

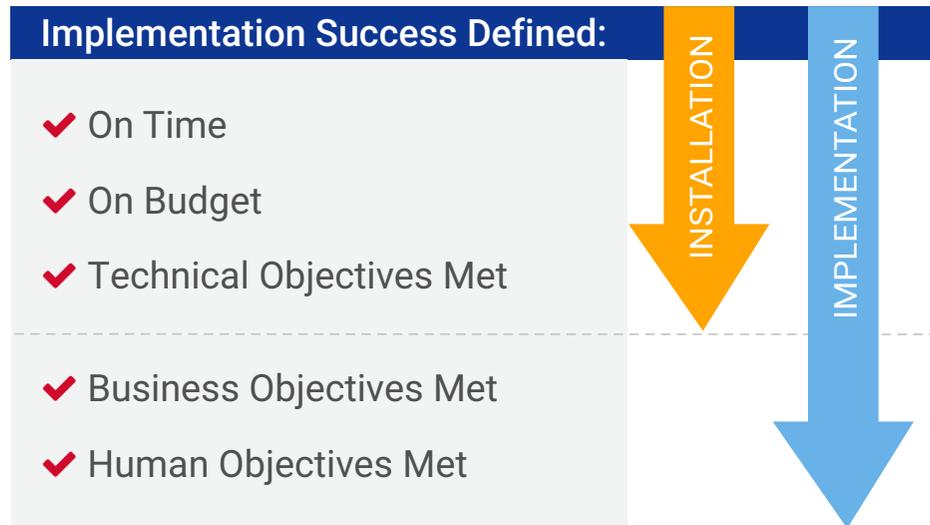
The Role of Sponsors in Project Success

**How to Secure the Sponsorship You Need...To Achieve
the Business Outcomes Your Sponsors Want**

The Metrics for “Implementation Success” for Sponsors

Since Sponsorship and Implementation success are so intertwined, it’s important to first be clear on what the metrics for success actually are:

Installation vs. Implementation



INSTALLATION does not equal IMPLEMENTATION

Too many Sponsors confuse achieving Installation with achieving the 5 metrics required for Implementation. Therefore, they declare the project complete at the point of go live, before behavioral changes actually occur. Installation is very important, but it is far short of the goal line. *There is no change unless behavior changes.*

We need visible, active Sponsorship to continue all the way through to Implementation!

The Role of Sponsors in Implementation

There are 4 major roles in project implementation:

C

Champions who believe in the change but may lack Sponsorship to drive it

A

Agents who have assigned implementation responsibility through planning and execution of the project

S

Sponsors must *authorize, legitimize, and demonstrate ownership* of the change throughout the project implementation, publically and privately

T

Targets who must change behavior, emotions, knowledge, perceptions, etc.



