The ABCs of Behavioral Change in Biopharma Manufacturing

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AT A GLANCE

Successful transformation is not just about making technical changes to manufacturing and supply chain processes. It is about getting all employees to change their behaviors.

A Holistic, Balanced Approach to Change
If biopharma manufacturing companies are to achieve real operational excellence through transformation programs, they must balance their operational emphasis with full attention to the people side of change.

From "Have to" to "Want to"
The executive team must supplement the use of traditional "have to" tools—deadlines, checklists, implementation plans, and audits—to tap into as much "want to" behavior as possible.

The ABCs in Action
The concept for our approach—that *antecedents* enable *behaviors*, but the *consequences* of those behaviors are what truly motivate behavioral change—is a simple principle from behavioral science. It can create the context for intrinsic reinforcement so that employees behave as desired even without management supervision.

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I T WAS AN INCREASINGLY familiar story. A well-established and successful biopharma-production site, accustomed to large, relatively stable production volumes for blockbuster products, was starting to see the effects of wider changes in the industry: products going off-patent, fewer products coming through the R&D pipeline, and a shift from churning out blockbusters to ramping up new, smaller products and focusing on the increasingly competitive period after the loss of product exclusivity. These macro trends were creating new pressures for the manufacturing site, including reduced and more volatile demand, less certainty about future volumes, much more intense cost pressure, and more of a need than ever to deliver the highest possible levels of quality, safety, and compliance.

Leadership's underlying worry was that the organization might not be sufficiently ready, willing, and able to meet the site's goal of becoming operationally best in class in this brand-new production environment. If employees were not able to bring to fruition earlier investments in change, any new performance initiatives would likely not pay off as planned. The site would be unable to advance from performance that met expectations to performance that exceeded them. Top management's worry—couched in language such as "How on earth can we achieve such a step change in performance without our people fully onboard?"—was typical of the concerns of many biopharma-operations executives.

Because of these concerns, this biopharma-manufacturing site tapped into the science of behavior to tackle areas in which employees' actions fell short and thereby impede transformative change. We call this the ABCs approach—*antecedents* enable *behaviors*, and the *consequences* of those behaviors are what truly motivate behavioral change—which is based on a simple principle from behavioral science. Indeed, all organizations, including biopharma production plants, can leverage basic facets of behavioral science to substantially improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. The science brings behavioral data into the workplace, establishes and accelerates feedback loops, and deliberately shifts the balance of positive and negative consequences to reward the most appropriate actions. The result? Highly engaged employees who consistently behave in ways that lead to operational excellence.

Applying the basics of behavioral science can create highly engaged employees who consistently behave in ways that lead to operational excellence.

The Boston Consulting Group's longtime study of change management and our wide-ranging empirical work across many industries and regions show that successful transformation is not just about making technical changes to manufacturing and supply chain processes. It is about getting all employees to change their behaviors so that they can respond effectively to the dynamic state of the business—and drive value throughout that business. It is about getting people to use the new processes fully, quickly, and consistently.

In a nutshell, biopharma manufacturers have to change change itself. The best way to do that is to focus on the people side of change.

A Holistic, Balanced Approach to Change

There is no question that it is hard to effect large-scale change across an enterprise or operating unit of any size. Yet it is still surprising that the failure rates remain so high when so many business leaders have been exposed to decades of conversation, coaching, and consulting on change management. At least half of all change initiatives fail to deliver their anticipated value.[1] Some academics and consultants cite even higher probabilities of failure.

Despite the statistics, there is often great enthusiasm for change among corporate leaders. What is commonly missing, however, is access to the change tools that are critical to enabling success. This is as true of biopharma as it is of industrial manufacturing and grocery retailing.

BCG's work has revealed that most organizations interpret change management to mean an unwavering focus on the operational side of change—in other words, creating executional certainty and ensuring the delivery of results by applying clear, cross-functional governance and transparent progress-tracking mechanisms.

