factor for transformation success lies in anticipating challenges and embracing agility. Working together to achieve our common goal while embracing change and empowering our teams. Sharpening our program management to be the engine to turn potential obstacles into catalysts for innovation and progress.



**Eisa Alsayegh**  
Transformation Delivery  
Senior Principal – EY Business Services

## Transformation critical enablers

Transformation enablers

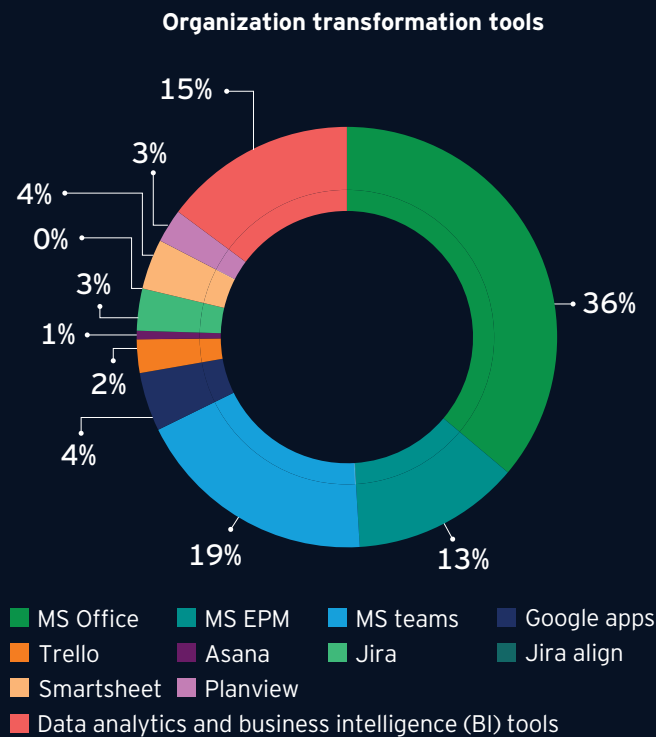


- About **19%** of respondents identified "**engaging stakeholders**" as the most key enabler for the success of the transformation initiatives. This highlighted the importance of involving stakeholders in the transformation process to secure their support and provide alignment with the objectives of initiative. Engaging stakeholders helped in meeting their needs and expectations, fosters a sense of ownership and commitment, and ultimately enhances the relevance and success of the transformation efforts.
- **Support from leadership** was considered as the **second most crucial factor**, with **16%** of respondents identified it as the key enabler.
- Additionally, **13%** of respondents stated that having a **clear vision** is essential. Close behind, **10%** of those surveyed highlighted that the **accessibility and reliability of data** are key facilitators.



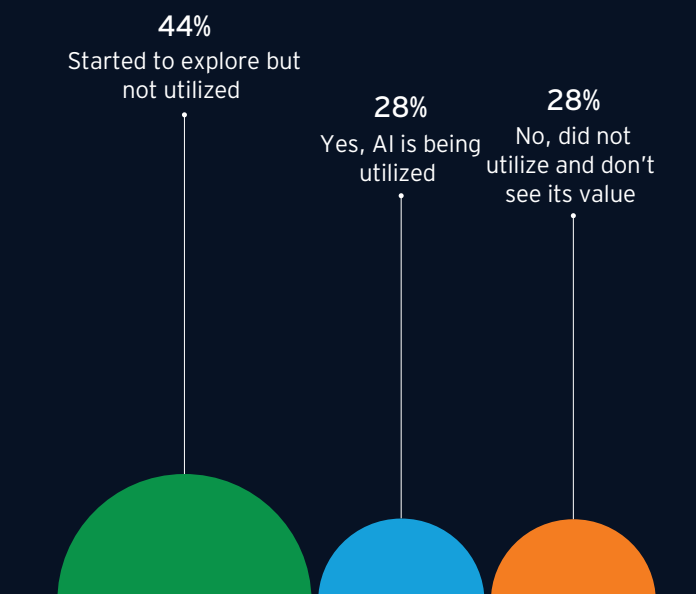


## Organization transformation tools



- **MS Office** was the **top choice** for organizational transformation tools favored by **36%** of respondents for its user-friendliness and versatility.
- **Microsoft Teams** followed at **19%**, reflecting the value placed on teamwork and communication.
- **Data analytics and BI tools**, at **15%**, underscored the significance of data in guiding transformations. Collectively, these preferences revealed that organizations sought integrated digital solutions that provided a broad spectrum of capabilities, from document handling to data analysis, to effectively manage change.

