



Contract for Sponsor-Agent Working Relationship

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The Importance of Setting Expectations

Sponsor-Agent Contracting

The sponsor-agent relationship is central to the success of any change initiative. The most effective way to guarantee both individuals are in a position to perform their roles effectively is to select people who have the skills to do their job and then ensure they have time to discuss and clarify expectations about how they are going to work together. Some of the issues relevant to this discussion are:

- Critical tasks each person is expected to perform.
- When and how communication will take place and the extent to which each will give the other feedback on his or her performance.
- Specifically how each will tell the other when his or her actions are inhibiting or facilitating the implementation process.
- How bad news will be delivered to the sponsor or the agent.
- The proportion of the sponsor's and agent's time that will be devoted to the initiative.

The following questions are designed to facilitate this kind of exchange of expectations.

Contract for Sponsor-Agent Working Relationship

Sponsor: _____

Agent: _____

Date: _____

1. What is the change initiative that requires the sponsor and the agent to work together?

2. What is the intended duration of the sponsor-agent relationship?

3. What level of importance does the sponsor place on the use of the Change Execution Methodology within the organization?

4. What specific duties and activities will the sponsor be accountable for, and how do these link to the installation and realization goals? (See Appendix A.)

5. What specific duties and activities will the agent be accountable for, and how do these link to the installation and realization goals? (See Appendix B.)

6. What kind of access will the sponsor and the agent have to each other (e.g., when, how often, how)?

7. What expectations do the sponsor and the agent have about giving and receiving feedback regarding each other's performance?

8. It should be the agent's responsibility to be specific with the sponsor when his or her actions are inhibiting the implementation process. When and how should this occur?

9. If the agent reports to someone other than the sponsor, how will this relationship affect the sponsor and the agent working together?

10. What proportion of the agent's time is to be devoted to activities related to the change initiative?

11. How will this additional responsibility affect the agent's current job duties?

12. What existing tasks may be delegated, transferred, modified, etc. so the agent can pay proper attention to activities related to the change initiative?

13. How will the agent's activities related to the change initiative be addressed in his or her performance rating?

14. How can the sponsor ensure that the agent's supervisor will be supportive of his or her activities related to the change initiative?

15. If the agent performs his or her role well, what form of currency* will be used to reward success?

*Possible currencies for rewarding an agent include money, appreciation, recognition, promotion, respect, publicity, and/or assignment to another important change initiative.

Appendix A

Role Definitions During Change

Initiating Sponsor(s): The individual or group who strategically legitimizes implementation of a change, either within several major areas of the organization or enterprisewide. Sponsors (regardless of their level) sanction initiatives through influential communications and meaningful consequences.

Primary Sustaining Sponsor(s): The individual or group who formally sanctions the change within relevant areas of responsibility, providing a “united front” of leadership support for the endeavor and coordinating implementation activities (across functional or geographical lines, as necessary).

