

# Change Management Is A Behavioral Competency You Can Develop

Hinda K. Sterling  
Herbert L. Selesnick



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This article is intended to help you create an action plan for achieving your own personal developmental goals for the competency often referred to as *Change Management*.

## ■ WHY COMPETENCIES ARE IMPORTANT

A competency is a personal attribute which research has shown either causes or predicts a particular level of performance in a job or job series, in an organizational role or function, or in an occupational trade or profession. Competencies are an important tool in helping to define high performance in management positions, to identify high-performing managers, and to improve or sustain managerial performance. Managers who develop *and maintain* the competencies associated with high performance are more effective in their jobs than other managers.

## ■ HOW COMPETENCIES ARE DEVELOPED

Competency acquisition is a self-directed process of learning and change with six stages:

1. **Recognition and identification** of the competency in important work situations (e.g., agency management situations) provides you with a clear picture of the competency as demonstrated on the job.
2. **Understanding and valuing** the competency and how it relates to managerial effectiveness, and internalizing it as a critical determinant of managerial success, integrates the competency into your way of thinking and acting.
3. **Self-assessment and reflection** on feedback concerning your present level of proficiency in the competency in comparison to the ideal, and *developmental action planning* to close any gap, require opportunities for feedback and introspection on the your ability to perform the competency successfully.
4. **Experimentation and skill practice** with demonstrating the competency or demonstrating it at a higher level of proficiency, in situations allowing for skill-building (e.g., training programs or planned developmental assignments), helps you to improve or maintain the competency and can lead, ultimately, to its mastery.

5. **Goal-setting and job application** of the competency and evaluation of its usefulness in important work situations and in the context of other attributes, and additional developmental goal-setting and action planning to increase its usefulness in specific work situations, helps you to reinforces and strengthen the competency.
6. **Goal-setting and job application** of the competency and evaluation of its usefulness in important work situations and in the context of other attributes, and additional developmental goal-setting and action planning to increase its usefulness in specific work situations, helps you to reinforces and strengthen the competency.
7. **Follow-up organizational support** activities help to encourage and solidify your use of the competency.

■ **THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY**

*Change Management* behaviorally defined: Facilitates the orderly implementation and timely acceptance of workplace innovations and improvements by planning and overseeing the execution of structured transition processes and clearly communicating transition goals and strategies. There are seven behavioral indicators of the *Change Management* competency:

1. **Strategic Thinking.** Develops strategic goals for change, aligning changes with the organization's strategic direction, objectives and customer expectations.
2. **Innovation Enrollment.** Fosters an environment of innovation and change, communicating goals and strategies to appropriate parties and involving them in the changes.
3. **Organizational Development.** Ensures that employees and the organization have the skills and abilities needed to accomplish change objectives.
4. **Transition Monitoring.** Uses business operations performance measurement and other data to identify opportunities for, and measure the progress of, process improvement changes.
5. **Transition Control.** Establishes effective structures and processes for planning and managing the orderly implementation of change.
6. **Behavior Modeling.** Demonstrates support for change goals and strategies to facilitate the implementation and acceptance of change within the workplace.
7. **Transition Support.** Guides employees through fundamental change, recognizing the scope of transition problems and the impact of change on others.

**The *Change Management* competency is demonstrated by...**

**The *Change Management* competency is *not* demonstrated by...**

recognizing “where” change needs to happen and communicating it to others

identifying and pointing out serious problems and genuine concerns with the way things are

defining and communicating a compelling vision of the future that makes adaptive responses to the present appear both feasible and desirable to stakeholders

clarifying in your mind the reasons why you think change should happen and exactly what its principal benefits are likely to be

proactively and repeatedly searching out opportunities to talk about the new vision in both formal and informal settings at all levels of the organization

attending an all-hands meeting about the new vision and asking clarifying questions

challenging the *status quo* with facts, figures and logical reasoning about its advantages and drawbacks

compiling a list of the reasons why a particular thing has always been done a certain way

personally initiating tangible actions to reinforce or support the new vision (e.g., organizational restructuring, budgeting changes, new performance metrics, etc.)

reflecting on specific changes in your personal behavior which others are asking you to make

■ **EXAMPLES OF ON-THE-JOB USE OF THE *CHANGE MANAGEMENT* COMPETENCY**

1. I sent out a memo detailing the action steps we planned to take in changing from the old to the new procurement process, with projected completion dates, contingency plans and the name of each person accountable for each action step.
2. I sat down and made a list of the major goals our agency needed to accomplish in light of what I had just learned about the new administration’s priority objectives.
3. At the very next monthly team meeting, I asked my direct reports to clarify their dissatisfactions with our long-established case assignment process and to spell out the specific changes they would suggest for improving it.
4. I began the discussion by asking everyone to list their reasons for opposing the proposed procedural change in our vendor oversight system. They all voiced the same concern about getting trained in the new procedure, which I assured them they would.
5. I made a list of the technical skills and subject matter training the various members of our team would need in order to be able to perform their redesigned roles in the new financial management system effectively.

