

Information Management Framework: Change management guidance

1. Purpose

Information management projects in NSW Government are often described as ‘change management’ projects as a key element of success is adoption of change by staff. This guidance provides advice for information management projects, including:

- strategies for embedding change and transitioning to ‘business-as-usual’
- techniques for measuring the success of change management activities
- pointers to change management resources available in NSW Government.

This document does not provide specific advice on change management within projects, nor does it provide advice on the basics of change management.

2. Introduction

Background

The NSW Government ICT Strategy is designed to enable government to deliver better services through citizen focus, community and industry collaboration, better information sharing and support for services anytime, anywhere.

NSW Government has acknowledged the importance of improving capabilities around ICT project management and benefits realisation. This commitment is set out in the Government response to the findings of the Public Accounts Committee’s Enquiry into ICT Procurement in 2013.

The change management guidance aligns with NSW Government commitments to:

- drive better value from investment (ICT Strategy)
- reduce the size and complexity of ICT projects (PAC response)
- improve benefits realisation (PAC response).

Information Management Framework

A key initiative of the NSW Government ICT Strategy is the development of an Information Management Framework to support the way government designs systems, administers and uses data and information.

The Framework is a set of standards, policies, guidelines and procedures which are implemented either manually or, where possible, automated through technology. This Framework will enable data and information to be managed in a secure, structured and consistent manner.

It will ensure that data and information can be appropriately shared or re-used – immediately and in the longer term – by agencies, individual public sector staff, the community or industry for better services, improved performance management and a more productive public sector.

Further information about NSW Government approach to information management and standards can be found on the website of the NSW Government ICT Strategy at:

<http://finance.nsw.gov.au/ict/information-management-framework>

The ability to change, quickly and effectively, with committed and capable people, is the new strategic advantage. This is particularly important in the NSW Public Sector as government reform is one of the key drivers of change.

~ NSW Public Sector Community of Change Professionals

Change management and information projects

NSW Government is undertaking a significant amount of reform and change.

Agencies are recognising information as an asset of strategic, operational and administrative value, and as the key to public trust and participation. They are transforming the way they provide services, taking advantage of opportunities in the digital environment and the financial benefits of new ICT sourcing models.

Customer NOW will transition NSW Government to a customer-centric approach to service delivery. Service NSW will provide simpler services and standardise customer transactions. The Public Service Commission has defined a workforce strategy focused on mobility, capabilities and innovation.

These initiatives rely on successful process redesign, technology implementations, and associated changes in the organisational culture of agencies.

There are also opportunities to learn from these initiatives and drive a more people-centric approach to implementing information management projects.

CIOs have recognised the importance of change management for information and ICT projects. Successful projects incorporate change management from the beginning, generating commitment for new ways of working and driving support for new processes or technology.

NSW Government is redesigning public service delivery to suit its customers. Information management has two groups of customers:

- internal – staff providing a service, processes must enable them to operate;
- external – individuals or businesses accessing a service, services must be convenient to them.

Success requires support and buy-in from both.

This guidance offers an executive level overview of key change management elements and resources that can help embed new ways of working in the organisational culture.

3. Transitioning to “business-as-usual”

Critical success factors

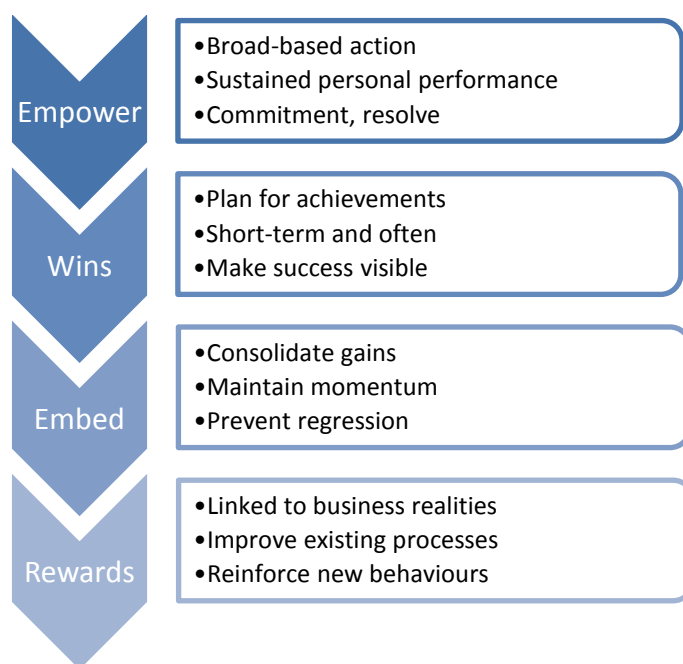
There is a lot of advice available on change management and many clusters and agencies have defined change management strategies and methodologies to enhance the success of business change programs.

The following items are well recognised critical success factors:

- Executive endorsement
- Strong and continuing stakeholder engagement at all levels
- Clear objectives
- Prioritisation of activities against those objectives.

Key findings from the Lessons Learned Survey¹ suggest that NSW public sector change initiatives successfully applied a methodology, planned communications and engaged with stakeholders.

But beyond these are additional strategies for fully embedding or reinvigorating change, and transitioning to a 'business-as-usual' environment.



