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# Organizational Change Management For IT Project Managers

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### INTRODUCTION

This is a guide and template for Change Management (CM) planning and execution. The work described in the CM plan encompasses the “people part” of organizational changes brought upon by IT projects. It is the part that traditionally is relegated to training only, but has many other important aspects not to be ignored. The paper is written to be used by Information Technology (IT) project managers (PM) as an adjunct to the planning embodied in the technical project plan.

The paper has two sections:

1. *The Case for Change Management* (this section) describes CM, makes a case for its need, and why IT PMs should include CM in their planning and project execution.
2. *Change Management – What To Do* provides a description of the major steps (step is used here as a generic term for phases, activities, tasks, and subtasks) to be considered in putting together a change management action plan. Importantly, beyond describing the steps, the manual explains reasons for performing them. It also details some templates for completing tasks and describes major deliverables.

## THE CASE FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT

### A WORD ABOUT CM FOR IT PROJECTS

Change is by definition a process of altering people's behavior, sometimes all the way down to their attitudes and thought processes. Change can cut deep to people who are comfortable with routines, or at least tolerate them as "the devil we know." The problem very often is not in causing change, with enough effort change will always occur, but creating productive, beneficial change. This popular (but apocryphal) quote attributed to an ancient Roman general says it all:

*We trained hard . . . but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization.*

Though of dubious attribution, the quote provides a stark warning against ineffectual organizational change.

In their article *Integrating Change Management into Projects for True Success*, Lori Bocklund and Lori Fraser define CM:

*"...a structured process that rallies support for change at all levels of the organization while building the knowledge, skills and incentives to sustain it. It is the people side of change."*

They later to make the distinctions that *"IT change management is version control, not CM."*<sup>1</sup>

Or, more formally, CM is defined as:

*...an approach to shifting/transitioning individuals, teams, and - in general - organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It is an organizational process aimed at helping change stakeholders to accept and embrace changes in their business environment or individuals in their personal lives.[citation needed] In some project management contexts, change management refers to a project management process wherein changes to a project are formally introduced and approved.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Integrating Change Management into Projects for True Success*, Lori Bocklund and Lori Fraser, CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT • FALL 2009 - [http://www.strategiccontact.com/articles/ChgMgmt\\_fall09.pdf](http://www.strategiccontact.com/articles/ChgMgmt_fall09.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Change management. (2013, May 1). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 18:08, May 2, 2013, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Change\\_management&oldid=553073452](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Change_management&oldid=553073452)

Finally, given the term “change management” is used many ways in industry, it is important to note that CM is not IT version control, nor is it project scope control. Finally, as Bocklund and Fraser noted in their article “Training is just one CM component.”

### PRINCIPLES OF CM

Change programs must incorporate not only input from the top, but also include the knowledge and enthusiasm from folks across the organization. No matter how committed leaders may be, change will not occur as it is meant to unless people throughout the organization change their behavior in the desired way. It is helpful when an executive attends a meeting or conference to make the case for change. It’s crucial when you are in the trenches training reluctant folks that a respected coworker jumps in and says, “It’s ok, it’s doable, and this is how it’s done.”

Two principles to be derived from this are:

- *Commitment and Sponsorship From the Top Is a Necessary But Not Sufficient Requirement For Change.* Commitment must come from line staff and supervisor/managers throughout the enterprise.
- *Change Agents Are the Link Between Vision and Success:* The inevitability of change is created when a critical mass of people volunteers to be agents of change within the organizations. Diehards may never be moved to like change, but even they can be accept it as inevitable. Generally, CM best practices place leadership commitment at the top.

### IT FOCUSED CM

The focus of this guide is to provide IT PM’s a primer on CM. The guide can be useful to help recognize the need for CM, and how to plan for it.

Why IT focused CM? Consider these three points:

- A project is not successful until after it is implemented and its benefits are realized by the organization. Even well designed, smoothly running new systems can fail after implementation if they are not adopted or well accepted by the people who use them. Changing people -- their attitudes, competencies, and awareness -- is essential for the success of all large IT project implementation and many smaller ones.
- Change is hard generally, but change brought about by IT projects can be some of the hardest of all. IT projects, especially large ones, require people to both learn how to use new and imposing applications, and also to incorporate major changes in complex business workflows. Accordingly there is a significant need to manage how people adopt to the changes imposed upon them.

