ROOMPACT WEBINAR



The Myth of Buy-In: Designing Work People Actually Do

Erin Simpson



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Articulate why "buy–in" as a goal often fails
- Identify at least one friction point in a process they own and propose a design–based fix
- Apply expectation–setting and default–behavior strategies to a real work context
- Name specific ways to simplify processes so staff are more likely to follow through

“Buy–in in the context of organizational change can be considered an honest, reciprocal agreement between leaders and members (stakeholders) of an organization to work together to navigate a successful change initiative.” (Hubbard, 2022)

70%

of organizational change efforts fail, and a leading reason for failure is a lack of stakeholder buy–in (Hubbard, 2022)

WHAT IF THE PROBLEM IS PROCESS, NOT WILL?

3 LEVERS OF WORK DESIGN

Make Expectations Unmissable

Simplify the Process Itself

Design the Default

1 MAKE EXPECTATIONS UNMISSABLE

- The difference between "everyone knows" and "it's written down, visible, and revisited"
- Expectations given once a year in training or in one–time emails aren't visible expectations
- *Example:* Shift from the once a year expectation meeting to agendas with a permanent section

2 SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS ITSELF

- The fewer steps, the more likely completion
- Simplification isn't lowering standards, it's removing obstacles to meet them consistently
- *Example:* Multiple assessment tools that generate the same data cause assessment fatigue

3 DESIGN THE DEFAULT

- Change the default operating systems: the easiest solution should be baked into your design

- Opt-Outs instead of Opt-Ins, Templates instead of Blank Docs, Quick Forms over E-mailed Responses

- *Example:* Roompact!

FRICTION AUDIT

Step 1: Think of one process you own or co-own where follow-through is inconsistent. Write it down.

Step 2: List every step you're asking people to take. Be honest and include the mental steps (knowing where to find the form, remembering the deadline, knowing the detail that gets missed every time).

FRICTION AUDIT

Step 3: Mark any step that adds friction but not value.

Step 4: Identify which lever applies: Is the expectation unclear? Is the process too complex? Is the default pointing the wrong way?

Step	Question
What are they being asked to do?	Is this necessary?
How many clicks?	Can we reduce them?
What information do they need?	Are we asking for information we already have?
Do they have to leave one system and go somewhere else?	Can we keep them in one place?
Do they have to enter the same information twice?	Can we pre-populate it?
Do they have to make a decision?	Can we make the appropriate choice for them?
Does this step actually improve the outcome?	If not, why does it exist?

POSITIONALITY

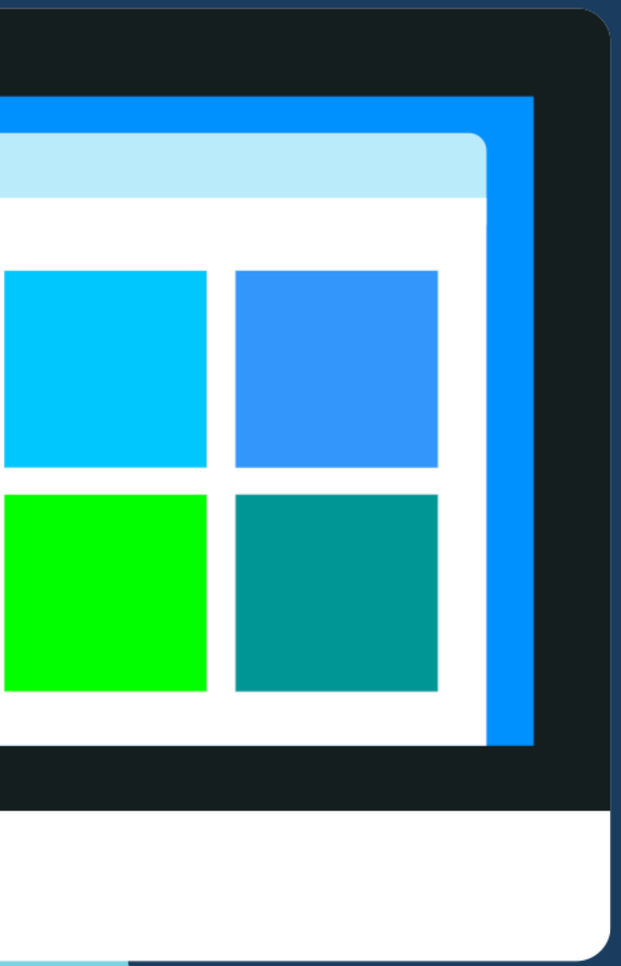


- What is at least one process that you can influence?
- Name your scope of influence and strategically start there.
- The goal is not to change your entire structure in one day, it is to get your team from point A to B.



ONE THING, THIS WEEK

THANK YOU ROOMPACT!



Erin Simpson, Ph.D.

erindsimp@gmail.com

linkedin.com/in/erin-d-simpson/



REFERENCES

EAB. (n.d.). 4 ways to build faculty buy-in for student success initiatives. https://eab.com/resources/blog/student-success-blog/build-faculty-buy-in/

Hubbart, J. A. (2023). Organizational change: Considering truth and buy-in. Administrative Sciences, 13(1), 3. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13010003

Kaplan, M., & Linder, K. (2021). Nudging in education: From theory towards guidelines for successful implementation. European Journal of Psychology of Education, 36(3), 791–808. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-020-00495-0

Meyers, C., & Hitt, D. (2022). A content analysis of change management strategies in higher education learning management system transitions. Online Learning, 26(2). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1320178.pdf

Vance, I. (2022). What educators might learn from behavioral economics: Revisiting nudges. Academic Advising Today. https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Academic-Advising-Today/View-Articles/What-Educators-Might-Learn-from-Behavioral-Economics-Revisiting-Nudges.aspx