

Change Management Team Chartering

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Change Management
A Highlands Group White Paper Series



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Change efforts most often fail not because of poor planning or a bad design, but from lack of implementation. As Ram Charan said in his book *Execution*, “One of the fundamental problems is that leaders think of implementation or execution as the tactical side of business—something leaders delegate while they focus on the perceived ‘bigger’ issues. This idea is completely wrong. Execution is not just tactics—it is discipline and a system.”

Our experience is similar to Charan’s. We have found that an organization, division, or team can execute only if leaders are fully engaged in the process of change. In other words, leaders have to be personally involved in the day-to-day operations. Leaders have to provide insight, direction, and understanding of the environment. They have to be on the playing field with the team discussing, challenging, allocating resources, making decisions, and enabling the team to win. Leaders need to be the champions and role models of high performance and the visionaries of the organization being created. Leaders have to *be there* to execute. Larry Bossidy said, “When things are running well, I spend 20 percent of my time on the [change] process. When I’m rebuilding an organization, it’s 40 percent.” This type of leadership is not about micromanaging, being “hands-on,” or disempowering people. Instead, it’s about active involvement.

Effective change sponsors establish a trusted and respected Change Management Team to enable organizational leaders to be actively involved in change. This team helps with the day-to-day tasks of managing change. Change sponsors do not abdicate responsibility to execute; instead, they establish a systematic process to discuss what the team will do and how; they rigorously follow through and ensure accountability; and they remove barriers that get in the way of the team. Effective sponsors charter a team to enable organizational change using communication, education, and involvement tools and processes. In effect, the Change Management Team with an involved sponsor could be called a change leadership team.

The following chartering process ensures that the Change Management Team is prepared to succeed. The process helps team members identify, document, and agree upon the following:

- The purpose of the team
- Expected deliverables and due dates
- How the team will achieve its task
- Required resources
- Guidelines and boundaries
- Accountability

A good chartering process defines direction, roles and responsibilities, and time allocation of resources for the team.



Complete the following steps to charter a Change Management Team:

1. Determine team membership.
2. Hold a kickoff meeting.
3. Establish team focus.
4. Answer key questions about how the team will operate.
5. Determine an initial project plan.
6. Communicate to the organization.

Step 1: Determine Team Membership

Determining team membership is about getting the right people involved in the change initiative, and then allowing them to refine the direction of the change. Listed below are the roles, responsibilities, attributes, and skills of Change Management Team members. Team members should be self-starters, innovators, the ones who are restless with the *status quo*. The team should include those who know things can be dramatically better and are relentless in their pursuit for a world-class organization. The role descriptions and selection advice below is helpful in determining team membership.

Tasks

Complete the following tasks to determine Change Management Team membership:

1. Select the Change Management Team Leader. Consider the following roles, responsibilities, and attributes.

Team Leader Roles and Responsibilities	Team Leader Attributes and Skills
Be a liaison with the sponsor and/or Sponsor Team.	Excellent coaching and facilitation skills; gets things done by working with people; brings out the best in them
Be a role model.	Good arbitration and negotiation skills
Guide the team through the change process with the support of external and internal consultants.	Excellent communication and listening skills
Unify the Change Management Team and bring out the best in each member.	Diplomatic, tactful, and persuasive
Remove any obstacles and roadblocks; obtain the help of support teams and subject matter experts.	Stamina to deal with long days; skills to deal with the impact of the change on self and others

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Team Leader Roles and Responsibilities	Team Leader Attributes and Skills
Assess the current state and design the future and transition states.	Subject matter expert in a key part of the process
Develop implementation plans.	Excellent analytical and organizational design skills
	Demonstrated openness to new possibilities
	Creative
	Systemic thinker
	Highly credible
	A proven team player

2. Finalize the selection of Change Management Team members. The Change Management Team should have 6 to 10 members. Consider the following selection advice:
 - Keep the process open, not mysterious.
 - Conduct an open information session to kickoff the selection process.
 - Have the sponsor lead the information session.
 - Remember, the selection process will set the tone of the change effort.
 - Select the best and brightest—availability should not be a key criterion.
 - Remember, it takes time to do it right.
 - Look for hidden talent.
 - Select people with attributes that mirror the new organization you are trying to create.
 - Remember, the new organization will be only as good as the Change Management and Implementation Teams.
 - Use a mix of levels, backgrounds, and diverse styles. (Consider outsiders.)

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Team Member Roles and Responsibilities	Team Member Attributes and Skills
Understand the current organization (process, structure, systems); help invent a new organization based on the objectives of the change initiative.	Ability to work in an environment without well-defined goals or precise project plans, at times
Assess the current results, culture, and requirements of the external environment.	Ability to understand the organization (systemic thinker)
Assess the level of alignment or misalignment within the organization.	Creative
Envision the future organization.	Enthusiastic, optimistic, persistent
Design the future and transition states.	Excellent communication and listening skills
Create implementation plans.	Drive for improvement and following through
Represent the organization at large.	Broad work experience
Communicate, communicate, communicate (within the team and with peers, leaders, and the sponsor).	Enjoys working with people
Be role models.	Stamina to deal with long days; skills to deal with the impact of the change on self and others
	Diplomatic, tactful, and persuasive
	Highly credible, trustworthy, and authentic
	Subject matter experts in key parts of the process
	Good analytical skills
	Open to new possibilities, proven willingness to risk change
	A proven team player



3. Use other support teams and subject matter experts, as appropriate.

Support Team Member Roles and Responsibilities	Support Team Member Attributes and Skills
Provide the sponsor and Change Management Team with support functions, human resources, information technology, finance, facilities, quality management, etc., as needed throughout the initiative.	Subject matter expertise
Fulfill specific assignments to collect and interpret data concerning the current state.	

Subject Matter Expert Roles and Responsibilities	Subject Matter Expert Attributes and Skills
Provide subject matter expertise to the Change Management Team concerning the current state of the organization.	Subject matter expertise
Participate in brainstorming future breakthrough possibilities.	
Prototype and test proposed new ideas.	



Step 2: Hold a Kickoff Meeting

A kickoff meeting gathers together the selected members of the Change Management Team to refine the team focus and direction, roles and responsibilities, and group operating norms and procedures.

A typical kickoff meeting agenda includes the following:

- Introduce team members.
- Review the purpose of the meeting.
- Review any communication about the purpose for change already created by senior leadership (e.g., the business case for change).
- Determine team focus.
- Identify roles and responsibilities.
- Determine team operating norms.
- Identify key concerns about implementing the change initiative.

Tasks

Complete the following tasks to prepare for and hold the kickoff meeting:

1. Finalize the team member list.
2. Invite team members to be on the team.
3. Schedule the kickoff meeting and invite team members.
4. Finalize and send the agenda to all team members.

Step 3: Establish Team Focus

Other reasons why change efforts fail is due to the wrong focus or “scope creep.” Either problem can lead a team down the wrong path. Consequently, it is critical for the team to agree on its focus at the beginning of the change initiative.



Use the following template to define team focus.

Key stakeholders (needs):	
Desired results (outcomes):	
Guidelines (boundaries):	
Resources (who, what, where):	
Accountability (measurement):	
Consequences (rewards):	



Tasks

The sponsor might have already captured and shared his or her focus and purpose for the team. If so, the Change Management Team should review that information and then use the steps below to refine the focus.

- Identify key stakeholders and their needs.
 - Which customers, employees, and suppliers have a key “stake” in the success of the change effort?
 - What matters most to stakeholders? (Identify the needs you must meet to achieve the desired results.)
- Determine the desired results or outcomes of the team.
 - What is the context for change?
 - What is the fundamental purpose of the team? What does it do? (Create a brief description of what the team is going to accomplish.)
- Determine what guidelines or boundaries exist for the project.
 - What are the boundaries to guide us?
 - What is outside the scope of work?
 - What staff considerations should we be aware of?
 - What are the “sacred cows” to avoid?
- Identify key resources needed to succeed.
 - Budget?
 - Time?
 - People?
 - Equipment?
 - Space?
- Develop key measures of success.
 - Who is accountable for what?
 - How will we measure success?
 - What are the key milestones (activities and outcomes)?
 - How will we regularly track progress?
 - How will we hold each other accountable?



- Establish rewards for successful implementation.
 - How is this worth the investment we are making?
 - Why does this matter to the organization?
 - What are the benefits if we succeed?

Step 4: Answer Key Questions About How the Team Will Operate

Most problems that arise in individual relationships and teams are due to the violation of unclarified expectations. This step helps team members clarify their expectations and define how the team will operate.

Tasks

Complete the following tasks to define team operating principles:

1. Have each team member think about their responses to the following questions. Use the responses to begin crafting team operating principles.
 - What has frustrated you the most about past change initiatives?
 - What is your greatest hope for this change process?
 - What barriers might get in our way?
 - How could we fail?
 - To achieve the desired results, what must we let go of (e.g., beliefs, traditions, old practices, paradigms, etc.)?
 - How do we overcome barriers?
 - How will we work together as a team?
 - What team operating norms matter most to you? What expectations do you have regarding team meeting norms, attendance, preparation, and commitment?
 - What principles and practices of highly effective teams do you value most (e.g., understand stakeholder requirements of the organization; achieve excellent, high-performance results; strive constantly to learn and improve; identify and adapt to changes; address and solve problems quickly; make decisions and move forward; use open and honest communication; etc.)?
2. As a team, discuss individual answers.
3. Determine team operating principles and refer to them regularly as a team.



Step 5: Determine an Initial Project Plan

The Change Management Team outlines a high-level project plan, which includes an initial project timeline, deliverables, and key milestones. The team outlines the detailed steps to accomplish the plan once it has more information.

Develop an initial project plan by answering simple project management questions, such as *who* does *what* by *when*.

Tasks

Answer the following questions to create an initial project plan:

- What are the key milestones (activities and outcomes)?
- What should be our first priorities?
- What are the areas where failure is not an option?
- Where should we start?
- What must we say no to?
- How will we organize to accomplish the work?

Step 6: Communicate to the Organization

Once team members start to meet, employees will wonder what they are doing, why they are meeting, who is on the team, why those team members were selected, how they can be involved, etc. It is important to continually communicate the purpose of the change initiative, the role of the sponsor, and the role of the Change Management Team as soon as possible.

Tasks

Announce the change effort to the entire organization. Communicate with the organization about the purpose of the Change Management Team including team membership, roles, deliverables, and timelines.



Conclusion

Reports state that before Ernest Shackleton began his legendary Antarctic expedition, he ran an advertisement in the paper asking for sailors to join him. The advertisement said: “Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.” Some authors write that hundreds of men responded to the ad. Likewise, when change sponsors announce they are looking for Change Management Team members, they too want hundreds who are willing to be involved in the challenging and somewhat dangerous business of change.

It is important to note that Shackleton didn’t charter a team of men to sail off and report back occasionally. Instead, he was personally involved in the day-to-day operations. He was in the same boat with his team discussing, challenging, making decisions, and enabling them to succeed. Similarly, French Novelist Andre Gide noted, “One doesn’t discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.” Effective change sponsors recognize that stakeholders can lose sight of the real reason for change, so they establish a trusted and respected Change Management Team comprised of leaders and employees who can help everyone navigate the hazards of change and safely land the organization on the far new shore.

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