

Change Leadership in Projects (The P.O.D.S. Model)

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In a project environment there should already be a plan for the physical outputs, perhaps an outcome or two, and some benefits that were in the business case to justify the expenditure and resource allocation. All too often the people engagement side and the end-user engagement is not considered until well into the project, if at all. In poorly managed projects the project manager considers his or her job finished when the physical components are complete. We are not talking about variation management here - a topic which project management texts often call change management. We are interested in how people engage with a new process and implement it to deliver the desired benefits.

Sometimes, if it's a piece of software, an application, the implementation of a new process, a building, or even just moving a desk; the change management piece can be given scant consideration. We've all heard the phrase: "they just through it over the fence and hoped it would work." Project Managers have a responsibility to manage a project to achieve the benefits of the project, and should ensure that the people-change element is planned and effectively managed, as with any other component.

End-to-end project management models have strong elements of engagement. Both PRINCE2 and PMBoK based systems have extensive processes for stakeholder engagement and communication. Agile (incremental) systems have an opportunity for similar, if not greater, engagement.

So, if we consider an idealised (waterfall) project process for an IT project:



we see that there is an obvious need for user engagement at the deployment phase and handover phase. Users might even get some level of engagement and change management during User Acceptance Testing. However, there is a role for change management (which is used to ensure success) all along the process. Change management is not a "quality" process for business improvement - it is a method for minimising the risks of project failure when implementing technological, process or organisational change.

Kotter's 8-steps to leading change, D.E Hussey's EASIER model, or Prosci's 3 phases of change management are examples of change management models that can be applied to project work. McKinsey's 7S Framework has mutually reinforcing elements that can also be used in projects to manage the change process. As an experienced project manager, the P.O.D.S. model of four phases fits well with project practice.

- Plan
- Organise
- Deliver
- Sustain

Project teams may include specialist members to facilitate change, with titles like: Change Manager, Implementation Manager, Communication Lead, Change Champion, or Training Developer. Regardless of the team that is brought on-board, the Project Manager must coordinate the people and technical elements to deliver successful outcomes.

Within each phase of P.O.D.S., activities prompt specific actions that help you guide the engagement process and move people to new behaviours that deliver the required project outcomes.

PHASE	ACTIVITY		CONSIDERATIONS
PLAN	Evaluate	Evaluate the change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Environment, history, culture, previous changes Impact of change, examine significance
	Assess	Assess the change environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the expected scale & cultural impact Assess the requirements, analyse the culture Analyse success metrics
	Design	Design the message for change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the key messages Information styles Vision and goal alignment
ORGANISE	Motivate	Motivate your team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivate through values, create purpose Mobilise resources /communicate goals
	Influence	Influence change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role model and influence change, lead by example Establish champions, advocates and early adopters
	Unfreeze	'Unfreeze' and sponsor action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create sense of urgency, plant early wins Deal with states of mind Target specific approaches, sponsor action Identify points of inertia / address resistance
DELIVER	Coordinate	Coordinate change readiness and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change readiness assessment, measure commitment Support teams and roles /gain commitment
	Coach	Coach to develop capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coach with G.R.O.W. (Goal, current Reality, Options or Obstacles, Will or Way forward), develop capability Why? What? How? What else? (motivate, train, coach, explore)
	Empower	Empower and enable change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable behaviours (innovation, risk appetite), engage people Proceduralise accountability (formalise delegations) Enable responsibility, remove obstacles
SUSTAIN	Anchor	Anchor change and sustain behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchor and sustain change Repeat and reward acceptable behaviours
	Celebrate	Celebrate and reward change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and discourage non-conformance Celebrate and reward changed behaviours Congratulate closure
	Reflect	Reflect and review the changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on leaders' change activities, review learnings Measure success Capture successes for the future

The key to change, as many change management models depict, is to provide a clear vision, communicate well, encourage commitment and participation from those affected by change, and lead the required behaviours.

Change management models are a good tool to use as a framework for successful change, and also as in the case of the EASIER and ADKAR Models, acts as a good checklist in order to give the best possibility of success in a change project. P.O.D.S. has a range of support checklists and tools that will help you achieve the desired business outcome.

Remember, change management models are only guides; so understand as many as you can, and then make your own judgement as to which will be most useful for you.