

Common Change Management Steps

Purpose:

This resource outlines a set of steps for supporting large-scale change. Review the table below and consider how your work plans align with each step. For example, *does your communication plan start by building awareness of the need to change across stakeholders groups? Do you have a guiding coalition established to support buy-in?* It may be necessary to complete steps in a different order based on local context, or to spend more time on a particular step - this variation is normal. It may be helpful to think of these steps as “principles” to align with as you implement change rather than a lock-step plan.

| Change Management Steps | What people are thinking at each step in the change process | Sample Activities to Help People Embrace The Change |
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| 1. Build awareness of the need to change demonstrated in data and opportunity lost | There may not be any conversation happening at this point. Some people may have general questions such as “how can we enroll and complete more students?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prove that a problem exists using evidence. ● Collect real stories to highlight challenges and opportunities. Student testimonials can be powerful tools for highlighting barriers to educational opportunity. |
| 2. Create desire to implement changes driven by a shared sense of urgency | “Why are you making us change? Does this really matter?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help people understand how CBE and the changes proposed fix known problems and improve the student experience. ● Frame the problem as something that needs to be fixed <i>now</i> rather than later. ● Make the problem as personal as possible so people feel intrinsically motivated to fix it. |

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| 3. Establish a guiding coalition (i.e, a leadership team, steering committee, or working group) | “Whose idea is this? Who is in charge of this trainwreck-to-be?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a clear group of leaders who are guiding the change management process. This group provides a point of contact for questions and can help increase buy-in if the coalition includes trusted leaders. Sometimes it’s not what is said, but who says it. |
| 4. Form a clear, high-level strategic vision | “What are we working towards? What’s the end goal here? To what end?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set a clear vision of the ideal future state so that people can get excited about the potential positive impact of changes being made. Continue to point back to this vision as you move forward. |
| 5. Align the overarching vision with existing high-priority, funded, and/or state initiatives | “Is this <i>another</i> thing? Do we need one more initiative?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show how the change is part of an existing priority or initiative so that it does not appear to be a distraction or deviation from previous work. (e.g., show how CBE is aligned with credit for prior learning) |
| 6. Enlist “volunteers” to commit in continuous improvement and learning via state and institutional impact projects | “How can I help?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At this point, some stakeholders will be excited and interested in making a change. Direct that energy towards a proof of concept (like a direct assessment CBE pilot)! |
| 7. Develop knowledge of what must be done at the state- and institutional-levels for an effective change, across state and institutional stakeholders | “Does everyone know how amazing this could be if we had more folks on board? How do we get more people to help make this the new normal?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage excited volunteers and the guiding coalition to begin building awareness across other key stakeholder groups. This expanded set of stakeholders will need to be brought along in order for broad systemic changes to happen. |

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| 8. Enable action by removing state and institutional policy & practice barriers | “I don’t know how we can get around <i>this</i> policy, do you? What specific policies, processes, rules, and regulations are in the way of scaling? How are they creating barriers? Can we remove them?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State and institutional leaders champion the new approach and help create an environment conducive to transformational teaching and learning models by removing policy barriers and clearing administrative burdens (e.g., funding additional exploration of promising models, approving hold harmless agreements, reviewing and adapting policies, etc.). |
| 9. Generate short-term wins via state and institutional impact projects | “Does this even work?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share stories from demonstration projects to show that transformational models can be impactful, building an evidence base for broader adoption. |
| 10. Sustain acceleration by increasing buy-in | “How can we have more impact?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Iterate on state and institutional impact projects. ● Continue to generate buy-in across stakeholder groups. ● Continue to share the problem, the vision, the suggested change, and stories of impact to justify change. |
| 11. Repeat these steps | “What are we doing again?...Why?” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go back to the beginning of the change management process - frame the problem, justify the work, secure buy-in, etc. In the middle of large-scale changes, many people will forget the “why”, or circumstances will change and you may need to shift the goal posts. |