

6 FAH-5 H-170 MANAGING CHANGE

(CT:ICASS-5; 07-21-2006)
(Office of Origin: RM/ICASS)

6 FAH-5 H-171 CHANGE DEFINED

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(Applies to participating ICASS agencies)

- a. ICASS councils are intended to be agents of change devoted to process improvement. The processes of initiating, managing and benefiting from change are aspects of ICASS activity that need special attention.
- b. Change can be revolutionary or incremental:
 - (1) Revolutionary change is abrupt and threatens the status quo. It evokes great uncertainty, anxiety and fear. It can cause upheavals and disruptions that need to be managed;
 - (2) Incremental change is slower, evolutionary, enhances existing practices, and is manageable within existing resources. Resistance is lower.
- c. Managing change requires:
 - (1) Building on success, with quick follow-up to reduce risks and anxiety;
 - (2) Achieving wide participation and acceptance;
 - (3) Involving and empowering those affected by the change;
 - (4) Providing management support; and
 - (5) Being sensitive to issues behind resistance.

6 FAH-5 H-172 GETTING READY TO CHANGE

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- a. Agree on a goal. Initiating change without a plan will lead to unplanned results. Councils and service provider(s) should orchestrate change toward a future objective. Council members and service provider(s) must support the goals, or conflicting signals may negate their efforts. Trying to impose change without such acceptance implies a lack of consensus

and will lead to tension and resistance. The ability of councils to encourage change lies in the network of relationships within the council and with the service provider(s). Councils can use those relationships to persuade and build coalitions of support that bring ideas to fruition. While the earlier sections 6 FAH-5 H-120 Team Building and Communication and 6 FAH-5 H-130 Planning are important for the effective management of day-to-day operations, they are critical to successful change management.

b. What to watch for: Barriers to change include:

- (1) Lack of authority to make changes;
- (2) Underestimating constraints on change. The environment, the amount of resources available, the approach taken by agency headquarters, etc., can impact the ability of council members and service providers to effect significant change;
- (3) Failure to reach consensus on long-term as well as short-term goals;
- (4) Uncertainty about how final goals will be achieved;
- (5) Failure to fully understand key business processes;
- (6) Focusing on too many things at once;
- (7) Failure to get acceptance on desired objectives. This may be due to perceived threats to power, status, authority, or control;
- (8) Failure to communicate;
- (9) Failure to commit appropriate resources. Identify in advance where the money will come from and assess the likelihood that adequate funding will be available. Do not base estimated funding requirements on the best case. Post does not want to get deep into a proposed change only to find that funding has run out; and
- (10) Failure to develop a back-up plan or exit strategy. Do not plan just for success. Change management doesn't always work—sometimes for very good reasons. Have a strategy on what post will do if things do not work out.

6 FAH-5 H-173 FOCUS ON CRITICAL ISSUES

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A change-management strategy is no good unless it causes processes to be questioned and standards to be heightened. As elaborated further below, councils should:

- (1) Highlight areas for improvement;
- (2) Develop a plan to deal with opposition; and
- (3) Be persistent: Stay with a change long enough to make it work.

6 FAH-5 H-174 IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

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Critical hurdles for change will occur as enthusiasm flags. Management needs to motivate participants by encouraging, supporting, and rewarding progress—not by being punitive or autocratic. Management needs to know the strengths and weaknesses of key participants, to coach them, to educate them, and to develop their skills.

6 FAH-5 H-175 IMPROVEMENT IS THE BOTTOM LINE

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Post ICASS councils and service provider(s) are constantly searching for ways to make ICASS better, faster, or cheaper. New technology, the development of local host-country infrastructure and other changes in the world around us may offer opportunities to provide top-quality service in a different way. Do not be afraid to ask “Why not?” Do research your current activities and any proposed new approaches thoroughly. A blind leap off a diving board is not effective change management. It is a lot smarter to make sure there is water in the pool, know how deep it is, and practice diving first at lower heights to maximize one’s potential for success when finally climbing up to the high board. Be realistic about the amount of change your post can digest. Change can involve risk as well as benefit. Bite off as much as post can handle but avoid biting off too much.

6 FAH-5 H-176 CELEBRATE SUCCESS AND PASS IT ALONG

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If a post built a team, identified an opportunity to innovate, conducted the research, planned an effective strategy, acquired the necessary resources, and successfully implemented a program of change management, does the

post have anything left to do? Yes, two tasks remain:

- (1) First, post should celebrate its success. Take time out from the grind to collectively pat itself on the back. Whether it is a solemn awards ceremony, a loud after-hours bash or something in between will be determined by the post's own culture. Successful change is a group effort so make sure some group recognition follows promptly; and
- (2) Second, make sure post passes along to others the lessons it has learned and the example it has created. Nominating a post for the ICASS "Best Practices" award is one way to pass along word of a post's success and perhaps get some recognition too! The ICASS Service Center does periodic cables on best practices. Telegrams, e-mails, listserves, or presentations at regional conferences offer other venues through which post can communicate about its success and the lessons it has learned. Passing along the benefits of a post's experience can help others who may face similar challenges and could profit from a post's trailblazing efforts.

6 FAH-5 H-177 THROUGH H-179 UNASSIGNED