Leading Change

Text-Only Version

This document is a text-only version of Leading Change. Leading Change is a Web-based training course which simulates an office environment and is designed to help you better manage and facilitate organizational change in your office. *If you are able to complete this course with the Web-based training module, please use it instead.*

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Introduction to Leading Change

Welcome to the Leading Change simulation! Here, you will practice your leadership skills by leading an organization through a significant transition.

Leading Change is one of the five Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs), and it involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment.

As you lead your team through this transition, you will need to manage all the aspects of your daily office environment: emails, voicemails, text messages, phone calls, and meetings. The difficult decisions you make will impact your team, your relationship with your supervisor, and the outcome of an important initiative.

Your mission is to pioneer cutting-edge technology and services that will transform the Federal Government. The Secretary of your Department (the Department of Innovation and Technology, or DIT) has recently issued her Strategic Plan for the next 4 years, and one of her top priorities is to implement a Human Resources Information Technology (HRIT) Integration Plan that will transform the agency's outdated and inefficient paper-based processes to a more streamlined digital-based approach. The goal of this initiative is to capitalize on the advancements in technology to automate all HR processes and give employees access and control over their data.

The Secretary has appointed you as the Executive Director of the newly established Office of Human Resources and Technology (OHRT) to lead this change effort. You have been allocated a budget of $1.5 million to complete the HRIT Integration Plan, which includes the development of an online HRIT System that will capture information on each of the agency's 6,500 employees. There is a tight timeline, as the end of the fiscal year will put a halt to all Web development. You have 6 months to launch this system.

While you manage multiple teams and multiple projects in this role, your specific challenge here is to lead the HRIT System Team to success. Ready to meet your team? Let's get started!

Your team

Shannon

Shannon is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of your agency and your direct supervisor. She has 30 years of Federal Government experience and has worked for 6 different agencies over the course of her career. She has developed a reputation for being direct and fair, and she strives to empower her team while keeping them accountable.

Lisa

Lisa is your executive sponsor, and has been sponsoring executives in the Federal Government for over 20 years. In particular, she has served as mentor and sponsor for numerous executives in the agency. She is highly regarded for her wisdom and political savvy.

Leo

Leo has 15 years of experience in HR Policy—he is the agency's "go-to" guy for any HR-related questions. Leo is hardworking and thoughtful; he is always checking in with team members and offering help when needed.

Claire

Claire has 10 year of expertise in HR Analytics. Claire has a background in Computer Science and Statistics, and has been in the Federal Government for her entire career. She is energetic and skilled at finding innovative ways to solve problems.

Nina

Nina is an experienced IT Specialist. She specializes in IT infrastructure and is motivated by challenging assignments. She is a reputable leader within the agency and aspires to become a senior executive.

Max

Max joined your team 9 months ago from a non-profit organization. He specializes in IT functionality. Max brings 15 years of technical expertise to your team. Max is quiet and analytical; he thoroughly researches a topic before making a decision.

The beginning of your first 3 months

As soon as you sit down at your desk, you receive an email from Shannon:

From: Shannon
Subject: Welcome and Thank You!

Hello!

The Office of Human Resources and Technology is lucky to have you as their leader! As you know, you will be in charge of leading the effort to create and launch the Human Resource Information Technology System, which will transform the HR operations of the entire agency. I am confident that you will lead us to success.

Before you get started, I want you to meet Lisa, your sponsor, who will help you get acclimated to your new role. She will be a valuable resource to help you navigate this challenge. She said she left you a voicemail to introduce herself—please listen to it before engage your team. I also left some materials on your desk that might be helpful as you start to get to know everyone. Please feel free to ask me any questions.

I look forward to working with you!
Shannon

Next, Lisa knocks on your door. You invite her inside your office and she says:

Good morning! My name is Lisa, and I'll be your sponsor! I've been with the agency for 25 years and I'm thrilled to support you on this exciting initiative.

I'd like to fill you in on a few things about the current work environment, specifically your project team. All of your managers are competent and skilled in their areas of expertise, but they've never worked on the same team before. While your team understands and appreciates the need for the new office, they've been struggling to determine their new roles and responsibilities, and have been voicing their concerns about the new project. It's important that everyone works together to make this a success, and based on what I've heard about you—you're just the right person for the job!

As you proceed, you'll need to consider a number of factors that are important to leading a change initiative, like: How will you gather resources? How will you manage your direct reports? Your peers? And how will you manage the expectations of your leadership? You'll also have to consider your budget and how to handle budget constraints. It's important to realize that when managing any kind of change initiative, multiple factors are always at play.

I'll check in with you periodically to see how you're doing and provide support if needed.

Later that day…

On your first day in your new role, you send an introductory email to your whole team, welcoming them to the new office and expressing your enthusiasm about the future. You then set up meetings with each of your managers individually to introduce yourself and learn more about them. You receive a few email replies from your team after their initial one-on-one sessions.

It looks like your first email is from Claire:

> **From:** Claire
> **Re:** Introduction
>
> Hi!
>
> I'm glad that we were finally able to meet. I'm excited to be a part of this team, even if I'm not 100% sure how we are going to accomplish everything, especially in such a short timeframe. A project of this scale will definitely be challenging, but I'm sure that we will be successful under your leadership.
>
> -Claire

Next, you read an email from Max:

> **From:** Max
> **Re**: Introduction
>
> Good afternoon!
>
> It was nice speaking with you. I have worked with Nina before but I have never worked with Leo and Claire, although I've heard great things about them. I must note—there is not a lot of clarity about this project, and the timeline is a big concern. I look forward to working out the details with you and the team.
>
> Thanks,
> Max

Time to decide

After receiving these replies, you send a calendar appointment to your entire staff for an all-hands meeting. You take the feedback you've received so far to develop a strategic approach for this meeting.

