



## PMO Building Block 5: Successful Change Leadership

### *Creating Change Advocacy in Your Organization*



Change management is essentially about three things: The project, the people and the people. What does that mean? The project is about the work that needs to get accomplished. Essentially, we are talking about the scope. Getting this work done, by the way, is also about the people. For any project to be successful, you need that talent we discussed earlier driving the changes within the organization and they must bring along those stakeholders that are a part of the change.

Secondly, successful change management is about the people side of change. That means that we must have a good change management strategy in place that looks at what needs to change (the project) and how that change is going to be implemented (through



the people). There are many methodologies out there that help you figure out how to create a great change strategy. One of my favorites is Prosci's change management methodology.

Above all, though, it's about the people. What do I mean here? I am talking about the sponsorship of your change. The number one reason that change initiatives fail or succeed can be clearly tied back to how active and engaged the sponsors are on the change initiative. Sound, right? Think back to any change projects you were a part of or are a part of right now. Are your sponsors engaged? Are they asking the right questions about how they can help and removing barriers for you to be successful? If not, you are going to feel like you are pushing a boulder up a hill with others simultaneously pushing it back down the hill. Why is that? Because they are!

Change is tough. Not everyone is going to be onboard with the changes you are creating in the organization via your PMO. So, what do you do?

First, you start with change agents.

Following the principles outlined in hiring the right change agents in your PMO, you should be on your way to solving for the PMO as change agents. They are the champions for change and the ones driving the changes within the organization. Once you've got them on board, you then focus on those that are likely to work with you to drive change within the organization. They are the stakeholders on the project that are eager to roll up their sleeves and help. They are activists for the change and they are vocal about wanting to see progress. **LEVERAGE THEM.**

These groups of change agents in your PMO and across the organization can be organized and leveraged in a way that lets them provide a leadership from the bottom up approach. Work with their passion and give them the information they need to act as vocal supporters of the changes you are creating within your organization. You should also empower them to hold others in your organization accountable for the change they need to participate in. Leading by example and asking the right questions is a quick way to get the positive reinforcement your change initiative will need.

Secondly, you must engage your sponsors.

This is a big one. I remember being relatively new to an organization and watching what happens when sponsors don't know how to engage. I was hired to build a PMO, but before I was there, they had hired several program managers and said, "OK, now you are a PMO". They brought me in to help teach these program managers how to "be program managers" and to build a PMO to manage some transformational change the company was about to undertake. I quickly observed that, yes, the PMs did need some education, but you know who was really in need of some training? The sponsors.



No one had taken the time to explain to them their role in the changes they were responsible for implementing. They would stare at the PM in a sponsor update and just wait for the PM to report on and then provide solutions for the problems they were facing. So, one of my first and most important acts was to pull all these sponsors together and teach them what it meant to be a sponsor. They need to feel responsible for the changes because, oh by the way, they are responsible for the changes! They are the business unit leaders that are supposed to be creating change in their organizations. They are leveraging the PMO as a facilitator of that change, but they are ultimately accountable. Help them learn this and tie this accountability to their professional success and you will be on your way. Look for a separate article specifically on the roles and responsibilities of a sponsor in coming months!

Once you have educated your sponsors, you must keep them actively engaged. You do this by giving them access to all the information they need on a regular basis to make educated and informed decisions, remove barriers, and champion the change. When you give them this information, you then tell them what they need to act on and the impact of any decisions they make. This will help them accomplish a shared objective. You will make them look good while they are getting done what you need to get done for the changes to be successful. As they are driving results, they are now seen as someone that can make real change happen in the organization and, oh by the way, they are becoming a huge advocate of the PMO in the process...everyone likes someone that makes them look good.



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Warmly,



Founder & CEO, PMO Strategies