Those facets are essential, no doubt, but insufficient in most cases. If companies are to achieve real operational excellence through change programs, they must balance their operational emphasis with full attention to the people side of change, all the way from the leadership ranks to the frontlines. (See the sidebar "BCG's Change Delta.") This calls for enabled leaders who can build a case for change and whose behaviors accelerate adoption of the "new way" at every stage of the change journey. It also calls for an engaged organization in which the workforce is motivated and mobilized, and desired behaviors are hardwired into new habits so that employees become assets in, and champions of, the transformation effort.

The sponsor of a major change program at a leading global medical company explained it this way: "People face constant uncertainty in their lives. Given the stress they're under these days, you must be empathetic and flexible—yet resolute. You've got to address the uncertainty among all those affected if your change effort is to be successful."

We have learned that there are two broad families of behaviors that enable a manufacturing site, or any other type of organization, to deliver expected results.

> For change programs to be successful, companies must balance their operational emphasis with full attention to the people side of change.

THE CHANGE DELTA

Our approach to explicitly managing change across four dimensions—the "change delta"—helps organizations flip the odds toward success by strengthening executive sponsorship; coordinating and driving execution; aligning leaders along goals, initiatives, and decisions; and, finally, boosting employee engagement.

The framework element—*executional certainty*—is more operational in nature. It helps to ensure positive results by giving top managers a forward view of progress and the means to make course corrections early enough to make a difference. A second element, *enabled leaders*, puts the whole leadership team (middle managers as well as senior executives) in a position to "own" the change and its connection to the vision and strategy of the company. Enabled leaders speak with one voice and have the necessary training and tools to manage the change. Change happens in earnest only when accountability is made explicit through robust governance structures (the central element of the change

delta) and when managers are armed with the information needed to facilitate timely decisions and actions.

However, attention to those three elements of the change delta won't lead to sustained change unless the final element—an *engaged organization*—is also activated and is as focused as it can be. If a critical mass of the workforce does not buy into the change effort, top management should reconsider trying to push it through. Why? Even if the change effort manages to get solidly off the ground from an operational perspective, the lack of support from the rank and file will begin to erode any early headway, causing the effort to falter before results materialize or can be sustained. Deploying all dimensions of the change delta helps to ensure that as many employees as possible experience and contribute to the change process in constructive ways, leading to a more positive trajectory for change and sustained business results.

- *Results-Linked Behaviors.* These are discrete employee behaviors that produce very specific—and typically measurable—outcomes. For example, if an organization needs to change the order of the steps in a production process in order to lower costs, the employees whose job has been to follow those steps must now understand the new way of doing things and begin behaving in this new way consistently and meticulously to streamline the process and maximize its efficiency. If employees are half-hearted about the new steps—or lapse back into the old way of doing things because they believe that it "really is just the same as the new way, only easier"—they will undercut the results expected from the process improvement.

- *Values-Linked Behaviors.* The ways in which employees behave demonstrate their individual values and transcend any single outcome or result. Take the case of an employee who gets his own work done and keeps very much to himself. If

the organization requires his team to work more cross-functionally on a new production process, that worker will need to be more transparent about his work by proactively offering to be more open and collaborative with his team. This kind of values-linked behavior will constitute his new way of working; as such, it will help his team make big strides with the new production process.

The reality is that one or both of these types of behaviors is likely to be out of sync with the site's strategy for transformation and with the new operational realities required to implement that strategy. This should come as no surprise; by definition, change efforts require a shift from the status quo. At the outset of a change effort, therefore, misaligned behaviors are not necessarily a cause for concern—they must simply be realigned. The real issue is if, and how easily, employees can *change* those behaviors in order to adapt to their organizations' new circumstances.

From "Have to" to "Want to"

Of course, no two employees are alike. There are employees whose current behaviors are aligned to support the status quo but who have strong "muscle memory" for change; they are ready, willing, and able to change how they currently behave in order to support new requirements. In such cases, the trickle-down effects of more traditional, operational change tools—such as the governance of the project management office and detailed initiative tracking—may be enough to spark the necessary behavior changes.

But there are other workers who, while exhibiting behaviors that are equally well aligned with the status quo, are resistant to change. It doesn't matter whether their resistance is due to cynicism about previous initiatives or fears about the initiative at hand. Change simply is not going to happen fast or comprehensively enough as long as they remain resistant.

