



# **OVERSTRAND MUNICIPALITY**

## **CHANGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

*Approved by Council:  
24 April 2023*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this strategy is to provide the Overstrand Municipality with a framework of the concepts and theories of change management and tips/tools on how the Municipality can lead a successful and rewarding organizational change initiative. The strategy focuses on two streams; the “process” or change model, and the “transition” or emotional impact when embarking on a change effort.

As leaders of change all stakeholders have a critical role to play in ensuring that the change effort is successful. At Overstrand Municipality, the Human Resources Department can provide guidance and support in understanding the change process.

## 2. CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Below figure is a depiction of the Change Management Plan Roadmap that is being utilised by the Overstrand Municipality.



Figure 1.: *Change Management Plan Roadmap*

- Change management is a *structured approach* to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state in order to fulfil or implement a vision and strategy.
- It is an organizational process aimed at empowering employees to accept and embrace changes in their current environment.
- Change management means defining and adopting corporate strategies, structures, procedures, and technologies to deal with variations stemming from internal and external conditions.

- Change management is a critical part of any project that leads, manages, and enables people to accept new processes, technologies, systems, structures, and values.
- It is the set of activities that helps people transition from their present way of working and thinking to a more desired approach to work tasks and duties.
- At Overstrand Municipality, change management should be the continuous process of aligning the Municipality with its span of business and doing so more responsively and effectively than competitors

### 3. CHANGE STARTS WITH A VISION

A change effort or initiative must start with a vision. Whether change is prompted by external (political, economic, social or technological) or internal factors (policy, systems or structure), creating a vision will clarify the direction for the change. In addition, the vision will assist in motivating those that are impacted to take action in the right direction.

### 4. WHY DO CHANGE EFFORTS FAIL?

In any organisation, there can be a significantly negative impact on a department when a change initiative fails or its implementation is unplanned. Organizations often commit the following common errors that will hinder their change efforts:

#### 4.1 Errors Common to Organisational Change Efforts

The following table provides the eight errors common to organisational change efforts:

Allowing too much complacency
Failing to garner leadership
Underestimating the power of vision
Under- communicating the vision
Permitting obstacles to block the new vision
Failing to create short-term wins
Declaring victory too soon
Neglecting to anchor changes firmly within the culture of the organisation

**Table 1:** Eight errors of change efforts

### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE

Understanding the roles and responsibilities that stakeholders play in the change effort is essential. They will provide clarity on the expectations, project scopes and responsibilities of each contributor. Typically, there are four key roles: the Sponsor (Director), Champion (Manager), Change Agent (Human Resources) and Affected (Employees and Unions). The unions need to be the catalyst. The below information clearly defines the different role players responsibilities:



Figure 2.: *Change Management Key Role players*

### 5.1 Sponsor:

The sponsor is the Director of the specific Directorate and:

- Has overall responsibility for the Directorate and its various divisions;
- Is the person with authority over the project and over individuals who will implement change;
- Provides funding, resolves issues and scope changes;
- Approves major deliverables and provides high-level direction; and
- Has a clear vision, identified goals and measurable outcomes for change initiatives.

### 5.2 Champion:

The champion is the Manager of the specific division that:

- Has the overall day-to-day authority;
- Provides the Sponsor with information about issues and challenges;
- Engages and involves the relevant stakeholders;
- Enables the change vision;
- Encourages (and sometimes enforces) new and desired behaviours.

### 5.3 Change Agent:

The change agent is the person or group that assists a division to implement the proposed change. The focus areas of the change agent are to:

- Assisting, advising and coaching the Sponsor and Champion in the change effort;
- May be engaged in a number of roles (for example: data gatherer, educator, advisor, facilitator or coach).
- Has no direct-line authority to or over the Sponsor or Stakeholders;

- Act as subject matter experts in the change management process.