Rank the following agenda items in terms of priority for this first meeting. You will rank them 1 to 5, with one being the most important and 5 being the least important.

☐ Set goals with the team to complete the HRIT System project.

☐ Communicate your vision for the future of the office and the HRIT Integration Plan.

☐ Discuss the value and importance of the HRIT Integration Plan.

☐ Address the team's concerns about the timeline of the HRIT System project.

☐ Develop a project outline by identifying key milestones.

Feedback

If you ranked "Communicate your vision for the future of the office and the HRIT Integration Plan" or "Discuss the value and importance of the HRIT Integration Plan" as number 1…
Lisa is happy with your meeting agenda and sends you the following message:
> Looks like you have your priorities in order! Good luck at the meeting.

If you ranked any of the other three options as number 1…
You receive the following text message from Lisa:
> This first meeting with your staff is a key opportunity for you to convey your strategy and vision for the future of the office. Try again.

At the meeting

During the meeting, you state your vision:
> Capitalizing on the integration of HR and IT is a smart strategic move that will provide great value to the agency and a great model for the rest of the Federal Government. My vision for the HRIT System is a platform that captures information on each aspect of our employees' Federal careers. This System will process information on recruitment, performance management, career movements, training and development, and pay and benefits. By combining all of your knowledge and expertise in HR and IT, we'll be able to set the gold standard for Human Resources in Government. What are your thoughts? I want to be sure we all agree on this vision.

Your team hesitates initially, but agrees that this is a vision they can all support and implement if they collaborate. They work together to design a Project Plan that meets the 6-month timeframe. Meanwhile, as you are busy assessing your resources to ensure you have everything you need to be successful, you get a voicemail from Lisa:
> Hi, it's Lisa. Just calling to say—excellent job. Because this system has many moving parts that will impact the agency as a whole, it's important to ensure your team understands the vision and has an opportunity to weigh in before you get started.

Time to decide

Because this system requires collaboration with multiple roles and functions across the agency, it is important to generate buy-in from your stakeholders early on.

How will you engage your stakeholders in this project?

    a.   Establish a working group comprised of managers in all functions that are affected by the HRIT system, and set up regular meetings.

    b.   Create an email distribution list to keep key stakeholders informed.

    c.   Ask your team to establish a working group comprised of managers in all functions that are affected by the HRIT system, and set up regular meetings.

Feedback

If you select A…

You receive an email about the working group from your colleague John.

> **From:** John
> **Re:** HRIT Working Group
>
> Hi.
>
> So glad to be a part of this working group! The project is so broad and has so many moving parts—this is a great way to make sure we all stay informed and on track.
> If you need anything from me, just let me know.
>
> Thanks,
> John

If you select B…

You receive a voicemail from Lisa:

> Hi, it's Lisa. Looks like your colleagues are confused about your email. Inviting them to participate in a working group might be a better way to engage your stakeholders in this process. That way, you can provide clarification and ensure that their questions and concerns are addressed. Thanks!

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

You receive an email from a colleague about the working group.

> **From:** John
> **Re:** HRIT Working Group
>
> Hi.
>
> So glad to be a part of this working group! The project is so broad and has so many moving parts—this is a great way to make sure we all stay informed and on track.
> If you need anything from me, just let me know.
>
> Thanks,
> John

The next day

You receive an email from Jackie, the Union President.

> **From:** Jackie
> **Subject:** HRIT System Project
>
> Good afternoon.
>
> I have a concern regarding the new HRIT System. I understand that part of your data collection will include information on employees' pay and performance. Can you please give me a call so we can discuss this as soon as possible?
>
> Thanks,
> Jackie

Looks like Jackie wants to chat. You decide to go ahead and give her a call:

> **You:** Hi Jackie, I just got your email. How can I help you?
> **Jackie:** Thanks for calling. As I mentioned in the email, I have a concern about the data you're collecting for the HRIT System.
> **You:** I can understand how that might cause some concerns.
> **Jackie:** I think we need to leave that information off of the System. Our employees will feel much more comfortable, and it's less data for your office to manage. It's a win/win.

Time to decide

So, how do you address Jackie's concerns?

a. Explain that the data will be restricted to managers and the individual employee only. Offer to provide a private demonstration of the site before it is launched.

b. Invite her to participate in the working group so all of her concerns can be addressed and she can understand how the data will be protected.

c. Connect her with one of your managers to work out the details.

d. Agree to take the pay and performance data points off of the platform.

Feedback

If you select A…

You continue your phone conversation with Jackie:

You: I hear what you're saying, and I assure you the data will be restricted to only individual employees and their managers. No one else will have access to the data.
Jackie: I see.
You: Actually, I can set up a demonstration to show you exactly how the system works, if that would be helpful.
Jackie: Sure, that sounds great! Let me know when you're ready.
You: Absolutely! I will be in touch.

If you select B…

You continue your phone conversation with Jackie:

You: I hear what you're saying, and I assure you the data will be restricted to only individual employees and their managers. No one else will have access to the data.
Jackie: I see.
You: Actually, it would be great if you joined our working group. You can be directly involved in the development of the System and make sure all of your concerns are addressed. Are you interested?
Jackie: Yes, of course. That's a great idea!
You: Great! I'll send our most recent project plan for your review. We also have biweekly meetings, so I'll send you the calendar invite.
Jackie: Ok. I really appreciate the invitation.

If you select C…

You continue your phone conversation with Jackie:

You: I hear what you're saying, and I assure you we are taking these concerns into account as we build the System. Let me connect you with our IT functionality expert, Max. He can answer any questions that you have.
Jackie: OK, sounds good. I may reach back out to you, though, if I still have concerns that aren't addressed.
You: Please do. I will connect you via email now.
Jackie: Thanks. I appreciate it.