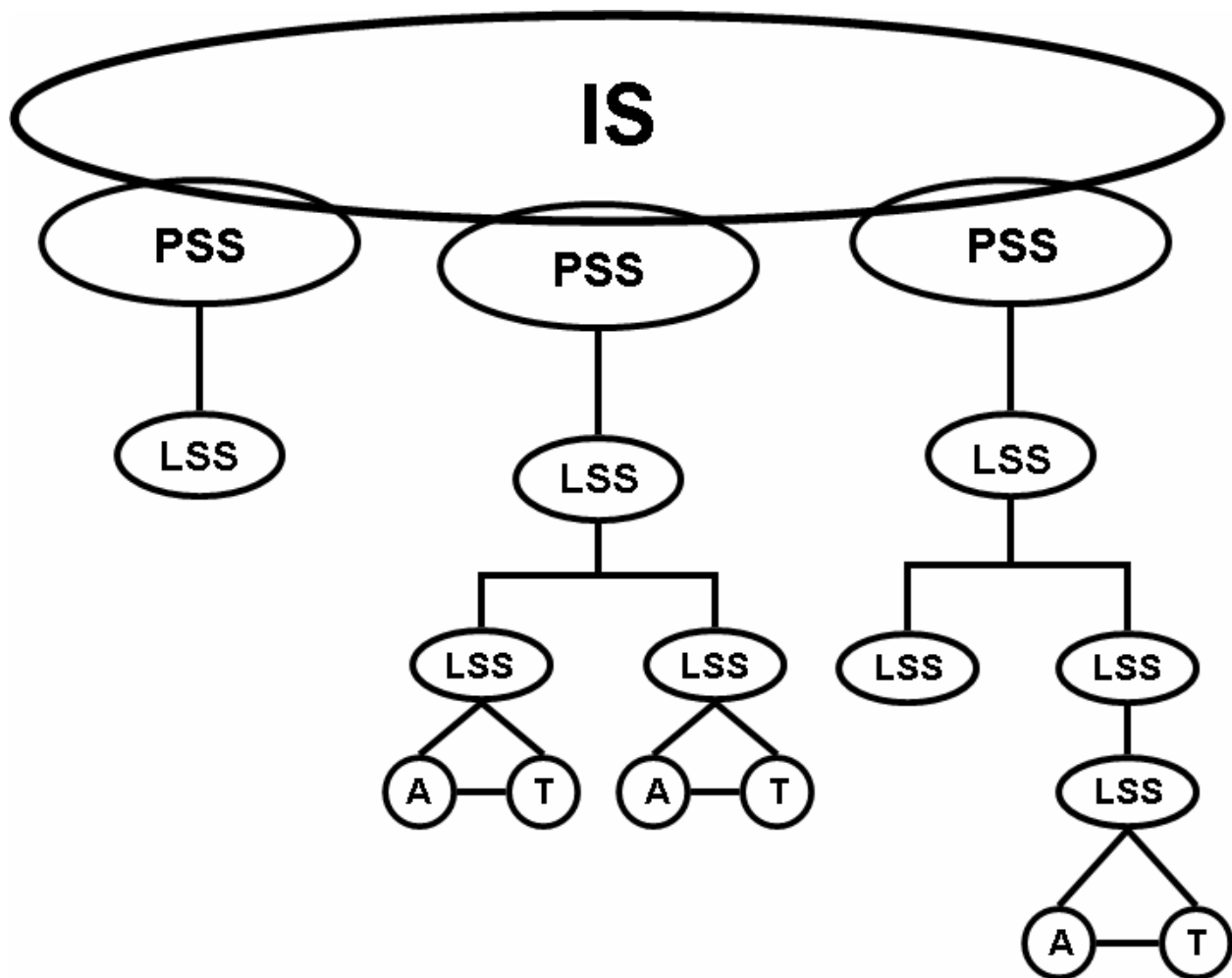
Local Sustaining Sponsor(s): The individual or group who orchestrates the communications and consequences within the relevant tactical areas of responsibility necessary to ensure successful change implementation.

Change Agent(s): The individual or group who facilitates the development and execution of the implementation plans.

Target(s): The individual or group who must actually change.

Advocate(s): The individual or group who wants to achieve a change but does not possess the necessary legitimization power.

Relationships Among Key Roles in the Change Process



Legend

| | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| IS | = Initiating Sponsor |
| PSS | = Primary Sustaining Sponsor |
| LSS | = Local Sustaining Sponsor |
| A | = Change Agent |
| T | = Target |