## 6. PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED TO IMPLEMENT CHANGE IN OVERSTRAND MUNICIPALITY

- Establish a clear vision for the change management process. Paint a picture of where the organization will end up and the anticipated outcomes. Make certain the picture is one of reality and not what people wish would occur. When this vision and communication is done well, each employee should be able to describe what he or she will experience on the other side of making the change. For employees, the most significant factor is the impact of the change in their job. This is an often-neglected step.
- Appoint the Director Management Services or her delegee as executive champion who owns the change management process and makes certain other senior managers, as well as other responsible staff members in the organization, are involved. Change is easier when a large number of staff who must change are involved in planning and implementation.
- Pay attention to the changes occurring. Ask employees how things are going. Focus on progress and barriers to change management. One of the worst possible scenarios is to have the senior managers ignore the process.
- Sponsor portions of the change or the change management process, as an involved participant, to increase active involvement and interaction with other organization members.
- If personal or managerial actions or behaviours require change, for the changes to take hold in the organization, model the new behaviours and actions. Walk the talk. Senior leaders play a huge role in educating their reporting staff on the expected and desired behaviour changes.
- Establish a structure that will support the change. This may take the form of a Steering Committee.
- Solicit and act upon feedback from other members of the organization. What's working? Not working? How can you improve the processes?
- Recognize the human element in the change. People have different needs and different ways of reacting to change. They need time to deal with and adjust to change.
- Senior leaders must participate in the training that other organization members attend, but, even more importantly, they must exhibit their "learning" from the sessions, readings, interactions, tapes, books or research.
- Be honest and worthy of trust. Treat people with the same respect that you expect from them. Change is difficult and progresses when the people involved feel supported, respected, and that you care about them.