You continue your phone conversation with Jackie:

> **You:** I hear what you're saying, and I honestly feel that we have taken the right measures to make sure that this data is protected. However, if you still have concerns, we will remove the pay and performance data from the system as you have requested.
> **Jackie:** Thank you. I truly appreciate your understanding.

You end your conversation with Jackie. Later that afternoon, you receive an email from the Pay Team:

> **From:** Jason
> **Re:** Removal of Data
>
> Good afternoon.
>
> I just received your request to remove the pay data from the system. This is disappointing—we spent so much time and effort loading it into the system and also putting in safeguards to protect the data. If you could connect Jackie with our office, I'm sure we can alleviate her concerns.
>
> Thanks,
> Jason

After you read Jason's email, you receive a text message from Lisa:

> Hi, sorry I missed you earlier. Here's what I think about your current situation: There might be potential for a win-win situation here, where both parties can get their needs met. Try another option.

One month later

Your team is working hard to compile all of the data that you need from different departments and beginning to load it onto the platform. Max knocks on your door after a meeting with the other managers.

After you invite him in and ask him to have a seat, he says:

> **Max:** Hey, can we chat for a second?
> **You:** Sure, what's up?
> **Max:** Well, I want to talk to you about something I just heard. Nina told me that she suspects one of our Pay and Benefits contacts—Jason—has been providing faulty data. Someone highlighted a discrepancy during our last working group meeting and Jason was furious. He denied the claim and stormed out of the meeting.

Time to decide

How do you handle this situation?

    a. Keep moving forward with the project. Ask Jason to assemble a Quality Control team to validate all data, including the alleged faulty data.

    b. Halt the project and alert the Deputy Secretary of the allegations.

    c. Keep moving forward with the project. Arrange a meeting with the Director of Pay and Benefits to discuss data integrity.

Feedback

If you select A…

You continue your conversation with Max:

    You: Ok, thank you for letting me know. Please continue with the project as planned.
    Max: Sounds good.

After talking with Max, you receive an email from Jason:

    From: Jason
    Re: Pay discrepancy

    Good afternoon,

    I got your message inquiring about the Pay discrepancy, and have been looking into it. It seems that some of the data we included was from last fiscal year… I'm sorry about that.

    -Jason

If you select B…

You continue your conversation with Max:

    You: Ok, thank you for letting me know. We're going to have to stop the project until this gets resolved. Please tell the group to halt development until I can talk to the Deputy Secretary.
    Max: Ok. I'll let everyone know. Just let me know when we can move forward.

After Max leaves, you call James, the Deputy Secretary:

    You: Hi James, thanks for speaking with me on such short notice.
    James: Not a problem. What's going on?
    You: Well, I've heard from one of the managers in my working group that Pay and Benefits has been providing faulty data. This could have a significant impact on our project.
    James: I agree. Do you have any evidence to support this claim?
    You: Well, not yet. But I thought you would want to know as soon as possible.
    James: There's nothing I can do at this point. Let me know when you have more definitive information.
    You: Ok, will do.

You end your conversation with James, and then you receive a text message from Lisa:

Hi, I just wanted to give you a quick reminder: It's important to gather all the facts and take steps to resolve a problem before alerting your leadership. Perhaps try another approach.

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

You continue your conversation with Max:

You: Ok, thank you for letting me know. Please continue with the project as planned.
Max: Sounds good.

After talking with Max, you receive an email from Jason:

From: Jason
Re: Pay discrepancy

Good afternoon,

I got your message inquiring about the Pay discrepancy, and have been looking into it. It seems that some of the data we included was from last fiscal year… I'm sorry about that.

-Jason

Time to decide

A few weeks later you begin to hear concerning rumors about your project. A few of your trusted colleagues have reported they've overheard people saying that you are doing a poor job managing the HRIT system, as it keeps running into problems. They don't believe the data in the system is accurate, and are saying that you are wasting the agency's time and money—that the project is doomed to fail. You are just starting to build momentum and these rumors might cause more than a few setbacks.

What's your strategy for dealing with the rumors?

a. Compile data on the progress and benefits of the HRIT System and ask a colleague to help spread the positive information.

b. Don't do anything. They are just rumors, after all, and there is not enough evidence to justify taking any action.

c. Talk to more people to find out more information about the rumors, including the source. Once you confirm the source of the rumors, have a conversation with the individual(s) responsible to provide an update on the progress of the System.

d. Talk to more people to find out more information about the rumors, including the source. Once you confirm the source of the rumors, threaten to take the matter to the Chief of Staff if they continue to spread false information.

Feedback

You ask you colleague Brian to pay you a visit. He comes into your office and says:

> **Brian:** What's up?
> **You:** Hey Brian, do you have time for a quick chat?
> **Brian:** Sure, what do you need?
> **You**: Well, it's about the rumors. I know we talked about this earlier in the week, but it's unsettling how much false information is out there. I'm afraid this might jeopardize the future of the project.
> **Brian:** I hear you.
> **You:** So I have a favor to ask—I need help spreading positive information about the System highlighting all of the progress that's been made. Here's some data on our current progress and expected benefits of the System—you can see that it will save managers an estimated 2 hours a week on administrative tasks. This will save us so much time in the long run.
> **Brian:** This is great information—I'd be happy to help you out.
> **You:** Thanks, I appreciate it!

