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Influencing Change Without Buy-In, Resources, or Organisational Readiness

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The reality of working as an Org Psych……..

THE BRIEF

Transform the culture.

THE BUDGET

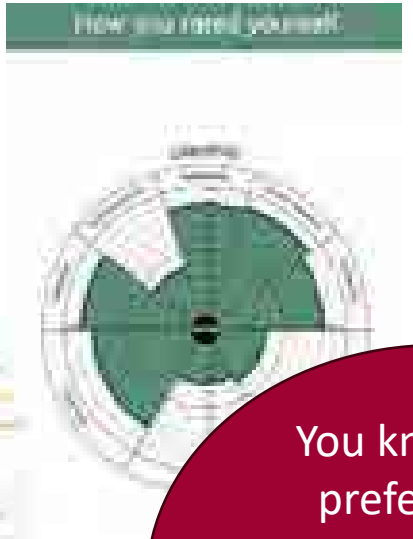


When there is limited

Buy-in

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Know thyself…





You know your preferences.

How do they show up in the way you influence?

















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Your preferences shape your pitch…

If you tend to….	*Consider if you need to….*
Be highly people-centred in your comms and recommendations	Better highlight the evidence, costs and organisational outcomes of your recommendations
Focus strongly on data and analysis	Explain what the findings mean for people's everyday experience
Think out loud and generate enthusiasm	Pause and give others time to process and contribute
Facilitate as an introvert	Use preparation, written reflection and structured participation to work with your energy
Focus on the big picture and future possibilities	Come back to the practical steps, details, resources and implications
Critically evaluate ideas and readily spot flaws	Consider how repeated critique affects trust, confidence and willingness to contribute, offer solution-focused feedback
Prioritise relationships and harmony	Are you avoiding difficult conversations?
Under pressure you respond with x and y…	What conditions make you feel pressure and what strategies can you put in place to manage unhelpful behaviours or thinking? (e.g being over emotional, overly detail focused, overly critical, overly domineering etc.)

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Understand your stakeholder…

Your stakeholders are all **different**.

What do you know about them and what do they most care about?



Values



Motivation level



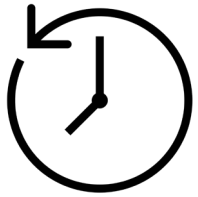
Experience + Tenure



Learning Styles



Backgrounds/ Family/Age



Past jobs/ experiences



Personality / Thinking Style



Skillset + Capability

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The Trust Equation

What do people need to experience when they work with you?

$$\textbf{Trustworthiness} = \frac{\textbf{Credibility}\ \text{I trust what you say.} + \textbf{Reliability}\ \text{You do what you say you'll do.} + \textbf{Intimacy}\ \text{I feel safe with you.}}{\textbf{Self-orientation}\ \text{Whose interests are you focused on?}}$$

There is always an element you can build on when you need to build trust.

Maister, Green & Galford (2000), The Trusted Advisor

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The Trust Equation

Applied to Organisational Psychology Practice

Credibility

Demonstrate your expertise through useful advice and action.

Tailor your message to the audience's priorities and understanding.

Be honest about uncertainty, limitations and what you don't know.

Welcome challenge and change your view when the evidence warrants it.

Reliability

Make realistic commitments about scope, timing and what you can influence.

Close the feedback loop, showing people what happened to their input.

Flag delays early and agree on a revised plan.

Model the behaviours you recommend, including inviting feedback and acting on it.

Intimacy

Be human, sharing appropriate imperfections and vulnerability.

Listen with empathy and be comfortable with silence.

Protect people's confidence, explaining confidentiality and its limits.

Respond constructively to difficult truths, questions and mistakes.

Low Self-Orientation

Get curious about their needs, pressures and definition of success.

Diagnose before prescribing your preferred solution.

Share time, resources and credit generously.

