



FROM CUTOVER TO BUSINESS AS USUAL:

A Dexcent Playbook for Technical and Human Transitions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INDUSTRIAL CHANGE RARELY FAILS BECAUSE THE TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT WORK.

It fails because the operation cannot absorb the change safely, consistently, and across shifts. Operational readiness is capability plus commitment. People need to know how to execute the change, and they need a reason to choose it.

In 24/7 environments, the cost of adoption failure shows up as workarounds, parallel processes, inconsistent execution, rework, and a growing gap between the designed process and the real process. Over time, that gap erodes reliability, audit readiness, and confidence in the next initiative.

This eBook is a Dexcent playbook for bridging that gap. It focuses on the practical conditions that allow change to hold in the control room and in the field, under real operating pressure.

WHO THIS PLAYBOOK IS FOR

Operations, plant, maintenance, reliability, engineering, OT and controls leaders, and transformation owners in asset-intensive industries, including utilities, manufacturing, oil and gas, chemicals, mining, and municipal operations such as water and wastewater.

WHAT YOU WILL TAKE AWAY

A practical approach for moving from cutover to business as usual, including how to:

- **Define success** in operational terms and assign ownership after go-live
- **Build readiness** into the integrated project plan with measurable gates
- **Prepare supervisors and frontline teams** for normal and abnormal conditions
- **Execute cutover** with clear non-negotiables, hypercare, and exception control
- **Stabilize performance**, then sustain adoption with routines and 3 to 5 meaningful signals
- **Recognize predictable failure patterns early** and apply practical countermeasures

HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

Use it as a readiness checklist before you lock the plan, as a cutover and stabilization guide during rollout, and as a sustainment reference when attention shifts and drift begins to appear.

DEEPER DIVE AND NEXT STEP

If you want the deeper conversation behind these readiness principles, register for the on-demand webinar series:

dexcent.com/webinars/adkar-for-industrial-operations

If you have an upcoming cutover, rollout, or major workflow change, a readiness assessment is a structured way to surface blind spots early while you still have time to adjust:

dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/readiness-assessment

CHAPTER 1

Introduction:

Operational Excellence When Change Cannot Pause



INDUSTRIAL CHANGE IS DIFFERENT,
**NOT BECAUSE THE TECHNOLOGY
IS ALWAYS MORE COMPLEX,
BUT BECAUSE THE OPERATING
CONTEXT IS UNFORGIVING.**

In a 24/7 environment, transformation lands in the control room, on shift, during an outage window, inside a maintenance backlog, and under constant pressure from safety, uptime, compliance, and production targets.

THAT REALITY CREATES A PREDICTABLE GAP THAT MANY INITIATIVES NEVER CROSS.

Most organizations plan the technical work in detail. They invest in systems, define architectures, build integrations, test cutover paths, and commission solutions with discipline. On paper, everything lines up. But once the initiative meets operational reality, adoption becomes the constraint. Operators and maintainers default to what is familiar because it is fast, safe, and proven. Supervisors compensate for uncertainty by improvising. Workarounds and parallel processes show up fast, and they quietly widen the gap between designed work and real work.

When that happens, the costs do not always appear immediately in reporting. They surface later as variability and rework. Execution starts to depend on who is on shift; informal processes creep in that cannot be audited, and the gap widens between the designed process and the real process. Even when the technology works, operational benefits remain out of reach.

Operational excellence, in other words, is not only a technical outcome. **It is an operational capability.**

It is the ability to **absorb change** without sacrificing safety, uptime, quality, and credibility. That capability depends on a discipline that is often underweighted: **OPERATIONAL READINESS.**

WHY READINESS IS THE REAL CONSTRAINT

Readiness is not a kickoff meeting, a training deck, or a communications plan. In industrial environments, readiness is the practical set of conditions that allow frontline teams to execute the new way of working consistently, under pressure, across the real constraints of shift rotation, contractor churn, legacy systems, and competing work priorities.

It is the difference between a process that becomes **"how we work now"** and a process that becomes **"how we work when the right person is available."**

It is also the difference between a launch that holds and a launch that degrades under operating pressure.



READINESS IS ALSO PERSONAL

Industrial change is not absorbed by job titles. It is absorbed by people and change often creates a quiet personal calculation long before it becomes a visible operational issue.

For a frontline leader or experienced technician, a new workflow can feel like giving up the competence they earned. It can introduce fear of getting it wrong in a high-consequence environment. It can feel like increased scrutiny, loss of autonomy, or added work on top of an already full shift. When that personal cost is unclear or unacknowledged, people protect safety and credibility in the most predictable way: they stick with the old way.

This is where the **"what's in it for me"** question matters. If the change does not clearly answer how it makes work safer, smoother, or more predictable on shift, the organization should expect resistance, even when the technical solution is sound.

This is also why sponsor visibility and leadership reinforcement are not soft topics. In industrial environments, they are risk controls. They create belief, they protect capacity, and they give supervisors permission to hold the new standard during backlog surges, outage windows, and the inevitable weekend surprises.



HOW THIS PLAYBOOK IS STRUCTURED

This eBook is designed as a practical playbook for industrial leaders. It follows the arc of how change succeeds in real operations, from the earliest decisions through sustainment:

- **Define success and ownership** before execution begins
- **Build readiness** into the integrated project plan, not as a late add-on
- **Prepare** supervisors and frontline teams for real operating conditions
- **Execute cutover** with clarity and controlled stabilization
- **Sustain performance** through measurement, reinforcement, and leader routines

A DEEPER DIVE: ADKAR FOR INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS

Dexcent collaborated with Prosci on a short, on-demand webinar series called “ADKAR for Industrial Operations.” The series is delivered in a fireside-chat format and expands on the adoption and sustainment challenges that show up in 24/7 environments.

If you want the deeper conversation behind the principles in this playbook, **register and access the series here:**
dexcent.com/webinars/adkar-for-industrial-operations/

CHAPTER 2

Define Success Before the First Work Order Moves



INDUSTRIAL CHANGE INITIATIVES RARELY FAIL BECAUSE TEAMS DID NOT WORK HARD ENOUGH.

They fail because the organization never agreed on what **"success"** means in operational terms, or who owns it after go-live.

