



Prosci's **Sponsorship Checklist** draws from benchmarking research with over 900 participants and the feedback and input of hundreds of training participants. The checklist can be used as an audit tool to see if you are utilizing best practices when getting senior leaders involved. The [Change Management Toolkit](#) and online [Change Management Pilot](#) include complete guidelines and templates for creating effective sponsorship coalitions and plans. Contact one of Prosci's change management analysts at 970-203-9332 or [changemanagement@prosci.com](mailto:changemanagement@prosci.com) for more information.

### Prosci's Sponsorship Checklist

☐	<b>Are your sponsors aware of the importance they play in making changes successful?</b>
Prosci conducted change management benchmarking studies in 1998, 2000, 2003 and 2005. The number one response by participants when asked what was the greatest overall contributor to project success in each of the four studies was <i>active and visible sponsorship</i> .	
☐	<b>Do your sponsors know their three biggest roles in supporting organizational change?</b>
Prosci's 2005 Best Practices in Change Management benchmarking report revealed three key roles for senior leaders: 1) Participate actively and visibly throughout the project; 2) Build a coalition of sponsorship with managers and peers; and 3) Communicate effectively with employees. In this study, nearly 50% of participants ranked their sponsor as having a moderate to poor understanding of their role.	
☐	<b>Are your sponsors active and visible throughout the project?</b>
The first key role of sponsors has several components. The first component is <i>active and visible</i> . Effective sponsors cannot stand on the 'side-lines' - they must be involved in more than just signing their names on the project charter. The second is <i>throughout the project</i> . Sponsors must stay engaged, from the beginning when a project is launched clear through the end when the project is completed and transitioned over as 'business as usual'. Effective sponsors cannot disappear or remain in the background.	
☐	<b>Are your sponsors building the coalitions that are needed for the change to be successful?</b>
The second role of sponsors relates to how they interact with the other leaders necessary to make changes successful. In the Prosci change management methodology, a sponsor diagram is drawn to show which other business leaders and managers are need for the change to be successful. The primary sponsor must build relationships and commitment with these other key leaders.	
☐	<b>Are your sponsors communicating directly and effectively with employees?</b>
The sponsors of change are one of the two preferred senders of communication messages. Your sponsors need to directly communicate with employees about the business reasons for change, risks of not changing and why the change is happening now.	
☐	<b>Do your sponsors know that the biggest mistake cited by study participants was failing to personally engage as the sponsor of change?</b>
Participants in the 2005 study cited a failure to engage personally - including not participating through the entire project, abdicating their role to lower level managers or the project team and failing to communicate the reasons for change with immediate employees. Project teams face tremendous difficulties when they have a sponsor who does not personally engage in the change.	
☐	<b>Is your sponsor prepared to manage resistance?</b>
Managing resistance is a key role of senior leaders, managers and supervisors. Your sponsor needs to be prepared and ready to deal with resistance in the organization - especially from other senior and mid-level managers. As a change manager in the organization, you will need to coach senior leaders on how to identify the root causes of resistance and how to engage and manage resistance when it happens.	
☐	<b>Is your sponsor prepared to celebrate successes?</b>
Celebrating successes - even small, short-term successes - is an important part in building support and momentum for your changes. Sponsors play a key role in recognizing employees both publicly and privately.	
☐	<b>Is your sponsor setting clear priorities regarding this initiative, other initiatives and day-to-day work?</b>
Sponsors influence priorities through their behaviors, actions and the communications they send. Sponsors must show both their own and the organization's commitment to a change if they expect employees throughout the organization to become engaged.	
☐	<b>Is your sponsor avoiding the 'flavor of the month' syndrome?</b>
'Flavor of the month' describes a situation where organizations are constantly introducing and abandoning initiatives - in essence they have a short attention span. A 'flavor of the month' situation where new initiatives are being launched every month and not being followed through creates a very difficult background for creating any meaningful change. In the organization, sponsors are responsible for launching new initiatives and ensuring that new projects are not just the next 'flavor'.	

The contents of the checklist are based on Prosci's **2005 Best Practices in Change Management** benchmarking report and the Prosci change management methodology, which is available in the hardcopy **Change Management Toolkit** or the online **Change Management Pilot**. Email a change management analyst at [changemanagement@prosci.com](mailto:changemanagement@prosci.com) or call 970-203-9332 for more information. You can find out more about the products at [www.change-management.com/bookstore.htm](http://www.change-management.com/bookstore.htm).