

# Sponsor Role & Responsibilities Cheat Sheet

**Purpose:** A strong sponsor is the single biggest predictor of successful change. But most sponsors are never told exactly what “good sponsorship” looks like. This one-pager helps clarify their role in simple, actionable terms.

## What Is a Sponsor’s Real Job?

A sponsor isn’t just the person who approves the budget or gives the kickoff speech. They’re the one who:

- Sets the tone for why the change matters
- Builds alignment across leaders
- Reinforces the message—consistently and publicly
- Clears obstacles so the team can move forward
- Champions the change, especially when resistance shows up

People follow people—not projects. If the sponsor disappears, the change usually loses momentum.

## Key Responsibilities by Phase

### Initiation

- Be visible and vocal: say *why* this matters
- Secure funding and resources
- Help define the outcomes, what does “success” look like?

### Planning

- Socialize the vision with other leaders
- Validate stakeholder mapping and impact assessments
- Support alignment between project and OCM plans

### Execution

- Reinforce messages at town halls and meetings

- Model the change through your own behavior
- Step in to address resistance when needed

### Closing

- Celebrate wins, especially the people-side ones
- Share stories that highlight adoption and impact
- Recognize change champions publicly

### Sustainment

- Keep asking about adoption, not just results
- Embed the change into KPIs, performance reviews, and leadership updates
- Ensure long-term ownership beyond the project

### Sound Like This

- “This change is a priority and here’s why it matters to us.”
- “I expect all leaders to model and support the new process.”
- “Let’s keep listening to feedback so we can keep improving.”
- “Our goal isn’t just to launch it’s to make this part of how we work.”



### Pro Tips

If you're a sponsor: *Be seen*. Show up at key milestones. Your presence matters more than your signature.

If you're supporting a sponsor: *Coach them*. Help them prep for tough questions and keep their messaging consistent.

Strong sponsorship isn't loud. It's steady. Be the drumbeat that keeps the change moving forward.