For these workers—all too often the norm at manufacturing sites—the impact of traditional change-management tools is blunted and increasingly limited. Yes, these tools can cause employees to change behaviors, but only because they have to in order to avoid negative consequences. This kind of top-down enforcement, when used in isolation, typically creates short-lived results and puts a site's workplace culture further at risk. Management ends up with grudging compliance from employees and "just enough to get by" performance. Worse, when the pressure is off, employees often revert to their previous behaviors because the new enforced behaviors never gelled into new habits.

Therefore, when planning an organization's journey toward operational excellence, the executive team must consider how exactly to augment the use of the traditional "have to" tools such as deadlines, checklists, and audits by applying managed behavioral change to tap into as much "want to" behavior as possible. In other words, they must reinforce rather than enforce.

The ABCs approach effectively shifts the change management bias from "have to" to "want to." Rapid and lasting change requires both modes, but BCG's approach calls for changing the conventional balance between them. It does this by methodi-

Top-down enforcement of change, when used in isolation, typically creates short-lived results and puts a site's workplace culture at risk.

cally unpacking, analyzing, and altering the contextual factors that directly enable and motivate employees' behaviors to drive near- and long-term results. It helps to create the context for intrinsic reinforcement so that employees behave in the desired ways even without management supervision. (See the sidebar "A Close-Up of the ABCs.") It is anchored on two simple maxims that stem from behavioral psychology. First, the behaviors that a production site may be getting right now are perfectly aligned with the context (the antecedents and the consequences)

A CLOSE-UP OF THE ABCs

The ABCs lie at the heart of BCG's fusion of process change with rapid and precise behavior change. By definition, antecedents precede behaviors; they trigger what people say or do. In a biopharma manufacturing setting, a typical antecedent (A) might be training in certain technical or collaboration skills on production teams; this antecedent enables collaborative behaviors. But As do not motivate behaviors (Bs). It is consequences (Cs) that motivate, by reinforcing—or discouraging—behaviors.

BCG has identified three "enablement" sources of antecedents: clarity,

skills, and resources. Most efforts to improve or change behavior use these levers, focusing on factors that range from better metrics to improved training. (See Exhibit 1.)

Consequences determine whether desired or unwanted behaviors occur, and they have five sources:

- *Work and Workplace Consequences.* If a new process takes more time than the one it replaces, or if it is harder or slower to implement, these workplace consequences will discourage the behaviors needed. Conversely, if the process is easier

EXHIBIT 1 | Three Types of Antecedents Enable Desired Behaviors: Clarity, Skills, and Resources

Organizational dimensions
- Strategy
- Desired results
- Tracking and metrics
- Milestones/roadmaps
- Governance
- Key methods

Individual dimensions
- Role charters
- Priorities
- Accountabilities
- Specific behaviors
- Level of performance
- Individual contribution to results

Skills
Clarity
Resources
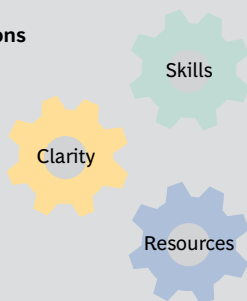
- Technical skills
- People skills
- Management skills
- Supervisory skills
- Leadership skills

- Organizational structure
- Process capability
- Human capital
- Decision-making authority
- Tools, technology, and materials
- Processes and systems
- Financial resources
- Physical plant
- Quality data and information

Source: BCG analysis.

A CLOSE-UP OF THE ABCS
(continued)

or faster, the consequences will reinforce the desired behaviors.

- *Intrinsic and Internal Consequences.* Pride and a sense of ownership are positive consequences; they reinforce the desired behaviors. Conversely, if employees feel foolish or embarrassed while attempting to match the needed behavior, they likely won't continue trying.

- *Peer Group Consequences.* What peers choose to celebrate or disparage can be a powerful source of consequences. Many organizations underutilize this source, in part because many managers don't know how to align and activate it effectively. In some cases, efforts to do so backfire badly, making managers doubly shy of trying this route.

