



CHANGE AGENTS

the key to successful change

The role of change agent is vital to the success of any change project that a company undertakes. However, while many people have heard the phrase, the true nature of the role is often not fully understood.

Every member of a change team becomes a **change agent**, so if you can choose the team to deliver change in your organisation, you should think carefully about whom to include.

From our experience of working with change teams, Inspired Partners has found successful **change agents** have the following characteristics and skills:

- **Credibility** – with key sponsors and team members
- **Awareness** – of the organisation's culture and the needs of the team
- **Enthusiasm** – for the project and the business overall
- **Reliability** – to do the job they say they will
- **Flexibility** – to do the job when and where needed
- **Good Communication Skills** – able to use clear language and actively listen to others
- **'Can Do' Attitude** – with a desire to overcome resistance

If you do have the luxury of a number of candidates, it's worth evaluating them against these characteristics before choosing your team.

Once you've made your decision, it's not sufficient just to say "you are a change agent". Each team member needs to understand:

- What that means to the project in general
- What it means to them in particular
- How their behaviours can affect the long-term success of the change





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Inspired Partners always starts by explaining to the team that they have all taken on the role of **change agent**, which means acting and behaving in particular ways. They must proactively act as agents for the change and promote the project at all appropriate opportunities by:

- Informing others of the benefits and building understanding
- Emphasising 'what is in it' for the individuals and addressing concerns
- Using language that engages others
- Leading by example

We also help prepare them for the common pitfalls that they may fall into, which can include:

- Assuming that this change is happening in isolation from all other changes
- Attempting change without real sponsorship
- Overstating the readiness for change in the business
- Being seduced by activity
- Not realising how much time it takes to be effective
- Underestimating the impact that they as individuals can have on the overall success of the change

It's perfectly normal for everyone to have frustrating moments when working on a change programme, but **change agents** need to recognise the effect of having a 'negative moment' in front of individuals who may already be sceptical about the change. One negative comment or action can undo months of positive communications and progress. Frustrations must be kept within the change team and team members must support each other during the difficult times.