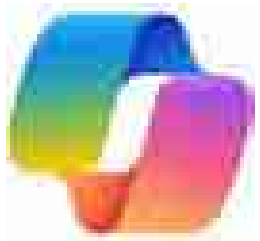
Put their outcomes ahead of your attachment to the recommendation.

Your Personal Brand

What do people expect when they work with you?



People's expectations of you DIRECTLY influence how they buy in to your proposal



AI… a word of caution

My TOP TIPS

- Start with your own thinking, examples and intended message.
- Use AI to tighten or clarify your draft.
- Check for generic language, exaggerated claims and a tone you wouldn't use.
- Read it out loud: **would you *actually* say this?**
- Take responsibility for every sentence you send.
- A handy prompt; "Tighten this without changing my tone or meaning. Keep my examples and plain language. Don't add claims or enthusiasm I haven't expressed."

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Gain buy-in through ACTION

Understand before advising: get to know the org/people what you might be missing.

Make reliable commitments: agree what you can deliver and follow through.

Be clear about your limits: acknowledge uncertainty and explain your role.

Handle information carefully: clarify what you can keep private and what you need to share.

START SMALL: Act on even seemingly small tasks and show your value and impact.

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Buy-In Hack: The Compromise Effect

An option can be more appealing when it becomes a compromise between alternatives.

Two options



Lower cost
Fewer features



Moderate cost
More features

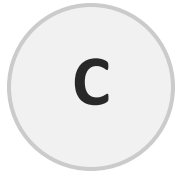
Three options



Lower cost
Fewer features



Moderate cost
More features



Higher cost
Most features

Same option B. A different comparison.

Adapted from Simonson (1989) and Simonson & Tversky (1992)

Example: Survey Vendor Criteria Comparison Table

Requirements	Weighting	Vendor 1	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Key Differentiators
1. Engagement Measure Engagement model, validity, reliability and rigour of assessment	3	3	3	1.5	Based on real case study. Vendor assessment details not included.
2. Survey Design & Useability User Experience + Accessibility	3	3	2.5	1	
3. Reporting & Access Real time data, dashboards, levels of access	3	3	2.5	0.5	
4. Qualitative Data Analysis and visibility to administrators	2	2	2	1	
5. Benchmarking Against relevant industry	2	1.5	0.5	1	
6. Action Planning Tool included, dashboard overview, ability to communicate and prompt	3	3	2.5	0.5	
7. Consulting Capability + Support Skills, knowledge, availability to support	2	2	1	1	
8. Value for Money Quote, other uses, limits around use	3	3	1	2	
9. Timeliness March or April 202x roll out possible	1	1	1	1	
Total Score	**22**	**21.5**	**16**	**9.5**	

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	VENDOR 3	VENDOR 2	VENDOR 1 (RECOMMENDATION)
Pulse Checks only	$HIGH + report and editing fees. Annual subscription minus engagement survey + exec presentation fees	$MEDIUM. Based on 3 year agreement discount	No pulse only option, subscription below applies
Pulse Checks, Engagement Survey and inclusions	$HIGH. Annual subscription, no multi year discount.	$LOW. Based on 3 year agreement discount	$MEDIUM. Based on 2 year 5% subscription discount, all inclusive
Add-ons and inclusions			
Exit Survey. Potential saving: $40k p/annum.	✓	✗	✓
Onboarding	✓	✗	✓
Wellbeing	✗	✗	✓
D&I	✗	✗	✓
Change	✗	✗	✓
Manager 180-360. Recommended for Manager Capability program	Approx $7k set up fee per survey, + additional fees for reporting, customisation and support	Additional survey costs – undisclosed.	Unlimited launches, adjustments and tailoring of questions. Also includes team assessments for managers.

When there are limited

Resources

Your network is one of your most powerful resources

Maintain it when you don't *need* it.

Ask	Who has done this before?
Sense-check	What am I missing? What would you challenge?
Borrow	Templates, lessons, examples, models, frameworks, activities, introductions (with permission).
Connect	Which trusted peer could introduce you to someone who you could learn from?
Reciprocate	Be useful and generous with your own time when you are not asking for anything.