- *Individual and Leader Consequences.* These are consequences delivered directly by a key individual—often "the boss." Managers' habits, such as a small frown when they disagree with something or a short nod when they agree, are easily read by everyone on the team and can steer behaviors accordingly.

- *Organizational Consequences.* These are the consequences on which most managers and organizations rely to motivate employees—pay, promotion, titles, and so on. The problem is that these consequences have longer timelines and are not as effective.

So which consequences are most powerful? Of course, there are always competing consequences for any behavior. The more predictable, immediate, and meaningful the consequence is to the performer, the more powerful it becomes. This is what gives so much more impact to consequences coming from the work itself or from valued peers. Intrinsic consequences, such as pride and embarrassment, get their power because they usually occur as the person engages in the behavior. Such consequences are more predictable, immediate, and meaningful than, say, getting a promotion or the boss's noticing and commenting on some "good" behavior. This hierarchy of consequences is seen in the "power pyramid." (See Exhibit 2.)

Put simply, the Cs are the real motivators or demotivators. The As are just enablers. Furthermore, it is the ratio of positive to negative

surrounding the site's employees. If the site's executives like these behaviors, they don't need to change the context.

The second maxim is that if they don't like the behaviors, they must change the context. If the As and Cs are "right," they will create real alignment between behaviors and the change program's overall objectives. In other words, the right context will drive desired behaviors and, by extension, the right results for the business.

EXHIBIT 2 | Five Types of Consequences Make Up the Power Pyramid

Organization

Individuals (such as leaders and key customers)

Groups (such as peers and customers)

Intrinsic

Work environment

Less powerful
- Deferred, occur in the future
- Performers believe the consequences are less likely to occur based on a specific behavior now

Easier to manage

More powerful
- More immediate
- Performers believe the consequences are more likely to occur for a specific behavior now

Harder to manage

Source: BCG analysis.

consequences from peers, from the work itself, and from inside the individual that determines how sustainably high-performing the work environment is and how motivated or demotivated employees become. Studies show that peak performance is achieved at a four-to-one or five-to-one ratio of positives to negatives. Having more positives than this actually degrades performance, leading to insufficient accountability and learning. Ratios lower than this degrade performance; in such cases, the workplace becomes a slog where people work just for the paycheck and to avoid getting in trouble.[1]

Gaps in desired behavior can be traced to any of the three antecedent enablers or the five consequence motivators. Careful analysis of the performance context using these factors—their presence, alignment, and strength—will always reveal the root causes of any performance gaps, as well as the drivers of performance strengths. If these root causes can be understood, they can be managed.

NOTE
1. Marcial Losada and Emily Heaphy, "The Role of Positivity and Connectivity in the Performance of Business Teams: A Nonlinear Dynamics Model," *American Behavioral Scientist,* 47, (2004); 740.

Here's an example of how the ABC relationship usually plays out. Effective collaboration within teams (a B) may shorten cycle times, generating positive consequences for the site and the company broadly. It may also mean that team members finally feel free of obstacles that historically caused frustration over wasted time—a positive personal consequence. On the flip side, effective collaboration may also mean that the team works harder and experiences higher stress because cycle times are shorter—a C that team members may view as negative. Cs can come in all shapes and sizes—and though they follow behaviors, they will compete to motivate

or discourage desired behaviors in the future. As such, they should be viewed as a critically important behavior-management tool.

To improve collaboration, however, typical change-management practice might say it is important to hold meetings to explain why collaboration is good (an A), or to provide training (another A.) The problem with such practices is that a C has four times more behavior-driving impact than an A.[2] (See Exhibit 1.) Yet research and our own experience tell us that managers persist in spending 80 percent or more of their time trying to manage by working on As, leaving Cs largely unmanaged.[3]