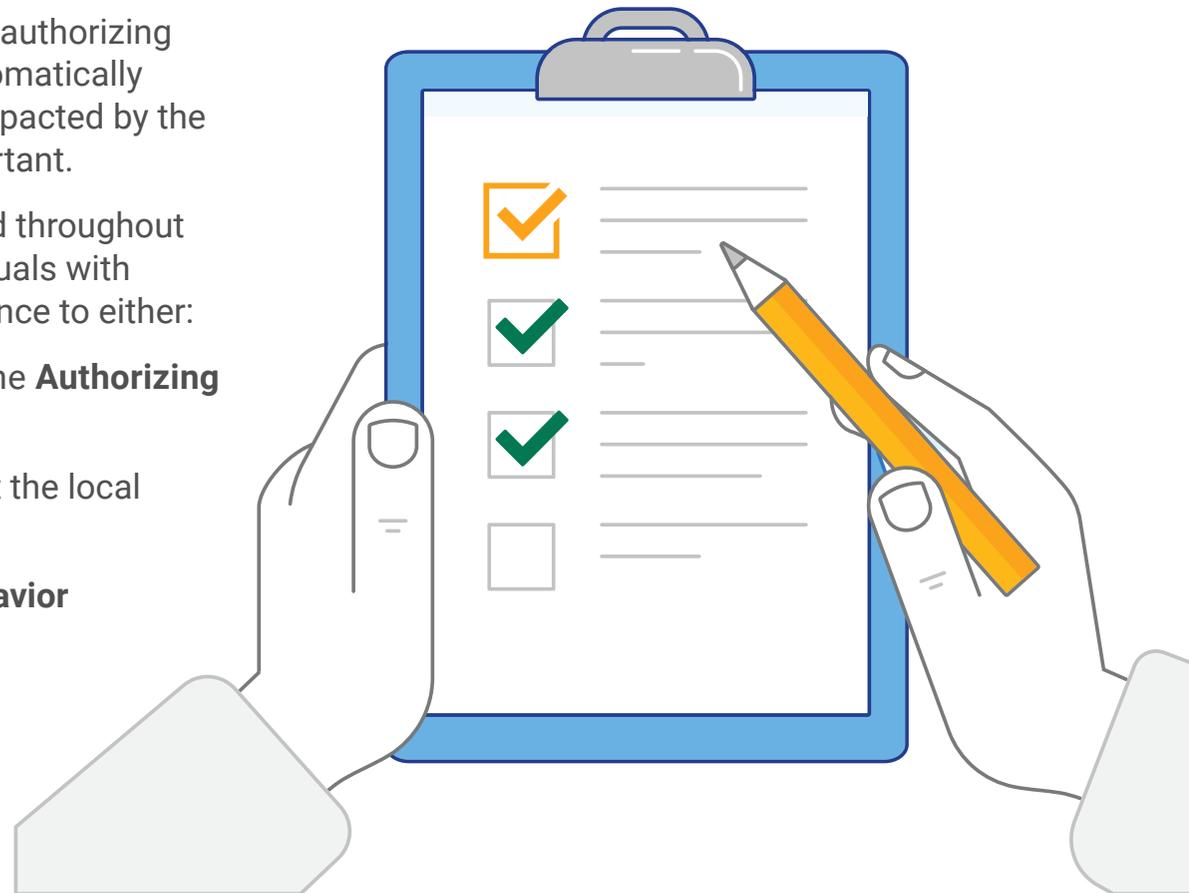
Sponsorship is Position and Action

Sponsors must do more than sign a check authorizing funding for an initiative. Managers are automatically Sponsors when they have direct reports impacted by the change, so organizational position is important.

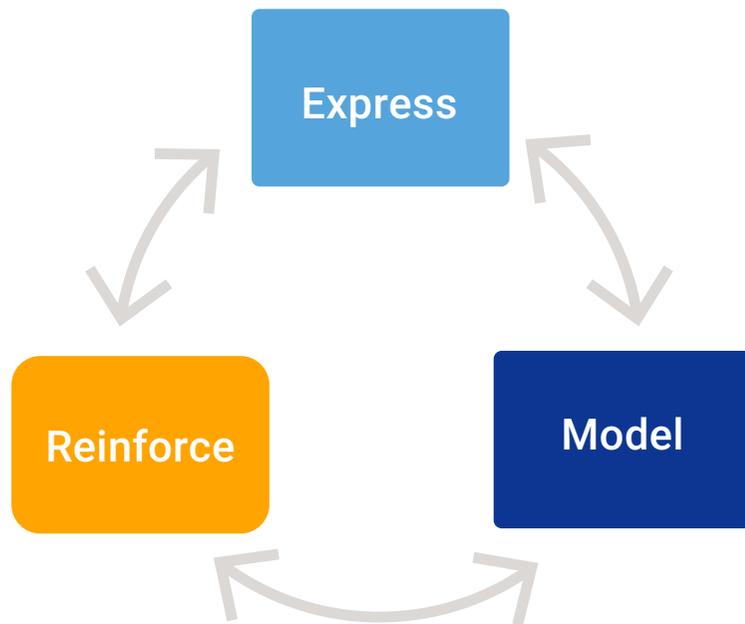
You need 2 types of Sponsorship sustained throughout your business change. Both require individuals with enough organizational power and/or influence to either:

- Sign the check to commit resources (the **Authorizing Sponsor**) or
- Reinforce commitment to the change at the local level (the **Reinforcing Sponsor**)

But action is needed, too—it's the daily **behavior** of leaders that drives the pace of change!



