

Ask for Help

Since the task of introducing a new idea into an organization is a big job, look for people and resources to help your efforts.

The job of introducing a new idea into an organization is too big for one person, especially a newcomer who doesn't know the ropes

Ask as many people as you can for help when you need it. Don't try to do it alone.

Big Jolt

To provide more visibility for the change effort, invite a high profile person into your organization to talk about the new idea.

You've been carrying out some activities to give your new idea some visibility in your organization, but at some point you need to attract more attention to the effort.

Arrange for a high-profile person who can talk about the new idea to do a presentation in your organization.

Bridge-Builder

Pair those who have accepted the new idea with those who have not.

Some won't listen to even the most enthusiastic proponent if it's someone they don't know or trust.

Ask for help from Early Adopters, Connectors, or gurus who have already adopted the innovation. Introduce them to people who have interests similar to theirs and encourage them to discuss how they found the innovation useful.

Brown Bag

Use the time when people normally eat lunch to provide a convenient and relaxed setting for hearing about the new idea.

People can be too busy to attend optional meetings held during work hours.

Hold the meeting in the middle of the day and invite attendees to bring their own lunches.

Champion Skeptic

Ask for Help from strong opinion leaders, who are skeptical of your new idea, to play the role of “official skeptic.” Use their comments to improve your effort, even if you don’t change their minds.

Some of the resistors to the new idea are strong opinion leaders in your organization.

Ask for help from a skeptical opinion leader to play the role of “official skeptic” or “official realist.”

Connector

To help you spread the word about the innovation, Ask for Help from people who have connections with many others in the organization.

Your organization is too big for you to personally contact everyone.

Ask for help in spreading the word about the innovation from those who know and communicate with many others in your organization.

Corporate Angel

To help align the innovation with the goals of the organization, get support from a high-level executive.

Support from local management will provide some attention and resources for the new idea, but you need high-level support to have a more lasting impact.

Enlist the support of a high-level executive who has a special interest in the new idea and will provide direction and the resources to support it.

Corridor Politics

Informally work on decision makers and key influencers before an important vote to make sure they fully understand the consequences of the decision.

It's difficult to address the concerns of all decision makers when a new idea is raised in a meeting.

Informally work on decision makers and key influencers one-on-one before the vote. Try to get the approval of anyone who can kill it.

Dedicated Champion

To increase your effectiveness in introducing your new idea, make a case for having the work part of your job description.

Effectively introducing a new idea into any organization is too much work for a volunteer.

Make a case for including the change initiative as part of your job description.

Do Food

Make an ordinary gathering a special event by including food.

Usually a meeting is just another ordinary, impersonal event.

Make food available at the meeting.

e-Forum

Set up an electronic bulletin board, distribution list, listserv, or writeable Web site for those who want to hear more.

You need to initiate and maintain regular contact with people who might be interested in your new idea.

Create a publicly accessible electronic, interactive forum. Advertise its existence. Keep it alive, active, and growing.

Early Adopter

Win the support of the people who can be opinion leaders for the new idea.

To create more impact for the new idea in an organization, interest must extend beyond the initial group of supporters.

Look for the opinion leaders in your organization and ask for help from them.

Early Majority

To create commitment to the new idea in the organization, you must convince the majority.

The support of Innovators and Early Adopters will spark the new idea in the organization, but you need much more to truly have impact.

Expand the group that has adopted the new idea rapidly to include the more deliberate majority that will allow the idea to establish a strong foothold in your organization.

Evangelist

To begin to introduce the new idea into your organization, do everything you can to share your passion for it.

You want to get a new idea going in your organization but you don't know where to start.

To introduce a new idea into your organization, let your passion for this new idea drive you.

External Validation

To increase the credibility of the new idea, bring in information from sources external to the organization.

Before being persuaded to accept a new idea, people want assurance that the idea has validity outside the organization.

Give people in the organization external sources of useful information about the new idea.

Fear Less

Turn resistance to the new idea to your advantage.

Any innovation is disruptive, so resistance is likely.

Ask for help from resisters.

Group Identity

Give the change effort an identity to help people recognize that it exists.

It's harder to introduce a new idea when people aren't aware that the effort exists.

Give the change effort an identity.

Guru on Your Side

Enlist the support of senior-level people who are esteemed by members of the organization.

