12 Key Attributes of Effective Change Agents  
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Change is happening all of the time. Much is written about the process or stages of change. While process is clearly important, what characteristics are required to be an effective change agent?

1. Goal or Outcome Focus  
If you don’t know where you are going, you will never get there. While this might seem like stating the obvious, it is surprising how many organizations start to embark on change without absolute clarity on:  
• What they want the organization to be like when they reach the desired outcome  
• How it will be different as a result of the change  
• What the benefits are for the different stakeholders  
Before embarking on any change, get clear on the outcomes you want to achieve.

2. Believe change is possible  
If you embark on any change process without believing change is possible, guess what-it is not possible. When you step into any type of major change, you have to believe 100% that change is possible. Failure to do so will result in resistance and creativity blocked.

3. Highly motivated  
Change is tough and if you are not highly motivated, you may quickly become stuck. Motivation is what keeps your momentum going, even when things are tough. When you have desire to make change happen and a high degree of motivation, you are well on your way to success.

4. Highly committed  
Commitment is another essential characteristic of successful change agents. Your level of personal commitment influences your behavior which in turn influences results.

5. Highly creative  
If you keep doing what you always did, you will keep getting the same results you always got. Creativity is about thinking outside of the box, finding new solutions and new ways of responding to challenges.
6. Plan effectively
While there needs to be flexibility, no real change can happen unless it is planned and thought through.

7. Take risks
Whether you like it or not, change requires an element of risk. When you take risks they sometimes result in success but can result in failure. When you fail you learn. In fact, the most successful people always state that they learned more from when they failed than when they succeeded. Change without some risk taking is not an option.

8. Persistence
The most successful change agents recognize that change takes time. They don’t give up at the first sign of problems. They keep working at it until they find a way to get the outcome they desire.

9. Enthusiasm
Some complain about the circumstances while others embrace the challenge with enthusiasm. Those that excel not just as change agents but as leaders are highly enthusiastic.

10. Courageousness
In any change difficult choices will need to be made and communicated. Many of these changes will be unpopular and impact on a lot of people. Those that excel as change agents have the courage to follow through on the changes and stay focused on their goal and outcome. Another way of looking at is that they keep their focus on the bigger picture.

11. Flexibility
Even the best laid plans don’t materialize as expected. As a change agent you need to be able to adapt to changing circumstances internally and externally to the organization.

12. Empathy
While there is a need to be courageous and move things forward, high degrees of empathy are important. Change agents need to be ready to see different perspectives and be able to step into the shoes of others. At the end of the day any change is going to present many challenges. Where are you going to be when it comes to change? Stepping forward as a leader or standing on the sidelines.

About Goals and Achievements
Goals and Achievements is a Leadership Development Company based in the UK that helps individuals and organizations to reach their true potential.