

The Project Sponsor plays a key role in any project or change initiative. The Sponsor typically is part of the agency leadership, and has the ability to identify, promote and complete change. Project team members must feel sure that the agency leadership is thoroughly committed to the project or change. The Sponsor must **C**ommunicate commitment, **M**odel commitment, and **R**einforce commitment to ensure project success. Without the perceived commitment of the sponsor, implementation success is compromised.

There are a variety of messages and behaviors that sponsors can use to show commitment. You as a sponsor can do specific things that have high return on investment. Doing these things will help ensure that your most scarce resource, time, is used effectively. The following checklist describes ways to demonstrate commitment and project support in a manner will increase the probability of project success.

Section 1 – Communicate Commitment (What is said)

1. Provide a clear definition of the overall goals and objectives for this project.
2. Clearly articulate the business case or rationale for why this change is needed.
3. Communicate how this project relates to the overall vision, strategy, and mission of the organization.
4. Communicate strong ownership and personal commitment for this project.
5. Communicate the objectives of this project to each target group, specifying what changes the group should expect.
6. Communicate a clear understanding of the impact of the proposed change on each target group.
7. Publicly pinpoint specific processes/procedures that must change.
8. Communicate in a manner that encourages direct feedback.
9. Communicate in a manner that promotes a problem-solving climate.
10. Demonstrate strong communication skills, providing clear, concise, and understandable messages.

Section 2 – Model Commitment (What is done)

11. Constantly provide motivation to change current operations.
12. Prioritize activities and resources in the organization to reflect the importance of the project.
13. Demonstrate personal support privately to direct reports to generate their commitment to change.
14. Demonstrate the willingness to pay the ongoing organizational price for the project.
15. Be tenacious in pursuit of objectives of the project.
16. Invest effort to build broad support for the project.
17. Strive for good working relationships with the Project Team.
18. Strive for good working relationships with the people who are impacted by the change.
19. Build a history of successfully implementing change in the organization.

Section 3 – Reinforce Commitment (What is reinforced in others)

20. Commit the resources necessary to achieve the objectives of the project.
21. Commit to participation and providing leadership on the project steering committee.
22. Place strong emphasis on rewards for achieving the change versus punishment for failure.
23. Focus reinforcement strategies on direct reports.
24. Make both positive and negative reinforcement predictable, certain and immediate.
25. Emphasize formal and informal work unit reward and recognition, as well as individual reinforcement.
26. Link intrinsic rewards, e.g. doing your best, solving an important problem or providing the highest quality, to the success of the project.
27. Establish processes to monitor the progress of the project.
28. Make the old, undesired processes/procedures not accessible or more difficult to perform.
29. Make the new desired processes/procedures accessible and easier to perform.