



Change Implementers – Questions to Ask Sponsors

- What:** Implementers are most effective when they listen, inquire, and clarify their questions and concerns with their Sponsor at the beginning of a change initiative
- Use this tool to guide your initial discussions with your Executive or Sustaining Sponsor. Use it to determine:
- what is involved in the change initiative
 - what will be expected of you
 - what you sponsor will do to support you to achieve success
- When:** If you've been asked to lead, guide or assist with a change, it's critical that you meet your Sponsor (i.e. the person who has assigned the task or asked you to take responsibility), before taking any action on the initiative. Use this tool in your first few meetings.
- Why:** Organizational change requires time, commitment, and work from many people. For implementation to succeed, it's important that roles, responsibilities and support be defined early on. You need to know exactly what's going to be expected of you and how much support you can expect.
- How:** Use the questions below (not all will apply) to structure your initial discussions. As you do, keep in mind that the answers you get from the sponsor should reflect their behind-the-scenes role.



Questions to Ask Sponsor about the Change:

- What is driving the change effort?
- How does this change tie in with the organization's objectives?
- What is your vision of this change? What do you see changing?
- Is this part of a larger change initiative? If so, how does it fit in to that larger effort?
- What is the current situation?
- What is the time frame for this change?
- Where does this change fit into the list of organizational priorities? On your list of priorities?
- Who (else) is driving the change effort?
- What is their level of support for the change?

About expectations/results:

- What results does the organization expect from this initiative?
- What are the consequences if this change doesn't occur?
- Describe the outcomes:
 - What organizational payoffs do you see in this?
 - What benefits do you see for individuals?
 - How will results be measured?
- About Your Role as the Implementer:
 - Why was I chosen for this?
 - To whom am I accountable?
 - What do you expect from me?
 - What authority do I have?
 - What additional authority do I need?
 - What other factors do I need to consider?

About the Sponsor's Role:

- What role do you plan to play as the sponsor? (Active? behind-the-scenes?)
- What kind of ongoing communication do you want or need?
- What support will you provide?
- How committed are you to making this change?
- What resources are you willing to commit?
- What concerns do you have?
- Are you open to receiving feedback on what you are doing to aid the change effort?

About Support/Resources:

- What ideas do you have for the best ways to achieve this change?
- What resources are available?
- Who else relies on those resources?
- What kind of access to people and information will we have?
- What information/data exists that supports the change?
- What kind of information do we need?
- What help do you think I'll need from you?
- What help will I need from others?
- What is the budget for this?

About People:

- Who are the stakeholders in this change?
- Whose support is it particularly important to get?
- What suggestions do you have for the best ways to get that support?