



# The IKEA Effect: Why Building It Together Builds Stronger Change

## INSIGHTS

When it comes to assembling flat-pack furniture, we've all been there - fighting with Allen keys and deciphering obscure instructions. And yet, once it's built, we feel an irrational sense of pride. Even if it's slightly wonky. That's the **IKEA effect** in action: the psychological principle that people place disproportionately high value on things they have had a hand in creating.

This isn't just about bookshelves and bedside tables - it's a powerful insight for how **people relate to change**.

### Understanding the IKEA Effect

The IKEA effect is a behavioural economics concept coined by researchers Michael Norton, Daniel Mochon, and Dan Ariely. Their findings revealed a simple truth: **when people invest**

**effort into building something, they value it more—sometimes irrationally so.**

### What This Means for Change Management

At Linea, we don't do change **to** people - we build it **with** them.

From day one, we embed internal stakeholders into every stage of the transformation journey. This isn't just a tick-box exercise or a gesture of inclusion - it's a deliberate strategy to harness the insights, energy, and ownership of the people who know the organisation best. Whether we're leading complex cost improvement programmes, operational redesigns, clinical service transformations, or digital maturity pathways, our method remains the same: co-creation over command-and-control.

Because change that's imposed gets resisted.

But change that's co-created gets delivered.

This isn't a "soft" approach - it's a smart one. Engaging staff from across the organisation doesn't just create goodwill; it enhances the quality and sustainability of the outcomes. Here's how:

- **Contextual Accuracy:** Internal teams understand the practical, cultural, and operational realities that often get missed by outsiders. By working together, we ensure that change is relevant, feasible, and aligned with frontline needs - not just leadership ambitions.
- **Early Buy-In:** When people see their fingerprints on a new process, model, or structure, they feel invested. Engagement isn't something that happens after a strategy is signed off - it's built in from the beginning.
- **Risk Reduction:** Staff input helps uncover operational risks, cultural sensitivities, and unspoken dynamics that could derail a top-down change initiative. By surfacing these early, we can address them proactively.
- **Stronger Business Case:** Change driven by those who live the challenge day-to-day tends to resonate more powerfully with the wider workforce. It reflects authentic needs and realistic opportunities, making it easier to communicate and defend at all levels.

And crucially - it activates the IKEA effect. When people help build something, they value it more. They care more. They maintain it, advocate for it, and protect it from sliding back into old habits. This kind of deep-rooted ownership is what sustains transformation long after external support steps away.

In a world where change fatigue is real and transformation efforts frequently stall, Linea's collaborative model doesn't just deliver

outcomes - it builds momentum, capability, and belief. It turns resistance into resolve.

Because when people are part of the journey, they drive it forward.

### Real Value from Real Involvement

We've seen it time and again—**when staff are treated as collaborators, not bystanders, change doesn't just land - it lasts.**

This isn't theoretical. Across the healthcare, public sector, and regulated industries, we've worked alongside frontline clinicians redesigning care pathways to improve patient flow, operational teams reengineering business processes to drive efficiency, and executive leaders reshaping entire service delivery models to meet future demand. In every instance, the same pattern emerges: **shared input leads to shared accountability.**

When people are invited into the process, they move from feeling imposed upon to feeling empowered. They don't just understand the "what" - they own the "why" and contribute to the "how." That shift is powerful. It turns passive recipients of change into active stewards of transformation.

The result? Solutions that aren't just technically sound, but **culturally embedded** and **operationally sustainable.**

By the time we transition ownership to internal teams, they're not just ready - they're **motivated advocates.** They defend the decisions they helped shape. They reinforce the new behaviours and ways of working. They onboard new colleagues with conviction and confidence because the change belongs to them.

This level of commitment isn't something that can be mandated - it must be **earned and built through meaningful involvement.**

That's the Linea difference. We don't just deliver

frameworks and recommendations. We create the conditions for ownership, resilience, and pride. Because change that's *technically right* will only go so far. But change that's *personally owned*? That's where transformation sticks.

## The Linea Difference

At Linea, we believe successful transformation is never just about systems or structures - it's about people.

Our approach to change management is rooted in structured engagement, evidence-based methodologies, and mutual trust. We apply proven tools, frameworks, and governance to keep programmes on track, but what sets us apart is how we engage the people who live and breathe the organisation every day.

This isn't about soft skills - it's about strategic advantage. Because no matter how technically sound a solution is, it will fail without the commitment of the people delivering it.

That's why we consciously build our programmes around the principles of behavioural science. We understand what drives human motivation, resistance, and belief - and we use that insight to unlock engagement at every level.

The IKEA effect is a perfect example. It's not just a psychological curiosity - it's a powerful lever. When people have a hand in building the solution, they become emotionally and intellectually invested in its success. They don't just comply - they contribute. They don't just go along with change - they push it forward.

And we design for that.

From co-designed workshops and inclusive planning forums to frontline involvement in pilot testing and solution modelling, every aspect of our approach is about making people part of the journey. Because we know that when people help build it, they back it. They sustain it. They improve it.

This is where Linea adds real, lasting value - not just in the outcomes we deliver, but in the capability and confidence we leave behind. Our clients aren't left with a binder of recommendations - they're left with a workforce that's engaged, empowered, and ready to own the next chapter.

Change doesn't need to be something people fear. With the right approach, it can be something they believe in.

That's the Linea difference.

### About Us:

We are business transformation specialists with years of experience in helping organisations to restructure and strategically realign their operations to deliver on their goals.

We will analyse your current operations and business restructuring processes against best practice, and ensure that you are able to achieve continuous productivity, cost improvements & sustained transformational change.

Find out more about our services, or take a look at our other Insights articles for more helpful resources and advice.

Please call us on **+44 (0) 124 442 1095**, or complete [our contact form](#) to request a call back any time.