Sponsors Must Express, Model, and Reinforce Commitment to the Change with their Direct Reports!



Sponsorship is defined by 3 very specific behavioral actions, and these can't be delegated to anyone else. Sponsors must:

Express commitment to the change

Model commitment to the new behaviors

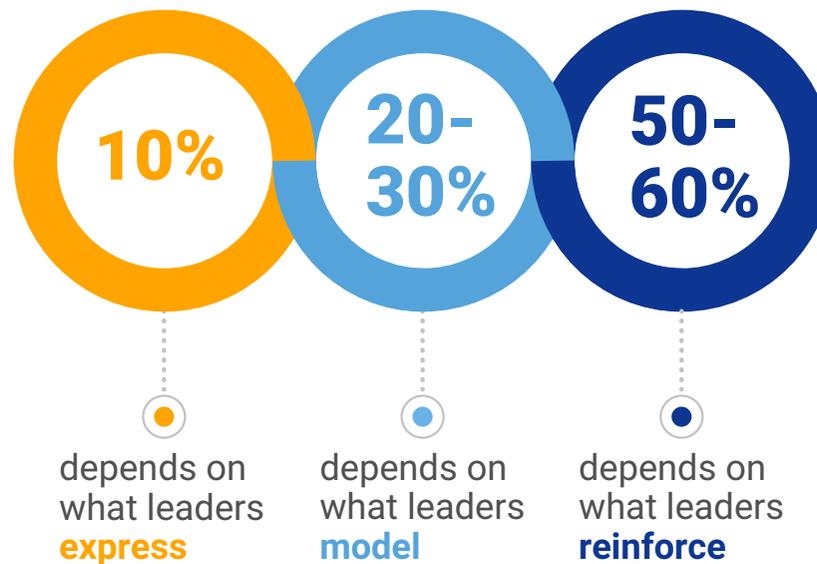
Reinforce the new behaviors (the behaviors "we seek to see" at the end of the project)

Leaders must align what they say, do, and reinforce. In other words, what the leader says, what the leader does, and what the leader reinforces (rewards and consequences) must be consistent.

This is the formula for building trust, and that's important because trust and speed are functional. *The higher the trust, the greater the speed of implementation.*

What Sponsors Reinforce with Direct Reports Has the Most Impact

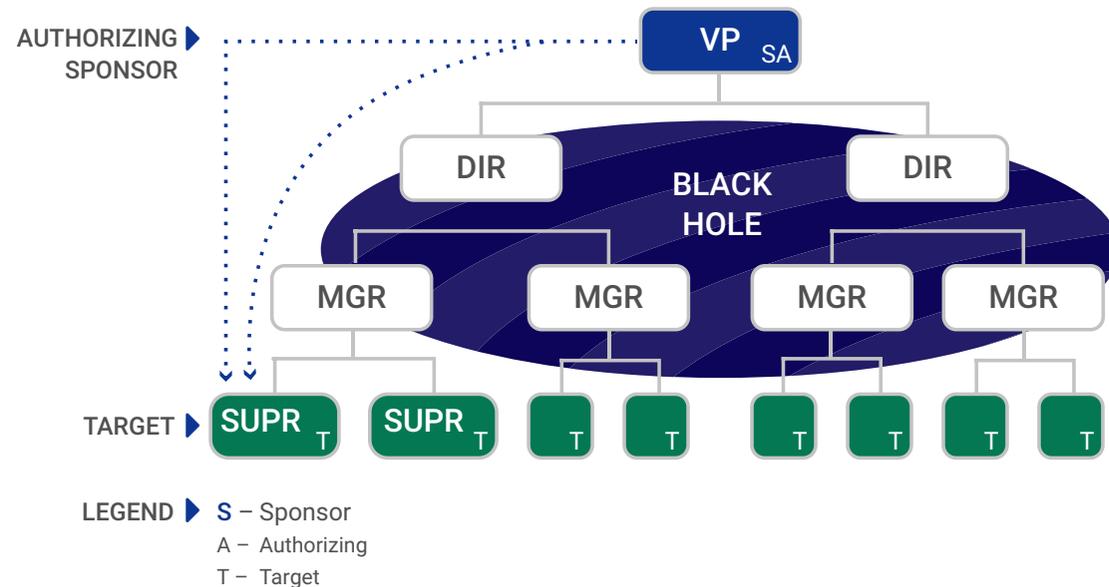
We often hear that good leaders “walk the talk.” But what leaders say and model is far less important than what they reinforce on a daily basis. We can actually build a mathematical model around the impact of Sponsors on the success of the project:



Reinforcement is the power lever for driving the required behavioral changes. It is the immediate application of rewards and negative consequences, plus the ability to make the new way of operating easier to adopt, that determines whether a project will get to value realization, and how quickly that happens.

Black Holes Form Without a Cascade of Demonstrated Commitment

It's easier to prevent a black hole than to dig out of one.



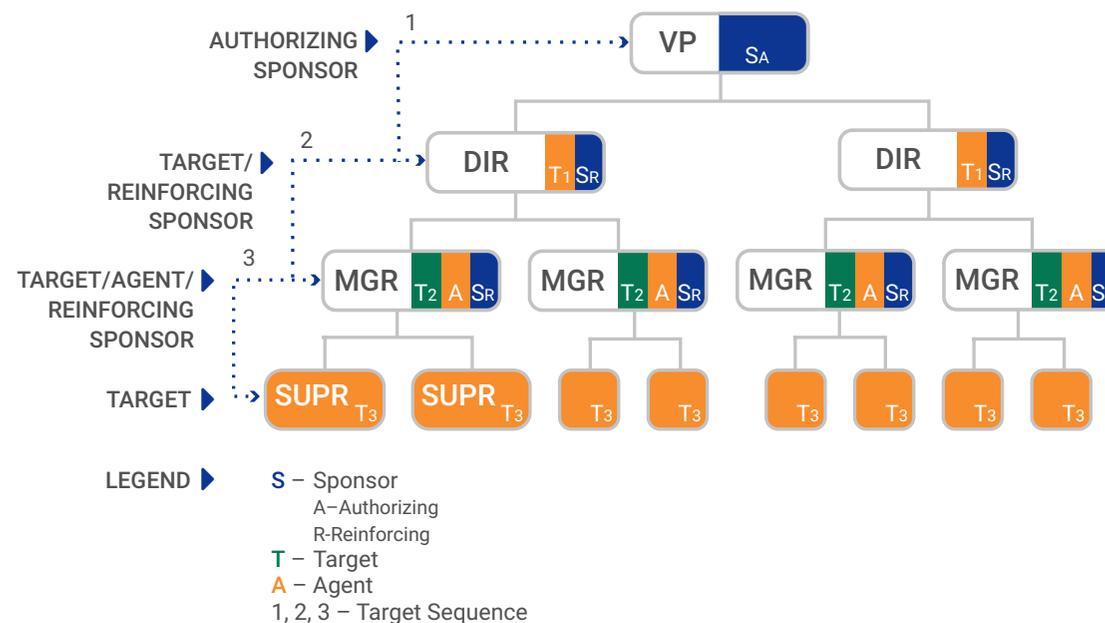
If the VP at the top who authorizes the change doesn't personally Express/Model/Reinforce commitment with his/her own direct reports, you don't build accountability at the next level. And if there is no accountability at the top, why would you expect it lower down? In other words, if you don't take the time to build the circuitry (the cascade of Sponsorship), when you flip the "adoption switch" at the top, the lights won't come on.

Without the cascade of Sponsorship at each level, "black holes" are formed. You've seen them—these are where projects go to die and are never heard from again!

TIP #3

Fast and Successful Implementation Depends on a Cascade of Demonstrated Commitment by Sponsors at Every Level

An effective strategy builds Sponsorship at every level between the Authorizing Sponsors and the Targets of the change.