People in an organization can be reluctant to show interest in a new idea unless it has the support of colleagues they respect.

Enlist the support of experienced, senior-level gurus who are respected by both managers and non-managers alike.

Guru Review

Gather anyone who is a Guru on Your Side and other interested colleagues to evaluate the new idea for managers and other developers.

Some managers and developers are supportive, but others are reluctant to join in until they have some assurance that this is a worthwhile idea.

Gather a review team of respected gurus in the organization to evaluate the new idea.

Hometown Story

To help people see the usefulness of the new idea, encourage those who have had success with it to share their stories.

People who haven't used the new idea may not be aware that other people have used it successfully.

Encourage individuals to share their experiences with the new idea in an informal, highly interactive session.

In Your Space

Keep the new idea visible by placing reminders throughout your organization.

Unless people are reminded, they may forget about the new idea.

Post information about the new idea around your organization – wherever people are likely to see it and discuss it.

Innovator

When you begin the change initiative, Ask for Help from colleagues who like new ideas.

You need people to jumpstart the new idea in your organization.

Find people who are quick to adopt new ideas. Talk to them about the innovation and ask for help in sparking an interest for it in the organization.

Involve Everyone

For a new idea to be successful across an organization, everyone should have an opportunity to support the innovation and make his own unique contribution.

Even when you ask for help, there's a tendency to take on too much. Others, especially those who don't see the value in the new idea, may think of it as "your show."

Just Do It

To prepare to spread the word about the new idea, use it in your own work to discover its benefits and limitations.

You don't have any experience with the innovation yourself, just good ideas that might work. You believe that the innovation can help the organization but you're not sure.

Gather first-hand information on the benefits and limitations of the innovation by integrating it into your current work.

Just Enough

To ease learners into the more difficult concepts of a new idea, give a brief introduction and then make more information available when they are ready.

Difficult, complex concepts can overwhelm novices.

When introducing the new idea, concentrate on the fundamentals and give learners a brief description of the more difficult concepts. Provide more information when they are ready.

Just Say Thanks

To show your appreciation, say “Thanks” in the most sincere way you can to everyone who helps you.

People feel unappreciated when they work hard and no one notices or cares.

Find everyone who has helped you and say thanks to the most sincere way you can.

Local Sponsor

Ask for Help from first-line management. When your boss supports the tasks you are doing to introduce the new idea, you can be even more effective.

You need attention and resources for the new idea.

Find a first-line manager to support your new idea, ideally, your boss.

Location, Location, Location

To avoid interruptions that disrupt the flow of an event, try to hold significant events off site.

When you hold an event onsite at the organization, attendees can be easily distracted with their nearby work obligations.

Hold significant events of a half-day or longer offsite but nearby.

Mentor

When a project wants to get started with the new idea, have someone around who understands it and can help the team.

People want to use the new idea on their project but don't know how to begin.

Find an outside or internal consultant or trainer to provide mentoring and feedback while project members are getting started with the innovation.

Next Steps

Take time near the end of an event about the new idea to identify what participants can do next.

A presentation in a training class or another event can leave attendees uncertain about what to do with what they have learned.

Take time near the end of a presentation to brainstorm and discuss how the participants can apply the new information.

Personal Touch

To convince people of the value in a new idea, show how it can be personally useful and valuable to them.

Presentations and training will arouse curiosity and some interest in the new idea, but you must do more – the old habits of most individuals will not die without effort.

Talk with individuals about the ways in which the new idea can be *personally* useful and valuable to them.

Piggyback

When faced with several obstacles in your strategy to introduce something new, look for a way to piggyback on a practice in your organization.

Several procedures or hurdles are required for the introduction of your new idea but you're looking for an easier way.

Piggyback the new idea on a well-accepted practice in the organization.

Plant the Seeds

To spark interest, carry materials (seeds) and display (plant) them when the opportunity arises.

You want to spare some interest in the new idea.

Carry materials about the new idea to events where people gather. Put them in places where people are likely to pick them up and look at them.

The Right Time

Consider the timing when you schedule events or when you ask others for help.

When people face deadlines and have too much to do, they tend to focus on things that move them toward completing necessary tasks and making the deadlines.

Be aware of those times when people are likely to be the busiest. Schedule events and requests for help outside those times.