In a 24/7 environment, ambiguity is expensive. When outcomes are unclear, the operation fills the gap with local decisions, workarounds, and informal rules. That is not a character flaw. It is how industrial systems protect uptime and safety when priorities compete, and time is limited.

DEFINING SUCCESS EARLY PREVENTS DRIFT.

START WITH OPERATIONAL OUTCOMES, NOT PROJECT OUTPUTS

A project output is something you deliver: a system goes live, a workflow is configured, a dashboard is published, training is completed.

An operational outcome is what changes in real execution: what becomes safer, more consistent, and more predictable from crew to crew. It reduces rework, improves audit readiness, and keeps decisions cleaner when the happy path breaks.

Before you discuss the plan, align on outcomes that matter to the operation, such as:

- **Reduced variability** across crews and shifts
- **Faster response** to abnormal conditions in the control room
- **Better work order quality** and less rework from missing information
- **Improved audit readiness** because documented process and real practice match
- **More predictable uptime** because the new way of working holds

If you cannot describe success in these terms, the team is still describing **activity, not impact**.

A QUICK REALITY CHECK SCENARIO

Consider a rollout that changes how field work is planned and executed, such as a new work order workflow in an EAM system. The project outputs might be “workflow configured” and “training delivered.” But the operational outcomes are different:

- Does the night shift execute the workflow the same way as day shift?
- Do supervisors trust the new steps enough to reinforce them during a backlog surge?
- When a job runs long, do crews follow the new workflow or revert to informal notes and verbal handoffs?
- In the first weeks, is predictability improving or getting worse?

If you do not define these operational outcomes up front, you will miss early warning signs. You will only see the gap after workarounds become routine.

DEFINE WHO OWNS SUCCESS AFTER GO-LIVE

Industrial organizations are designed to keep running.

Projects are temporary. Operations are continuous.

If transfer of ownership is unclear, go-live becomes a cliff. The project team steps back, issues persist, and the frontline returns to what it trusts. The initiative may be technically complete, but it is operationally unfinished.

Ownership needs to be explicit in three areas:

OPERATIONAL OWNERSHIP

- Who is accountable for the new standard of work in the control room and in the field?
- Who has the authority to reinforce it across shifts?

TECHNICAL OWNERSHIP

- Who owns configuration changes, access, support triage, and ongoing improvements?
- What is the path from operational feedback to technical action?

PERFORMANCE OWNERSHIP

- Who tracks the signals that indicate adoption and performance?
- Who reviews them, how often, and what happens when performance drifts?

A clean handoff is not a meeting. It is a set of roles, routines, and escalation paths that survive real operating pressure.

INCLUDE SPONSOR OWNERSHIP, NOT JUST OPERATIONAL OWNERSHIP

In industrial environments, sponsorship is not a ceremonial role. The sponsor sets priority, protects capacity, and creates permission.

If the sponsor is invisible, the operation assumes the change is optional. If the sponsor does not resolve conflicts between production pressure and the new standard, supervisors will resolve those conflicts locally, and consistency will fracture.

Sponsor ownership should be explicit in the **Definition of Success**:

- What outcomes the sponsor is personally accountable for
- What tradeoffs the sponsor is willing to make during stabilization
- How the sponsor will stay visible during critical moments
- What decisions require sponsor escalation, and what does not

SURFACE CONSTRAINTS EARLY, ESPECIALLY CAPACITY

In industrial environments, the most common readiness failure is not resistance. **It is capacity.** People are already fully allocated to keep the operation safe and stable. When an initiative assumes **"extra time,"** execution breaks first, then credibility follows.

Before planning the work, clarify constraints that will shape the path:

- Shift coverage and training windows
- Contractor churn, onboarding cycles, and mixed crew competency
- Critical outages, shutdowns, and turnaround schedules
- Safety and compliance requirements that cannot flex
- Work management realities: backlog, permit processes, prioritization rules
- Role boundaries where applicable

These constraints are not reasons to stop. They are the design inputs for a plan that can actually be executed.



BUILD A SHARED NARRATIVE SUPERVISORS CAN REPEAT

Alignment is not only an executive exercise. If the story of the change cannot be repeated simply by supervisors and frontline leaders, it will not travel across shifts.

A practical test is to ask: can a supervisor explain, in one minute, all of the following?

- What is changing in daily work
- Why it matters to safety, reliability, quality, or compliance
- What will be supported, and what will not
- What will be measured, and what “good” looks like
- What to do when the new process conflicts with production pressure
- What to do during abnormal situations, and when to escalate
- Where to go when something breaks, does not make sense, or creates extra work

If you cannot answer these clearly before execution begins, you are not ready yet. You are still negotiating the change while asking people to adopt it.

ANSWER “WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME” BY ROLE

If you want people to choose the new way under pressure, you must make the value personal and credible. In industrial environments, that value is rarely abstract. It is usually about making daily work safer, smoother, and more predictable.

Before go-live, **define the role-based value exchange:**

- **Operators and control room staff:** clearer escalation paths, fewer ambiguous situations, less second-guessing during abnormal conditions
- **Maintainers and technicians:** cleaner work orders, fewer call-backs, less hunting for information, better sequencing and access to what is needed
- **Supervisors:** fewer exceptions, fewer end-of-shift surprises, clearer visibility into what is done and what is at risk
- **Engineers and planners:** better data quality, fewer downstream fixes, fewer “why did this happen” investigations caused by missing inputs
- **Contractors:** clearer standards, faster onboarding into the expected workflow, fewer site-specific workarounds that create rework later

This is not about selling a vision. It is about answering a legitimate question:

“How will this help me do my job better, safer, or with less friction?”



PRACTICAL OUTPUT:

A ONE-PAGE DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

Before moving into detailed planning, capture the agreement in a one-page Definition of Success that includes:

- The operational outcomes and how they will be measured
- Roles and ownership after go-live (operational, technical, performance, sponsor)
- The top constraints and how the plan will respect them
- The leadership routines that will reinforce adoption
- The escalation path when the operation surfaces friction
- The role-based value exchange, so supervisors can reinforce adoption with credibility

This document becomes the anchor when competing priorities appear, which they always do.

Go deeper: dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/leadership

CHAPTER 3

Build Readiness into the Integrated Project Plan

A QUICK REALITY CHECK SCENARIO:

Many programs schedule training in the final weeks and discover the night shift cannot attend, contractors rotate out mid-rollout, and supervisors do not have time to reinforce a new workflow while managing backlog and exceptions.