The pace of implementation is directly related to the leaders' willingness and ability to consistently demonstrate their personal commitment to the change, both individually and collectively. So "Sponsorship" is not the focus on what one Sponsor does, but on this cascade of behavioral commitment.

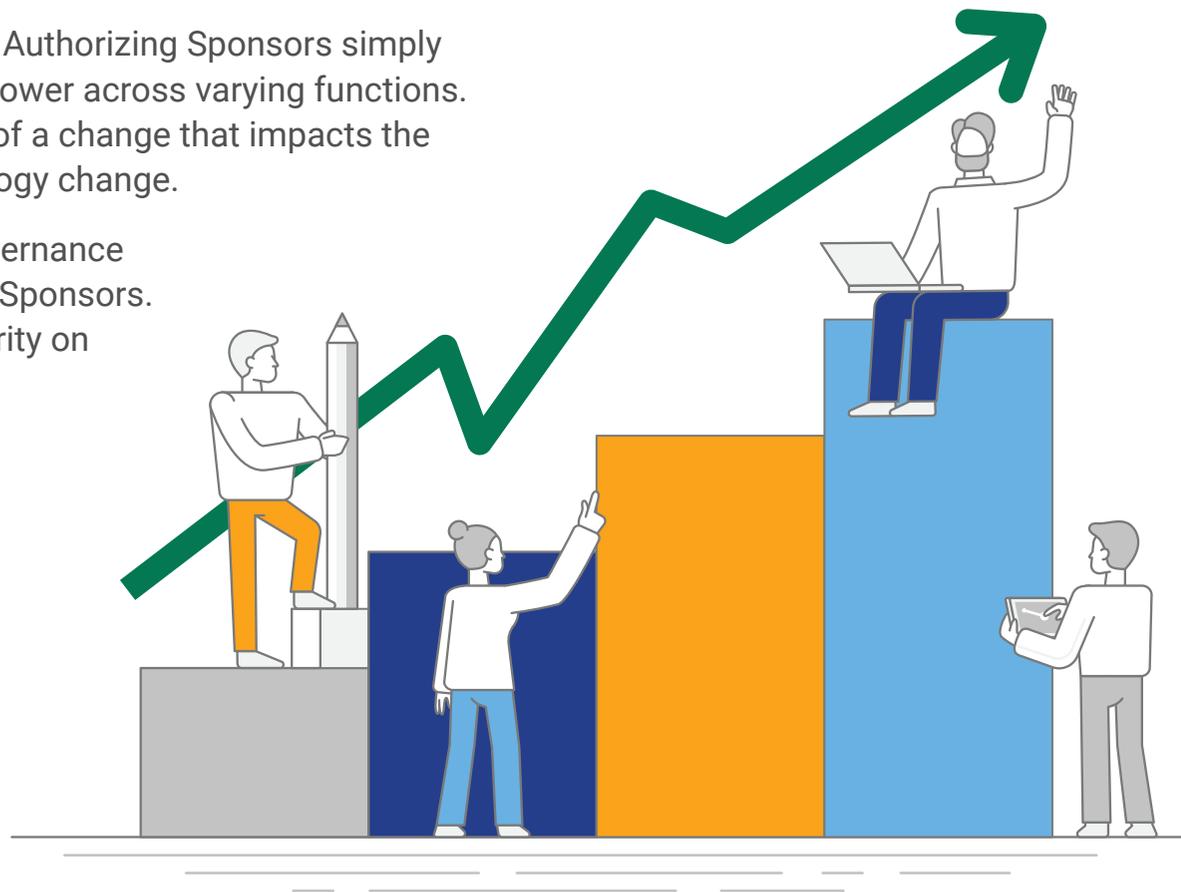
TIP #4

An Authorizing Sponsor Can Only Sponsor in His/Her Own Chain of Command

In complex changes, you will have multiple Authorizing Sponsors simply because one Authorizing Sponsor has no power across varying functions. For example, the CIO can't be the Sponsor of a change that impacts the Finance organization, even if it is a technology change.