## 7. STEPS TO IMPLEMENT CHANGE MANAGEMENT

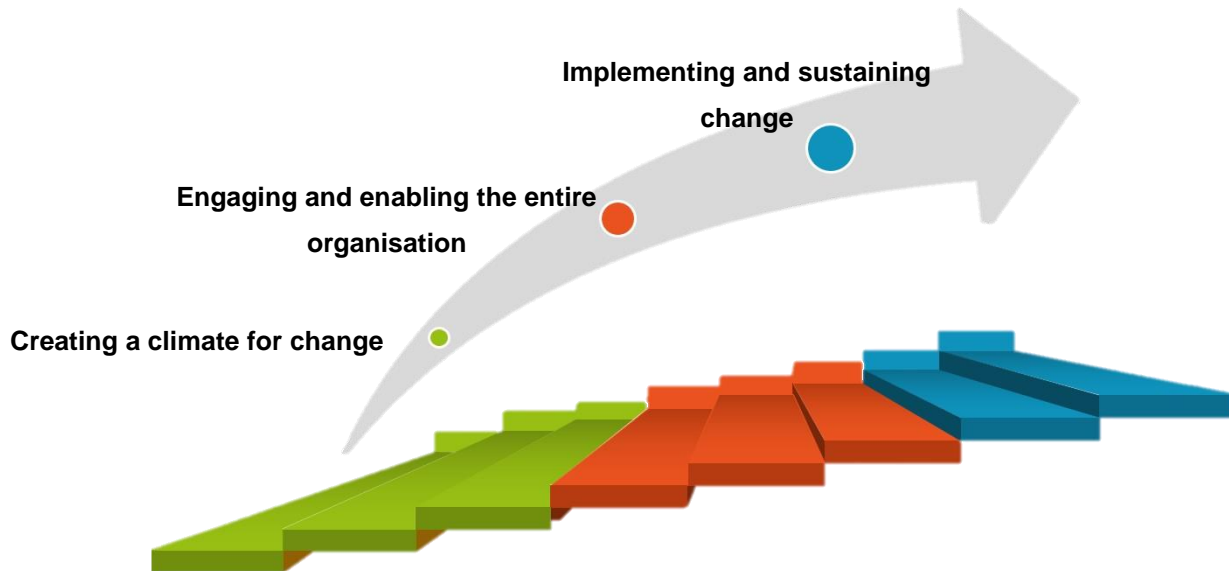


Figure 3.: *Key steps to implement change*

### 7.1 Step 1: Establishing a sense of urgency

Create a sense of urgency to ensure that employees of the Overstrand Municipality will cooperate in the change process. It is necessary to remove any obstacles such as perceptions, fear of the unknown, poor communication and ineffective leadership that might have an influence on urgency and create the impression that issues are under control and that everything is in order. It is necessary that intrepid steps be taken where leadership will be critical to achieve set goals. Visible crises are helpful to ensure that municipal employees realise the urgency to make necessary changes within the span of their control; unfortunately, it is not always wise or possible to wait until these situations occur. The task to create a feeling of urgency is usually that of senior management, -however leaders in lower levels of the Municipality also play crucial roles within the process.

### 7.2 Step 2: Creating the guiding coalition

In the process of creating a coalition to lead the change process, it is necessary to identify a group of officials who will unwaveringly drive the change process. There are four important characteristics that such a group must have in order to play an effective guiding role. The characteristics include position power, expertise, credibility and leadership. Strong management and leadership skills are critical for an change process to be successful. The element of trust must specifically be present within the coalition to ensure the presence of a strong and loyal team leading toward the achievement of mutual goals and objectives.

### 7.3 Step 3: Developing a vision and strategy

It is very important to create a clear roadmap of the process and indicate what the end goal of the suggested change will be. The purpose of a clear vision is to clarify the direction of change, to motivate stakeholders to adopt the direction

and change, and to coordinate the actions of individuals to add value to the mutual goals and objectives of the Municipality. The characteristics of a clear vision will mean that it will have to be imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused and flexible.

#### 7.4 **Step 4: Communicating the change vision**

It is critical that the chosen vision should be communicated as far as possible within the Municipality to ensure that it is fully understood. It often happens that the message is either under-communicated, over-communicated or communicated inconsistently, either way has a negative impact on creating a general understanding of the change and its process. All communication should be as simple and clear as possible to make the necessary impact and to ensure that the message is understood. It is further suggested that the message should be consistently communicated in as many as possible forums and through a wide variety of mediums, to improve the probability of employees accepting and understanding the message. It is also important that the behaviour of leadership consistently be in line with the vision that is communicated. It is also important that communication should be kept open and between all stakeholders to ensure that any concerns and uncertainties be addressed timeously.

#### 7.5 **Step 5: Empowering employees for broad-based action**

It is critical that the culture of the Municipality changes in adaptation to the change process. The main purpose of this step is to remove any of the following possible barriers from the environment:

- 7.5.1 The organisational structure of the Municipality: The organisational structure must compliment the changes process
- 7.5.2 The available skill sets within the Municipality: It is important that the correct training be provided at the correct time
- 7.5.3 Current systems at the Overstrand Municipality and not be aligned with the proposed vision: The way things were done in the past should be altered to accommodate the new direction and vision
- 7.5.4 Resistance of officials: It often happens that there are one or two individuals in an organisation who absolutely resist any form of change and influence several other employees within the organisation. It is suggested that extra effort be made to discuss the situation with resistant officials and if consensus cannot be reached, that various disciplinary processes be followed.

#### 7.6 **Step 6: Generating short-term wins**

It is important to realise that the process of change takes time and it is therefore important that necessary attention be focused on short-term objectives. The results of short-term wins can be a motivating factor for all stakeholders involved and furthermore gives assurance that the process is on the right track. When a short term objective is achieved at the Municipality, a form of reward or recognition should be given to actively involve participants to the process.

A good short-term win will have three characteristics; namely, that it is visible, unambiguous, and related to the suggested change. It is argued that short-term wins have an important role to play and that it helps to show that there



is progress and that the vision is appropriate and achievable. It also helps to retain support from the various role-players throughout the process and also helps to keep momentum.

### 7.7 Step 7: Consolidating gains and producing more change

The reality is that resistance never completely disappears and it is therefore important to monitor the situation throughout the change process. It is possible that one incident of resistance can negatively influence progress on the road to change and it is therefore important to incorporate current change into the Municipality's organisational culture as the process progresses.