By the time go-live arrives, the operation is learning the change while executing it, and the safest path becomes the old way.

IN INDUSTRIAL OPERATIONS,

READINESS DOES NOT HAPPEN BECAUSE THE TEAM CARES ABOUT PEOPLE.

It happens because readiness work is planned, resourced, scheduled, and tracked with the same discipline as technical delivery.

When readiness is treated as a late-stage activity, it gets crushed by reality. Training gets compressed. Engagement becomes a broadcast. Supervisors are asked to drive adoption without the time, clarity, or support to do it. The organization reaches go-live with a technically complete solution and an operationally incomplete transition.

This chapter is about making readiness a first-class workstream on the integrated plan.

TREAT READINESS AS A WORKSTREAM, NOT A TASK LIST

A readiness plan is not a set of communications deliverables. In 24/7 environments, readiness has dependencies, constraints, and critical paths. It needs a workstream owner, milestones, and clear integration into the master schedule.

A practical standard is simple: if readiness work is not visible on the integrated plan, it will not survive competing priorities.

Readiness belongs on the same plan as configuration, testing, commissioning, cutover, training, support coverage, stabilization, and sustainment. That does not mean the plan gets bigger. It means the plan is more honest.

BACKWARD-PLAN FROM THE OPERATIONAL MOMENT OF TRUTH

Most programs plan forward from project kickoff. Operations plan backward from the moment the new way of working becomes unavoidable.

In industrial change, there are **specific moments of truth that define readiness**:

- **The first shift** that must execute the new workflow without the project team present
- **The first abnormal situation** where the team must apply the new process under pressure
- **The first turnaround or outage window** where coordination, permits, and work orders must flow through the new system
- **The first audit, safety review, or compliance event** where documented process and actual practice must match

Plan backward from those moments.

If the first time a crew practices the change is at go-live, you do not have readiness. You have hope.

DEFINE READINESS MILESTONES THAT MATCH INDUSTRIAL REALITY

Industrial projects often use technical gates. Readiness needs gates too, but they must reflect operational conditions, not completion of documentation.

Examples of readiness milestones that matter:

Signed off before
cutover rehearsal and
before go-live

SUPERVISORS ARE ENABLED

- Supervisors can explain what changes, why it matters, and what good looks like
- Escalation paths are clear and tested
- Supervisor routines are defined for the stabilization period

Complete before
training is considered
done and before
deployment expands

SHIFT COVERAGE IS REAL

- Training windows exist for every crew, not just day shift
- Practice time is scheduled, not assumed
- There is a plan for new hires and contractor onboarding

Verified before go-live
and re-verified if
conditions change

WORKFLOW IS TESTABLE IN CONTEXT

- Steps are validated against real work scenarios
- Field conditions, connectivity constraints, and control room realities are considered
- The team has practiced at least one abnormal scenario

In Place Before Cutover
And Maintained
Through Stabilization

SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION ARE STAFFED

- Hypercare coverage is defined by role and time window
- Triage is clear (fix now, log, defer)
- A feedback loop exists between operations and the technical team

These milestones create a **shared definition of ready** that leaders can manage.

PUT SPONSOR ACTIONS ON THE INTEGRATED PLAN

In industrial environments, sponsorship is a form of operational control. Sponsors create belief, protect capacity, and settle conflicts when production pressure rises.

If sponsor's actions are not scheduled, they will be displaced by urgent work, and the organization will interpret that absence as a signal that the **change is optional**.

Sponsor actions should appear on the integrated plan as **deliverables, not intentions**.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Sponsor kickoff message tied to operational outcomes
- A short message that connects the change to safety, reliability, compliance, and predictability on shift.
- A sponsor permission statement that resolves tradeoffs
- Clear guidance on what takes priority during stabilization, especially when the new standard feels slower at first.
- Visible sponsor presence during critical moments
- Planned site visits, control room drop-ins, or shift interactions before cutover and during stabilization.
- Sponsor reinforcement at readiness gates
- A sponsor check-in at defined milestones to confirm readiness is real, not assumed.
- Sponsor escalation rules for conflicts
- Clarity on what issues require sponsor decisions and how quickly those decisions will be made.



Sponsors do not need to manage details. They need to make it safe and worthwhile for the organization to choose the new way.

ALIGN THE PLAN TO CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS

Every industrial leader has lived this pattern: **the plan assumes time that does not exist**.

If your readiness plan competes with production, it will lose unless you explicitly protect windows for readiness work. This is where the integrated plan becomes **the leverage point**.

Practical capacity moves include:

- **Scheduling micro-sessions** across shifts rather than one large training block
- **Using field-based workshops** tied to real work, not generic classroom content
- **Building readiness** into existing routines (*shift handoffs, toolbox talks, supervisor huddles*)
- **Sequencing deployment** to match operational windows, not IT convenience

Capacity planning is not a scheduling detail. It is a readiness requirement.



MAKE READINESS MEASURABLE EARLY

Teams often wait until after go-live to measure adoption. By then, you are measuring the outcomes of a plan you can no longer change.

You can measure readiness before go-live through indicators such as:

- **Supervisor confidence and clarity** through short check-ins
- **Completion of role-based practice** across all shifts
- **Observed performance** in simulated scenarios
- **Volume and type of questions** from the field
- **Readiness gate completion** tied to real conditions, not attendance

Training completion is an input, not proof of execution. If you want an early signal that readiness is real, measure behaviour, exceptions, and escalation patterns in the scenarios that reflect operating pressure.

PRACTICAL OUTPUT: THE INTEGRATED READINESS PLAN

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to answer three questions:

1. Where does readiness work live on the integrated project plan?
2. What readiness gates must be achieved before go-live?
3. What sponsor actions are scheduled to create belief, protect capacity, and reinforce adoption?

If you cannot answer these questions, the program is vulnerable to a technically complete delivery that never becomes operationally normal, especially once production pressure rises.

Go deeper: dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/rethink-change/

Next step option: dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/readiness-assessment/

CHAPTER 4

Prepare the Front Line for Real Conditions

IF CHAPTERS 2 AND 3 ARE ABOUT CLARITY AND PLANNING, **THIS CHAPTER IS ABOUT REALITY.**

Industrial change succeeds or fails at the point of execution: in the control room, in the field, and in the supervisor's daily routines. That is where decisions get made under pressure, where exceptions are handled, and where the operation protects itself when something feels risky, unclear, or inefficient.