Steering committees, and other similar governance bodies, can't substitute for the Authorizing Sponsors. Why? Because the leaders only have authority on the performance of individuals in their own chains of command.

So Change Agents for enterprise projects will need to build trusting relationships with multiple leaders!



Contract with Individual Sponsors for What Action You Need Right Now

What do you need your Sponsor to Express, Model, and Reinforce at this point in the project? What you need at the beginning of the project is different from what you will need at the middle or near the end.

Many Sponsors will assume all you need is to have some communication with the Targets, but now you know that won't be enough. In fact, if you are only focusing on getting Sponsors to communicate, you are likely to actually increase the resistance to the change.

When you have discussions with your Sponsors, there are best practices that can impact the outcome:



Educate Your Sponsors on Their Role

Sponsors generally aren't ineffective intentionally. Despite huge investments in leadership training, the content almost never includes what Sponsors must specifically do to increase project change effectiveness. And Sponsors aren't measured on their effectiveness in leading projects.

Sponsors need an explanation on the criticality of Express/Model/Reinforce behaviors. The best way to do this is on a specific project, rather than herding all your leaders into a room and talking about Sponsorship. Your chances for long-term behavior change on the part of Sponsors is much greater when you build Sponsor awareness and accountability project by project.

Sponsors are no different from anyone else. They are motivated by rewards and consequences for non-performance.

So anytime you see an unwanted Sponsor behavior, there either is or was a reward for that behavior.

Sponsors may try to delegate their responsibilities to Change Agents, but there are 6 Sponsorship tasks that can't be delegated!

One of the common Sponsor problems is the mistaken belief that Agents should be able to implement on their own, and therefore the Sponsor tries to delegate leadership tasks to the Agents.

There are 6 tasks that Sponsors can't delegate. Only Sponsors can:

1. **Establish** and communicate a compelling “business case for action” for the change
2. **Participate** in goal setting
3. **Allocate** resources
4. **Concentrate** their focus on their direct reports by starting or continuing the cascade of Sponsorship
5. **Align** or apply rewards and consequences for their direct reports
6. **Monitor** progress constantly

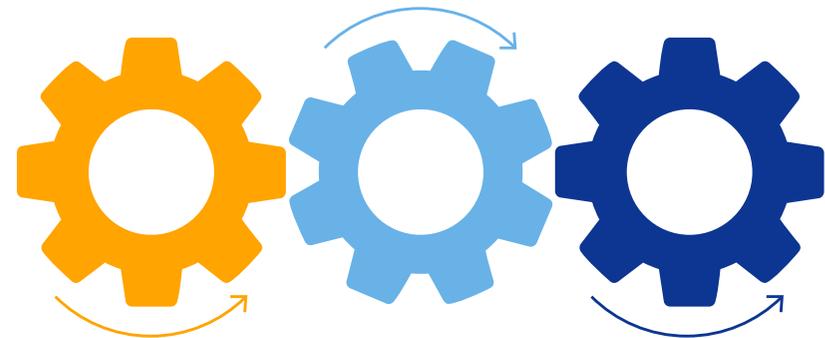
Be Prepared for Changes in Sponsors

Be prepared for the fact that over the course of the business change, all of your Sponsors will not remain in the same position.

Sponsors will likely change or turn over during the project implementation. Plan for it.

When that happens (not if) you will need to start over building a relationship of trust.

Additional Tactics to Accelerate



Spend more time on the front end developing Sponsorship than on convincing Targets to change

Develop role descriptions for Sponsors as early as possible

Search for common goals and inter-dependence when you are trying to align multiple Sponsors

About IMA

IMA is an international consulting firm that guides organizations through all types of large-scale project implementations. Since 1989, our proprietary *Accelerating Implementation Methodology (AIM)* has been used extensively for the successful implementation of a wide variety of business-critical change projects.

We work with clients in 4 major ways:

- 1. Action Learning Programs**, designed to train your people in the principles, tools, and deliverables of *AIM*, including Sponsor education via our Executive Briefing or SponsorShop
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