Initiating Sponsor's Duties During a Business-Imperative Change Initiative

1. Engage the proper due diligence to ensure you believe the price for the status quo is prohibitively high and that "realization" of the endeavor is the best option available.
2. Recognize the short- and long-term impact the change will have on the entire organization.
3. Be aware of the political and/or organizational prices to be paid in implementing the change properly, and be willing to make personal sacrifices to ensure its success.
4. Demonstrate consistent, sustained support for the change, and reject any course of action that is inconsistent with the initiative's overall success.
5. Find various ways that fit your leadership style to demonstrate to your direct reports (and others throughout the organization) the focus, persistence, and tenacity you are willing to apply toward the success of this effort.
6. Assign direct accountability to Primary Sustaining Sponsors for ensuring the endeavor's success in their area(s) of responsibility and across functional and/or geographical lines, as necessary.
7. Be unwavering in your conviction that realization of this change is essential to the organization's success, and convince Primary Sustaining Sponsors that achieving the full intent of the initiative is non-negotiable.
8. Require that Primary Sustaining Sponsors apply discipline and structure to addressing the human/cultural aspects as well as the logistical components of implementing the change.
9. Ensure that Primary Sustaining Sponsors are able and willing to properly perform their roles.
10. Understand the general time frame and budget implications of the change, and be prepared to provide the resources that are necessary to safeguard the success of the initiative.
11. Be willing to engage in the personal actions necessary to convey to people at all levels how critical the initiative is to the organization, including:
 - Providing frequent and effective communication, clearly stating that "installation" of the change is unacceptable—nothing short of full "realization" will be satisfactory.
 - Providing not only public endorsement of the change, but also private encouragement and pressure, as needed, for its successful implementation.
 - If necessary, altering, slowing down, or terminating other change initiatives that compete for attention or resources.
 - Requiring frequent status reports from Primary Sustaining Sponsors.
 - Applying positive and/or negative consequences to Primary Sustaining Sponsors to ensure success.
12. Be vigilant about recognizing and capitalizing on the small daily interactions, interpretations, and decisions that will not only increase the initiative's chance of success, but also teach others how to behave in ways that are consistent with the true intent of the change.
13. Select, properly charter, and effectively utilize one or more change agents to assist you in carrying out your sponsor role.
14. Understand that this change may require you to both alter some of your own perspectives and behaviors and be the senior-level Initiating Sponsor for the entire effort.

Primary Sustaining Sponsor's Duties During a Business-Imperative Change Initiative

1. Align with your Initiating Sponsor(s) and demonstrate your personal belief (or the attitudes and actions consistent with the belief) that “realization” of this endeavor is the best option for going forward.
2. Recognize the short- and long-term impact the change will have on your part of the organization, and help your direct reports do the same.
3. Be aware of the political and/or organizational prices to be paid in implementing the change properly, and be willing to make personal sacrifices to ensure its success in your respective area.
4. Demonstrate consistent, sustained support for the change in your part of the organization, and reject any course of action that is inconsistent with the implementation process.
5. Find various ways that fit your leadership style to demonstrate to your direct reports and others the focus, persistence, and tenacity you are willing to apply toward the success of this effort.
6. Assign direct accountability to Local Sustaining Sponsors for ensuring the endeavor's success in their tactical area(s) of responsibility.
7. Look for ways to demonstrate your belief that the price for the status quo is prohibitively high, and convince the Local Sustaining Sponsors in your area that achieving the goals of the initiative is non-negotiable.
8. Ensure that your Local Sustaining Sponsors are able and willing to properly perform their roles.
9. Understand the time frame, impact on key personnel, and budget implications of the change in your area, and be prepared to provide the resources that are necessary to safeguard the success of the initiative.
10. Understand and be willing to engage in the personal actions necessary to convey to others in your part of the organization just how critical the initiative is, including:
 - Providing frequent and effective communications, clearly stating that “installation” of the change is unacceptable—nothing short of full “realization” will be satisfactory.
 - Providing not only public endorsement of the change, but also private encouragement and pressure, as needed, for its successful implementation.
 - If necessary, altering, slowing down, or terminating other change initiatives within your area that compete for attention or resources.
 - Establishing monitoring processes to track results in each area reporting to you.
 - Using positive and/or negative consequences with your Local Sustaining Sponsors to ensure success.
11. Require from each Local Sustaining Sponsor that a:
 - Thorough investigation be completed of potential inhibitors that could endanger the initiative's success in his or her area.

- Detailed implementation plan be developed that will mitigate as much disruption as possible, prepare for the resistance that is unavoidable, and create as much of a positive outlook and commitment as can be achieved.
 - Reliable process be put in place to monitor the remaining adaptation resources of the people being affected by this initiative.
- 12.** Be vigilant about recognizing and capitalizing on the small daily interactions, interpretations, and decisions that will not only increase the initiative's chance of success, but also teach others how to behave in ways that are consistent with the true intent of the change.
 - 13.** Select, properly charter, and effectively utilize one or more change agents to assist you in carrying out your sponsor role.
 - 14.** Understand that, in all likelihood, the change will require you to both alter some of your own perspectives and behaviors and be a critical sustaining sponsor for its success in your part of the organization and across the enterprise.

Local Sustaining Sponsor's Duties During a Business-Imperative Change Initiative

1. Align with your Primary Sustaining Sponsor(s) and demonstrate your personal belief (or the attitudes and actions consistent with the belief) that "realization" of this endeavor is the best option for going forward.
2. Recognize the short-term impact the change will have on people in your area.
3. Be aware of the political and/or organizational prices to be paid in implementing the change properly, and be willing to make personal sacrifices to ensure its success in your area.
4. Demonstrate consistent, sustained support for the change in your part of the organization, and reject any course of action that is inconsistent with the implementation process.
5. Look for ways to demonstrate your belief that the price for the status quo is prohibitively high, and convince the people who work for you that achieving the objectives of the initiative is non-negotiable.
6. Determine who should function as Primary Sustaining Sponsors and key change agents within your area of responsibility, ensure that they are able and willing to properly perform their roles, and prepare targets and advocates to engage their roles successfully.
7. Understand the time frame, impact on key personnel, and budget implications of the change in your area, and be prepared to provide the resources that are necessary to safeguard the success of the initiative.
8. Be willing to engage in the personal actions necessary to convey to those who work for you just how critical the initiative is to the organization, including:
 - Generating frequent communications about the importance of the initiative.
 - Providing not only public endorsement of the change, but also private encouragement and pressure, as needed, for its successful implementation.
 - If necessary, altering, slowing down, or terminating other change initiatives that compete for attention or resources.
 - Using positive and/or negative consequences to ensure success.
 - Issuing progress reports to your sponsor(s) at key milestone points.
9. Prepare and submit to the proper Primary Sustaining Sponsor a:
 - Thorough investigation of potential inhibitors that could endanger the initiative's success in your area.
 - Detailed implementation plan that will mitigate as much disruption as possible, prepare for the resistance that is unavoidable, and create as much of a positive outlook and commitment as can be achieved.
 - Reliable process to monitor the remaining adaptation resources of the people being affected by this initiative.
10. Be vigilant about recognizing and capitalizing on the small daily interactions, interpretations, and decisions that will not only increase the initiative's chance of success, but also teach others how to behave in ways that are consistent with the true intent of the change.

- 11.** Select, properly charter, and effectively utilize one or more change agents to assist you in carrying out your sponsor role.
- 12.** Understand that you are a target for (and will be affected by) the change as well as a critical local sponsor of its success.

Appendix B

Critical Dimensions for Successful Change Agents

Effective change agents are skilled in a complex combination of characteristics that can be brought to bear on a given change initiative. Change agents should be able to:

1. **Parameters:** Work within the parameters set by the sponsor.
2. **Dynamics of Change:** Understand the psychological dynamics regarding how individuals and organizations can modify their operations as well as how these dynamics can be applied to develop and execute plans for major change efforts.
3. **Value:** Optimize their performance when value is placed on the human as well as the technical aspects of the change initiative.
4. **Differing Frames of Reference:** Identify, relate to, and respect the diverse frames of reference of sponsors and targets.
5. **Plans of Action:** Generate diagnostic data regarding the organization's resistance to change and convert this information into a coherent and usable plan of action.
6. **Synergistic Relationships:** Develop and sustain "synergistic" working relationships with and among sponsors and targets.
7. **Communicating Styles:** Select and utilize alternative styles of interpersonal communication to effectively announce the change and respond to questions.
8. **Commitment:** Continually assess the level of commitment from both sponsors and targets, and be prepared to take the necessary action to bolster faltering support.
9. **Resistance:** Address resistance to change skillfully.
10. **Power and Influence:** Utilize power dynamics and influence techniques in a manner that reflects a capacity to achieve results, a concern for ethical boundaries of behavior, and a sensitivity for human dignity.
11. **Professional:** Subordinate, when necessary, one's personal agenda, desires, and tendencies toward the change initiative so it will succeed.