Frontline readiness is not created by awareness alone. It is created by capability, confidence, and commitment in real working conditions.

START WITH THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE CHANGE REAL

Frontline engagement is often treated as a communications step. A message is sent, a briefing occurs, and leaders assume understanding equals readiness.

In industrial operations, it rarely works that way.

The people most critical to adoption are typically:

- **Supervisors** and lead hands who translate intent into daily execution
- **Control room operators** who manage abnormal situations and coordination
- **Maintainers and technicians** who live inside work management constraints
- **Contractors** who rotate through mixed crews and carry "how it's done" habits from site to site

If these groups are not engaged early and practically, the operation will absorb the change by building its own version. That is when parallel processes form.

Just as important, senior sponsors are also **"people who make the change real."** They set priority, protect capacity, and create permission. If sponsors are invisible, crews assume the change is optional. If sponsors do not resolve conflicts between production pressure and the new standard, supervisors will resolve those conflicts locally, and consistency will fracture.



MAKE IT WORTH ADOPTING: THE FRONTLINE VALUE EXCHANGE

Resistance is not only about process friction. It is also about perceived personal costs.

Industrial change often asks people to give up the competence they earned and to perform under scrutiny while they are still learning.

It can feel like:

- **Added work** on top of a full shift
- **Increased risk** of getting it wrong in a high-consequence environment
- **Loss of autonomy and control** over how work gets done
- **Fear** that the change benefits reporting more than it benefits the operation

If the change does not answer **"what's in it for me,"** people will protect safety and credibility by defaulting to the old way.

Before go-live, **define a credible value exchange by role. Keep it grounded in daily work:**

- **Operators and control room staff:** clearer escalation, fewer ambiguous handoffs, more predictable response under abnormal conditions
- **Maintainers and technicians:** cleaner work orders, less rework, fewer call-backs, less searching for information
- **Supervisors:** fewer exceptions, fewer end-of-shift surprises, clearer visibility into what is done and what is at risk
- **Planners and engineers:** fewer downstream fixes, better input quality, fewer investigations caused by missing information
- **Contractors:** clearer standards, faster onboarding, fewer local workarounds that create rework later

If you cannot state the value exchange in practical terms, it will not survive production pressure.

DEFINE ROLE-SPECIFIC IMPACT, NOT GENERIC MESSAGING

Generic change messaging creates generic results.

Frontline teams do not need abstract statements about transformation. They need clarity about what is changing in their specific work, what stays the same, and how success will be judged.

A practical way to structure this is **role-based impact mapping**:

- What tasks change for this role?
- What decisions change, and what decisions stay the same?
- What new information is required, and where does it come from?
- What is the new normal during abnormal situations?
- What happens when the new process conflicts with production pressure?
- What is the escalation path when the workflow breaks, slows work, or creates safety risk?

This is how you prevent confusion from turning into bypasses and workarounds.

BUILD CONFIDENCE THROUGH PRACTICE, AND REMOVE REASONS TO OPT OUT

People adopt what they trust.

Trust comes from two things: confidence that the new way works in real conditions, and confidence that leadership will support it when tradeoffs appear.

Training that only shows the ideal path does not prepare people for reality. Crews will face exceptions, missing data, connectivity constraints, urgent work, and abnormal situations. If they have not practiced what to do **when the happy path breaks, they will revert to what they trust**.

To build confidence quickly, keep practice lightweight and scenario-based, especially for abnormal conditions. **Focus on the moments that drive bypasses**: missing inputs, priority changes mid-task, and escalation under time pressure.

Just as important, **remove the reasons people opt out**. If the new workflow adds friction, deal with it early. If a step is slow, fix it. If an input is unclear, clarify it. If support is unavailable on nights, correct the coverage plan. People will tolerate early friction if they see it being addressed.

They will not tolerate friction that becomes permanent.

A QUICK REALITY CHECK SCENARIO:

A control room workflow changes how operators escalate an abnormal condition and how field response is dispatched. In training, the happy path looks simple. On shift, an alarm flood hits, radio traffic spikes, and the operator must decide whether to follow the new workflow or revert to the old habit that feels faster. If that scenario has not been practiced and supported with clear escalation rules, the operation will default to the old way, and the new process will be viewed as unsafe or unrealistic.

EQUIP SUPERVISORS WITH ROUTINES, NOT RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENTS

Supervisors are often told they own adoption. That is true, but it is incomplete. Ownership without enablement becomes burnout, and burnout becomes passive resistance.

Supervisor enablement means giving them:

- **Clear expectations** for what to reinforce and when
- **Time windows** to engage and coach crews
- **Simple talking points** that match operational priorities
- **A triage and escalation path** that works
- **Visibility** into what is working and what is drifting

Most importantly, supervisors need routines that fit the shift-based operating rhythm:

- **Shift-start reminders** of the critical steps that must not be skipped
- **Quick end-of-shift checks** on exceptions and workarounds
- **Escalation triggers** when crews route around the process
- **Short coaching moments** tied to real jobs, not generic reminders

These routines turn change into consistent execution.



TREAT RESISTANCE AS OPERATIONAL FEEDBACK AND PERSONAL FEEDBACK

Resistance in industrial environments is not always emotional, and it is rarely irrational. Many concerns are legitimate signals about safety, workload, and real constraints.

At the same time, resistance is often personal. People need to believe the change helps them, and that leadership will support them through the learning curve.

In practice, **resistance often shows up as behaviour, not complaints**. People may not argue. They may bypass. They may delay. They may continue using old forms, offline notes, or parallel tracking.

One of the most important early signals is silence.

When people stop asking questions, it can mean confidence. It can also mean disengagement or a decision to wait it out.

The objective is not to eliminate resistance. It is to surface it early, interpret it accurately, and respond in a way that protects safety, uptime, and credibility.



