



Change processes that work for people



Change Management Templates
Applying The Practitioners' Masterclass

Power and Influence
Organisational Leaders

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Power and Influence

(1) Status = Starting Out

You have an idea, you have a vision for a significant visionary change, and/or your organisation is facing major external challenges...

It is fairly obvious to you that the size, scope and complexity, priority, timescale and strategic importance of the proposed change is such that it is a step change, and as such should not be introduced as part of "Business As Usual" as it would disrupt the day-to-day running of your organisation.

It is also apparent that if this potential change initiative is to proceed, it needs to be regarded and handled as a specific initiative and will require some form of change management process.

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Stalling Points

(1) Failure to understand your role

- ❑ Failure to appreciate that for any major change initiative to succeed your role is to provide facilitative leadership, that is, to ensure the wider involvement of people at all levels - especially in the informal networks
- ❑ Facilitative leadership will require from you: communication skills, social skills and a collaborative approach
- ❑ Whilst your command-control hierarchy remains intact - and it needs to for the exercising of legal authority to ratify decisions - the power needed to drive this change initiative is based on synergy and mutuality and is multi-directional

(2) Failure to understand what has and hasn't worked before

- ❑ So many companies – especially in North America – just rush into the next change initiative without debriefing and assessing what did and didn't work last time, and why
- ❑ You need to get that knowledge and insight now, right up front as it can help you repeating past mistakes and failing with this initiative
- ❑ Your organisations' "transition readiness" is best indicated by your organisations' legacy of change initiatives (both those that worked and those that didn't work) as it provides an important early indicator of what lies ahead
- ❑ You also need to look at the scars left by successful as well as unsuccessful initiatives as it is crucial to understand and address the scar tissue left by previous initiatives

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(3) Failure to understand the role and critical importance of your informal networks

- ❑ Failing to understand that your informal networks are critical to the success or failure of your change initiative
 - ❑ To succeed with any change initiative you need the involvement and support of your informal networks – from the outset
 - ❑ Your informal networks are the source of most of your potential resistance and the source of most of your solutions
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Critical Action Point

- ❑ Before instigating any action, and in addition to discussing this with your senior management team, hold informal talks as soon as possible with a small group drawn from the informal networks within your organisation
 - ❑ Outline the challenges, give them the background and the reasons for the potential change and invite their views and feedback on how to proceed – and listen
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Key Questions

- Where have we come from?
 - Where are we now?
 - Where do we want to be?
 - What will happen if we don't get there?
 - What are forces or drivers for this change?
 - What are the forces or drivers against this change?
 - What are the strongest forces for change?
 - What are the strongest forces against change?
 - What will be the impact of changing?
 - What will be the impact of not changing?
 - Is change viable?
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Initial Objective

Your initial objective is to reach a shared perspective of a high level view of each of the following points:

- ❑ The organisational **need** for the change
- ❑ The **specifics** of what will change
- ❑ The **benefits** of the change
- ❑ The **impacts** of the change

This not a negotiation, this is not a planning exercise, this is an informal discussion.

It is highly likely that this will involve a number of meetings of the “informal” group – each of the above points could involve a separate session.

Get your formal team to meet with your informal team.

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What is most likely to go wrong?

Problems are likely to arise from 3 areas:

(1) Your fellow directors and other senior management colleagues

Your fellow directors and other senior management colleagues will probably not initially understand what you are doing or why. They will put you under pressure to move more quickly, to delegate as soon as possible, and unconsciously they will recoil from the idea of the loss of control – and the perception of the loss of power - in involving so many “outsiders” or “at least until we are clear what we are doing”.

(2) Members of the informal organisation

If you have not involved members of the informal organisation in prior change initiatives, and if you and/or your organisation have a poor track record on running change initiatives then they will likely be suspicious or even hostile to your initial invitation to meet and talk informally. They will be trying to figure out what your hidden agenda is and may be reluctant to participate and will stall you.

(3) You

The change you seek within your organisation starts with you.. An adaptive approach to change leadership means that you as leader have to be prepared to change first. This may mean admitting past mistakes – mistakes that may have disrupted and negatively impacted the personal and emotional lives of many people. Your leadership style quite likely has to change. You are now an enabler and facilitator. If your psychological and emotional profile matches that of the typical business leader , whilst you may intellectually agree with some of what you have just read, you will quite probably experience a degree of resistance.

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Quick metrics on progress

- ❑ You catch yourself (maybe uncharacteristically) reflecting more on the people side of your proposed change initiative.
 - ❑ You have in your possession a single sheet summary of the lessons learnt from past change initiatives
 - ❑ A member of your informal team emails you personally or phones you on your mobile phone with ideas and suggestions
 - ❑ You feel a certain level of dis-ease and mild discomfort about where all this is leading
 - ❑ You sense that a shared perception of the initial objective is starting to emerge from meetings with the informal team
 - ❑ The informal and formal teams have met together once
 - ❑ The informal and formal teams have met together more than once
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