6. I called my team together and told them the new legal guidelines meant that we would have to make the following specific changes in how we do business.
7. I adapted organizational performance metrics from the Baldrige and federal quality awards programs to create a set of indicators our agency could use to identify and track process improvement changes.
8. I said to my staff, "I need your help in figuring out how to make this change happen successfully. I would like each of you to study the draft transition plan and then come back to me with specific implementation ideas."
9. I lead them through a staffing analysis of our newly automated budget monitoring process which showed that the partially installed system was already saving us approximately 10 person hours per week.
10. I asked them to create a sequence-and-duration timeline for all the action steps in the system integration so that we could spot slippages and take remedial action.
11. I knew my direct reports had never overseen a changeover to an outside contractor, so I secured staff from a sister agency who had handled a similar outsourcing to brief them and answer their questions on how to navigate the transition.
12. I listened patiently to her objections to the new account procedure. Then I encouraged her to consider the merits of the new system and whether they outweighed the drawbacks enough for her to reconsider her opposition to it.
13. One of our agency's goals was at cross purposes with one of the administration's strategic priorities, so I put together a study team to reframe our goal keeping it consistent with our mission but more in sync with that particular priority.
14. I wasn't thrilled about deferring one of our agency's established goals, but I endorsed the Commissioner's new initiative at our agency's monthly leadership meeting.

■ **EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL CHALLENGES WHICH COULD AFFECT YOUR USE OF THE *CHANGE MANAGEMENT* COMPETENCY**

1. Having a particularly bad (or good) day
2. Giving some events more (or less) weight than they deserve
3. Overlooking, dismissing or discounting some events
4. Bias, favoritism or personal loyalties
5. Inadequate education or knowledge
6. Lack of technical skills
7. Lack of interpersonal skills
8. Lack of conceptual skills

9. Counter productive values or beliefs
10. Counter productive attitudes or emotions
11. Feelings of burnout, stress, depression, boredom, indifference, cynicism or alienation
12. Lack of focus or discipline
13. Resistance to or discomfort with self-directed learning and change
14. Lack of opportunities to receive feedback on how you use the behavioral indicators of a competency
15. Extreme self-orientation or self-absorption
16. Lack of concern for the interests of other individuals or the interests of your work group, your organization or your agency
17. Lack of awareness of the impact of your words or actions on other individuals
18. Inability to recognize and identify a competency when it is being used on the job
19. Lack of appreciation for the usefulness of a competency in relation to your job performance
20. Challenging or frustrating situations in your work group, your organization or your agency

■ **EXAMPLES OF ON-THE-JOB ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING THE *CHANGE MANAGEMENT* COMPETENCY**

- 1. Identify an opportunity to improve or change a current function, process or procedure within your agency**
  - Once you have identified an opportunity, prepare a proposal including a list of the required resources, the benefits and the obstacles to be overcome.
  - Review your proposal with the operating areas involved.
- 2. Assess the readiness of a target group to accept a change initiative.**
  - Identify a group or division that is a good candidate for a change initiative (e.g., implementation of new technology, change in leadership, new training, etc.).
  - Develop a clear case that the change is desirable for this group.
  - Consider using survey data, if available.
  - Interview employees who will be affected to identify recurring issues or problems.
  - Present your case to the individuals who will be most affected by the change.
- 3. Conceptualize and articulate your vision of a new initiative or direction.**
  - Review the events surrounding or leading up to the need for the initiative in your agency or unit—e.g., recent changes in the agency's strategy.
  - Anticipate the reasons behind potential resistance to the initiative and think about what actions you can take to overcome or minimize that resistance.
  - Build a persuasive case for the initiative that is personally meaningful to people.

- Develop a communication plan to articulate the initiative.
  - Present the message to a select group for feedback on the content and make any necessary changes.
  - Implement the communication plan within your organization as well as with others who will be affected by the initiative.
  - Ensure that the vision underlying the initiative is visible and meaningful to all staff.
  - Develop multiple two-way communication channels so that you can effectively monitor the organization's reaction to the message and make yourself available to answer questions.
- 4. Think about all the possible implications of a change initiative you are planning.**
- Assess the scope and impact of the initiative.
  - Identify the individuals or groups who will be affected by it.
  - Anticipate different problems that may arise and the approaches you could take to address potential problems.
  - Identify the individuals who need to be involved in the solution.
  - Keep a contingency plan in reserve.
  - Act when you first hear of a problem affecting the initiative, not later.
- 5. Seek out someone who excels in managing change and learn from them.**
- Identify a person who is perceived as an effective leader of organizational change.
  - Observe the person at work and model your behavior on what you learn.
  - Arrange a meeting to determine how the person approaches different situations.
  - What is it that this person does that you can apply to your organization?
  - **When implementing any new strategy or major initiative, consider the impact on all those involved—both internal and external individuals and groups.**
  - Identify the individuals or groups affected and keep them informed.
  - Whenever possible make a personal visit to key influencers and stakeholders and talk to them about:
    - Currently planned changes
    - The importance of these changes
    - What the changes mean to them
    - How they can become constructively involved in the transition process
  - Actively solicit the advice and commitment of the key stakeholders before implementing the new strategy or initiative
  - Ask key stakeholders to promote the new strategy or initiative on your behalf.
  - Justify your request to them—sell them on the changes so they can sell others.