PRACTICAL OUTPUT: A FRONTLINE READINESS PACKAGE

Before go-live, the program should have a frontline readiness package that includes:

- **Role-based impact** maps for key roles
- **A role-based value exchange** so supervisors can reinforce adoption credibly
- **Practice scenarios** for normal and abnormal conditions
- **Supervisor routines** for stabilization and reinforcement
- **A visible escalation and support path**
- **A method for capturing friction** from the field and **responding quickly**
- **A stabilization coverage plan** by role and shift
- **Sponsor visibility** moments scheduled during rollout and stabilization

Go deeper: dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/overcoming-resistance

CHAPTER 5

Cutover Without Chaos



CUTOVER IS WHERE INDUSTRIAL CHANGE BECOMES REAL.

It is also where many programs lose credibility. The solution may be ready, training may be complete, and support plans may exist, but the operation experiences cutover as confusion, delay, and added risk. When that happens, industrial teams do what they are designed to do: stabilize the system by reverting to what they trust.

This chapter is about making cutover a controlled transition, not a disruption event. It also addresses a key human reality: people will choose the new way only if they believe it is safe, supported, and worth the effort during the learning curve.

SEPARATE GO-LIVE FROM OPERATIONAL STABILIZATION

Many programs treat go-live as a single moment. In industrial operations, go-live is a threshold. Stabilization is the work that follows.

If your plan assumes the operation will be stable immediately after cutover, you are asking crews to absorb uncertainty while maintaining safety and performance. That is when workarounds emerge, and parallel processes take root.

A safer planning assumption is:

- **Go-live** is when the new process becomes mandatory
- **Stabilization** is the period when the organization makes the new process practical, consistent, and reliable under operating pressure

Stabilization needs **defined coverage, clear escalation, and visible leadership.**

Visible leadership matters here because it creates permission. If supervisors believe they will be blamed for short-term friction, they will protect performance by allowing bypasses. If leaders reinforce the standard and support the learning curve, the operation is far more likely to stay with the new way long enough for it to become normal.

A QUICK REALITY CHECK SCENARIO:

A new workflow goes live for work execution and close-out. During the first weekend shift, a priority job comes in and the new system is slower because crews are still learning where information lives. The supervisor, trying to protect uptime, tells the crew to do it the old way and update later. By Monday, two processes exist. By the end of the week, the old way is the default again. Stabilization is the period where you prevent that outcome through visible support, clear rules, and rapid fixes to friction.



DEFINE NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR SAFETY-CRITICAL WORK

In industrial environments, not every element of readiness carries the same risk. Some changes can tolerate partial readiness while teams learn. Others cannot. For safety-critical tasks and compliance-critical workflows, **you need explicit non-negotiables at cutover:**

- What must be done the new way on Day 1, with no exceptions
- What cannot proceed without required inputs, approvals, or permits
- What steps are mandatory for audit or safety integrity
- What fallback methods are allowed, and under what conditions

This is not about bureaucracy. It is about preventing improvisation in high-consequence situations.

REHEARSE THE CHANGE IN THE CONTEXT IT WILL RUN

Testing in a project environment is not the same as rehearsal in operational context.

Cutover readiness increases when you rehearse the workflow using real scenarios:

- A typical work order from planning to close-out
- A late-breaking priority job that interrupts the schedule
- A control room escalation that requires coordination with the field
- A missing data scenario where crews must decide what to do next
- A support ticket scenario to test triage and response time

The objective is not perfection. The objective is familiarity under pressure.

Rehearsals should include the roles who will run the work on shift. The output should be a short list of adjustments to workflow, training, and support coverage before cutover.

STAFF HYPERCARE LIKE AN OPERATIONAL FUNCTION

Hypercare is often treated as a helpdesk function. In industrial environments, it is closer to an operational control function during stabilization.

Hypercare needs:

- Role-based coverage (operations, maintenance, OT and controls, and support where relevant)
- Shift-aware availability, not only business hours
- Clear triage rules (fix now, log, defer)
- A feedback loop that turns frontline friction into rapid adjustment

Most importantly, hypercare must be visible and trusted. If crews do not believe help will come quickly, they will build workarounds that bypass the new process.

MANAGE EXCEPTIONS EXPLICITLY, OR THE OPERATION WILL

Every new process creates exceptions. If exceptions are not managed explicitly, the operation will create its own rules, and those rules will vary by shift, crew, and supervisor.



Before cutover, define:

- What qualifies as an exception
- Who can approve an exception
- How exceptions are recorded
- How exception trends are reviewed and resolved
- When exceptions trigger an update to the workflow, training, or support

This is one of the fastest ways to prevent informal normal from replacing the designed process.



PRACTICAL OUTPUT: THE CUTOVER AND STABILIZATION BRIEF

Before go-live, the program should produce a cutover and stabilization brief that includes:

- The go-live scope and what is changing on Day 1
- The stabilization period definition and coverage plan by role and shift
- Non-negotiables for safety and compliance-critical tasks
- Hypercare triage rules and escalation paths
- Exception handling rules and review cadence
- The first set of stabilization metrics to watch daily
- The leadership behaviours expected during stabilization, including how conflicts will be resolved

In industrial environments, credibility is built during cutover. If the operation experiences the new way of working as safer, clearer, and more supported than the old way, adoption accelerates. If cutover feels risky and unsupported, the organization will route around it.



CUTOVER IS NOT THE FINISH LINE.

The proof comes in the stabilization period: fewer exceptions, fewer workarounds, and consistent execution across shifts. In the next chapter, we will focus on how to measure that reality and reinforce it until the new way becomes normal.

CHAPTER 6

Stabilize, Then Sustain



MANY INDUSTRIAL PROGRAMS DO NOT FAIL AT GO-LIVE.

They fail after go-live, when attention shifts, and the operation is left to absorb friction on its own. Stabilization is the period where the new way becomes workable under pressure, and sustainment is what keeps it from decaying weeks or months later.

If you want operational value, you have to plan for both. You also must recognize a human truth: people will not keep choosing the new way if it feels harder, riskier, or unrewarded once the project team steps back.

DEFINE STABILIZATION AS A PERIOD WITH CLEAR EXIT CRITERIA

Stabilization is often treated as hypercare for two weeks or support until ticket volume drops. That approach is convenient, but it is not operationally precise.

