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Commitment, enrolment and compliance

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Commitment, enrolment and compliance

What is it?

In an ideal world, everyone on your team would be 100% committed to an improvement or change project. However, the reality is that staff may range from fully committed to non-compliant and everywhere in between.

The key is to identify what level of support you have and need from each of your stakeholders, so that you know where to focus your drive for commitment. Using the commitment, enrolment and compliance tool means you won't waste time trying to persuade everybody to commit to an improvement project when it isn't necessary.

Working through this process may help you find out which things will really make a difference to your project, as well as identifying allies who may be able to offer valuable support.

When to use it

This tool is useful when you are starting out on a change programme prior to implementation. It is also useful when engaging new stakeholders or team members.

If you invest time in looking ahead and anticipating the obstacles to change, you can work with, or around some of the barriers – or even remove them completely.

For this approach to be really effective, you must make sure you act on some of the obstacles you identify.

How to use it

1. Purpose

If you can see a definite need for change, but other people involved don't see the necessity, you may find it difficult to implement. However, you can still carry out change effectively without everyone's consistent support. It is important to understand where people sit on the spectrum and how engaged they need to be for successful implementation of the change.

2. Process

There is a difference between commitment, enrolment and compliance. While you may *prefer* wholehearted commitment from everybody, you don't actually *need* it for the change to succeed.

Generally, people involved in a change project will position themselves at various points along a continuum in response to proposed action and change. You are more likely to accomplish change if you analyse what level of support you need from each of the participants and then direct your energy towards achieving it, rather than trying to persuade everybody to commit.

Figure 1: Table showing levels of commitment to change

Disposition	Response to change	Actions
Commitment	Want change to happen.	Willing to create whatever structures, systems and frameworks are necessary for it to work.
Enrolment	Want change to happen and will devote time and energy to making it happen within given frameworks.	Act within the spirit of the frameworks.
Genuine compliance	See virtue in what is proposed, do what is asked of them and think proactively about what is needed.	Act within the letter of the frameworks.
Formal compliance	Can describe the benefits of what is proposed and are not hostile to them.	Do what they are asked but no more. Stick to the letter of the framework.
Grudging compliance	Do not accept that there are benefits to what is proposed and do not go along with it.	Do enough of what is asked of them not to jeopardise their position. Voice opposition and hopes for failure. Interpret the letter of the framework.
Non compliance	Do not accept that there are benefits and have nothing to lose by opposing the proposition.	Will not do what is asked of them. Work outside the framework.
Apathy	Neither in support of, nor in opposition to the proposal – just serving time.	Do not care about the framework
Sabotage	Do not want change to happen and may take action to prevent change being successfully implemented	Work against the framework

3. Complete a stakeholder analysis

Identify the key stakeholders and their likely response to the changes you are proposing. You then need to identify actions that may move each group along the continuum to a more positive mindset.

Figure 2: Prepare a table with these headings

Stakeholders	Likely disposition	Actions

TIPS

In section two, we talked about the Pareto principle and the 20–20–60 rule. To recap, this rule claims that in most organisations, 20% of people support process improvement and 20% do not. The people in these two groups are basically fixed and no amount of persuasion is likely to change their view. People in the remaining 60% are interested, but need to be convinced. Applying the 20–20–60 rule suggests focusing on the 60% by addressing their questions and concerns – these are the people who are most likely to get involved in service improvement in the future.

To understand who these people are, a stakeholder analysis will be helpful. More can be gained by combining Pareto analysis with an understanding of where on the spectrum of commitment, enrolment and compliance individuals sit and therefore where and how to focus effort.

4. Continuum of commitment

Continuum of commitment analysis is used to add further depth to stakeholder analysis and provide insight into the level and type of influence leaders may need to exert. (**Stakeholder analysis**)

In the table below, X symbolises where each stakeholder is currently in terms of their commitment and O shows where you need them to be in order to achieve your project aims.

Figure 3: Continuum of commitment table

Stakeholder	Obstructing	No commitment	Let it happen	Help it happen	Make it happen
A		X			O
B				X ← O	
C			O		X
D	X		O		

This is what the table is telling you about your stakeholders:

- Stakeholder A is someone who is currently neutral (has no interest in your service improvement project) but who is key to its success. You really need stakeholder A to be actively engaged and committed to making your improvement project happen so you need to think about how you can help them move towards commitment.
- Stakeholder B is someone who is exactly where you need them to be in terms of their commitment to your project and so you can move on to action with them.

- Stakeholder C is tricky because while they are totally committed to making your improvement project happen, it would be better for the success of your project if they had a more 'hands off/behind the scenes' role.
- Stakeholder D is a different kind of challenge. This is someone who is currently standing in the way of your project's success and who is actively opposed to the work you are planning. You need to spend time understanding both the stakeholder's objections and where you need to move them to – whether this is simply to a neutral or 'let it happen' position or to a more proactive 'help it happen' or 'make it happen' role. Where you need to move stakeholder D to will determine the amount of time you will need to spend understanding them and engaging with them.

What next?

Force field analysis (plenty of resources can be accessed online via a quick search using the term 'Lewin's force field analysis') identifies the factors for and against change. Using these two approaches together may help you prioritise the key people to involve and how they feel about your project or change. This approach is quick and easy to try out and is likely to save you time in the long run.

The clinical engagement tool suggests how you can gain the disposition (commitment and enrolment) you need from clinical colleagues.

Additional resources

Senge, P (2006) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organisation*, 2nd edition, London: Random House

Background

In *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge writes of the difference between commitment, enrolment and compliance, suggesting that while it is more agreeable (and reassuring) to have considerable commitment, it isn't ultimately necessary.

The continuum of commitment was promoted as part of the 'Large Scale Change' work initiated in 2008 by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement and was progressed by the NHS Improvement ACT Academy. The programme of work is currently called *Transformational Change through System Leadership*.