You receive an email from Shannon:

> **From:** Shannon
> **Subject:** HRIT Project
>
> Hi,
>
> I heard some interesting information about the HRIT project this afternoon. Apparently rumors are spreading that we are draining agency funds on a system that is doomed to fail. What is worse is that I'm told you are aware of this false information, but are choosing to do nothing about it. Is this true?
>
> -Shannon

After reading Shannon's email, you receive a text message from Lisa:

> Ignoring the rumors will not make them go away. Instead, you're jeopardizing your project by allowing the false information to spread. This will create much bigger problems for you down the road. Try a different approach.

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

You decide to talk to three colleagues about the situation: Zachary, Jane, and Brian.

First, you invite Zachary into your office:

> **Zachary:** Rumors? Yeah, I've heard about them. I haven't been paying much attention, but that's because I've known you for a long time and I trust that you know what you're doing.

Next, you hear from Jane:
>**Jane:** I haven't heard much, but then again, I don't typically work much with HR or IT. What I heard, though, isn't good. They're saying that this project is costing way more than what it's worth, and that will fail anyway after all this time and effort.

After speaking with Zachary and Jane, you chat with Brian:
>**Brian:** I was honestly surprised to hear that the rumors were about you! I'm glad that you came to me to talk about this; some people are hesitant to partner with you. They're afraid that they'll be dragged in to a failing project—sorry!

After some investigating, you discover that Jason, the Pay and Benefits team lead, is the culprit behind the rumors. You hear that he's still upset about being embarrassed during the working group meeting. The next day you invite him to your office for a conversation:
>**You:** Hi Jason. Thank you for meeting with me.
>**Jason:** No problem. What do you need?
>**You:** I just wanted to talk to you about the HRIT System and make sure you have everything you need to support the project.
>**Jason:** Actually, I don't. Ever since the mix-up with the pay data, no one on the working group takes me seriously. I don't even want to be a part of it anymore, to be honest, but I really don't have a choice.
>**You:** I want you to know that I don't blame you for the pay data. Everyone makes mistakes, and it was an easy fix! We value your expertise and perspective as a part of the team, and I apologize if it doesn't feel that way. Is there anything I can do to change your mind?
>**Jason:** Actually, I'm surprised you're not still upset about the data. Would you be able to attend the next working group meeting and vouch that the new pay data is accurate? I triple-checked it before we loaded it into the system.
>**You:** Consider it done.

If you select D…
You decide to talk to three colleagues about the situation: Zachary, Jane, and Brian.

First, you invite Zachary into your office:
>**Zachary:** Rumors? Yeah, I've heard about them. I haven't been paying much attention, but that's because I've known you for a long time and I trust that you know what you're doing.

Next, you hear from Jane:
>**Jane:** I haven't heard much, but then again, I don't typically work much with HR or IT. What I heard, though, isn't good. They're saying that this project is costing way more than what it's worth, and that will fail anyway after all this time and effort.

After speaking with Zachary and Jane, you chat with Brian:
>**Brian:** I was honestly surprised to hear that the rumors were about you! I'm glad that you came to me to talk about this; some people are hesitant to partner with you. They're afraid that they'll be dragged in to a failing project—sorry!

After some investigating, you've discovered that Jason, the Pay and Benefits team lead, is the culprit behind the rumors. You've heard that he's still upset about being embarrassed during the working group meeting. The next day you invite him to your office for a conversation:

> **You:** Hi Jason. Thank you for meeting with me.
>
> **Jason:** No problem. What do you need?
>
> **You:** Well, I have been hearing some upsetting rumors about the HRIT project, and what's even more concerning is that I've been led to believe they started with you.
>
> **Jason:** Hold on a minute—you think I've been spreading rumors about the project? This is ridiculous—what proof do you have?
>
> **You:** I've had multiple sources name you as the instigator, and the lies need to stop now. If this continues, I promise I will take it up with the Chief of Staff. I can't let you jeopardize my project.
>
> **Jason:** I can't believe this. I didn't do anything wrong. Don't ever ask me or my team for help again!

After Jason leaves your office, you receive a text message from Lisa:

> Taking an aggressive approach by accusing and threatening Jason just cost you working relationships with colleagues that you depend on to accomplish your goals for this project. Try again.

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

Time to decide

Unfortunately, it appears your efforts to dispel the rumors were too little, too late. They've reached the Deputy Secretary, and he has confided in Shannon that he's losing confidence in your ability to manage this project. He wants to speak with you as soon as possible, so make sure you are prepared when he calls.

How do you prepare for the call with the Deputy Secretary?

a. Develop a strategy for the meeting and spend time compiling a list of key points that demonstrate your progress. Include relevant research and data to make your case.

b. Spend time thinking about your past accomplishments, the challenges you've overcome, and how you can apply those lessons to your current situation.

c. Create a metrics dashboard comparing the progress of your office to other offices in your department—you know this will be a quick win.

Feedback

If you select A…

Your phone rings. It looks like you're getting a call from James, the Deputy Secretary:

> **James:** Hello.
>
> **You:** Good afternoon, Sir. How are you?
>
> **James:** I've been better… Unfortunately, I don't have good news to share. The leadership team is concerned about the success of the HRIT System. What we've been

hearing is troubling, and since you only have 4 months left until the end of the fiscal year—we're just not confident that you can accomplish the goal in time.

You: I'm sorry you're having doubts, but I assure you that we are headed in the right direction and we will launch the System successfully and on time. We have had a few setbacks, but we'll be saving a lot of time and money in the long run. If we can set up a time to meet, I have some figures that will alleviate your concerns.

James: Okay, let's meet in my office at 3 p.m.

After ending your conversation with James, you receive a text message from Lisa:
I heard your meeting went great. Keep up the good work!

If you select B…

Your phone rings. It looks like you're getting a call from James, the Deputy Secretary:

James: Hello.