## ■ CREATING YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENTAL ACTION PLAN

**Purpose and Use of the Form.** The partially completed developmental action planning sample form and the blank developmental action planning form on the following pages are designed to help you plan a time-phased sequence of activities in which you have meaningful opportunities to practice using behavioral indicator(s) of the *Change Management* competency.

*Your immediate supervisor should review your developmental action plan with you, provide you with input and feedback on its content, and approve and sign off on it.*

**Preparing Your Plan.** First, for each behavioral indicator of the competency which you have targeted personally to improve or maintain (column 1), describe each specific goal you hope to achieve and indicate whether the goal is short-term or long-term (column 2). Next, identify the developmental activities in which you would like to participate in order to help you improve or maintain your use of this particular behavioral indicator of the *Change Management* competency (column 3). Then, specify the resources and support you believe you will need to complete each of these developmental activities (column 4). When filling in this column, be sure to consider any personal challenges currently affecting your use of the behavioral indicator(s) of the *Change Management* competency, and what specific help you would need in overcoming or working around these personal challenges. Finally, record the anticipated start and finish dates for each one of your planned developmental activities (columns 5 and 6).

**Addressing Your Needs.** Human performance research has shown that, for management competency acquisition, the highest-impact learning experiences are *on-the-job activities*. Books and training can provide good information, but on-the-job activities promote much more significant behavior change and personal growth through trial-and-error practice, coaching, feedback and personal reflection. Your developmental action plan will be strengthened if you include in it suggestions from your peers and your supervisor about specific on-the-job actions you can take to practice your targeted behavioral indicator(s) of the *Change Management* competency.

On-the-job developmental activities might include volunteering for new projects, accepting special assignments, working with peers on certain types of team projects, or shadowing and observing others who demonstrate effective use of the behavioral indicator(s) of *Change Management* competency. Off-the-job developmental activities might include leading community groups to practice the behavioral indicator(s) of *Change Management* competency in a neutral setting.

Change management is a *skill*. To be effective, developmental activities must be logically related to the *type* of competency you are trying to improve. For example, if your need is in the area of:

<b>Knowledge:</b>	<b>Read or take a course on a subject related to the knowledge area.</b>
<b>Skill:</b>	<b>Attend training in a technique or model related to the skill.</b>
<b>Motive:</b>	<b>Practice thinking and acting in ways related to the motive.</b>

When selecting developmental activities, take into consideration the fit between the type of competency targeted and the type of activity selected; the likely availability to you of various on-the-job activities; your level of comfort engaging in various types of activity; the challenges you will face in mastering the knowledge area, skill-set or underlying motive; and the resources and time you are likely to have for personal development.



## PARTIALLY COMPLETED SAMPLE DEVELOPMENTAL ACTION PLANNING FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavioral indicator of the competency to be developed	Specific goals, results or outcomes to be achieved	Developmental activities (courses, assignments, readings, OJT, etc.)	Resources needed (cost, time, coaching, feedback, etc.)	Projected start date	Projected finish date
<u><i>Change Management</i></u> Fosters an environment of innovation and change, communicating goals and strategies to appropriate parties and involving them in the changes.	<b>Short term:</b> Make it “safe” for my people to be open in expressing and working through their fears of change.	Practice talking to staff immediately whenever I hear about organizational or agency changes, and learn how to surface their fears and frustrations.	None	5/1	On-going
	<b>Long term:</b> Build a staff that knows how to deal with change and that goes from fearing it to embracing it.	Set aside part of our team meetings to have staff report on their change initiatives.	None	5/1	On-going
<u><i>Change Management</i></u> Uses business operations performance measurement and other data to identify opportunities for, and measure the progress of, process improvement changes.	<b>Short term:</b> Find out how our agency’s financial and statistical reports are generated and configured.	Speak with budget officers, financial analysts and program analysts in our agency.	None	1/15	On-going
	<b>Long term:</b> Become proficient in using a variety of measurement tools to analyze before-after fiscal and statistical results.	Take courses in budgeting, financial analysis and operations research at the local community college.	Approx. \$ 900/course	1/30	12/30

## BLANK DEVELOPMENTAL ACTION PLANNING FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavioral indicator of the change management competency	Specific goals, results or outcomes to be achieved	Developmental activities (courses, assignments, readings, OJT, etc.)	Resources needed (cost, time, coaching, feedback, etc.)	Projected start date	Projected finish date
	<p>Short-term:</p>    <p>Long-term:</p>				
	<p>Short-term:</p>    <p>Long-term:</p>				

Behavioral indicator of the change management competency	Specific goals, results or outcomes to be achieved	Developmental activities (courses, assignments, readings, OJT, etc.)	Resources needed (cost, time, coaching, feedback, etc.)	Projected start date	Projected finish date
	<b>Short-Term:</b>          <b>Long-Term:</b>				
	<b>Short-Term:</b>          <b>Long-Term:</b>				