

On his website, [Stephen Goldsmith](#) reviews current academic research that is most relevant to practitioners, policy advisors and policy makers.

This document summarizes: Fernandez, Sergio and Hal G. Rainey. “Managing Successful Organizational Change in the Public Sector.” *Public Administration Review* (Mar/Apr 2006) 168: 9.

*This piece is a must-read for public administrators at all levels of government, and in all functional areas, who are tasked with the reform of a department, agency, or institution.*

In “Managing Successful Organizational Change in the Public Sector,” Sergio Fernandez and Hal Rainey give the reader time-proven tips on affecting successful organizational change in the public sector. Central to the article are eight factors pertaining to the development and progression of organizations. Below is a list of all eight, followed by an exploration of the most critical factors.

There are some theorists who argue that managers should play a minimal role in driving change within an organization, while others contest that they play a major role in advocating and helping to implement organizational change. Here, the authors review the existing research on organizational change in public administration. They synthesize the most important trends and similarities into the comprehensive and well-documented list below:

- Ensure the need
- Provide a plan
- Build internal support for change and overcome resistance
- Ensure top-management support and commitment
- Build external support
- Provide resources
- Institutionalize change
- Pursue comprehensive change

A number of these factors and propositions are intended to help promote an environment of trust and confidence for the organization in moving forward. For example, it is essential that managers first communicate the need for change in a clear, concise manner. Clarity is key. Vague suggestions of change often leave room for re-interpretation and miscommunication among organizational staff. Next, designing a plan for change enables people to better understand how change will occur and what their roles will be in implementing that change. Having a strategy early on encourages everyone and reaffirms the belief that change will actually happen. In some situations, dialogue and a solid blueprint are not enough to foster support. Establishing a cohort of advocates, both internally and externally, will bolster success in gaining buy-in from the organization.

Rainey and Fernandez document that these factors reflect the best available research. They should serve as a “compass” for public administrators confronted with the challenge of organizational change. And of course, the authors suggest employing metrics throughout the process as a means of measuring and substantiating the impacts of implementing these factors.