You: Good afternoon, Sir. How are you?

James: I've been better… Unfortunately, I don't have good news to share. The leadership team is concerned about the success of the HRIT System. What we've been hearing is troubling, and since you only have 4 months left until the end of the fiscal year—we're just not confident that you can accomplish the goal in time.

You: I understand that you are concerned, but let me remind you that you selected me for this role because of my experience implementing large-scale changes. This is all part of the process—trust me, this initiative will be a success.

After ending your conversation with James, you receive a text message from Lisa:
I heard your meeting went great. Keep up the good work!

If you select C…

You pick up the phone and call James, the Deputy Secretary:

You: Good afternoon, sir. How are you?

James: I've been better… Unfortunately, I don't have good news to share. The leadership team is concerned about the success of the HRIT System. What we've been hearing is troubling, and since you only have 4 months left until the end of the fiscal year—we're just not confident that you can accomplish the goal in time.

You: I'm sorry you're having doubts, but I assure you that we are headed in the right direction and will launch the System successfully and on time.

James: I'm not so sure.

You: Well, in order to show you how much progress we've made, I've created a dashboard that shows our progress compared to other offices in our department. As you will see, despite our setbacks, we are much closer to completion that any of the other teams.

After ending your conversation with James, you receive a text message from Lisa:

> Comparing your work to your colleagues is *not* the best way to show success. Remember that it's important to maintain strong working relationships with your colleagues, and what you've done will only break their trust. See if you can find a way to emphasize your progress without damaging your colleagues' reputations.

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

Three months later…

You just passed the 3-month mark and your team is making great progress. Your team meets with you to discuss an upgrade they'd like to purchase for the System. This upgrade was not originally in the budget, but it includes brand new software that will enhance the functionality of the System.

While the timing is not optimal, and the upgrade is expensive, it will be a long-term win if you spend the money to buy the upgrade now. You send in a purchase request to the CFO and he approves the request. The next day, you receive an email from Shannon that says she is halting the approval process. She is not convinced that you need such an expensive upgrade, especially since you have yet to deliver anything concrete on the System.

Time to decide

Shannon is not convinced that you need such an expensive upgrade, especially since you have yet to deliver anything concrete on the System.

You think about the situation in order to develop a strategy for dealing with this obstacle. How do you handle this situation?

a. Make an executive decision to take a calculated risk by having the team purchase the software. Shannon will understand that the upgrade is a critical need.

b. Build a business case by compiling data and research that demonstrates how purchasing the upgrade aligns with your vision for the System.

c. Make an executive decision to cancel the purchase request. The System can function without the upgrade.

d. You have limited expertise in IT, so set up a meeting with Shannon and one of your IT experts so they can make the case to purchase the upgrade.

If you select A…

The next day, you receive an email from Shannon that says she is halting the approval process. She is not convinced that you need such an expensive upgrade, especially since you have yet to deliver anything concrete on the System.

> **From:** Shannon
> **Subject:** Software Upgrade
>
> I understand that your office has moved forward on the purchase of the system upgrade without my permission. I halted this purchase because I have yet to see any evidence that this upgrade is cost-effective, and I am disappointed that you ignored my decision.
>
> Send me a justification for the upgrade by COB today and I will review. Also, please include a progress update on the system to date. I will make a decision on whether or not the order needs to be cancelled.
>
> -Shannon

Later that day, Shannon sends you another email:

> **From:** Shannon
> **Re:** Software Upgrade
>
> I have reviewed your materials and decided to approve the purchase of the software. It looks like this will save us time and effort in the long run. In the future, do not override my decisions. I am open to discuss anything you don't agree with.
>
> -Shannon

If you select B…

Looks like Nina is knocking on your door. You invite her to come into your office:

> **Nina:** Hi, you wanted to see me?
> **You:** Yes. As you know, Shannon put a halt on the purchase of the upgrade. She's concerned that it is not a cost-effective solution. I'm going to meet with Shannon to address her concerns, but I need more facts about the software. Can you compile a few data points that highlight the benefits of the upgrade and how it will help us accomplish our vision? We need to justify the cost, and the more information I have, the better.
> **Nina:** Sure, I'll draft something and send it over as soon as possible.
> **You:** Sounds good.

After Nina leaves, you invite Shannon into your office:

> **Shannon:** Hi. What can I help you with?
> **You:** I'd like to discuss the purchase of the IT upgrade. I know you have concerns, and I'd like to talk through them so you can see that this software is a critical need. I assure you that the long-term benefits outweigh the initial cost.
> **Shannon:** Ok. That sounds fair. I'm curious to hear what you have to say.

The meeting runs for 30 minutes. At the end of the meeting, Shannon gives her approval:

> **Shannon:** It sounds like this upgrade is a strategic move. I will approve the purchase request. I am excited for this system to launch!

After seeing Shannon's response, you decide to cancel the purchase request. That afternoon, Nina asks to speak with you:

> **Nina:** Hi, do you have a minute to talk about the upgrade?
> **You:** Sure.
> **Nina:** I understand that Shannon has concerns about the cost of the software, but I don't think she understands how critical it is to the success of the system. We'll need to purchase it eventually, and we're going to regret holding off. It will cause a lot of headaches to install it on the back end after the system goes live.
> **You:** I hear what you're saying, but Shannon knows what she's doing. She has a different perspective than we do, and at this point in time, the upgrade isn't necessary.
> **Nina:** Based on her response to the purchase request, it looks like she just needs more information to justify the cost. I can put something together if you think that will change her mind.
> **You:** Thank you for offering, but I don't think that will be necessary. We need to just move forward as planned without the upgrade.