EXHIBIT 1 | Many Organizations Fail to Fully Leverage the Power of Consequences
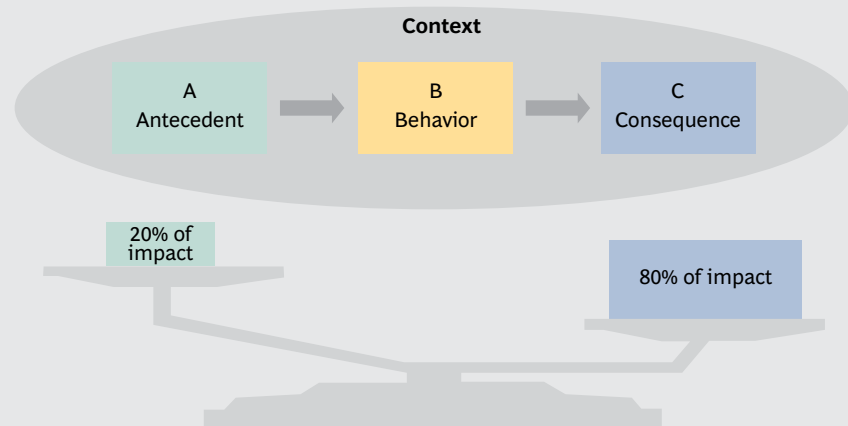
Source: Leslie Wilk Braksick, *Unlock Behavior, Unleash Profits,* 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007).

It's not uncommon to hear senior managers make enthusiastic declarations such as "Let's institute more team meetings to improve focus and discipline" or "Let's cascade better KPIs and go a level deeper this time to foster real accountability at all levels." Or perhaps they say they want to have a series of town hall meetings to help make communication more open. Declarations such as these are typical of the strategies employed to motivate behavior change. Note, however, that all of these are antecedents; they are essential, yes, but they *enable* behavior rather than *motivate* it. Motivation comes entirely from consequences, as we will see in the example that follows.

The ABCs in Action

Biopharma manufacturing sites that are striving for operational excellence are prime candidates for an ABC approach—even those that already have high levels of operating efficiency but have yet to reach targeted levels of being best in class. But the challenge of change—getting employees to rapidly alter ingrained habits—is not for the faint of heart. Here is how the site mentioned above implemented the ABC method in four phases and achieved its breakthrough. (See Exhibit 2.)

Exhibit 2 | Managed Behavior Change, in Four Phases

1	2	3	4
Define the key behavioral issues	Understand the As and Cs driving current behaviors	Design solutions and develop action plans	Implement and track
• Identify the key behavioral issues that, if solved, would have the most impact on site performance	• Understand the root causes of the current identified behaviors in a range of specific situations	• Develop targeted action plans to drive changes to the identified behaviors	• Implement the changes, monitor impact, and refine the plan as needed

Source: BCG analysis.

Phase one: define the key behavioral issues. The behavioral-change team began its diagnosis by drawing on the output of previous workshops and other employee-engagement activities conducted at the site over the previous nine months—activities that hadn't yet been mined in much detail for behavioral insights. In many organizations, there are existing data from which to draw—for example, from engagement surveys, town halls, feedback sessions, exit interviews, and incident investigations. Where such data do not exist, they can be acquired relatively easily and quickly from a mix of well-structured interviews, focus groups, and workshops. The output is the same: candid insights into current workplace behaviors—and into which desired behaviors are missing or insufficient.

The team took this rich, bottom-up information, complemented it with top-down insight from senior-leader interviews, and captured it in a database of hundreds of comments. The database was analyzed and organized into different behavioral themes. Four main needs emerged from the discussion with the site's senior managers:

- More ownership and accountability

- Sharper focus and discipline in execution

- Breakdown of thinking and working in silos

- Increase in employees' willingness to change

The executives all agreed that their site could not achieve best-in-class performance unless these four themes were addressed head-on. In order to do that, they needed to know what specific behaviors—as opposed to intangible behavioral issues—to address. The change team set out to uncover the behaviors driving these issues, with the outcome of this effort translating into specific behavioral pinpoints. For example, the team discovered a pinpointed behavior contributing to a need for "more ownership and accountability." If something was not going

right, individuals would often wait to flag this problem to others. This behavior was added to the list of specific undesired behaviors. Similarly, when employees hit barriers, they would, at times, wait for others to take action rather than trying to proactively work out solutions to make things right. That behavior was also added to the undesirable list.

