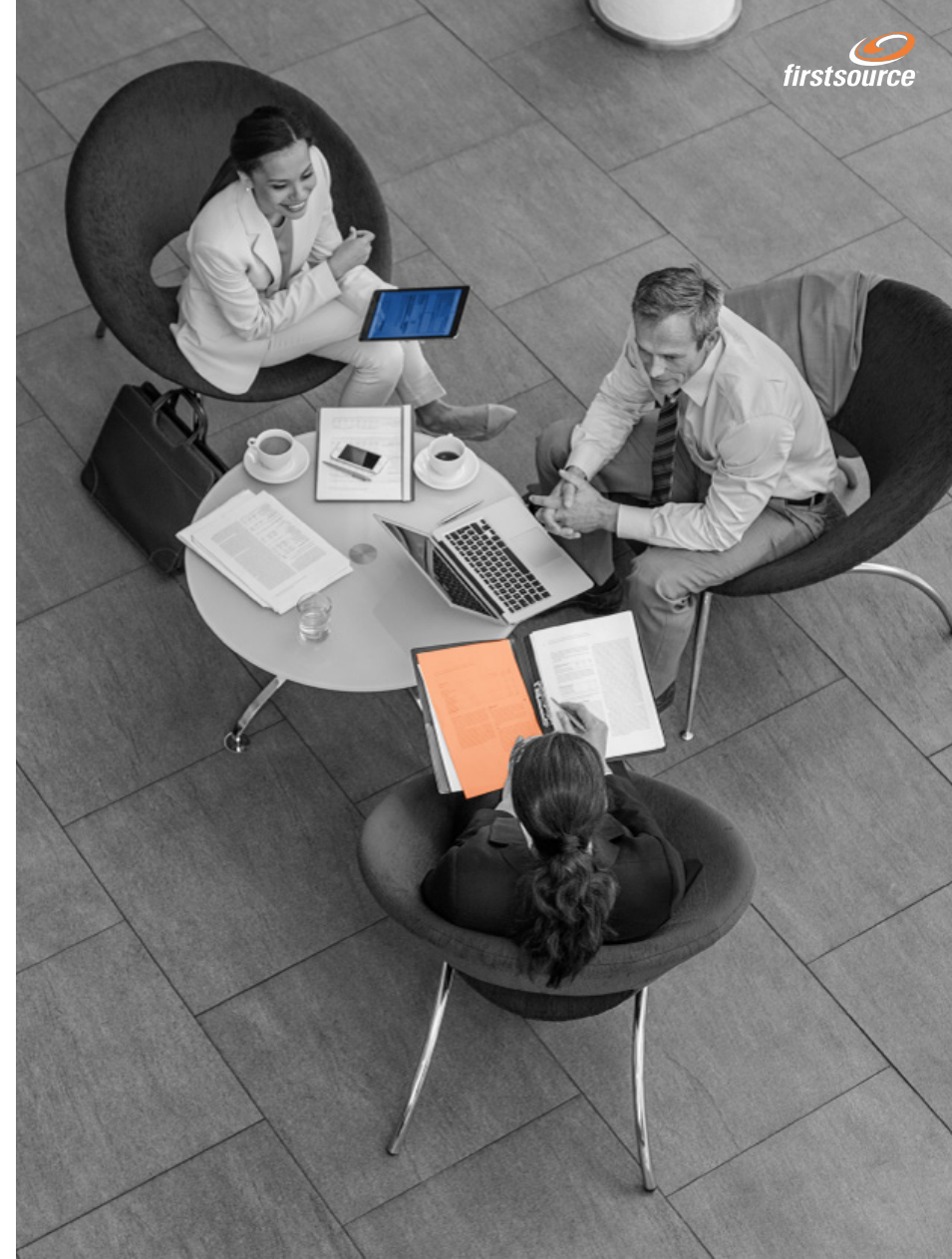


“No business case is ever right.”

10 honest quotes on business transformation



“

Of all the business cases in the many companies I've either been Chief Executive or Chairman, where they've gone through all the process to the Board, I can't remember one that ever delivered what was on the nameplate.”

- CEO



What they don't tell you about change

When it comes to business transformation, talk is cheap. Experience is what matters.

To cut through the platitudes and ambiguity, we surveyed **120 executives** who've actually led large-scale change initiatives.

Here's their honest perspective.



Change is hard on those who lead it

It's a marathon, not a sprint.



I think transformations are possibly some of the most stressful work you can do.

Because if you are leading that transformation you have to be relentlessly optimistic and focused in the face of stuff which is, excuse the language, crap. On a daily basis. It really is exhausting.”

- Head of Transformation



“

You take a lot of abuse during something like that as well.

Because you're doing stuff that is impacting lots and lots of people around you, and people can have quite strong views. So, they can be very negative in terms of dealing with you, and with the problem.”

- CFO

Every initiative makes mistakes

So executives need to ground initiatives in reality.



Something I learnt is, let's get the timelines, bump them up five times, and maybe we are approximating reality."

- Head of Strategic Finance



“

I find that most proposals haven't considered the implications for adjacent systems and processes.

Then you end up with project over-runs and you're into more money than you'd originally planned.”

- COO

As an executive, you play two critical roles

You need to both encourage the initiative *and* repeatedly change it.



If you haven't got an executive sponsor or an executive lead, you're going to be screwed in terms of delivery."

- CFO



“

It needs to be a good plan and you need to know that you'll have to re-build that plan multiple times.”

- **Head of Strategic Finance**

And you set the tone for the whole initiative

You help decide how people
feel about their contributions.



There needs to be regular dialogue so the project team is clear that bad news isn't something to be ashamed of.

Projects don't always go well, they may need escalation and that's what senior management are there for."

- Group Vice President



“

If I've committed to you that I'm going to do something in 100 days and it takes 150, what does that drive?

Embarrassment and feeling stupid, that's all it drives. You could pick any stress within a transformation program and I bet you could boil it down to human embarrassment and fear of failure.”

- Chief Data Officer

So how you manage *yourself* makes a big difference

It isn't easy. But it does
affect everything.



If the senior leader is in the room, it shouldn't mean you can't voice your opinion. That comes from the leadership and culture of openness and feedback."

- Enterprise Architect



“

I would love to say; 'I have never let stress get the better of me', but there are occasions when it does get the better of me.

The skill is actually can you step back from it relatively quickly and get into; 'right, what do we do about it?'

- CFO

So what should you be doing?

To lead change effectively, you need to confront the elephant in the room.

From interviews and surveys of these **120 executives**, we've identified five central issues that most need your attention during business transformation.



[Read 'The 5 elephants of business transformation' to find out what they are.](#)

It's packed with practical insights from transformation leaders.

Learn more:

