

Mini-guide to being a Sponsor

Leading a major change initiative can be a challenging endeavor. However, it is also a privilege that can bring great rewards. For those who have led change initiatives before, this document may act as a helpful reminder. For newcomers stepping into the role, it may provide some useful insights on what is expected on the journey ahead.

Start by asking yourself these 4 questions

Can I give enough of myself?



Do I have what the job needs?



What should I know?



What should I focus on?



1 - Can I give enough of myself?

Two key factors emphasise the importance of this question:

- Sponsors are usually already busy business leaders with many responsibilities.
- The sponsor role is often seen as "light touch," implying minimal impact on their main job.

This combination can create an inappropriate mind-set, lulling the unaware into danger.

Some suggestions:

- Consider delegating parts of your role.
- Plan to avoid overlapping demands with activities that are already planned.
- Set aside regular time for tasks like steering groups or communications.
- Talk to the programme manager to optimise working arrangements.

2 - Do I have what the job needs?

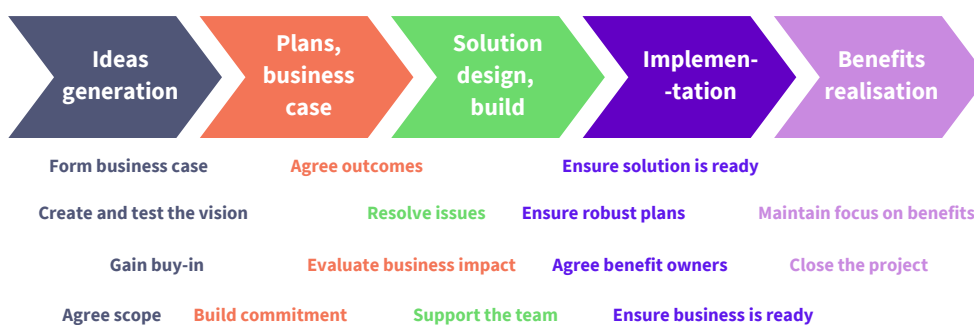
Key elements beyond time and enthusiasm include:

- A mix of influence and authority, sometimes sourced by soliciting help from others.
- Authenticity in vision, driven by passion rather than presentations.
- Commitment that motivates others to take action.

- A commercial mindset is essential since change involves complex costs, benefits, suppliers, and contracts.
- Experience is important; sponsors typically come from the relevant business area, significantly helping to confidently guide the change process.

Don't think you are alone. If there is something you struggle with, find someone who can help. Asking for help is a sign of strength.

3 - What should I focus on? It depends on where on the journey you are



A couple of examples

On a sponsors' training course we ran, one attendee said they were sponsoring 13 changes. A discussion ensued. It turned out he could only name 5 of them.

This is not sponsorship and a far cry from the true leadership demanded. What was actually happening was that he was 'nominally' reporting on 13 changes, using data gathered by others. Being a sponsor is a mission, not a title.

An issue-ridden programme got a new sponsor. He talked to key people in the team and within hours he'd rolled up his sleeves and scheduled a daily 08:30 huddle, where he focused on building the team purpose and morale, then identifying today's issues, dealing with them quickly and firmly.

The team responded, the programme was a resounding success.

4 - What should I know?

Is the vision still clear, agreed and supported?

Are the outcomes and benefits still achievable?

Is the planned solution still the right one for us?

Is governance working - supportive and challenging?

Is progress in line with the plans and budgets?

Do we have clarity over the decisions still to take?

Is the business fully engaged?

Do we know who will deliver the benefits, and when?

Is implementation being rigorously planned?

Do we know what need to go right for us to succeed?

Is delivery broken down into manageable chunks?

Is the team working well together?

Am I still the right person to sponsor this change?