After Nina leaves, you receive a text message from Lisa:

> Wow, looks like you're in a tough situation; but knowing when to trust your team is important. They are experts, after all. Please try a different approach.

You call Nina into your office for advice:

> **Nina:** You wanted to see me?
> **You:** Hi! Yes, come in. As you know, the purchase request has been approved by the CFO, but Shannon put a halt on the process. She's concerned that it is not a cost-effective solution. I'm confident that we have enough justification to purchase the system, but I'd like for someone with more technical expertise to meet with Shannon to make the case. Would you be willing to meet with her and address her concerns?
> **Nina:** Are you sure? I'd be happy to.
> **You:** Great! I'll connect you via email so you can schedule a time to meet.
> **Nina:** OK. I'll keep you posted.
> **You:** Please do.

After Nina leaves, you receive an email from Shannon:

> **From:** Shannon
> **Subject:** Software Upgrade
>
> Hi, I spoke with Nina today about the system upgrade in the purchase proposal that I voiced some concerns about earlier this week. I've decided to approve the request. It looks like this will save us time and effort in the long run.
>
> -Shannon

Time to decide

Your project is moving full steam ahead. You brief Senior Leadership on your progress, and your Chief of Staff, Jennifer, follows up with an email to let you know the leadership team is concerned that the metrics you presented to evaluate the return on investment (ROI) of the System are insufficient. Your managers worked hard to develop the metrics information.

How do you respond?

a. Apologize for your team's mistake and express your regrets that they didn't provide adequate metrics. Offer to personally revise them and send back ASAP.

b. Insist you are confident in the metrics you presented, and that they will adequately demonstrate the ROI of the System.

c. Thank her for the feedback and schedule a meeting with the working group to benchmark other ROI studies and revise your list of metrics.

Feedback

If you select A…

You decide to give Jennifer, your Chief of Staff, a call:

> **Jennifer:** Hello?
> **You:** Hi Jennifer, thanks for speaking with me. I'd like to discuss your feedback regarding the metrics I presented on the HRIT System.
> **Jennifer:** Ok.
> **You:** First of all, I want to apologize. My team developed the evaluation plan, and after looking it over again I realize that there are mistakes. I just wanted to let you know that I will personally revise this and send it back to you as soon as possible.
> **Jennifer:** Your team may have created the metrics, but *you* are ultimately responsible for ensuring that your department submits quality metrics for the system. Thank you for calling—I look forward to your revisions.

After ending your conversation with Jennifer, you get a message from Lisa:

> As an executive, it's your responsibility to review and validate information before sharing with your Senior Leadership. Also, take ownership because the responsibility is ultimately yours. You risk eroding employee trust as well as eroding respect from your senior leaders. Next time take a more proactive approach to address issues that arise.

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

If you select B…

You decide give Jennifer, your Chief of Staff, a call:

> **You:** Hi Jennifer, thanks for speaking with me. I'd like to discuss your feedback regarding the metrics I presented on the HRIT System.
> **Jennifer:** Ok.
> **You:** Well, I understand that you want us to revise the metrics, but I am confident that they are the right measures to demonstrate the ROI of the system. We put a lot of time into developing the evaluation plan and I am certain that this is the way to go.
> **Jennifer:** I understand how you feel given all the work you've done on this project, but this evaluation plan won't work for the report we need to submit to the Department of Federal Audit and Compliance. The metrics you presented won't suffice and I need you to change them. Please send me your revisions as soon as possible.

If you select C…

You decide to give Jennifer, your Chief of Staff, a call:

> **You:** Hi Jennifer, I wanted to thank you for your feedback on the metrics I presented on the HRIT System, and wanted to update you on my plan moving forward.
> **Jennifer:** You're welcome. OK.
> **You:** I've asked my team to do some benchmarking research on Return on Investment studies, and I will meet with the working group to strengthen our evaluation plan based on the benchmarking findings and your feedback.
> **Jennifer:** Excellent idea! I'm glad that my feedback has been helpful, and I look forward to reviewing the revised evaluation plan.

Time to decide

Two weeks later, you receive an email from Shannon outlining a new idea she has for the HRIT System. She recently attended an interagency council meeting where the topic of discussion focused on the importance of tracking retirement data. As a result, she is asking to link retirement data to the System.

What's your strategy for dealing with this issue?

a. Tell Shannon not to worry—your team will get it done.

b. Tell Shannon that it can't happen. Your team is already working hard, and they are stretched too thin.

c. Tell Shannon that it's a great idea, and you need to gather more information from your team to figure out how you'll make this happen. Recommend that the retirement data be integrated now.

d. Tell Shannon that it's a great idea, and you need to gather more information from your team to figure out how you'll make this happen. Recommend that the retirement data be phased into the System at a later date.

Feedback

If you select A…

You send Shannon an email telling her that you will integrate the retirement data into the System. You then have a meeting with your team to discuss how you will integrate the data:

> **You:** Good morning, everyone. I have some news to share. Shannon has asked that we link retirement data to the System, and I'd like to discuss your thoughts on how we can get this done.
> **Leo:** Well, this is a surprise. At this late stage, I'm not sure how we'd be able to get it done. We'd have to do some major re-work on the System to do what she's asking.
> **Claire:** I agree. To accommodate this new addition, we will end up compromising the quality of the System in the end.
> **You:** Unfortunately, we don't have a choice. I'm confident that you'll be able to get it done without sacrificing quality.
> **Nina:** Time is the issue here! There is just no extra room in our project timeline to get this done. We would have to shortcut other critical aspects of the project in order to meet the deadline.
> **You:** Once again, I'm sure you guys can figure out how to make this work.

