



Sponsor Evaluation

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Research and experience from ODR[®]

Introduction

When an organization decides to initiate a change that affects its people, methods, or products, or when the organization is faced with adjusting to an unanticipated change due to outside forces, four roles are critical:

Change Sponsor

The individual or group who legitimizes the change.

Change Agent

The individual or group who is responsible for implementing the change.

Change Target

The individual or group who must actually change.

Change Advocate

The individual or group who wants to achieve a change but does not possess legitimization power.

For an organizational change of any consequence to be successfully implemented, the sponsors must demonstrate strong, decisive commitment to the project. Strong commitment is vital to ensure that the agents and targets are effective. The **Sponsor Evaluation** (SE) is designed to assess sponsor commitment for a specific change project. Low levels of sponsor commitment will increase the risk of implementation failure. The SE can be used:

When

- While organizational change is being considered or during initial planning.
- Before the change has been announced.
- Anytime after the announcement has been made.
- After project implementation is complete.

Why

- To provide early warning for potential commitment problems and possible implementation failure.
- To determine sponsor commitment toward the change.
- To analyze possible fluctuations in commitment during the implementation process.
- To identify sponsor commitment that was generated after implementation.

Instructions

The following 15 items reflect the key components of sponsor commitment. Each item has a scale from 1 to 10, with “1” indicating high sponsor commitment and “10” indicating low sponsor commitment. Place a check mark above the number that reflects your assessment of your sponsor’s commitment.

Sponsor Evaluation

1. How dissatisfied is the sponsor with the way things are?

The sponsor...

is dissatisfied with the way things are now.

is satisfied with the way things are now.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

2. Are the sponsor’s goals for the change clear?

The sponsor...

has a clear definition of what should be changed.

does not have a clear definition of what should be changed.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

3. Does the sponsor believe that there is a real need for the change?

The sponsor...

believes that this change needs to occur.

does not believe that this change needs to occur.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

4. Does the sponsor understand the long-term impact the change will have on the organization?

The sponsor...

understands the long-term impact this change will have on the organization.

has little, if any, understanding of the long-term impact this change will have on the organization.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

5. Does the sponsor understand what people are being asked to change about the way they operate?

The sponsor...

understands what people are being asked to change about the way they operate.

does not understand what people are being asked to change about the way they operate.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

6. Does the sponsor understand how many people or groups will be affected by the change?

The sponsor...

understands the size of the group affected by this change.

does not understand the size of the group affected by this change.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

7. Does the sponsor understand what resources are needed for the change to be successful?

The sponsor...

understands the resources (e.g., time, training, money, access to people) that are needed for this change to be successful.

does not understand the resources that are needed for this change to be successful.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

8. Is the sponsor willing to commit the resources needed for the change to succeed?

The sponsor...

is willing to commit the resources needed for the change project to succeed.

is not willing to commit the resources needed for the change project to succeed.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

9. Does the sponsor publicly convey the organization's strong commitment to the change?

The sponsor...

displays the type of public support needed to convey strong organizational commitment to the change.

does not display the type of public support needed to convey strong organizational commitment to the change.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

10. Is the sponsor willing to meet privately with individuals or groups to convey strong personal support for the change?

The sponsor...

will meet privately with individuals or groups to convey strong personal support for the change.

will not meet privately with individuals or groups to convey strong personal support for the change.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

11. Will the sponsor use rewards and pressures to gain support for the change?

The sponsor...

will reward those who support the change process or express displeasure with those who resist the change.

will not reward those who support the change process or express displeasure with those who resist the change.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

12. Will the sponsor ensure that procedures to track progress and problems are established?

The sponsor...

will ensure that procedures are established to track progress or problems that occur during the change process.

will not ensure that procedures are established to track progress or problems that occur during the change process.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

13. Is the sponsor aware of the prices that must be paid for the change to succeed?

The sponsor...

is aware that personal, political, or organizational prices may be required to implement the change.

is unaware that personal, political, or organizational prices may be required to implement the change.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

14. Is the sponsor willing to make sacrifices to ensure the success of the project?

The sponsor...

will sacrifice for the project, even if the costs are high.

will not sacrifice for the project if the costs are too high.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

15. Will the sponsor show consistent, sustained support for the change?

The sponsor...

will show consistent, sustained support for the change and reject any course of action that is inconsistent with the change process.

will not show consistent, sustained support for the change or reject courses of action that are inconsistent with the change process.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

I. Scoring

Step 1: Total your responses to all items.