### 7.8 Step 8: Anchoring new approaches in the culture

The culture within the Overstrand Municipality is of great importance as it refers to behaviour and shared values within the Municipality. It is critical that any new approaches adopted be in line with this culture or that the culture modifies to accommodate the change. There are two general scenarios possible when considering the important role that culture plays in an organisation. The first scenario is where the basis of the culture stays the same and only certain elements are changed. It is then important to ensure that those changed elements are incorporated with the old culture that will still exist. The other scenario is where new practices will replace the current culture in the organisation and this will only happen at the end of the process, after new experiences and beliefs have been developed. Although attitude and behaviour of employees can change throughout the process, it will only become part of the culture towards the end of the process.

## 8. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

A clear communications strategy should be devised for any change process within the Municipality. Effective communication during any change effort will serve to provide employees with timely and accurate information which can positively influence whether the Municipality maintains employee productivity and morale and overcomes resistance to change. In developing the communication strategy to effectively communicate change it is important that the Municipality utilise the 4 P's of communicating change in order to ensure effective, sufficient and sustainable communication throughout the organisation is being practiced.

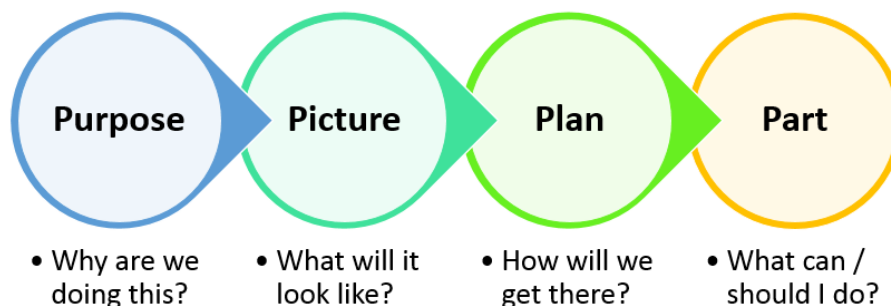


Figure 4.: 4P's of communication

## 8.1 Communicate clearly, early, and consistently

Sudden change is often jarring therefore it is important to be clear and specific from the start. At no point in the process should employees be left with queries or concerns. The following information should assist when addressing employees:

- Who is going to be affected by the change and who will be responsible for carrying out the change process?
- What is the change?
- Where will the change happen? This could apply to a physical location, such as a change that only affects certain departments, or it could apply to a specific process, such as switching online meetings from one platform to another.
- When will the change take effect?
- Why is the change needed?

Providing clear and comprehensive details is crucial and is best delivered by municipal officials who are fully informed and on board with the change details and process.

## 8.2. Communicate through the right people

- Employees generally want to hear about change through the changemaker and their direct supervisor. Thorough change management communication requires preparing multiple persons within the Municipality to be advocates for change, which includes managers and supervisors who will be communicating with their respective teams.
- The desire for change must cascade down so that each level of management and each reporting occupational level in the municipality that has a responsible official communicating directly with those affected.
- If the purpose of the change isn't fully explained to managers and supervisors, they cannot approach a conversation about the change with confidence which may result in mistrusting employees. Educating managers and supervisors about the change is crucial. Management should not only understand the details of why the change is needed and how it will be implemented but also how it will affect their employees specifically.

## 8.3. Communicate through multiple channels

A variety of communication mediums should be used as individuals have different communication styles and preferences. It is important to reach people through the channels they respond to best. The various suggested mediums for communication have various pros and cons:

- **In-person meetings and presentations-** it's helpful to allow for immediate questions, but we've all seen employees' eyes glaze over during a meeting that's scheduled too close to lunch – so be ready to reiterate what's happening through other mediums.
- **Email and newsletters** – Email is great for giving the highlights, but when people are trying clear this inbox, they'll skim over details, making them unlikely to fully understand or support the change.
- **Videos and blogs** – Ongoing communication through explainer videos, in-dept blogs, and collaborative tools ensures that employees have plenty of chances to learn about the change and ask questions.