Instead, define stabilization as a period where the new way of working becomes consistent under real operating pressure. **That requires clear exit criteria.** Examples include:

- **Exceptions** are trending down, not becoming normalized
- **Workarounds** are being surfaced, addressed, and retired
- **Shift-to-shift execution** is consistent, not dependent on a few champions
- **The support path** is functioning, and response times are predictable
- **The operation** can handle abnormal situations using the new workflow

Stabilization ends when capability and consistency are visible, not when the calendar says the project phase is complete.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS, NOT WHAT IS EASY TO REPORT

The fastest way to lose a change is to measure the wrong thing.

Attendance, completion rates, and training delivered are activity metrics. They do not prove adoption. In industrial environments, adoption is proven by execution in real conditions.

During stabilization, prioritize measures that **reflect operational reality**, such as:

- **Volume and type of exceptions** by shift and role
- **Work order quality indicators** (*completeness, rework triggers, late close-out reasons*)
- **Cycle time** impacts where relevant (*time to plan, execute, close, verify*)
- **Control room performance** signals (*response time, clarity of escalation, handoff quality*)
- **Safety and compliance signals** tied to the workflow (*missed steps, permit quality, audit observations*)
- **Support indicators** (*time to respond, time to resolve, recurring issue themes*)

Two cautions matter here:

- **Silence is not always success.** It can be disengagement, avoidance, or a parallel process.
- **A temporary dip in performance** is normal during transition. The goal is to understand whether the dip is shrinking with reinforcement or becoming the new baseline.

Choose a small set of **3 to 5 signals** that map directly to your defined operational outcomes, and use trends to drive action.



A QUICK REALITY CHECK SCENARIO:

Three weeks after go-live, support ticket volume drops, and leaders assume stabilization is complete. On shift, crews have started using a parallel spreadsheet to avoid a slow step in the workflow, and contractors are closing work orders inconsistently. The system looks quiet, but execution is drifting. This is why stabilization needs exit criteria and why sustainment must be built into the operating rhythm.

REINFORCEMENT IS A ROUTINE, NOT A CAMPAIGN

Sustainment does not come from one more message. It comes from routines that make the new way of working the path of least resistance.

The most effective reinforcement in industrial settings is usually local and leader-led. It shows up in simple behaviours repeated consistently. These behaviours also shape desire. When leaders reinforce fairly, remove friction, and recognize correct execution, crews see that choosing the new way is worth it.

Supervisor routines

- **Shift-start reminders** for the critical steps that must not be skipped
- **Quick review** of exceptions and workarounds at end of shift
- **Coaching moments** tied to real jobs, not generic reminders
- **Escalation** when crews route around the workflow

Operational leadership routines

- **Visible presence** during stabilization milestones
- **Rapid decisions** when priorities conflict and adoption is at risk
- **Weekly review** of stabilization metrics with clear actions
- **Recognition** that reinforces correct execution, not heroics around broken processes

These routines do not add bureaucracy.
They reduce it by preventing drift and rework.

CLOSE THE LOOP ON FRICTION QUICKLY

Industrial teams will forgive early friction if they see it being addressed. They will not tolerate friction that becomes permanent.

The stabilization period needs a fast feedback loop:

- **Capture friction** from the field in a structured way
- **Triage** what must be fixed immediately versus improved versus documented
- **Make changes quickly**, then communicate what changed and why
- **Confirm** the fix worked in the field, across shifts

This is where momentum is earned. When people see that raising an issue leads to a real improvement, participation increases. When issues disappear into a backlog with no response, crews adapt by bypassing the process.

TRANSFER OWNERSHIP FROM THE PROJECT TO THE OPERATION

Sustainment begins when ownership moves from the project team's job to how the operation runs.

That transfer should be explicit and visible in three ways:

OWNERSHIP OF STANDARDS

- **The new workflow** becomes part of the standard of work
- **Exceptions** are managed, not ignored
- **Leaders reinforce** the standard consistently across shifts

OWNERSHIP OF IMPROVEMENT

- **A path exists** for operational feedback to drive prioritization and changes
- **The technical team** understands operational consequences, not just configuration requests

OWNERSHIP OF PERFORMANCE

- **Metrics** are reviewed as part of normal operating rhythm
- **Actions** are assigned and followed through
- **Sustained performance** is the goal, not temporary compliance

Make the transfer visible with an operating rhythm calendar and named owners for metrics, exceptions, and workflow improvement.

If the operation does not own the change, it will not survive the next surge in workload, outage, turnaround, or staffing transition. It also will not stay desirable. When people believe the change is "**project work**" that will fade, they wait it out. When they see it is the new standard and it makes work better, they commit.



PRACTICAL OUTPUT: A SUSTAINMENT PLAN THAT CAN SURVIVE REALITY

Before you declare stabilization complete, build a sustainment plan that includes:

- **Stabilization** exit criteria and who signs off
- **The metrics** that will continue to be reviewed after the project ends
- **Leader routines** by role (supervisor, operations leadership, support)
- **Exception** handling rules and the review cadence
- **The feedback loop** from field friction to workflow improvement
- **A plan for onboarding** new hires and contractors into the new standard
- **How leaders will recognize** correct execution and reinforce adoption across shifts

If you want a structured view of how Dexcent approaches sustainment and reinforcement in industrial settings, the resource below expands on these practices:

dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/make-change-stick

CHAPTER 7

Failure Patterns and Countermoves (Industrial Edition)

INDUSTRIAL CHANGE RARELY FAILS IN DRAMATIC FASHION.

It fails quietly through drift, inconsistent execution, and unowned exceptions. The good news is that these failures are predictable. If you recognize the patterns early, you can intervene before drift becomes normal.

A QUICK REALITY CHECK SCENARIO:

Two weeks after go-live, training completion is reported at 95%, so the project is declared successful. On shift, crews run into exceptions the training never covered, and supervisors do not have a clear escalation path. A parallel spreadsheet appears to keep work moving. Ticket volume drops, leadership attention moves on, and the spreadsheet becomes the real process.

This chapter outlines common failure patterns that appear in industrial environments and the practical countermeasures that prevent them. Many of these patterns surfaced repeatedly in the webinar conversations, not as theory, but as lived operational reality.

