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SMART

SMART BUSINESS RANGE

Managing Change

Lead change without losing the room.

OVERVIEW

Your change on one page

Two kinds of change

Some change has a deadline — a system launch, a restructure, a move. Some never really ends — a market shift, a new way of working. Both need the same disciplines: know who it lands on, name the risks out loud, and notice people quietly reverting once attention moves on.

Use this workbook alongside the interactive planner, or by hand with your team in the room.

THE CHANGE, IN ONE SENTENCE

DEADLINE-BASED OR ONGOING? WHAT'S THE HONEST TIMELINE?

WHY NOW — THE CASE FOR THIS CHANGE

What happens if we don't?

WHAT 'LANDED WELL' LOOKS LIKE IN 90 DAYS

STAKEHOLDERS

Who this actually lands on

Map people, not job titles

Most change plans fail on people who were never mapped — the quiet influencers, those affected downstream, the ones who can block without formal power. For each stakeholder: what do they stand to gain or lose, what will they be most concerned about, and what do they need from you?

WHO	IMPACT ON THEM	THEIR LIKELY CONCERN	ENGAGEMENT PLAN

KOTTER'S 8 STEPS

The spine of the change

Work down the eight steps. For each: what will you actually do, and how will you know it's done? Momentum is usually lost at steps 4–6 — communication, obstacles, and early wins.

1 · CREATE URGENCY — WHY THIS, WHY NOW, FELT NOT JUST STATED**2 · BUILD THE GUIDING COALITION — WHO CARRIES THIS WITH YOU****3 · FORM THE VISION — THE PICTURE PEOPLE CAN REPEAT****4 · COMMUNICATE IT — RELENTLESSLY, IN EVERY CHANNEL****5 · REMOVE OBSTACLES — WHAT'S GENUINELY IN THE WAY****6 · CREATE SHORT-TERM WINS — VISIBLE, EARLY, CELEBRATED****7 · CONSOLIDATE — DON'T DECLARE VICTORY EARLY****8 · ANCHOR IT — INTO HABITS, SYSTEMS, HIRING, REVIEWS**

CHANGE CURVE

Where people really are

Denial, resistance, exploration, commitment

People move through change at different speeds — and a group's loudest voice isn't its average. Track where each stakeholder group actually is, and match your support: information for denial, empathy for resistance, direction for exploration, stretch for commitment.

GROUP	PHASE NOW	EVIDENCE	SUPPORT THEY NEED

RISK & REGRESSION

Name it out loud

Three risks, separated: what could go wrong, what old habit could quietly resurface, and what this change relies on outside your control.

TOP RISK — AND ITS EARLY WARNING SIGN

MOST LIKELY REGRESSION — THE OLD WAY THAT CREEPS BACK

KEY DEPENDENCY OUTSIDE MY CONTROL

READINESS

Before you launch

- ☐ The change fits in one sentence people can repeat.
- ☐ Every affected group is mapped, including downstream.
- ☐ The guiding coalition is named and genuinely bought in.
- ☐ Urgency is felt, not just announced.
- ☐ Early wins are identified and dated.
- ☐ Risks and regressions are written down and owned.
- ☐ You know what 'anchored' looks like at day 90.

WORKING WITH AI

Prompts for leading change

Built on the 4Ds

Give the AI a role, your real context, a constraint, and ask it to show its reasoning. Replace the [bracketed] parts. Treat every answer as a well-read colleague's opinion — useful, never the final word, especially about named people.

Surface the risks you're not naming

DISCERNMENT

To pressure-test your risk register before it goes to anyone senior.

Act as a pre-mortem facilitator. Assume my change has failed six months from now. Here's the plan: "[paste your change, timeline and logged risks]". Working backwards from failure, give me the three most likely causes I haven't listed — including human ones, like people quietly reverting. For each, an early warning sign to watch. Be blunt.

Why this shape: the pre-mortem — assume it failed — unlocks risks a normal what-could-go-wrong never surfaces.

Anticipate objections before the room does

DELEGATION

Before announcing, to prepare honest answers to the pushback you'll actually get.

You are a sceptical but fair member of my team. I'm about to announce: "[the change and why]". Give me the five hardest, most realistic objections — the ones said in the corridor, not the meeting. For each, don't just rebut it: tell me the legitimate concern underneath that I should actually address.

Why this shape: corridor-not-meeting gets the real objections, and the concern-underneath keeps you from just arming rebuttals.

Plan with intention. Execute with precision.