## AI technologies integration

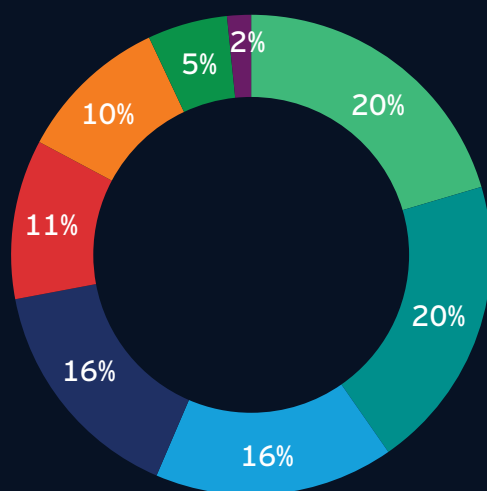


- Over **44%** of respondents were in the **initial stages** of exploring **artificial intelligence (AI)** for transformation, suggesting a **rising interest** in its potential.
- On the other hand, **28%** of respondents had **not yet utilized AI** and did not perceive its value in transformation initiatives, pointing to a potential need for further education or clarification.
- Interestingly, another **28%** of respondents had **already integrated AI** into their transformation initiatives, demonstrating a proactive stance. These results underscored a range of attitudes toward AI in transformation efforts, from exploration to proactive adoption.



## Internal talent and skill assessments

Transformation skill strategies

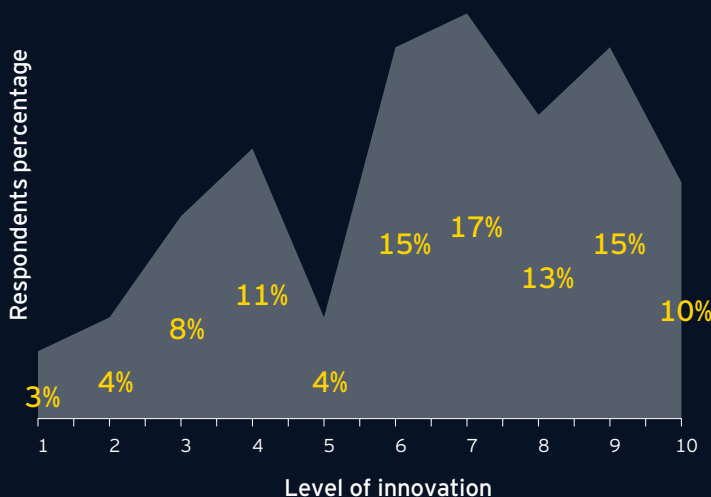


- The organization capitalizing on current employees
- Skill assessment and gap analysis
- The organization recruiting transformation consultants
- Technology adoption and digital skills development
- Augmenting the organization with permanent transformation change champions
- Cross training and job rotation
- The organization loaning resources from sister entities

- Organizations primarily depend on **two strategies** to provide the right skill set in place for transformation initiatives. Primarily, **20%** of respondents reported that their organizations **capitalized on current employees**, suggesting a focus on upskilling and re-skilling existing staff to meet the demands of transformation.
- Secondly, an equal percentage of respondents, **20%**, mentioned **conducting skill assessments and gap analyses**, indicating a proactive approach to identifying and addressing skills gaps within the organization.

## Transformation initiative innovation

Percentage of respondents



- The survey was designed to reveal the extent of innovation and creativity within organizations' transformation initiatives. The responses indicated a range of perceptions regarding the innovativeness of these initiatives.
- The most common response was **seven out of 10, chosen by 17%** of respondents, suggesting that a significant portion of organizations viewed their transformation activities as moderately innovative and new to the organization.