Royal Audience

Arrange for management and members of the organization to spend time with a Big Jolt visitor.

You want to get the most out of a visit from a famous person.

Use spare hours or lunchtime during the day or evenings, before and/or after the featured presentation, to make the visitor available for teams, individuals, or managers.

Shoulder to Cry On

To avoid becoming too discouraged when the going gets tough, find opportunities to talk with others who are also struggling to introduce a new idea.

When you're struggling to introduce a new idea, it's easy to become discouraged.

Get together regularly with others who are also working to introduce the new idea or are interested in the process.

Small Successes

To avoid becoming overwhelmed by the challenges and all the things you have to do when you're involved in an organizational change effort, celebrate even small successes.

Every organizational change effort has its ups and downs. It's a difficult process.

As you carry on Step by Step, take the time to recognize and celebrate successes, especially the small ones.

Smell of Success

When your efforts result in some visible positive result, people will come out of the woodwork to talk to you. Treat this opportunity as a teaching moment.

When you start to have some success, newcomers will ask you about the innovation.

When people comment on the success they see with the innovation, treat their inquiry as a teaching moment.

Stay in Touch

Once you've enlisted the support of key persons, don't forget about them and make sure they don't forget about you.

Your key supporters have too many things to think about and can forget about the new idea.

Stay in touch with your key supporters.

Step by Step

Relieve your frustration at the enormous task of changing an organization by taking one small step at a time toward your goal.

You wonder what your plan should be for introducing the new idea into your organization.

Use an incremental approach in the change initiative, with short-term goals, while keeping your long-term vision.

Study Group

Form a small group of colleagues who are interested in exploring or continuing to learn about a specific topic.

There may be little or no money for formal training on the specific topic.

Form a group of no more than eight colleagues who are interested in exploring and studying an interesting topic.

Sustained Momentum

Take a pro-active approach to the ongoing work of sustaining the interest in the new idea in your organization.

The many other things that need to be done will tempt you to put the task of introducing the new idea on the back burner for a while. But this can cause you and other people to lose interest in it.

Take a pro-active approach in the organization to the ongoing work of sustaining interest in the new idea. Take some small action each day, no matter how insignificant it may seem, to move you closer to your goal.

Tailor Made

To convince people in the organization of the value they can gain from the new idea, tailor your message to the needs of the organization.

Individuals can be intrigued by interesting ideas, but to have impact on an organization, the idea has to be more than just interesting.

Tailor your message about the innovations to the needs of the organization.

Test the Waters

When a new opportunity presents itself, see if there is any interest by using some of the patterns in this language and then evaluating the result.

When you learn about something new, you wonder if the organization is ready for it.

Choose a pattern or two from this collection, use them, and then evaluate the result.

Time For Reflection

To learn from the past, take time at regular intervals to evaluate what is working well and what should be done differently.

We make the same assumptions and the same mistakes based on those assumptions over and over again.

Pause in any activity to reflect on what is working well and what should be done differently.

Token

To keep a new idea alive in a person's memory, hand out tokens that can be identified with the topic being introduced.

People may be enthusiastic about a topic when they first hear about it, but the enthusiasm quickly wanes as they forget tomorrow what excited them today.

Hand out small tokens that will remind people of the new idea.

Trial Run

When the organization is not willing to commit to the new idea, suggest that they experiment with it for a short period and study the results.

There are people in the organization who are expressing an endless supply of objections to the new idea. It would be daunting, or even impossible, task to try to ease everyone's worries before the new idea is adopted.

Suggest that the organization, or a segment of the organization, try the new idea for a limited period as an experiment.

Whisper in the General's Ear

Managers are sometimes hard to convince in a group setting, so meet privately to address any concerns.

Managers who are against your new idea have the power to block your progress.

Set up a short one-one-one meeting with a manager to address any concerns with the innovation and the effort to introduce it.

These patterns are covered in:

Fearless Change
Patterns for Introducing New Ideas
Mary Lynn Manns, Ph.D., Linda Rising, Ph. D.
©2005 Pearson Publishing ISBN 0-201-74157-1

I converted the patterns to this format so I could print them on 3x5 cards (Avery 5388) so I could flip through them any time I've got a couple of minutes.

If you don't have the book, get it. If you have the book and haven't read it, do so now. The book contains background material not included in these cards. don@donaldegray.com