The next day, you receive an email from Shannon:

> **From:** Shannon
> **Subject:** Retirement Data
>
> Hi there. I just had a discussion with the head of the Retirement Office, and he is pushing back on including his data in the HRIT System. There's a personnel records policy issue that requires further investigation. Please move forward with the HRIT System without the retirement data at this point in time. We'll discuss again at a later date.
>
> Thank you,
> Shannon

After reading Shannon's email, you listen to a voicemail from Lisa:

> Hello—Lisa here. It looks like you created some unnecessary stress for your team. Next time, try to find out as much information as possible about a matter that will create extra work for your team.

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

You send Shannon an email saying that your team does not have the capacity to link the retirement data. Shortly after you send the email, Shannon calls your office:

> **You:** Hi Shannon, what can I do for you?
> **Shannon:** I'm confused about your email. I'm not sure what the issue is. Surely there is someone on your team that can work on linking the retirement data.
> **You:** I'm sorry, but we just can't do it. We are already doing everything we can to make sure we meet the deadline as it is. We are simply spread too thin. If we add anything else at this point, we won't be able to complete the project on time.
> **Shannon:** You need to figure out a way to make this work. Have you discussed the idea with your team?
> **You:** No, I didn't want to cause them any unnecessary stress.
> **Shannon:** I understand your concerns, but it is your job to ensure this system is the best that it can be, and adding the retirement data will add value. Talk to your team and figure out a way to make this happen.

The next morning, you receive an email from Shannon:

> **From:** Shannon
> **Subject:** Cancel Retirement Data
>
> Hi,
>
> I just had a discussion with the head of the Retirement Office, and he is pushing back on including his data in the HRIT System. There's a personnel records policy issue that requires further investigation. Please move forward with the HRIT System without the retirement data at this point in time. We'll discuss again at a later date.
>
> Thank you,
> Shannon

You send Shannon an email telling her that you appreciate her idea, but that you would like to gather more information from your team to develop a plan for integrating the data. You call a team meeting to discuss the issue:

> **You:** Good morning, everyone. I have some news to share. Shannon has asked that we link retirement data to the System, and I'd like to discuss your thoughts on how we can get this done.
> **Leo:** Well, this is a surprise. At this late stage, I'm not sure how we'd be able to get it done. We'd have to do some major re-work on the System to do what she's asking.
> **Claire:** I agree. To accommodate this new addition, we will end up compromising the quality of the System in the end.
> **You:** Unfortunately, we don't have a choice. I'm confident that you'll be able to get it done without sacrificing quality.
> **Nina:** Time is the issue here! There is just no extra room in our project timeline to get this done. We would have to shortcut other critical aspects of the project in order to meet the deadline.
> **You:** Once again, I'm sure you guys can figure out how to make this work.

The next morning, you receive an email from Shannon:

> **From:** Shannon
> **Subject:** Cancel Retirement Data
>
> Hi there,
>
> I just had a discussion with the head of the Retirement Office, and he is pushing back on including his data in the HRIT System. There's a personnel records policy issue that requires further investigation. Please move forward with the HRIT System without the retirement data at this point in time. We'll discuss again at a later date.
>
> Thank you,
> Shannon

If you select D…

You send Shannon an email telling her that you appreciate her idea, but that you would like to gather more information from your team to develop a plan for integrating the data. You call a team meeting to discuss the issue:

> **You:** Good morning, everyone. I have some news to share. Shannon has asked that we link retirement data to the system, and I'd like to discuss your thoughts on how we can get this done.
>
> **Leo:** Well, this is a surprise. At this late stage, I'm not sure how we'd be able to get it done. We'd have to do some major re-work on the system to do what she's asking.
>
> **Claire:** I agree. To accommodate this new addition, we will end up compromising the quality of the System in the end.
>
> **You:** Ok, I know you all have been working hard as it is to meet the deadline. It sounds like time is the biggest issue here. What if we loaded the retirement data at a later date?
>
> **Leo:** Well sure, that wouldn't be a problem. We need to focus all of our attention on getting the system up and running, but once it's launched we'll have all the time we need to phase in extra data.
>
> **You:** Ok. I'll propose that we phase the retirement data into the system at a later date. If you could prepare a brief justification for this new phased approach, along with a modified project plan including new dates for the retirement data addition, I'll have everything I need to make the case.
>
> **Leo:** Sounds like a plan.

You send Shannon an email saying that you will link the retirement data. That afternoon, you receive an email from Leo:

From: Leo
Subject: Issue with Retirement Data

Hi,

I reached out to a colleague in the Retirement Office to do some research for the justification, and it sounds like there's a personnel records policy issue that prevents us from being able to use their data. I'm not sure how you want to proceed.

-Leo

After reading Leo's email, you pick up the phone to call Shannon:

Shannon: Hi, what can I do for you?
You: We've run into an issue with the retirement data.
Shannon: What's the problem?
You: Well, I had my team connect with the Retirement Office and they claim that there is a personnel records policy that prevents us from being able to use their data.
Shannon: That's interesting. Let me see what I can find out.

A few hours after you end your conversation with Shannon, she sends you an email with the results of her investigation:

From: Shannon
Subject: Cancel Retirement Data

Good afternoon.

I just had a discussion with the head of the Retirement Office, and he is pushing back on including his data in the HRIT System. This policy issue requires further investigation. Please move forward with the HRIT System without the retirement data at this point in time. We'll discuss again at a later date.

Thank you,
Shannon

Two weeks before the end of the project

There are 2 weeks left in the project timeline and you are in the middle of the pilot testing phase. There is a lot of buzz about the launch of this new system, and your team is excited. It looks like the project will close out on time and without any issues.