- Everyone is different. One person may face the changes happily until confronted with having to use a new login procedure, then simply stop there. Someone else will painfully recreate reports from the old system even though they no longer meet the new reporting paradigm. In short, people will respond to the new system in a multiplicity of ways that hurt its acceptance and effectiveness.

CM is the process of planning to forestall these problems. Boiled down to one word, CM is about managing people's attitude – not to change in general, but to what is in immediate store for them.

## CHANGE MANAGEMENT – WHAT TO DO

### OVERVIEW

The following methodology is drawn from the experience of the author, but one particular recommended source is the United States Health and Human Services Agency “Making Change Work” methodology (<http://www.humtech.com/htoffice/website/sites/MCW/index.htm>).

Please note that traditional project management routines and activities are not specified. Please refer to the Project Management Institute (PMI) or other well developed and professional project methodologies for this important element of any plan.

Also, note that training is just one piece of CM. Even so, for the great majority of IT projects, even those that generate huge changes in workflows, job skills, and expected outcomes of work, the focus for CM is on training only.

The methodology includes information on what to plan for:

1. Appropriate resources, such as CM team leads, analysts and subject matter experts (SME).
2. Work Breakdown Structure (WBS activities and, tasks.
3. Major deliverables.
4. Assumptions and constraints.

The resulting plan information may be input into project management software such as Microsoft Project, Open Workbench, Primavera, or any of the numerous Internet PM project management tools. It might be stated here that word processing or spreadsheet based plans can be used as well, particularly for CM because these familiar tools do not require specialized skills limiting broad staff involvement.

The resulting plan should be well vetted by all who will play a part in it. The PM should be confident that people have bought into the duties they are assigned, the effort they are expected to put forward, and the reasonableness of the schedule they are called to perform against. As all planning, this effort is conducted on an iterative basis, starting with initial high level plans and proceeding to detailed implementation blow by blow planning.

With a well vetted plan in hand, the IT PM challenged to come up with a plan to successfully implement an IT project can also argue for the funds and resources needed to pursue a CM effort.

### ACTIVITIES

#### 1. PLAN FOR CHANGE

Steps for planning change are:

- Develop a Transformation “Win Theme”
- Get Ahead of the Curve – Prepare for Reaction to Change
- Lead with Purpose and Vision

##### 1.1. Develop a Transformation “Win Theme”

Establish a shared vision is to clearly explain what the change will be and how it will benefit the organization, emphasizing benefits to people.

1.1.1. Build a common understanding of the driving forces for the change.

- Describe the change(s) are indispensable to the organization's success
- Demonstrate Commitment to Organizational Values and Core Strengths
  - ✓ Not “throwing the baby out with the bath”

1.1.2. Obtain Buy-In for Proposed Changes

- Develop transformation goals and objectives
  - ✓ Develop a list of candidate outcomes
  - ✓ Define outcomes in terms of measurable objectives (such as: reduce time to complete application from 15 days to 1 day)
- Develop Implementation Goals & Objectives presentation
- Interview Executive Management and Program Managers to Validate Goals and Objectives
- Update Change Vision and complete Charter
  - ✓ Charter describes sponsor(s), budget, timeframe, stakeholders, communication plan, deliverables/scope of effort
  - ✓ May be more or less detailed depending on the size of the project and organization
- Obtain Approval for Change Vision



### 1.2. Get Ahead of the Curve – Prepare for Reaction to Change

Begin with recognizing that there are people as well as organizational dimensions to change. There is a need to proactively reach out to assess and evaluate how people might respond to change. This activity may employ surveys, town hall meetings, newsletters with FAQs, meeting with unions or employee representatives, and making presentations in regular standing employee or organizational meetings.

#### 1.2.1. Confirm employee stakeholders;

- External stakeholders may be included if integral to the workflow for example, a hospital might consider the impact of changes on contracted labs while redesigning diagnostic workflows

#### 1.2.2. Develop a situational description of employee's likely reaction to the changes

- Are employees computer literate – will they need training above and beyond application training to use the new application(s)
- Beyond application training, what help will they need to redesign/adjust their workflows beyond
  - ✓ Review the main design functions with application development team
  - ✓ Plan to work with managers and supervisors to describe workflow adjustments
- Will they fear being replaced or marginalized? This may be touchy because it may be true

#### 1.2.3. Look for allies

- Allies are needed in all organizational levels. Involving as many folks in the design phase will create a better likelihood of success. Some suggestions are:
  - ✓ If applicable, involve employee organizations or Unions
    - ✚ What is the union's attitude toward the change(s)?
    - ✚ What concerns have union representatives voiced?
    - ✚ What are the potential labor contract implications (if any) of the change(s)?
    - ✚ Encourage Informal Involvement
  - ✓ Beyond those with formal roles implementation of the change will involve many others For example:
    - ✚ Supervisors will be asked to implement the change in their work units and to allocate time for their workers to participate in the change processes

- ✚ Employees will be asked to make changes in their work processes and procedures
- ✚ People engaged in operations will need to track productivity data and, later, monitor systems impacts

### 1.3. Lead with Purpose and Vision

#### 1.3.1. Create the Communication Plan

The Communication Plan should include:

- Meetings, design sessions, town hall meetings, and short presentations during the course of normal work meetings
- Invitations for questions, concerns, and suggestions from the workforce Use an email box created for the purpose
- Identify the stakeholder groups, the persons and entities impacted
- Names the groups' representatives
- List all known concerns and stakeholder objectives for each stakeholder/group
- List corresponding actions taken to address stakeholder concerns and objectives
- Create and maintain the Stakeholder Communications Log
  - ✓ Show the date communications took place
  - ✓ Indicate how communications are conducted, e-mail, phone, in person

#### 1.3.2. Create CM Stakeholders and Executive Sponsor and Steering Committee Structures

The change governance system may include the following roles:

- *Sponsor*: provides funding, approves Charter and scope changes, chairs Steering Committee
- *Steering Committee*: provides resources/funding, advises on Charter and scope changes
  - ✓ *Project Manager*: oversees daily operations, chairs status meetings, manages master plan and schedule, reports costs and progress to Sponsor and Steering Committee, may supervise the design and implementation teams or their vendors
- *Design Team*: conducts analysis of organization, documents impact of new system/application on existing processes, proposes and obtains approval for the future state, documents gaps between present and future, develops and detailed implementation plan

- *Implementation Team*: performs training, on-site support, help desk support, acts as customer/user advocate, reports actionable metrics on status, quality, and effectiveness of change activities
- Customer/End User Team: provides subject matter experts (SMEs) to help describe the current state and design changes, participates in acceptance testing and/or pilots, may participate as trainers, generally act as agents of change

## 2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATE

Analyzing the current organization and performing benchmarking is part of preparing for design. Existing practices are used to understand how proposed changes will affect operations, and benchmarks provide the means to identify issues such as bottle necks, frequently occurring errors indicating the need for remedial training, or systemic issues with the new application(s) and/or procedures.

### 2.1. Collect the Data to Be Used in Design Creation

#### 2.1.1. Collect and analyze the data:

- Identify the data needed to consider in designing the future state.
  - ✓ Environmental Factors
  - ✓ Stakeholder Requirements and Expectations
  - ✓ Work Systems
  - ✓ Work Life
  - ✓ Benchmarks

#### 2.1.2. Determine data is already available and how it can be accessed.

#### 2.1.3. Identify the data gap

- What data is missing?
- How it can be collected
- Determine the effort/cost to benefit ratio for collecting new data
- Develop data collection analysis and recommendations to submit for approval by the Steering Committee

#### • Collect and analyze

#### 2.1.4. Analyze the data, make sure to identify:

- Routine and process oriented
- Non-routine and knowledge-based

2.1.5. Determine how the results of the data collection and analysis will be reported to the entire organization.

### 2.2. Perform an “As-Is” and “To Be” Analysis

As-Is analysis describes the current processes and procedures of the affected organization, while To-Be analysis maps out the changes to be implemented.

2.2.1. Complete As-Is Review Of Current Organization.

- Include procedure manuals, protocols, templates, contracts, business agreements to determine which will be replaced or require adjustments
  - ✓ Much of this information should have been collected in *Activity 2.1. Collect the Data to Be Used in Design Creation*
  - ✓ This and other inputs should also have been part of the analysis phase of the IT project design and development phases There is no need to repeat these steps, but to learn and validate their findings

2.2.2. Meet with Designers to Learn the Future State

- Work closely with application designers to understand what will be expected from the user
- Often designers know only enough of the current state to help design the desired new features, functions, and capabilities They do not necessarily understand the likely impacts to workflow outside of the application itself

### 2.3. Map out As Is and To Be Processes

2.3.1. There are many tools, notation, and charting/diagraming systems. Select one that supports one level of complexity below the requirements for your project. Anything less complex will lead you to documentation dead-ends; anything more complex will create unneeded training and maintenance costs.

2.3.2. Create workflows, charts, swimlanes, process diagrams, matrices, and process descriptions as needed to describe both As Is and To Be.

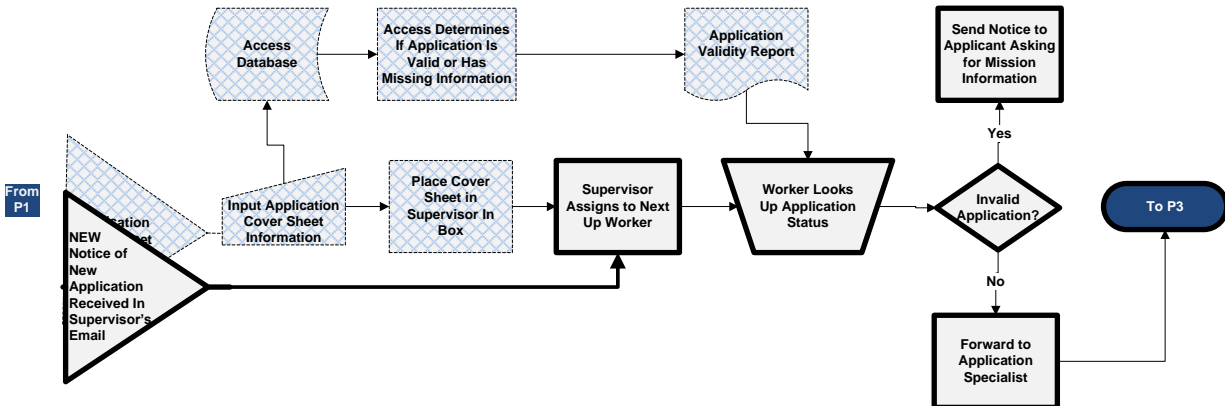
### 2.4. Perform a Gap Analysis

2.4.1. Superimpose the As Is and To Be charts to determine adjustments/redesigns necessary to implement the new process flows

2.4.2. Create a master flowchart and/or swim lane graphics to illustrate before and after processes

- Strikeout As Is processes that will no longer be performed, superimpose the new process *instead*; change description of old to accord with the new processes
  - ✓ See example below. Keep it simple and intuitive.

### P2 – Clear Application for Review



2.4.3. Conduct business area overlap meetings to confirm agreement between cross organizational inputs and outputs.

- Units within organizations tend to operate vertically instead of horizontally, while processes tend to occur horizontally rather than vertically. This often leads to “cracks” in processes, duplication of effort, errors and omissions. Overlap meetings help uncover these issues and help eliminate surprises.

2.4.4. Review and obtain buy-in from key stakeholders and subject matter experts.

2.4.5. Use outcome as input for development of training and new procedures manuals.

### 2.5. Finalize Job/Workflow impact

2.5.1. Identify impacts by stakeholder group, individuals or entities impacted

2.5.2. Create map of impacts to individuals, or positions

2.5.3. Identify the new or revised position or workflow task

2.5.4. Show the skill(s) required for successfully completing the task

2.5.5. Indicate if impacted people possess the required skills if the task involves different skills that they may not have

2.5.6. List the type of training required if re-training or knowledge transfer is an option

### 3. PLAN FOR CHANGE

The change plan describes the detailed steps for moving the organization from where it is to the future state. A significant aspect of planning for implementation is developing strategies to help people adjust to the change. This involves recognizing the concerns people have as the change unfolds, and taking steps to support people as they adapt to the change.

Assessing systems impacts and human concerns also helps identify temporary systems needed to keep the organization running smoothly while working toward the future state. Ultimately, all systems will need to be aligned with the change.

There are two major tasks in this phase

- Align to support the new ways of working
- Create the Change Plan

#### 3.1. Align support for the new ways of working

3.1.1. Identify specific needs and design mechanisms to support them:

- How will the organization ensure that information is accessible and that communication is flowing in conjunction with the change?
- Will performance management systems need to be modified?
- Are the current work space and physical environment conducive to the change?
- What interim or parallel process will be needed to prevent disruptions as the new system is rolled in?