- **Collaborative tools such as Slack and forums** – Consider setting up a Slack channel or internal forum dedicated to the change. You can regularly post articles and video that guide employees through the particulars of the change, while also allowing them to engage in a conversation about it.

Using a variety of channels or mediums for communication leads to better coverage and comprehension.

#### 8.4. Answer the questions, “what’s in it for me?” and “what does it mean to me?”

- Appeal to people’s individual concerns by answering the questions, “what’s in it for me?” (WIIFM) and “what does it mean to me?” (WDIMTM).
- Customize communication-based off on each employee’s or team’s level of involvement in the change and how they will be impacted.
- Let’s say you’re switching payroll from weekly processing to biweekly.
- It’s going to affect everyone within the organization, but accounting will be impacted much more than other departments, so you’ll need to communicate with each department differently.
- What’s in it for me? - accounting vs. other departments
- In this example, processing payroll weekly put too much strain on the accounting department and often resulted in payroll being released late.
- For accounting, the WIIFM is that they have more time to process payroll, so they can release payroll on a regular schedule.
- For every other department, the WIIFM is that they will always know when to expect their pay checks and won’t have to waste time following up with accounting.
- What does it mean to me? - How will this impact each person and department specifically?
- The impact on each department is different as well. The WDIMTM for accounting is that they will need to change their payroll process, so the transition will require more effort on their part than the other departments, whose WDIMTM is simply that they will have to adjust to getting paid biweekly instead of weekly.
- This is an example of the right person needing to communicate the change. Obviously, accounting is going to want to hear from someone who understands their day-to-day duties and can speak to the specifics of the change as it applies to their department. When that person is prepared with answers to WIIFM and WDIMTM, they are showing employees that the change is being made with them in mind.

#### 8.5. Prepare for resistance

- They may move through the denial, grief, bargaining, and depression stages several times before landing on acceptance. Preparing for emotional reactions allows you to communicate with empathy.
- Before announcing a change, map out potential objections and prepare responses to them. If you plan to switch email from Outlook to Front, employees will likely object to learning a new tool.
- Managers might complain that it will take too much time for them to learn the new software and train their employees on it as well.

- If you simply announce the change, employees could be in denial that it will actually happen and put no effort into making the switch.
- Managers may try to bargain their way out of it, swearing that it would be more efficient to stick with Outlook.
- As people work their way through their emotional reactions, you need to be ready to guide them.
- Your prepared response might be that the transition will happen gradually over the course of two months and that training and ongoing support will be provided through digital adoption solutions such as in-app training.
- Show your employees that you have a plan.
- If you introduce the change alongside a demo of What fix walkthroughs that guide each user through the new features in Front, employees won't feel as overwhelmed.
- You can combat denial and grief with additional resources that show your team the benefits of Front versus Outlook and shut down bargaining with firm but empathetic responses that back up your decision to change.
- Lift employees out of the depression stage by celebrating small wins, such as showing off how Front's segmented inboxes allow everyone to achieve inbox 0 faster.
- Even the smallest changes will be met with resistance.
- Communicating with compassion and understanding will help you move past it.

## 8.6. Listen to feedback

- Change management communication needs to flow both ways. You may believe you've designed the greatest change implementation process of all time, but if you aren't listening to the people whom the change affects, you've already failed.
- Poor change management communication won't just negatively affect the change process; it's likely to spread to other areas of the business. Change is stressful. When employees are stressed out, their ability to process information is reduced by 80%.
- That's a huge drop. Stressed-out employees struggle to recall information. They also tend to get defensive and feel threatened by change. Communication is critical. If you don't talk to your team, productivity and morale will suffer.
- It's possible to remain firm in your decision to change while still allowing those affected by the change to weigh in on how it will be implemented. Use any one of these communication channels to gather feedback:
  - Meetings, particularly in smaller groups so that you answer WIIFM and WDIMTM
  - Online chats or forums, encouraging group discussions to address common concerns
  - Surveys during the transition, checking on reactions to the change throughout the process
  - Keeping a pulse on the progress of acceptance (or lack thereof) using surveys will help you identify potential roadblocks early on. You may also discover that your employees have some innovative ideas for change management by reading online chats or forums.
  - Allowing your employees to influence the change process is a great way to increase enthusiasm and commitment to the change. Be open to altering your initial implementation change management plan based on the feedback you receive. Remember, the same destination can often be reached via multiple routes.