Empower

- **Take broad-based action**
Work towards change at all levels of the organization. Use peer-oriented groups to create top-down, bottom-up and "middle-out" change. Peer advocacy can garner support across different groups of staff, promoting communication between colleagues and the project team. Supervisors have significant influence over staff motivation to change. Assist middle and front-line managers to support implementation by providing them with skills, tools and incentives to work with their people during the change roll-out.
- **Enable sustained personal performance**
Help people adapt personally and individually to fit new ways of working. Minimise disruption and ensure they can continue to do their jobs with maximum effectiveness in the new environment.
- **Generate commitment, resolve**
Beyond compliance, sponsorship or endorsement; beyond the business case - enable people to see the need for change. Convince them of its value so that they feel compelled to act. Change occurs when staff recognise that they personally cannot continue to work in the current way, believe the solution is acceptable and understand how they can be successful in the future.

¹ NSW Public Sector Community of Change Professionals, July 2013

<http://www.comprac.nsw.gov.au/Communities-of-Practice/Change-Professionals/Lessons-Learned-Survey-2>

Wins

- **Plan for achievements**
Identify goals and milestones which can demonstrate progress and subsequent benefits. They will also help refine the vision and strategies. Measure performance and highlight key improvements as soon as possible.
- **Short-term and often**
Long-term projects face greater risks of scope-creep and time or cost overrun. Changes can take too long to deliver benefits and people become disengaged. Quick wins can be realized by reducing the size and complexity of large projects, breaking them down into short sprints with defined outcomes.
- **Make success visible**
Communicate and celebrate the achievement of milestones. Recognise and reward staff who were involved, providing positive feedback and reinforcing change. It must be possible to prove that the new way is superior to the old way.

Embed

- **Consolidate gains**
Organisations may underestimate how challenging it can be to change behavior, or overestimate how successfully they have done so. Project timelines may not take account of the length of time required to successfully embed change and transition to business-as-usual. This must be an incremental and ongoing process, to bring about sustainable shifts in work practices.
- **Maintain momentum**
“Failed” projects may in fact be instances where change has only been partially installed, rather than fully implemented. The strategy, process and technology components may be effectively deployed but are not being fully utilised. Sustained effort will embed change into the culture, in order to maintain critical momentum and avoid regression.
- **Prevent regression**
If change efforts are abandoned too early, people can quickly slip back into old ways of working or levels of resistance may re-emerge. Ongoing and repeated training can reinforce new behaviours and practices. Maintain two-way communication channels regarding the change, even after the project delivery is completed, so that project managers can promptly address concerns or challenges if they arise.

Rewards

- **Linked to business realities**
Incentives for making change can take many forms. Overall staff need to see a connection between the case for change, what they can personally achieve, and the impact their actions will have on broader organisational success.
- **Improve existing processes**
People are often committed and passionate about their jobs. Understanding the link between changes and customer service or satisfaction can be a significant motivator. They may be eager to improve work processes and this can be an opportunity to innovate rather than simply automate existing practices.

- **Reinforce new behaviours**

Determine which behaviours should be rewarded and which should be discouraged. Keep the reward system updated and relevant to the required change. Encourage staff to question the current state of processes and their ideas for improvements. There is also an opportunity to reinforce the culture with every new employee.

4. Measuring success

The achievement of change management milestones is considered critical to the success of information management projects. Business benefits can only be fully realised when new processes or technology are adopted by a critical mass of staff.

Measure the progress of implementation to understand where, when and how change activities are working, and on which areas to focus change management resources.

Establish specific goals for change to quantify and track the transition process and make either reinforcing or corrective actions. This also enables project managers to forecast risk and prepare mitigation strategies.

Consider the effectiveness of previous change implementations to predict likely levels of commitment or resistance to successful implementation of future initiatives.

Measure:

- specific goals and defined milestones for change
- progress throughout the entire course of the change
- improvement in key metrics linked to the change – such as operational effectiveness; ability to manage costs and resources; levels of customer satisfaction; service and other KPIs
- capabilities of people – such as proficiency with a new system or performing a new process
- abilities of people to sustain high levels of performance or customer service in the new environment
- the organisation's "energy" levels, to maintain readiness for future stages of change

To transition to business-as-usual, people must be willing and able to change their behaviour.

Survey staff at regular intervals to monitor the cultural factors over time. Respond to any indication of faltering commitment, developing resistance or breakdown in trust.

Ask staff:

- How well is the change being managed?
- How confident are you that change will improve agency performance in the future?

People operate, maintain and interact with the new system or process on a daily basis. Gathering real data about staff perceptions and practices can inform project managers about how people are adapting to change. Understanding their concerns and challenges enables the project manager to focus on the issues that matter most, and proactively drive effective change.

Measuring and tracking allows project managers to highlight and celebrate successes, and reward change results.

Providing feedback to staff about progress and survey results will demonstrate accountability, which can maintain momentum, increase confidence and stimulate learning.

5. Resources for change management

To find out more about change management or obtain advice for specific projects, contact:

NSW Public Sector Community of Change Professionals

<http://www.comprac.nsw.gov.au/Communities-of-Practice/Change>

Change Management Institute

<https://www.change-management-institute.com/new-south-wales>

Australian College of Change Management

<http://www.changemanagement.edu.au/>

Dr John Kotter – 8 Step Process for Leading Change

<http://www.kotterinternational.com/our-principles/changesteps>

Changefirst – People Centred Implementation (PCI)

<http://www.changefirst.com/what-is-pci>

For assistance managing the transition to a new information security classification scheme, refer to *Implementing the Digital Information Security Policy: Change management guidance*.