

Session 3 — Formulate Change Strategy

ACMP Process Group 2 · ACMP Africa Change Management Mentorship Programme · Wed
May 13 · 8PM EAT · 60 min

How to use this sheet: Fill in the workbook sections as we go. The Change Strategy Canvas is your core tool tonight — complete it for your own real-world initiative.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- **Design** a change strategy using the 5-element Change Strategy Canvas framework
- **Articulate** a clear, compelling vision statement that connects the change to organisational purpose
- **Identify** sponsorship gaps and map a primary sponsor action plan
- **Conduct** a rapid risk assessment and cultural alignment check for a change initiative

Key Framework: The Change Strategy Canvas

Process Group 2 of the ACMP Standard asks: *"How will we approach this change?"* Before you plan tactics (communications, training, coaching), you must formulate **the strategy** — the high-level approach that shapes everything else.

The **Change Strategy Canvas** covers 5 interdependent elements:

1. Vision

Where are we going and why should people care?

A strong change vision is **clear, compelling, and concise**. It answers:

- What will be different in the future state?
- Why is this change necessary (the burning platform or inspiring opportunity)?
- How does this connect to the organisation's mission?

2. Sponsorship

Who owns and champions this change?

Sponsorship is **active, visible, and sustained** — not just sign-off. The primary sponsor:

- Has organisational authority to remove barriers
- Communicates the vision consistently
- Models the desired behaviours
- Allocates resources and holds others accountable

Watch for gaps: A sponsor who delegates their role, is invisible, or lacks authority is a critical risk.

3. Risk Assessment

What could go wrong — and what are we doing about it?

Change risks go beyond project risks. Common categories:

Risk Category	Examples
People risk	Low buy-in, resistance, change fatigue, skill gaps
Cultural risk	Mismatch between change and organisational norms/values
Structural risk	Lack of alignment in org structure, incentives, or processes
Capacity risk	Insufficient time, budget, or skilled resources
External risk	Regulatory changes, market shifts, political instability

4. Cultural Alignment

Does this change fit — or conflict with — how we do things here?

Culture eats strategy for breakfast. Assess:

- **Current culture:** What values, norms, and behaviours exist today?
- **Required culture:** What needs to be true for this change to stick?
- **The gap:** Where is the biggest friction point?

Applied framing: A change that fights the culture will exhaust your team. A change that leverages cultural strengths gains momentum.

5. Resourcing

What people, time, and budget do we need to make this work?

Resourcing isn't just about the project budget. For change management:

- **Change team capacity:** Dedicated CM resource(s) or part-time?

- **Budget for change activities:** Communications, training, coaching, events, measurement
- **Time allocation:** Do leaders and frontline staff have the *space* to engage with the change?
- **External support:** Consultants, facilitators, tools/platforms?

Fillable Change Strategy Canvas Template

Complete this canvas for your own change initiative. Each section builds toward a coherent strategy.

Element	Your Notes / Strategy
Vision — Future state, rationale, connection to purpose	
Vision — Draft vision statement (one sentence)	
Primary Sponsor — Who is it? What is their role?	
Sponsorship Gaps — What is missing or weak?	
Risk #1 — Highest people/cultural risk	
Mitigation — What to do about it	
Risk #2 — Second-highest risk	
Mitigation — What to do about it	
Risk #3 — Third-highest risk	
Mitigation — What to do about it	
Cultural Strength — What existing cultural trait supports this change?	
Cultural Friction — What cultural norm will resist this change?	
Resources Needed — People, budget, time, tools (add rows as needed)	

Workbook: My Change Strategy

Take 10–15 minutes during the session to complete these exercises for **your own change initiative**.

Part 1: Draft Your Vision Statement

Write a one-sentence vision statement that is **clear, compelling, and concise**.

Template: "We will [future state] so that [benefit] because [reason for change]."

My vision statement:

Check your vision: Does it pass the "elevator test"? Could someone repeat it to a colleague and convey the essence of the change in 30 seconds?

Part 2: Identify Your Primary Sponsor

Question	Your Response
Who is the most senior person whose active support is essential?	
What authority does this person have that matters for this change?	
What should they be doing that they are not doing yet? (Identify specific gaps)	
What is one concrete ask you can make of them this week?	

Part 3: Top 3 Risks

#	Risk	Impact (1–5)	Likelihood (1–5)	Mitigation Plan
1	___	___	___	_____
2	___	___	___	_____
3	___	___	___	_____

Risk score = Impact × Likelihood. Focus your energy on risks scoring 10 or above.

Key Terms Glossary

Term	What It Means
Change Strategy	The high-level approach for how a change will be led, resourced, and communicated — distinct from the tactical plan
Sponsorship	

Term	What It Means
	Active, visible, sustained leadership commitment that removes barriers, models behaviours, and champions the change
Vision Statement	A concise description of the desired future state that motivates action and provides direction
Cultural Alignment	The degree of fit between a change initiative and the existing organisational values, norms, and behaviours
Burning Platform	A compelling rationale for change rooted in the urgency of current problems or threats (as opposed to an aspirational opportunity)
Change Capacity	The organisation's ability and readiness to absorb and sustain change without overwhelming its people

Personal Notes

Use this space to capture anything that stands out, questions you want to ask, or ideas to follow up on.

Key Takeaway

"Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." — Sun Tzu

The Change Strategy Canvas gives you the **strategy**. Session 4 (Develop Change Plan) will turn it into **tactics**. Don't skip this step — a plan without a strategy is activity masquerading as progress.

ACMP Africa Change Management Mentorship · Session 3 of 6 · Next session: Develop Change Plan (ACMP Process Group 3)