FAILURE PATTERN 1: SUCCESS IS DEFINED AS DELIVERY, NOT OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- **Project reports** celebrate milestones while operations sees more exceptions and rework
- **Leaders** use training completion as proof of readiness
- **Ownership** after go-live is unclear, so issues linger and workarounds grow

WHY IT HAPPENS

- **Delivery** is easier to measure than adoption
- **The program** lacks clear operational outcome metrics and exit criteria

COUNTERMOVES

- **Define operational outcomes** early and choose 3 to 5 metrics that prove execution in real conditions
- **Use stabilization exit criteria**, not dates, to decide when the program is truly complete
- **Assign named owners** for standards, improvement, and performance review
- **Name an owner** for post-go-live benefits tracking and continuous improvement prioritization

FAILURE PATTERN 2: THE FRONTLINE IS INFORMED, BUT NOT ENABLED

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- **Supervisors** can repeat the message but cannot coach execution
- **Crews** understand the intent but do not know what to do in exceptions
- **Work shifts** default to whatever works because there is no shared standard

WHY IT HAPPENS

- **Engagement** is treated as communication, not capability building
- **Training** focuses on the ideal workflow, not abnormal conditions and escalation

COUNTERMOVES

- **Build** role-based impact maps and practice scenarios tied to real work
- **Train** and **rehearse** escalation paths so the operation knows how to respond under pressure
- **Equip** supervisors with routines for reinforcement during stabilization
- **Publish** a one-page "**what changes for me**" sheet per key role that crews can reference on shift

FAILURE PATTERN 3: RESISTANCE IS IGNORED UNTIL IT BECOMES OPERATIONAL DRIFT

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- **Parallel** spreadsheets, offline notes, or old forms return
- **People bypass steps** just this once, then it becomes permanent
- **Silence** can be a signal: fewer questions, more bypasses, and more parallel tracking

WHY IT HAPPENS

- **Resistance** is interpreted as negativity instead of feedback
- **Friction** is not captured quickly enough to adjust the plan

COUNTERMOVES

- **Treat resistance as operational and personal feedback.** Watch behaviour shifts (bypass, delay, parallel tracking), not only complaints.
- **Close the loop quickly:** fix friction, communicate changes, confirm across shifts
- **Assign one person to log friction daily** during stabilization and report themes to the program lead

FAILURE PATTERN 4: CUTOVER IS TREATED AS THE FINISH LINE

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- **Hypercare** ends on a date, not based on stabilization performance
- **Leaders** shift focus to the next initiative
- **Exceptions** normalize and workarounds persist

WHY IT HAPPENS

- **Stabilization** is not defined with exit criteria
- **Sustainment routines** are not embedded into normal operating rhythm

COUNTERMOVES

- **Separate** go-live from stabilization and define clear exit criteria
- **Build** leader routines for measurement and reinforcement
- **Transfer** ownership explicitly and create an operating rhythm calendar
- **Hold** a stabilization stand-up with operations, OT and controls, and support for 2 to 4 weeks to review trends and actions

FAILURE PATTERN 5: CYBER SECURITY CHANGES ARE PUSHED INTO OT WITHOUT OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- **Password and access** changes slow urgent work and lead to shared credentials
- **Patch windows conflict** with production and create unplanned downtime risk
- **Cyber Security procedures** are viewed as IT rules, not operational requirements

WHY IT HAPPENS

- **Cyber Security controls** are introduced without role-based impact mapping
- **The operation** is not engaged early enough to design workable routines

COUNTERMOVES

- **Translate** Cyber Security controls into operational routines that crews can execute
- **Define** what is non-negotiable for safety and compliance, and what can be staged
- **Engage** supervisors and control room leaders early to design realistic workflows
- **Co-design** Cyber Security routines with control room and maintenance leads so procedures fit actual operating conditions

FAILURE PATTERN 6: THE CHANGE NEVER ANSWERS “WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME”

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- **Polite compliance** during rollout, followed by **quiet bypassing**
- **People** do the new steps when watched, then revert when pressure rises
- **The operation** waits it out, assuming the change will fade like past initiatives
- **Crews** describe the change as “for reporting” rather than “for operations”

WHY IT HAPPENS

- **Benefits** are described in corporate terms while costs are felt personally on shift
- **The change** threatens competence, autonomy, or credibility during the learning curve
- **Leaders** reinforce tasks but do not reinforce value, support, or fairness

COUNTERMOVES

- **Define** the role-based value exchange early and reinforce it through supervisors
- **Remove** friction quickly and visibly, especially the friction that creates extra work
- **Ensure** sponsor visibility during critical moments so the organization knows the change is real
- **Recognize** correct execution and early wins tied to daily work, not generic compliance
- **Make** it safe for crews to surface issues without blame, and act on what you hear

PRACTICAL OUTPUT: A FAILURE-PATTERN CHECKLIST

Run this checklist in a **30-minute review** with operations, maintenance, and OT leads before go-live and again during stabilization:

- Are we measuring operational performance or project activity?
- Are supervisors enabled with routines, practice, and escalation paths?
- Are we seeing workarounds, bypasses, or parallel processes? If so, why?
- Does the change clearly answer “what’s in it for me” by role?
- Is stabilization being managed with exit criteria or calendar dates?
- Are Cyber Security changes being implemented as workable operational routines?
- Are sponsors visible and actively resolving conflicts when pressure rises?

The earlier you ask these questions, the less you pay in rework later.

Go deeper: dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/why-change-efforts-fail

CHAPTER 8

How to Use the Webinar Series as a Deeper Dive

THIS EBOOK IS A DEXCENT PLAYBOOK FOR OPERATIONAL READINESS IN 24/7 ENVIRONMENTS.

It focuses on what determines whether change holds on shift: clear ownership, integrated readiness planning, frontline enablement, controlled cutover, stabilization, and sustainment routines.

If you want the deeper conversation behind these principles, Dexcent collaborated with Prosci on an on-demand webinar series called **"ADKAR for Industrial Operations."** The series is a fireside-chat format designed for industrial leaders who want practical insight into adoption and sustainment realities in operational settings.

Use the series to strengthen both sides of adoption: the operational ability to execute the change, and the commitment to choose it when pressure rises.

Use the series as a shared language tool to align leaders, surface friction early, and reinforce routines once the spotlight moves on.

WHEN TO WATCH THE SERIES

The best time to watch it is not after your program is struggling. It is before key moments where readiness makes the difference.