Treat CPD as capability acquisition, not an AHPRA logbook requirement

When the organisation cannot buy capability, build it.

1. Start with the work

What problem are you trying to solve in the next 6–12 months?

2. Find the gap

What knowledge, tool, method or relationship would materially improve your ability to solve it?

3. Leverage learning

Apply it immediately. Share it. Teach it. Turn individual CPD into organisational capability.

CPD can create both expertise and grow your network.

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Resourcing Top Tips



When there is limited

Organisational Readiness and/or Maturity

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What do we mean by *maturity*?

How established are the systems and routines supporting this change?

Clear ownership	Who decides, delivers and follows up?
Repeatable processes	Do people know what happens next?
Reliable follow-through	Does action and review happen consistently?

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Build foundations as you go

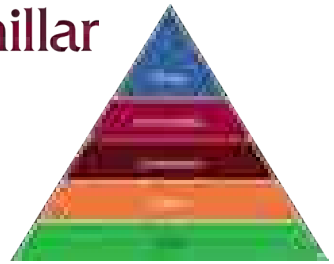
Start with one priority	Choose a manageable piece of the culture work.
Agree who owns it	Name the decision-maker, action owners and follow-up.
Make the process easy	Use a short action template and a clear review date.
Leverage existing practices	Review progress in the executive meeting.

Understanding team dynamics as an influencing lens

Five Behaviours of a Cohesive Team | Patrick Lencioni



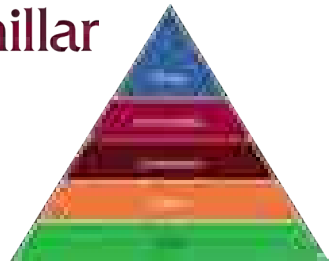
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When team DYSFUNCTIONS are present

Dynamic	What you might observe	How you can create buy-in/readiness/maturity
Trust	Meetings have an elephant in the room vibe, people conceal uncertainty.	• Establish intimacy and create psych safety by having individual conversations and listening • Lead the way by showing vulnerability yourself
Conflict	Unproductive conversations often occur after meetings, between trusted sub-groups. Critical issues are not discussed openly.	• Encourage different views before agreement • Restrain from 'intervening' when the group is having a debate, allow this process to play out organically
Commitment	Ambiguity is prominent in all aspects of the team's functions. Evident confusion amongst the group about direction & priorities, faked agreement to priorities in meetings.	• Push the group for closure around any arising issues • Do not place overly high importance on consensus
Accountability	If someone isn't on their game, the rest of the team will be unwilling to call them on it. Resentment likely to grow between people with different standards of performance, talking behind backs etc.	• Agree on specific actions and owners and Include a standing agenda item where each leader shares an update and reports whether their action is completed, blocked or overdue. • Role model constructive accountability. For example "You committed to X. Where has that landed?" Then: "What needs to happen now, what support do you need? Is it achievable by x?" Model a calm, direct discussion.
Results	Focus and recognition is on individual results and status, not the team/org goal which jeopardises team performance. Individual will not re-prioritise individual goals (e.g. KPIs) for greater good	• Coach CEO/Leader to acknowledge leaders who share resources or resolve problems across departments. • Encourage cross-department actions/collaborations by steering leaders to work together on issues not in their direct remit.

