

# Project Implementation: Putting Ideas into Practice

by Juan Riboldi



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## Case Summary

**Situation:** Large scale project required managing the change process so the solutions could be implementable.

**What We Did:** Organized and trained Change Champions to facilitate project implementation.

**Outcomes:** SPE adopted a new approach to marketing film, television and video that became the industry standard.

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### The Situation:

Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE) produces and distributes film, television, video and other media globally. SPE leaders recognized the need to change the way SPE produced, distributed, and franchised media to accelerate worldwide release and meet the unique needs of local markets. The objective was to accelerate film distribution while increasing local market adaptation for lower costs.

SPE contracted the services of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to conduct a comprehensive study and make recommendations. PwC proposed an approach to analyzing the problem and presenting solutions based on three phases—Discover, Design and Deploy. Each phase would require six to nine months and

the total project would span over two years. Under this plan, PwC deployed a team of consultants that began collecting data through employee interviews and quantitative analysis. The Discover phase was underway.

### The Challenge:

SPE executives and mid-level managers recognized that while PwC was doing an excellent job at capturing and processing information, there was a need for managing the change process so the solutions could be implementable. The need for change management surfaced as some leaders wanted to see the ideas tested before making conceptual assumptions, others perceived the consultants as taking credit for their ideas and felt dis-owned, and some groups perceived that the findings favored the more influential leaders.

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To address these concerns SPE decided to include a change management consultant to work as a liaison between the various parties. This role was to integrate ideas as they were being formulated to produce additional information on the original ideas. More importantly, this process allowed the employees to be part of the solution from the start, increasing support for adoption and commitment to implementation.

#### What We Did:

SPE contracted with Ascent Advisor Principal, Juan Riboldi, to fill the change management role for the project. The initial function was to listen attentively to different stakeholder groups, not necessarily for additional ideas, but to understand how ideas were being used — “the how.” This provided a venue for the SPE managers and the PwC consultants to express concerns or bring up suggestions for how to adopt the changes the project was producing. During the data collection and analysis phases, Ascent Advisor helped the PwC team produce reports that more objectively represented various views.

Ascent Advisor also helped form and organize a group of SPE “Change Champions,” representing stakeholders from across SPE that would act as “foot soldiers” to test and validate their ideas on the floor.

The Change Champions became key contributors to refining the consultant’s recommendations with input from the field. They also acted as catalysts for implementing ideas on a smaller scale while they were being considered globally. As the project moved through the Design and Deploy phases, the Change Champions were key resources for the implementation.

Ascent Advisor trained the Change Champions on change management and project execution skills while providing them with collaboration tools. The Change Champions dedicated twenty percent of their time to acting as facilitators of the change process. This allowed them to increase cross-department communication and coordination.

Ascent Advisor provided a level of objectivity to the project by bringing up points of view that could not be easily brought up by the SPE employees or the PwC consultants.

#### Outcomes:

SPE adopted a new approach to marketing film, television and video worldwide that became the industry standard.

The recommendations produced by the PwC consultants were more readily implemented with the help of the Change Champions who began putting ideas into practice as the project went along.