This practical pinpointing exercise set the stage for the change team to contrast and define, again in very specific and understandable terms, the *desired* behaviors that they currently observed. This attention to explicitly contrasting the bad behaviors with the good behaviors was critical. Spelling out exemplary behaviors not only created buy-in by softening and balancing out the message (a potentially negative-sounding message that might cause defensiveness) but it also made the overall goal of optimizing behaviors seem attainable by showing employees instances in which they had already reached specific targets.

The team members were now ready to investigate *why* the employees at the site acted the way they did.

Phase two: understand the As and Cs driving current behaviors. The central question in this phase was "What are the root causes of the behaviors we have now?"

Working closely with the site's managers and workers, the change team identified a set of specific, practical situations in which unwanted behavioral issues were tangible and evident, as well as a few positive situations in which the desired behaviors were already the site's norm. Interviews and workshops with those closest to the workplace situations teased out the "why" behind both the unwanted and the desired behaviors. The goal was to make sure that all of the critical root cause As and Cs were uncovered and to arrive at an understanding of exactly how they had been affecting behaviors.

To illustrate, let us take a closer look at the As, Bs, and Cs of ownership and accountability in two such circumstances—one with desired Bs and another with undesired Bs.

As is the case in many plants, the biopharma production site had a large number of projects under way to drive continuous improvement. However, the change team spotted several situations in which project teams experienced a negative cycle of behaviors. More than a few projects had been set up with insufficient commitment to follow-through and delivery. Team leaders were saying yes to requests yet implicitly denying the reality of project difficulties. Employees would quit their project teams when the road got bumpy, and those who stayed became overloaded with work.

After probing the situation, repeatedly asking questions, and encouraging honest dialogue about the As and Cs, the change team began to see powerful cause-effect relationships taking shape. For example, there was inadequate project prioritization at the site—an A—that inhibited project team leaders' ability to know which initiatives were truly important and, therefore, how to allocate time and resources accordingly. Team members, meanwhile, were stretched to the limit and lacked the time—an A—to dedicate to the project. And when they failed to attend a meeting, nothing

happened (there were no negative Cs for this behavior), giving the employees more time to make meaningful contributions to other projects (that is, positive Cs).

By contrast, a recent product introduction at the site had been very successful. The biopharma company's production executives had selected the site for production of a medicine with a complex manufacturing process. Despite challenges, the project's team leaders and production-line operators rose to the occasion. Stronger-than-expected batch yield results were proof of how each individual took ownership of the challenge and was serious about his or her role in making the project a success.

So what made this situation different? The project team, knowing the risks they faced, had taken the initiative to conduct a "reverse brainstorming" exercise offsite to consider all the potential pitfalls that they might encounter in the production process—and then as the project progressed, they began to systematically and proactively troubleshoot them, one by one. Why? For one thing, team leaders were clear about the importance and the complexity of the task at hand (an A), which helped them focus their energy and efforts. As one team member explained, "People were good at making time; the case was clear."

At the same time, the site's executives responded consistently and quickly (a powerful C) to the regular e-mail updates that they had asked team leaders to send. "We'd send daily updates to them during [batch] processing, and we would always get swift replies back. It motivated me," recalled one team leader. This reinforced the message that the project remained a top priority.

The operators who ran the new process behaved likewise. Morning meetings were standing-room only, project outcomes such as yield results were communicated, and each new milestone achieved was celebrated. By working on something of such clear importance, during which their ideas were listened to and improvements were applauded, operators became proud of what they were achieving. A simple "job well done—thank you!" comment from a senior executive was characterized by one team member as "one of the proudest moments" of his year. The employees' pride, coupled with the celebrations of milestones, spurred a virtuous cycle, generating even more sense of ownership and still better results.

The change team analyzed these successes and committed to using As and Cs to bring these same ingredients to all of the operational changes facing the site: clear and consistent priorities, listening to and acting on employee suggestions, sharing data on progress as soon as possible, encouraging and enabling operators and management to solve problems together, and genuinely celebrating improvements.