You receive an email regarding a new mandate from the Department of Federal Audit and Compliance (DFAC) that requires a status report of all major agency IT System Operations. The report is due in exactly 2 weeks. You call a meeting with some of your managers:

> **Claire:** Hi, you wanted to see us?
> **You:** Good morning, everyone. We just received a mandate from DFAC. They are requiring all agencies to assess their IT System Operations and provide a status update in the form of a detailed report. Our HRIT System is listed in the directive.
> **Leo:** When is the report due?
> **You:** In 2 weeks. I need you to stark working on it as soon as possible.
> **Claire:** I'm a little confused. We could put together a report, but it wouldn't be complete. The system hasn't even launched yet, so we couldn't even address things like testing, certification, and accreditation.
> **Leo:** Claire's right. Is there a way we can get an extension until after we've launched the System, or can we figure out an alternative solution?
> **You:** I'm not sure. Let me see what I can do.

Time to decide

You consider your project timeline, the need to launch the system in 2 weeks, and the feedback from your team.

What is your strategy for dealing with the requirement to develop a report for DFAC?

a. Schedule a meeting with DFAC to give them an overview and provide them the data that you currently have.

b. Pull together your most recent progress report and presentation slides and send them over to DFAC.

c. Work with your team to ensure the report is submitted on time.

Feedback

If you select A…

You schedule a meeting with Jack, the executive within DFAC who handles your agency's cases:

> **You:** Hi Jack. Thanks for making the time to speak with me.
> **Jack:** Not a problem. I know that you wanted to talk about the required report for your new system, but I'm still not aware of why you wanted to meet.
> **You:** Yes. I understand that there's a report due next week for all major agency IT Systems Operations. However, we are currently in the middle of developing an agency-wide HRIT System. I know DFAC has mandated a complete report, but that won't be possible until after our system has launched. Can you help me understand the requirements better and discuss the possibility of giving you a report on the data we currently have? Then we could provide periodic updates until we complete the System.

Jack: I didn't realize that you were in the middle of such a large-scale project. I can understand the need to modify the report schedule, and your proposal makes sense. Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

You: Thanks for your flexibility! I appreciate it.

If you select B…

You send an email to DFAC explaining your situation, and attach a current progress report and recent presentation slides on the HRIT System. The next day you receive an email from Shannon:

From: Shannon
Subject: DFAC Report

Hi,

I just received a note from DFAC about the report you submitted. Evidently, they need the report in a different format. I understand you explained the situation with the HRIT System, but they are still expecting a report in 2 weeks. Can you please make sure that you submit the correct report to them on time? I hate to distract your team from making progress on implementing the new system, but it is a requirement.

Thank you,
Shannon

If you select C…

You re-read the mandate and confirm with your contact at DFAC that there are no exceptions to the deadline.

You invite Claire into your office for a meeting:

You: I'm afraid we don't have a choice but to get this report out on time. From now on, this is your top priority. I'm here to help if needed.

Claire: OK. We'll complete as much as we can, but I don't think they're going to be happy with a partial report.

Three weeks later, you receive an email from Shannon:

From: Shannon
Subject: DFAC Report

Hi. I just received a call from DFAC about the report you submitted, which is apparently incomplete. They told me there are substantial parts of the report missing, including our certification information. Why would you submit an incomplete report? I'd like to discuss what happened today.

Thank you,
Shannon

After reading Shannon's email, you listen to a voicemail from Lisa:

> Hi there—This is Lisa. Sorry I missed you. I heard about the DFAC report. Submitting an incomplete report reflects poorly on you and your agency. Is there something else that you could have done to get the report done on time? Please try again.

Go back to the last time you made a decision and select another option.

End of the project

You are now nearing the end of your project. Throughout this effort, you have witnessed firsthand the benefits of fostering collaboration and building partnerships. Without the support of your colleagues, you wouldn't have been able to accomplish this task in such a short timeframe. As the HRIT System enters its final phases, you begin to think about how you will sustain this change and continue the momentum to support an innovative and efficient organization.

How will you sustain the change? (Select your top four next steps from the list below.)

a. Partner with your Office of Communications to develop a plan to communicate information about the new system.

b. Ask users to share success stories that can be included in the agency's monthly newsletter.

c. Submit your working group members for an administrator's award to recognize their efforts and contributions.

d. Send an email to department heads about the benefits of the system and ask them to spread the information within their departments.

e. Ask the Secretary of the Agency to send out a Memo to all employees.

f. Send an agency-wide email outlining the benefits of the new system.

g. Send an email to all of the executives that took part in the project and ask that they commit to keeping the change.

h. Ask your team to memorialize the initiative in a report.

i. Set up a conference call with all of the executives that took part in the project and reiterate your vision and appreciation.

j. Set up a steering committee to ensure that the project is managed properly.

All of the above answers were either "Excellent" or "Fair." The answer key is as follows:

LETTER	"EXCELLENT" OR "FAIR"
A	Excellent
B	Fair
C	Fair
D	Fair
E	Excellent
F	Fair
G	Fair
H	Fair
I	Excellent
J	Excellent

Success!

Lisa wants to stop by with kudos for you and your team. You invite her into your office:

> **Lisa**: I can't believe that we've reached the end of the project! The new system is working well and it's all thanks to the efforts of your team! Over the past few months, you have had the opportunity to work through many facets of leading change—including setting a vision, engaging your stakeholders, overcoming obstacles, building momentum, managing expectations, and planning for the future.

Course summary

Congratulations! You have successfully completed the Leading Change simulation. You accomplished your goal by engaging stakeholders and overcoming obstacles. You brought your vision to life by keeping your team motivated and managing their expectations throughout the project.

Now you're ready to lead your team through difficult changes that might occur at your own agency. Through careful planning and strategic management, you and your team can accomplish anything!