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When the team is HIGH PERFORMING

Dynamic	What you might observe	How you can leverage
Trust	People are open, vulnerable and genuinely welcome inputs, questions and feedback	Bring an unfinished proposal and invite honest feedback: "Where would this fall over in your area?" Ask executives to share a personal leadership behaviour they need to change.
Conflict	Lively, interesting, respectful meetings and discussions. People feel free to voice concerns and others embrace the opportunity to engage in unfiltered passionate debates	Ask the team to challenge an OD initiative e.g.: "What are we avoiding? What could make this fail?" Use their constructive debate to improve the plan prior to implementation.
Commitment	Every member of the team buys in and supports team decisions. Strong clarity around direction and priorities. Team is aligned around common objectives and purpose.	Connect your proposal and highlight how it can enable an agreed priority or organisational mission/purpose/goal/strategy.
Accountability	Teammates hold each other accountable and are not afraid to have difficult conversations with someone who is letting the team down or underperforming.	Encourage and allow the team to serve as the primary accountability mechanism. Advocate for the inclusion of OD-focused leadership actions to be captured in their KPIs. Ask the group to regularly report on progress and challenge missed commitments themselves, with the key leader or CEO maintaining expectations.
Results	The group remains focused on their collective team goal and will always band together and get back on track if team performance is slipping. Ego has a place, when it is advocating for team success.	Give leaders joint ownership of a cross-departmental OD priority/action. **Let them choose the approach, agree shared measures and resolve resource trade-offs together.** Review together how impactful the initiative has been.

Readiness for change



COMMITMENT

Are we **determined** to implement this together?



EFFICACY

Are we **confident** we can implement this together?

Reference: Weiner (2009).

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Assessing readiness: the 12-item ORIC

Organizational Readiness for Implementing Change

1 Disagree 2 Somewhat Disagree 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree 4 Somewhat Agree 5 Agree

1. People who work here feel confident that the organization can get people invested in implementing this change.

2. People who work here are committed to implementing this change.

3. People who work here feel confident that they can keep track of progress in implementing this change.

4. People who work here will do whatever it takes to implement this change.

5. People who work here feel confident that the organization can support people as they adjust to this change.

6. People who work here want to implement this change.

7. People who work here feel confident that they can keep the momentum going in implementing this change.

8. People who work here feel confident that they can handle the challenges that might arise in implementing this change.

9. People who work here are determined to implement this change.

10. People who work here feel confident that they can coordinate tasks so that implementation goes smoothly.

11. People who work here are motivated to implement this change.

12. People who work here feel confident that they can manage the politics of implementing this change.

Interpretation: **BLUE** items assess confidence/efficacy, and **ORANGE** items assess commitment

Shea et al. (2014). Full 12-item version: PhenX Toolkit, Protocol 310701.

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How can I apply the ORIC intel?

Pattern	What to explore	Practical
Committed, but not confident	"We want this, but how could we deliver it?"	Clarify tasks, protect time, provide support and trial one manageable priority to build efficacy.
Confident, but not committed	"We could do it, but why should we prioritise it?"	Explore concerns, relevance and competing priorities. Involve people in shaping the approach. Link impact to a shared problem.
Commitment and confidence both LOW	Doubts about both purpose and feasibility.	Agree the problem worth addressing, then develop a credible first step together.
Commitment and confidence both HIGH	Willingness and confidence are present.	Move into delivery with clear ownership, progress reviews and feedback.
Responses differ substantially	Different experiences, pressures or information.	Explore the disagreement via interviews and then tailor the plan and supports to various area's unique needs.

Help people build the conditions needed to implement the change

Refs: Weiner (2009) and Hagl et al. (2024)

What I have learned not to do…

✗ **Over-engineer**	A technically perfect solution nobody can absorb is not a good solution.
✗ **Lead with the model**	Start with their problem, not your favourite framework.
✗ **Treat resistance as ignorance**	Curiosity is usually more useful than education.
✗ **Wait for perfect sponsorship**	Build enough traction to make sponsorship easier.
✗ **Confuse pragmatism with lowering standards**	Protect the goal, but be flexible in how you get there



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You may not have the budget.
You may not have the people.
You may not have the readiness.
You may not have the buy-in.

YOU.

Your expertise. Your judgement.
Your understanding of human behaviour.
Your relationships. Your networks.
Your creativity. Your influence.

Never underestimate what you bring to the system you're trying to change.



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Thank you!

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