



Building great executive sponsorship

Prosci and the Change Management Learning Center are proud to present this four-part tutorial series focused on building great executive sponsorship for your change projects. The first tutorial provided the research foundation for the importance of sponsors and looked at three common failure points when creating great executive sponsorship. The second tutorial shared five steps that will help your team avoid the common executive sponsorship failure points and enable your team to acquire the right level of sponsorship to support your project. This tutorial provides the action steps, including a template and checklist, you need to coach your executive sponsor throughout the change.

Once you have your executive sponsor onboard, your work is not done. You are responsible for making sure that your executive sponsor remains active and visible throughout the **entire project**. Your job is to coach the executive sponsor on the who, what, when, where and why of their sponsor activities. You are the enabler; the executive sponsor is the actor. In order to do this, you will need to create a sponsor roadmap.

The sponsor roadmap clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the primary sponsor at each phase of the project. It shows the key activities and responsibilities of your primary sponsor and other business leaders who are needed to support the change. It is organized by phase of the project. One of the key roles of the change management team is to create identifiable actions that senior managers can do to sponsor the change. Below are the action steps for the change management team:

1. Prepare a plan for your primary sponsor using the template and checklist provided in this section.
2. Provide the primary sponsor with this plan and sponsor checklists for each stage of the change for their review (Planning and start-up checklist is included below). Each checklist should be organized by the target audience (project team, sponsors, employees) and timing (planning and start-up, design, implementation) for the

change.

3. Facilitate and assist the sponsor in completing the sponsor plan and completing items on the checklist. The change management team will be an ongoing aide to the primary sponsor to:

- provide support to the project team
- develop management sponsorship with critical sponsors and the leadership team
- provide direction and create awareness with employees

Primary sponsor plan template

Note: the change management team should view their role with the primary sponsor similar to that of an executive assistant that schedules events, prepares for the event, prepares the sponsor and facilitates the successful outcome of each activity.

Target group	Activity	Date/Time	Notes
with the project team			
with executive managers and sponsors			
with employees			

Primary sponsor checklist

Timing: planning and start-up

Audience: project team

- Select the best project leader and team members; include resources with change management expertise.
- Provide necessary funding for the team, including training for all team members on change management.
- Set priorities related to day-to-day work vs. project work to allow adequate team member participation.
- Help the team understand the critical business issues or opportunities that must be addressed; provide clear direction and objectives for the project; describe what success will look like.
- Be directly involved with the project team; set expectations; review key deliverables and remove obstacles; take ownership for success of the project and hold the team accountable for results.

Audience: sponsors

- Enlist the support of executive managers and create a support network; create change advocates within the leadership team.
- Create a steering committee of key sponsors to monitor progress.
- Educate senior managers about the business drivers for change and the risks of not changing.
- Work directly with managers who show early signs of resistance. Provide training on change management for senior managers.

- Establish change activities that the leadership group is responsible for completing.
- Define accountabilities for mid-level managers.

Audience: employees

- Communicate with employees.
- Be proactive, vocal and visible; communicate frequently, including face-to-face.
- Listen and be open to dialogue and resistance.
- Tell employees what they can expect to happen and when.
- Understand the organizational culture and beliefs.
- Repeat key messages over and over again.
- Share plans with customers and suppliers.
- Show project milestones and provide progress updates.

Summary

As a project team or change management team, your efforts in building executive sponsorship are as important as any other task you will complete. Your role is to coach the executive sponsor and make sure he or she remains active and visible throughout the entire project.

Overwhelmingly, the greatest contributor to project success is effective and strong executive sponsorship that remains active and visible throughout the project ([Best Practices in Change Management Report](#), page 7). For a complete set of sponsor templates and checklists, please see the [Change Management Toolkit](#) (hardcopy) or [Change Management Pilot](#) (online version).

Resource guide

Benchmarking Reports and Toolkits

Best Practices in Change Management:

288 companies share experiences in managing change and lesson on how to build great executive sponsorship. Includes success factors, methodology, role of top management, communications, team structure and more. The report makes it easy to learn change management best practices and discover the mistakes to avoid when creating executive sponsorship.

Change Management Toolkit:

a comprehensive change management process, including templates, worksheets, assessments, checklists and guidelines - a *must have* for change management team members and consultants.

Change Management Guide for Managers and Supervisors: a guide specifically designed for managers and supervisors dealing with change - complete with team and individual coaching activities, best practices findings and frequently asked questions.

Online tools

Change Management Pilot: a fully electronic version of Prosci's popular change management toolkit with templates, worksheets, assessments, checklists, eLearning modules, ready-to-use presentations and guidelines.

Change Management Pilot Professional: a fully electronic version that combines the Change Management Pilot with the Change Management Guide for Managers and Supervisors and Employee's Survival Guide - a combination that allows you to reach **each level** of the organization.

Books and Resources to distribute

Change Management: the people side of change: a solid foundation in change management perspectives, theories, activities and practices.

Employee's Survival Guide to Change: answers questions most employees are unwilling to ask and uncovers what it takes to survive and thrive in today's changing workplace. Employees will learn the ADKAR model and become effective change agents, instead of difficult change barriers.

Executive team training

Prosci provides customized executive training. Please call 970-203-9332 for more details.