- Keep in mind that conversations about the change may need to happen several times – when it comes to change management, repetition is not a bad thing.

### 8.7. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself

- Repetition is an essential aspect of change management communication. You may have been planning this change for some time, but it is new to everyone else. Employees will need to hear about the change many times and in many ways in order to fully understand and support it.
- Consider the classic marketing 'rule of seven' – people need to hear your message at least seven times before they'll consider taking action; [change implementation](#) is no different.
- When change is first announced, people are preoccupied with how it will affect them personally and don't focus on the details. Their minds are clouded by emotional reactions and initial resistance to change, making it difficult for them to understand the purpose.
- When you repeat your message, you give employees more opportunities to learn about the *why* behind the change and help them understand how it will happen. Repetition gives you the space to put all of the aforementioned communication strategies into practice.

## 9. COMMUNICATIONS TIPS:

- Communicate consistently, frequently, and through multiple channels, including speaking, writing, video, training, focus groups, bulletin boards, intranets, and more about the change.
- Communicate all that is known about the changes, as quickly as the information is available. Make clear that your bias is toward instant communication, so some of the details may change at a later date. Tell people that your other choice is to hold all communication until you are positive about the decisions, goals, and progress, which is disastrous in effective change management.
- Provide significant amounts of time for people to ask questions, request clarification, and provide input. If you've ever been part of a scenario in which a leader presented changes to a large group via overhead transparencies and then fled, you know what bad news this is for change integration. People must feel involved in the change. Involvement creates commitment—nothing else is as significant during a change process.
- Clearly communicate the vision, the mission, and the objectives of the change management effort. Help people to understand how these changes will affect them personally. If you don't help with this process, people will make up their own stories, usually more negative than the truth.
- Recognize that true communication is a conversation. It is two-way, and real discussion must result. It cannot be just a presentation.
- The change leaders or sponsors need to spend time conversing one-on-one or in small groups with the people who are expected to make the changes.

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- Communicate the reasons for the changes in such a way that people understand the context, the purpose, and the need. Practitioners have called this “building a memorable, conceptual framework” and “creating a theoretical framework to underpin the change.”
  - Provide answers to questions only if you know the answer. Leaders destroy their credibility when they provide incorrect information or appear to stumble or back-peddle when providing an answer. It is much better to say you don't know and that you will try to find out.
  - Leaders need to listen. Avoid defensiveness, excuse-making, and answers that are given too quickly. Act with thoughtfulness.
  - Make leaders and change sponsors available, daily when possible, to mingle with others in the workplace.
  - Hold interactive workshops and forums in which all employees can explore the changes together while learning more. Use training as a form of interactive communication and as an opportunity for people to safely explore new behaviors and ideas about change and change management. All levels of the organization must participate in the same sessions.
  - Communication should be proactive. If the rumour mill is already in action, the organization has waited too long to communicate.
  - Provide opportunities for people to network with each other, both formally and informally, to share ideas about change and change management.
  - Publicly review the measurements that are in place to chart progress in the change management and change efforts.
  - Publicize rewards and recognition for positive approaches and accomplishments in the changes and change management. Celebrate each small win publicly.
  - Acknowledge when you do not have the answers.
  - Emphasize that change will happen.
  - Only communicate what has been authorized.
  - This will ensure consistency across the organization.
  - Communicate the business rationale for the change and the events leading up to it.
  - Clarify the vision and specific change plans.
  - Explain the benefits of the change to the broader department or faculty and the individuals on your team.
  - Update your team regularly on the progress of the change.
  - Acknowledge the negatives of the change.
  - Provide as much detail as possible to minimize rumours.

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<b>CURRENT UPDATE :</b>	N/A
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