3.1.2. Assess Systems Impacts

- Work processes and procedures
- Policies and delegations of authority
- Communication systems
- Human resource management
- Equipment
- Facilities and space

3.1.3. Develop Implementation Strategies

- Identify and spotlight positive impacts
- Develop solutions to negative impacts
- Assess areas where systems realignment is needed

3.1.4. Create ways to modify current systems to support the desired change.

3.1.5. Establish mechanisms to track systems impacts as the change is implemented

### 3.2. Create the Change Plan

3.2.1. Establish the Implementation Management Structure

- Create a WBS
- Create an actionable project management plan and schedule the plan
  - ✓ Actions to be taken
  - ✓ Persons responsible
  - ✓ Resources needed
  - ✓ A detailed timeline
  - ✓ A strategy for monitoring the plan
  - ✓ Associate desired outcomes to project milestones/phases
  - ✓ Develop tracking device for prioritized outcomes

3.2.2. Walk through new or revamped work procedures with key supervisors and SMEs to identify probable problems and opportunities:

- Different behaviors or groups of behaviors
- Shortcuts, streamlining, cost-cutting
- New applications of existing hardware or software

3.2.3. Design Training

- Develop curricula and means of delivery
- Create training materials
- Create the training schedule
- Consider the number of people who can be diverted from the job at one time
- Determine the optimum length of the classes or other training delivery mechanisms, such as self-paced training
- Build in training room availability and needed equipment from the start
- Determine if there are overlapping situations – from outside audits, to lockdowns, that must be accommodated
- Assure the training schedule does not overlap other IT and/or business process initiatives

- Plan to minimize impact upon operations
- Create on-line and self-paced training
- Provide for backup training for those who missed the original training, are new, or feel a need for a refresher.
- Develop measures of training effectiveness:
- Positive feedback from customers.

### 3.2.4. Develop the CM Master Guide

- Compile the schedule level of participation from employees, change and training descriptions, workflow, and job description changes into one document that is the one place to go for the correct scope, direction, and timeline for the change.
- Include required project management plan components, most specifically schedule management, cost management, communications management, and change control processes.



### 4. IMPLEMENT THE CHANGE

Effective implementation depends on regularly monitoring the impact of the change on the work and on the people. Assessing impacts and results both during and after implementation:

- Allows course corrections to be made as necessary
- Provides significant learning for future change efforts
- Gives the organization the opportunity to target early successes that serve to motivate and reinforce new behaviors.

The importance of leadership from the Steering Committee increases after the change is underway. The implementation team and leaders at all levels need to:

- Keep the plans on track.
- Continue to articulate the vision.
- Reinforce new behaviors and processes
- Continue Two-Way Communication
- Encourage Creativity and Risk-Taking
- Check Results
- Continuously Align Systems

#### 4.1. Continue Two-Way Communication

- 4.1.1. Complete a survey of communication effectiveness during prior phases
- 4.1.2. Determine if the Communication Plan is being fully pursued
- 4.1.3. Revise and/or develop new communication mediums, messages, and timeframes

#### 4.2. Encourage Creativity and Risk-Taking

- 4.2.1. Walk through new or revamped work procedures, products or services at each institutions and HQ to refine plans to meet local realities.
- 4.2.2. Develop shortcuts, streamlining, and other solutions as short term solutions.
- 4.2.3. Work with organizational units and people to help them understand how the new applications will impact them

### 4.3. Align change processes with system implementation processes

- 4.3.1. Work with the project managers to assure that the CM plans align with the IT project implementation plans, including: system help and support processes, response to problems in the newly implemented systems, change control and release dates for system updates

### 4.4. Check Results

- 4.4.1. Employ plans in place from the design phase to evaluate:
- Goals
  - Ongoing Data Collection Strategies
  - Communication and Feedback Strategies
  - Action Plans to correct or follow up on identified areas of concern.

### IN CONCLUSION

If this paper leaves you thinking you are ready for managing the people side of projects, then it has overshot its mark. Office and organizational politics, external events, the toll of time and changing landscape of key project participants combine with any number of other pitfalls to discover the point in your planning you are the least prepared.

But that's OK. In a very real sense, every project plan is both a forward and backward looking document. Looking forward, the plan is a step-by-step cookbook of things to do and produce. But looking backward, it can show where you meant to go, and help explain why you wound up in a different place, but still good place, instead.

This is one of the most important strengths of planning. Ultimately users accept work changes they feel are inevitable. But they have also seen many grand designs fail in the implementation. Given the inevitability of project "wandering" along the way, the project plan is the main communication vehicle for showing that progress is still being made, the changes will still be implemented. In short, plans are as much psychological expressions of the credibility of a project effort as they are a step-by-step cookbook of what to do.

And what plan does the organization outside of the project team see? The CM plan. As they say, "build it and they will come..."