Use the series at three points:

1. Before you lock the plan

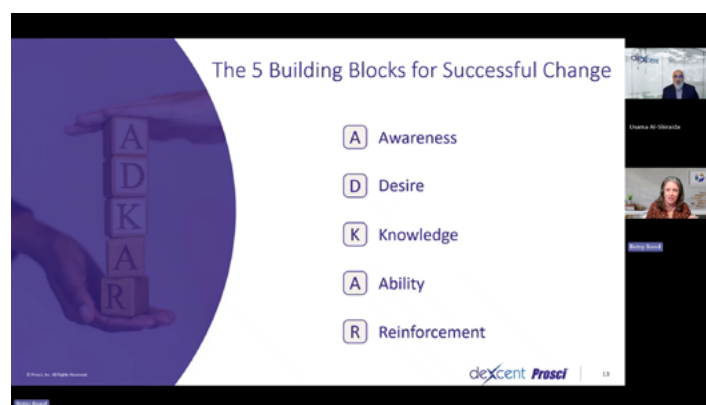
Watch with program leads, operations leadership, and OT and controls leads to align on what could break adoption and how to address it early.

2. Before cutover and stabilization

Use it as a readiness check to surface friction you can still fix while there is time to adjust the plan.

3. During sustainment

Revisit it when momentum fades. Sustainment often fails because leaders assume the change has landed. The series provides language and reminders leaders can use to reinforce routines and expectations.



A QUICK REALITY CHECK SCENARIO:

If supervisors cannot explain what changes on shift, or you see parallel tracking tools appear during rollout prep, use one session as a leadership huddle. Surface the friction, pick one action to reduce it this week, assign an owner, and follow up at the next session.

WHO SHOULD WATCH, AND WHY

You will **get the most value** when the series is used across the roles that carry adoption:

EXECUTIVE SPONSORS AND SENIOR LEADERS

Create belief, protect capacity, and resolve priority conflicts so supervisors can reinforce the new standard without being punished for short-term friction.

OPERATIONS LEADERS AND PLANT MANAGERS

Align on success definition, ownership after go-live, and the routines that prevent drift.

SUPERVISORS AND FRONTLINE LEADERS

Translate intent into daily execution, reinforcement, and escalation under pressure.

OT AND CONTROLS LEADERSHIP

Ensure technical decisions match operational constraints, and that OT access and Cyber Security expectations become workable routines, not friction.

CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION LEADERS

Integrate readiness into the plan, build feedback loops, and keep sustainment visible after go-live.

The series works best when it is treated as a **shared conversation, not an individual learning exercise**.

HOW TO USE IT WITHOUT CREATING OVERHEAD

The goal is not to build a training program. **The goal is to improve execution.**

Here are two simple ways to use the series.

OPTION A: A LIGHTWEIGHT LEADERSHIP RHYTHM

- **Pick one session** before a key readiness gate (planning lock, cutover rehearsal, stabilization week one)
- **Watch as a group** (30 minutes including discussion)
- **End with one question:** "What will make people choose the new way on shift, and what friction must we remove now?"
- **Assign one owner and one action** before the next gate

OPTION B: FAST ALIGNMENT WHEN THE WINDOW IS TIGHT

- **Watch two sessions** back-to-back in a 60-minute leadership working session
- **Capture** the top three adoption risks and the top three actions
- **Confirm** sponsor decisions needed to protect capacity and reinforce priorities

If you feed those outputs into your readiness plan, **the series becomes an execution tool, not an extra activity**.

REGISTER AND ACCESS THE SERIES

Register at the hub page below. After registration, you will be directed to the Watch page to view the sessions.

dexcent.com/webinars/adkar-for-industrial-operations/

CHAPTER 9

About Dexcent & Next Steps

DEXCENT HELPS ASSET-INTENSIVE ORGANIZATIONS

SECURE AND OPTIMIZE THE OPERATIONS THAT POWER EVERYDAY LIFE.

We support industrial and critical infrastructure environments, including utilities, manufacturing, oil and gas, chemicals, mining, and municipal operations such as water and wastewater.

Our work focuses on operational readiness and execution in OT environments, where safety, uptime, and compliance are non-negotiable, and change must hold across shifts, crews, and real operating pressure.

HOW DEXCENT HELPS

Dexcent supports industrial organizations through consulting and services that strengthen operational readiness, execution, and sustainment. Common engagement areas include:



If you want a structured view of Dexcent's change approach for industrial environments, explore the framework here:

dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/framework/

To explore Dexcent's change management offering and related resources, visit:

dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/overview/

A NOTE ON THE WEBINAR COLLABORATION WITH PROSCI

Dexcent collaborated with Prosci on the on-demand webinar series "ADKAR for Industrial Operations." The series is a fireside-chat conversation for industrial leaders focused on adoption and sustainment in 24/7 environments. This eBook is Dexcent-led and does not teach ADKAR.

Access the webinar series here: dexcent.com/webinars/adkar-for-industrial-operations/



NEXT STEPS

You do not get operational value from change by completing a rollout. You get value when the new way of working holds across shifts, under pressure, and over time.

HERE ARE TWO PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS:

1) WATCH THE WEBINAR SERIES

If you want the deeper conversation behind the readiness principles in this eBook, register and access the series here: dexcent.com/webinars/adkar-for-industrial-operations/

2) BOOK A CONVERSATION WITH DEXCENT ABOUT READINESS

If you have an upcoming cutover, rollout, or major workflow change, the most effective time to reduce risk is early, while there is still time to adjust the plan.

This is most useful when your initiative changes frontline workflows, control room routines, work management processes, or OT access and Cyber Security procedures.

A READINESS CONVERSATION TYPICALLY FOCUSES ON:

- What success means in operational terms, and how it will be measured
- Where readiness work sits in the integrated plan, and where it is currently at risk
- Supervisor enablement, practice, and escalation paths across shifts
- Cutover and stabilization coverage, including exception handling and support triage
- Sustainment routines and the signals that will keep adoption from drifting

You should leave with a clear view of the top readiness risks and a short list of prioritized actions to address them.

START WITH A READINESS ASSESSMENT

If you want a structured starting point, Dexcent's readiness assessment is designed to identify blind spots and execution risks before go-live:

dexcent.com/solutions/change-management/readiness-assessment/



STRATEGIZE. TRANSFORM. EVOLVE.

(833) 482-4100 | DEXCENT.COM | SALES@DEXCENT.COM