## Transformation tools and enablers: key takeaways

01

As communication represent 80% of project management, stakeholder engagement is crucial in large transformation initiatives, specifically for large, complex and multidisciplinary initiatives associated with Saudi Vision 2030.

02

Considering people are at the central of any transformation, upskilling and capability building should be aimed at meeting future needs rather than for present requirements. Multiple strategies of leveraging internal talent, combined with actively assessing and addressing skill deficiencies, and showcasing a comprehensive approach to build the necessary capabilities for successful transformation.

03

Technology has always been a key enabler for efficient project delivery. With the emergence of AI and more sophisticated tools and solutions, it is becoming a necessity rather than a luxury for more efficient transformation delivery.

04

Identifying and understanding the right enablers depends on the readiness of the transformation initiative, as this can significantly impact the successful delivery transformation.

05

Having a balanced approach to innovation, where organizations are pushing boundaries without straying too far from familiar territory is essential to delivery impact with innovative solutions.

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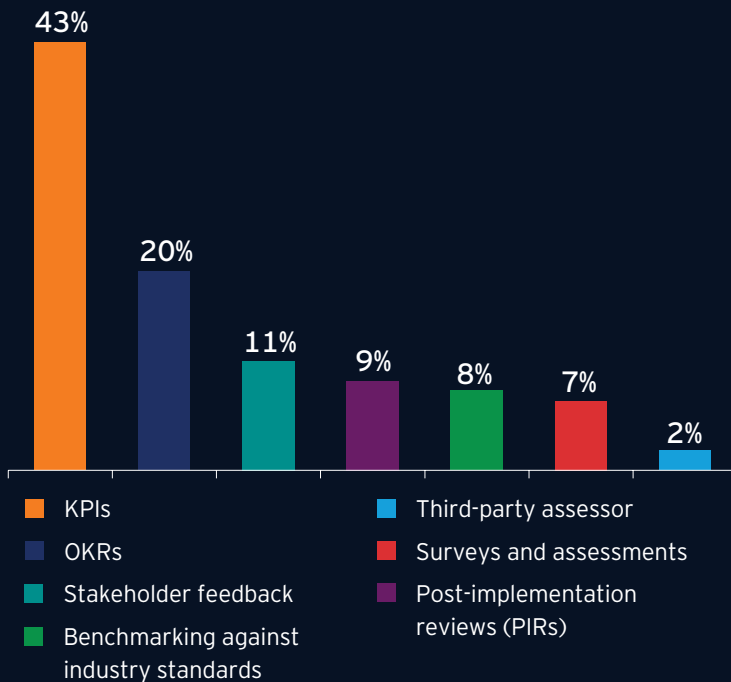
Engaging stakeholders at the commencement of large transformation initiative is a key enabler to ensure successful transformation delivery, in addition to innovative technology tools to support efficient program delivery, timely reporting and decision-making.



**Nazeeh Abdullah**  
Transformation Delivery  
Senior Principal – EY Business Services

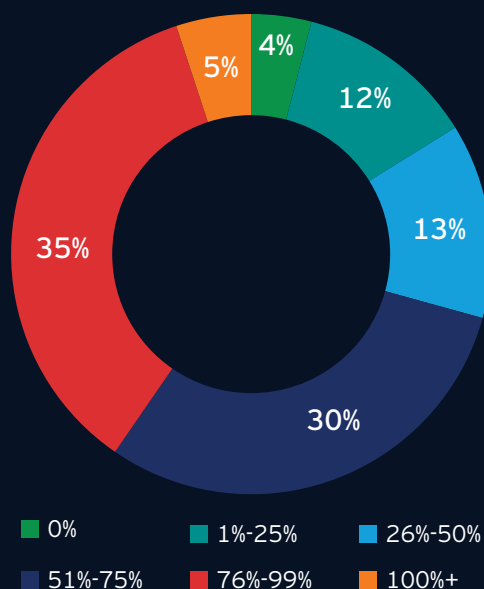


### Methods to assess transformation outcome



- Organizations employed various methods to evaluate the success of their transformation efforts. The transformation survey revealed that **half** of the organizations used **KPIs** to measure the effectiveness of their transformations.
- Following KPIs, **OKRs** were the second most popular tool, with **20%** of respondents indicating their organizations utilized this method.

### Objective realization

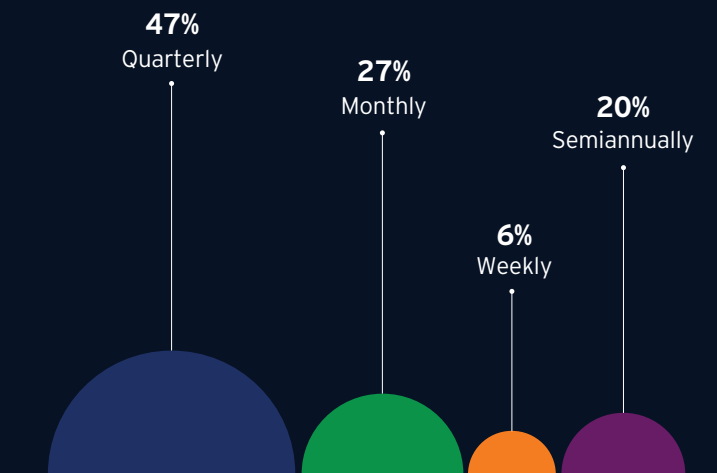


- The survey highlighted a mere **5%** of transformation **goals** were **fully met**.
- However, **35%** of goals were **nearly met**, with achievements ranging from **76% to 99%**, and **30%** of goals were **moderately met**, with a completion rate of **51% to 75%**.
- Around **13%** of respondents indicated that their transformation goals were **somewhat achieved**, reaching **26% to 50%** of the intended targets.
- Lastly, **12%** of participants noted that **less than a quarter** of their original goals **were fulfilled**.



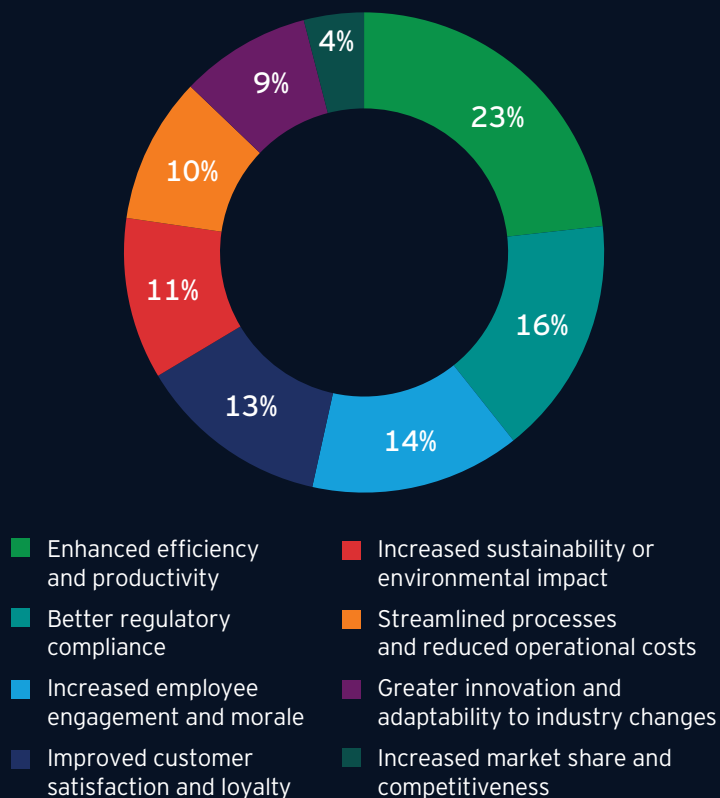
## Frequency of status update reporting

Frequency of sharing transformation results



- Regarding the communication of transformation results, **47%** of organizations **reported progress quarterly**, **27% monthly** and **20% semiannually**.

## Transformation impact



- In terms of the impact of transformation, **23%** of respondents reported that it had **improved efficiency and productivity** within their organization.
- Additionally, **16%** stated that it had **aided in regulatory compliance**.
- Fourteen percent** observed an **increase in employee engagement and morale**, and **13%** noted improvements in **customer satisfaction and loyalty**.



