

APMG vs Prosci: Which Change Management Certification Is Right for You?

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What are the key differences between APMG's Change Management and Prosci's Training? It's a question that many people interested in, or currently practicing, [Change Management](#) eventually ask themselves. I find this question particularly intriguing because it makes me wonder: what does someone mean by "better"?

My experience suggests that "better" is highly contextual, depending on an individual's motivations for studying and the expected benefits they hope to achieve after completing their certification.



Rather than declaring which certification is definitively "better," I'll guide you through a framework to determine which one best suits your goals based on three key criteria:

1. Your goal: What is motivating your desire for advancing Change Management knowledge and capability
2. Your confidence: How ready are you to blend theory with real-world practice
3. The demand: What your specific country, industry, or organisation expects when seeking Change Management support

In the course of exploring this topic, I've spoken with several professionals who completed both certifications to understand their motivations and the timing of their choices. Most had been practicing Change Management informally through traditional operations and project management roles but felt something was missing from their practice and knowledge. Through curiosity and community support, they became aware of the broader profession and considered formal study to structure their thinking.

When investigating certification options, most selected APMG first, then later added Prosci to expand their knowledge base. This progression was driven by continued curiosity and influenced by some organisations referencing the ADKAR method in advertised change roles.

So, let's take a short review of each certification, pulling out some of the key aspects each offers.

		
Globally recognized	✓	✓
Explains Change Management and its benefits	✓	✓
Methodology neutral	✓ Agnostic about the methodology used. APMG's courses focus on helping learners build a solid foundation in change management, explaining a range of approaches, including the ADKAR® methodology. This allows learners to choose an approach that suits their organization and the nature of the change.	✗ A narrower focus, concentrating on the ADKAR® methodology.
Endorsed by the Change Management Institute	✓ APMG's Change Management courses, were developed in partnership with the Change Management Institute, an independent, non-profit global professional body and the authors of the CMBok™.	✗ Based on Prosci®'s proprietary ADKAR® methodology, developed by the Prosci founder Jeff Hiatt in the 1990s.
APMG CHANGE MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION		<small>ADKAR® is a registered trademark of Prosci Inc. All rights reserved.</small>

APMG Change Management Overview

APMG's Change Management Foundation and Practitioner course is based on the Change Management Institute's Change Management Body of Knowledge (CMBok). The certification educates practitioners on key theories, tools, and techniques fundamental to managing change.

While the CMBok encompasses all knowledge expected of a Change Manager, the APMG certification covers only selected elements due to the CMBok's vast scope and examination constraints. However, what it does cover represents the absolute fundamentals, providing a solid foundation for any change practitioner.

Key Characteristics of APMG's Change Certification:

APMG doesn't prescribe a specific change management methodology. Instead, it equips practitioners with a breadth of tools to address different aspects of organisational change. This flexibility benefits practitioners who prefer not being constrained by rigid step-by-step processes, though newcomers may find the lack of structured guidance daunting.

Unlike some certifications, APMG doesn't typically provide standard templates or tools for managing change activities. The models explain concepts and potential applications, but practitioners must develop their own implementation methods. Course attendees and trainers sometimes share tools informally, but this varies case by case.

Prosci Overview

Prosci (whose full name is Professional Science) is known worldwide for the ADKAR model: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. The organisation commits to understanding project and change delivery through research and evidence-based analysis, claiming ADKAR's effectiveness stems from continuous research and analysis of real-world change delivery.

By understanding activities within the five steps of ADKAR, practitioners believe they can successfully navigate individual and organisational change impacts, moving people along a journey toward adoption and sustainment.

Key Characteristics of Prosci:

Many organisations appreciate ADKAR's simplicity and its compatibility with project process gates, whether [waterfall](#) or [agile](#)/iterative. This framework appeals to newcomers by providing a single change methodology giving confidence to begin practicing.

Prosci invests heavily in templates and support materials that practitioners can access and utilize. This means ADKAR users have both a methodology and the tools to understand implementation tasks.

Which Change Certification Is Right for You?

I hope it is evident that these certifications are very different, with overlaps in a handful of common techniques coming more from the likes of project management e.g. stakeholder management.

APMG offers a comprehensive catalog of change tools, while Prosci provides a single model in its ADKAR methodology. Newer practitioners may benefit from ADKAR's structured approach and well-documented templates, which can build confidence when real-world experience is limited but will pay a premium to take this certification.

However, for those with a little more experience behind them or a strong supportive network to reflect practice, the [APMG certification](#) provides a much more realistic exploration of change in organisations. While it might give you more than you bargained for in content, including an overview of the Prosci/ADKAR method, that knowledge will give you excellent grounding from which to develop your real-world practice. It does so without implying that organisations and the people in them move through change in a linear way.

Practitioners I interviewed noted that Prosci and ADKAR are requested in certain industries and countries. ADKAR is particularly popular in the United States and in large multinational organisations. Here, it is often deployed where change has a fixed implementation date, like the implementation of a new system or the move to a new office. However, these fixed milestones often mean ADKAR is trying to "force" people's engagement to fall in line with critical project dates, which in some ways goes against the true intention of Change Management. APMG's certification handles similar situations but due to its focus on the variety of ways to engage, seek insight and ultimately understand individuals' reactions to change it brings a more risk-based approach to achieving these fixed milestones. In addition, unlike ADKAR that breadth of tools

means it offers insights into other more emergent types of change. These include behavioural change initiatives that don't fit rigid timelines, such as becoming a customer focused organisation or improving company culture around decision making.

Cost Considerations:

APMG courses cost approximately half the cost of the Prosci certification. While Prosci provides template access for one year, maintaining tool access requires ongoing membership fees, as materials are constantly revised based on new research.

Conclusion

So which is better suited to your needs?

Select APMG:

If the breadth of tools and freedom to combine approaches doesn't concern you and the flexibility it offers you is something that would be valuable to you and the organisations/industries, you plan work with. Also, if you plan to either be in [Change Management](#) as a long term career move or indeed even take up increasing levels of people management, APMG is great foundation from which to build your leadership capability.

Select Prosci:

If having a single tool supported by templates (at an additional cost) with a simple linear set of steps gives you the confidence to begin practicing. But be warned "forcing" a process of change on people can lead to resistance, which in the long run makes the job of the Change Manager significant harder.

Whichever you choose, I strongly encourage you to seek and build a good network of practitioners with whom you can share your experiences and for which they can help you evolve your practice. Because, as with lots of post-school education, much of the value comes from learning the nuance in applying the knowledge in the real world.

About the Author:

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Ket Patel is the founder of Change Agitators and is a Change Management Institute Accredited Master Change Practitioner with over 20 years experience working with small to medium size organisations as they look to scale, grow and modernise their businesses.

Change Agitators is an organisational change consultancy dedicated to helping organisations develop a culture of adaptability by blending Change Management and Coaching expertise. The team at Change Agitators help unlock organisational adaptability by arming leaders and managers with the tools and mindset to navigate the uncertainty that can surround a broad and complex portfolio of change.

Ket is also a passionate volunteer within the field of Change Management. After leading the UK Change Management Institute (ChgMI) for several years, he has since gone on to establish and lead the ChgMI's UK Collaborations teams for the institute working closely with academic institutions to bring greater rigour to the profession, and professional bodies to broaden the understanding of Change Managements alignment with other teams supporting delivery of organisational change. In addition Ket has set up a not for profit, Change Reactions, to support new entrants to the field of organisational change to help encourage the next generation consider career paths in the field and reduce some of the complexity that exists in navigating it.

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