Phase three: design solutions and develop action plans. Next came the question of how to change the As and Cs to get the Bs where they needed to be. This phase kicked off actual behavioral change: the team designed practical changes to the behavioral context with a keen eye toward the important challenges facing the site at the time.

The team revisited the discrete operational areas for solution development that they had analyzed in phase two. In a series of cross-functional workshops and interviews,
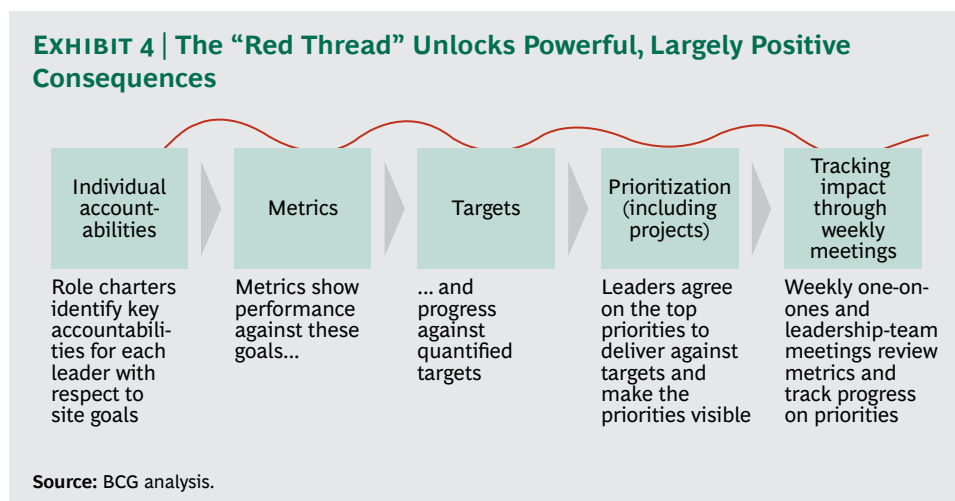
At one site, employee pride, coupled with the celebration of milestones, spurred a virtuous cycle, generating even more sense of ownership and still better results.

they hosted discussions not only about what undesired behaviors existed but also about tactical ways to meaningfully influence them. These in-depth brainstorming exercises led to numerous ideas about how to change As and Cs to improve discrete, results-linked Bs. Two examples of Cs that could easily be enacted: coaching managers to intervene confidently when workers did not wear proper personal protective equipment and scheduling a team dinner if everyone on the initiative team defined and submitted metrics for their area of the project on time and in full.

A challenge for the team at this point was to focus and prioritize the ABC effort itself. While there were plenty of potential opportunities to target discrete, results-linked behaviors, the bigger opportunity—with the new organizational model being finalized—was to ensure that structural change was accompanied by widespread, values-linked behavioral change in order to create an even stronger high-performance culture.

Therefore, the change team determined that a priority focus area was strengthening ownership and accountability at the leadership level in order to eventually cascade the theme down through the rest of the organization. Key to achieving that objective was creating clarity about role expectations, and much effort was devoted to clearly defining some critical As. For instance, leaders discussed, agreed to, and locked in initiative prioritization and captured individual accountabilities, performance metrics, targets, and decision rights in simple, one-page "role charters." (See Exhibit 3.)

Once those behavioral enablers were in place, the team had to create the right Cs to motivate and reinforce leaders' ownership and accountability. The team knew that,

EXHIBIT 3 | Role Charters Capture Accountabilities, Performance Metrics, Targets, and Decision Rights

Individual accountabilities: Each employee's mission-critical responsibilities

Metrics: Mission-critical performance indicators (that are aligned with the organization's vision and goals)

Financial targets: Mission-critical financial indicators

Shared accountabilities: Joint mission-critical accountabilities with another member of the management team

Decision rights, influencer: Decisions in which the individual's opinion counts

Decisions rights, owner: Decisions for which the individual is directly responsible

Decision rights, approver: Decisions that the individual does not control directly but has the authority to approve

☐ Accountabilities ☐ Decision rights ☐ Parameters for success

Source: BCG analysis.

in this case, the right Cs would be similar to what had had an impact during the new product introduction: peer recognition of performance improvement and personal pride in seeing individual performance drive real value for the site; constructive feedback and pressure from peers—Cs that behavioral science indicates are more powerful not only because they are more immediate and intrinsic but because they are collectively skewed toward the positive. To create those Cs, the team needed a way to facilitate real transparency and alignment within the leadership team.