## Transformation metrics and impact: key takeaways

01

Having a robust framework to define and plan impact at the initiation stage, along with ongoing monitoring that enables organizations to showcase their achievements in measurable ways that are aligned with objectives and targets.

02

A pitfall that most organizations fall into is not establishing a mechanism to make sure the impact is sustained way after the initiatives are delivered. This long-term perspective is critical to consider so that investments and efforts do not go to waste.

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Guiding organizational transformation hinges on metrics; they're our roadmap to success. By establishing and tracking clear metrics from the start, we can highlight achievements and identify areas for enhancement, ensuring a victorious transformation.



**Imad Alsadeq**  
Transformation Delivery  
Senior Principal – EY Business Services



# 06

## Brief about Transformation Delivery services

### EY Transformation Delivery

Transformation Delivery (TD) at the global EY organization is a broad suite of services dedicated to driving impactful and sustainable change within organizations. TD goes beyond traditional change management by focusing on enhancing the success rate, engagement and overall impact of large-scale transformation efforts. At the core of TD is the belief that true transformation requires a purposeful, continuous and nonlinear approach. TD places a strong emphasis on putting people at the center of transformation, recognizing that they are both the drivers and beneficiaries of change.

By addressing both emotional and rational drivers, TD helps in making the transformation process not only efficient but also meaningful for all stakeholders involved. One of the key strengths of TD is its ability to create agility within organizations. By leveraging agile tools and methodologies, TD enables organizations to respond quickly and effectively to changing market conditions, so that they remain competitive and adaptive in today's fast-paced business environment.

**01** Transformation management, which helps clients define, implement and manage complex portfolios from strategy to execution

**02** Capital program delivery, which advises clients on the effective setup and delivery of large capital projects

**03** Product management, which facilitates the product delivery lifecycle

**04** Complex program management, which equips clients with the necessary knowledge to drive major transformations

**05** Agile delivery, which establishes agile program management offices (PMO) and provides Scrum Masters to execute agile components of a program

**06** Portfolio management, which assists clients in aligning strategy to demand and driving portfolio-level decisions to realize value

The EY Transformation Delivery team is committed to helping organizations navigate the complexities of transformation and achieve lasting success. Contact us to learn more about how our Transformation Delivery services can support your organization's transformation journey.



# 07 | EY and PMI KSA Chapter Survey team

## EY MENA Leadership



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## EY MENA working team



**Yasser Alasmari**

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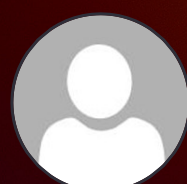
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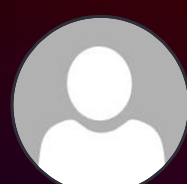
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## PMI Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Chapter Leadership

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**Badr Burshaid**

President

PMI Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Chapter

## PMI Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Chapter working team

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Director of Strategy

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**Majed Ghaith**

VP of Communications

PMI Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Chapter



**Abdulaziz Alarifi**

Director of Engagement

PMI Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Chapter



**Sakhr Alfaris**

Director of Excellence

PMI Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Chapter

## EY | Building a better working world

EY is building a better working world by creating new value for clients, people, society and the planet, while building trust in capital markets.

Enabled by data, AI and advanced technology, EY teams help clients shape the future with confidence and develop answers for the most pressing issues of today and tomorrow.

EY teams work across a full spectrum of services in assurance, consulting, tax, strategy and transactions. Fueled by sector insights, a globally connected, multi-disciplinary network and diverse ecosystem partners, EY teams can provide services in more than 150 countries and territories.

### All in to shape the future with confidence.

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The MENA practice of EY has been operating in the region since 1923. Over the past 100 years, we have grown to over 8,500 people united across 26 offices and 15 countries, sharing the same values and an unwavering commitment to quality. As an organization, we continue to develop outstanding leaders who deliver exceptional services to our clients and who contribute to our communities. We are proud of our accomplishments over the years, reaffirming our position as the largest and most established professional services organization in the region.

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ED None.

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