Step 2: Divide the total by 15.

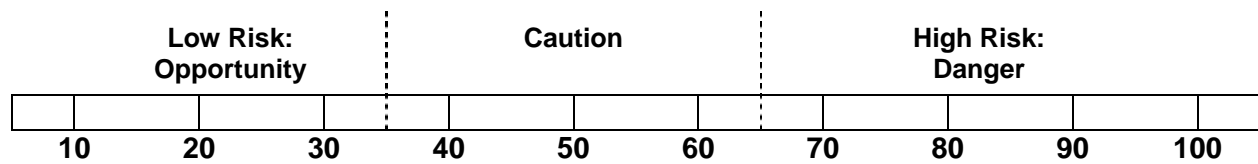
Step 3: Multiply the result by 10 to determine your Sponsor Factor.

$$\frac{\text{Total}}{15} \times 10 = \text{Sponsor Factor}$$

$$\frac{\quad}{15} \times 10 = \quad \text{Sponsor Factor}$$

II. Interpretation of Results: Overall Sponsor Factor

The Sponsor Factor reflects the risk of implementation failure of a project. The higher the factor, *the greater the risk of implementation failure.*



Level of Risk

High Risk: Danger (66 and above)

Most change projects with a Sponsor Factor score in this range fail to achieve full implementation. The only exception is when the sponsor does not consider the change to be a significant alteration of the status quo (i.e., the change is minor). However, change that is significantly disruptive or potentially threatening must always have a degree of sponsorship well above this range. The three options you have with Sponsor Factor scores in this range are:

- **Strengthen Sponsorship**

Use this instrument as an educational tool to help sponsors better understand and value the critical nature of their role.

- **Identify Alternative Sponsorship**

If it is not possible to strengthen the existing sponsor support, identify some other person or group with the power to legitimize the change and secure their agreement to serve as the sponsor.

- **Prepare to Fail**

Without strengthened or new sponsorship, the probability of successful implementation is low. Faced with these circumstances, the agent should consider aborting the change project or significantly altering the objectives so that new perspectives on the issue(s) can develop. If, for political reasons, there is pressure to continue the project without these alterations, preparations should be made to deal with the problems that will arise when the project fails to produce intended results.

Moderate Risk: Caution (35 to 65)

Partial or tentative support from sponsors does not always result in implementation failure, but it does increase the chances of failure. It certainly means implementation is more complicated. A Sponsor Factor score in this range should alert you to the following possibilities:

- The sponsor may have an intellectual commitment to the change but fails to grasp the full meaning of what is necessary for successful implementation.
- The sponsor's support for the change could deteriorate rapidly and with little warning.
- A significant amount of time and effort will need to be invested in sponsor education and maintenance.

Low Risk: Opportunity (10 to 34)

Sponsorship should never be taken for granted, but scores in this range generally indicate that the sponsor commitment is at the level necessary for successful change implementation. Although the overall score is positive, any item with a score of “3” or more should not be ignored. Items scored at more than “3” are often problem areas requiring special attention.

III. Interpretation of Results: Individual Items

Plot the score for each characteristic on the grid below and connect the dots with a line.

| Characteristics | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Dissatisfaction | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Goals | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Need | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Organizational Impact | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Human Impact | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Scope | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Resources | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Resource Commitment | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Sponsor's Public Role | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Sponsor's Private Role | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Consequence Management | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. Monitoring Activities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. Awareness of Sacrifice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Commitment to Sacrifice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. Sustained Support | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| | I | | | II | | | III | | | |
| | Low Risk: Opportunity | | | Caution | | | High Risk: Danger | | | |

Category I: Low Risk—Opportunity Range. Any item in this range indicates a high level of sponsor commitment and a positive prognosis for successful implementation

Category II: Caution Range. Any item in this range indicates a moderate level of sponsor commitment and a guarded prognosis for successful implementation.

Category III: High Risk—Danger Range. Any item in this range indicates a low level of sponsor commitment and a negative prognosis for successful implementation.