Consequently, the solution developed by the change team was a strong "red thread" to create a visible and coherent connection across all clarified components of accountability. (See Exhibit 4.) A key element of the red thread was a weekly forum during which the leadership team reviewed and checked in on progress against the various metrics and priorities. Out of this transparency and alignment, the consequences have begun to emerge both in this forum and outside it: feelings of encouragement, pride, and recognition. The desired behaviors—focus, discipline, ownership, and accountability—have since followed and continue to deepen.

EXHIBIT 4 | The "Red Thread" Unlocks Powerful, Largely Positive Consequences

Individual account-abilities	Metrics	Targets	Prioritization (including projects)	Tracking impact through weekly meetings
Role charters identify key accountabilities for each leader with respect to site goals	Metrics show performance against these goals...	... and progress against quantified targets	Leaders agree on the top priorities to deliver against targets and make the priorities visible	Weekly one-on-ones and leadership-team meetings review metrics and track progress on priorities

Source: BCG analysis.

Phase four: implement and track. In this phase, leaders and employees prepared and launched action plans, tracked and communicated progress, and celebrated successes. Action plans were centered on strengthening accountability (as noted), improving prioritization and follow-through, and increasing collaboration as the site moved to a new organizational structure and operating model.

All of these measures helped to change the site's As by giving employees and leaders greater clarity about expectations and true priorities and equipping them with the skills and tools needed to drive higher performance. But the real shift occurred because so many of the site's employees and managers learned the science of behavior and how to harness it more effectively and leverage the Cs. There are now more immediate and highly visible feedback loops that report progress against key metrics and high-priority projects. Employees are actively engaged in discussions about how to solve problems, and they have begun to see that their ideas about how to achieve further gains are being acted on. Furthermore, the increased focus on what matters most is generating pride and strengthen-

ing follow-through because employees know they are working on important site priorities that have high visibility with top management.

The last step in this journey will be to embed these desired behaviors as habits, so they become self-sustaining. Some of this is happening already. For instance, the language of ABCs is being used at the plant to create change in areas such as results-linked behaviors. Overall, though, the rollout at this production site is still in its early days. In time, a big push will be needed to further develop the capabilities of leaders and managers in key areas—for example, in prioritizing, delegating, and providing project teams with more effective support, all in order to continuously strengthen the As and Cs for the behaviors that the top management team wants to see more or less of. As this embedding initiative takes shape, the site will also see its managers become adept at leveraging the science of ABCs to start driving desired results-linked and values-linked behaviors on a regular, day-to-day basis.

> The biopharma manufacturing sites that stick to the essientials of behavioral change will outperform their peers.

Finally, the site's ABCs initiative will be underpinned by a concerted effort to explain to the workforce the changes taking place across the wider biopharma industry and business environment and to make clear the implications of those changes for the plant—in effect, to "bring the outside in" and fortify the organization's commitment to change.

THE CHANGES TAKING place at this production site are a powerful testament to what can be achieved not only at other production facilities within this biopharma company but more widely across the industry. Although many of the specific steps are obviously tailored to the plant we have described, the broad principles and practices of the ABC approach are relevant for and applicable to biopharma manufacturing sites large and small, regardless of location.

The core conclusion remains universal and unassailable: changing behaviors is challenging but absolutely essential to meaningful performance improvement. Behavioral change has been labeled the "soft" side of change to distinguish it from the operational, or "hard," side. But given the extent of the challenge, it would be appropriate to characterize it as the harder side of change, too.

The biopharma manufacturing sites that stick to the essentials of behavioral change—getting to the As and Cs behind the issues that cause gaps between current and required behaviors, engaging all pertinent parties in the change journey, and making plans that will change the A and C context behind the behaviors that matter most to driving operational results—will outperform their peers. They are set to become tomorrow's operational excellence exemplars.

NOTES
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