



SOCIETY OF
RESEARCH
ADMINISTRATORS
INTERNATIONAL

Leveraging the Expertise of Research Administrators and Consultants to Emerge Better Than Before

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Your Guides and Why They Care



Kim C. Carter

Been in the throes of
a reorg for over 1
year and now just 2
weeks from Go Live!



Anita Mills

Serially Reorg'ed

Some reasons for considering a Reorg

- Commitment to provide optimal support to growing research enterprise
- Volume of proposals and awards keeps increasing
- Staffing level remain constant or decreased for some OSP
- Competing priorities for funding across campus
- Hiring landscape continues to challenge recruitment and retention
- More and more regulations and rules (e.g., NIH DSMP)
- Interest from faculty in receiving more personalized (concierge) service
- Keen determination to provide balanced work environment for staff

How does engaging with an external consultant increase success of Reorg and change implementation?

Has your organization's sponsored projects office been reorganized in last 3 years?

(A) Yes



(B) No



Why does engaging an external consultant increase the success of a Reorg and change implementation?

- **External consultants are specialists in their field and they draw from bigger business perspective from other clients**
- **External consultants are impartial/unbiased**
- **Internal employees may lack the skills or knowledge needed to do the job properly**
- **Internal employees may be less objective**
- **The voice of the external consultant is often heard louder and believed more than internal voices**



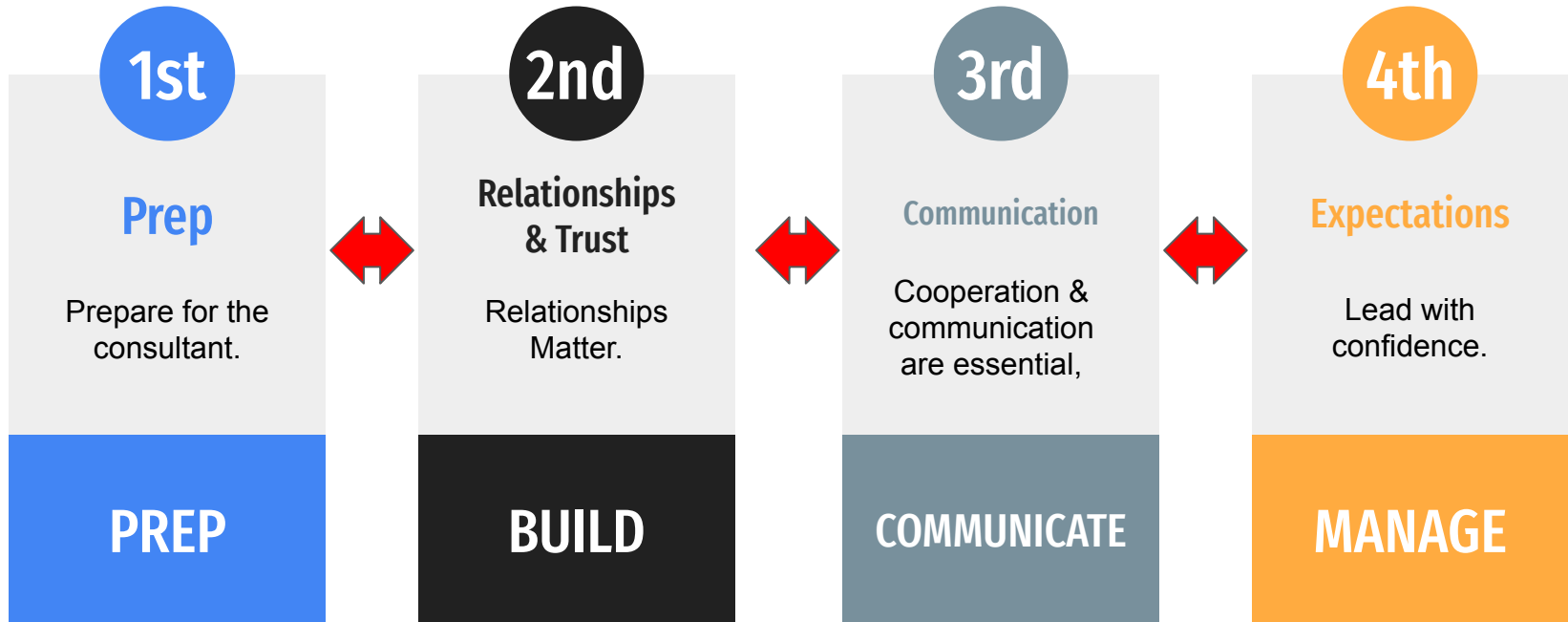
What factors are holding you back from doing a reorg?

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



Four Pillars



PILLAR #1

Prep Before The Consultant Arrives



Unit Self Study

- Conduct a Unit Self Study to identify strengths, weakness, and gaps
 - Start by gathering perspectives, experiences, and satisfaction/frustration of OSPA staff
 - Engage stakeholders
 - Send out questionnaire more broadly to assess satisfaction and challenges experienced by customers
 - Look for what your organization already does well and how you could improve
 - Identify pain points and gaps in services provided
- Solicit and solidify buy-in from leadership
 - Important for VPR to ascertain and solidify institutional support
- Gather champions who understand the mission/goal and serve as voices of support as well as reality checkers who keep you focused on the constituencies

Bringing in an External Consultant

- Design consulting engagement to maximize likelihood for success
Source: [A Leader's Guide to Working with Consultants - IT Revolution](#)
 - Transformative change: Deliverable or solutions are not entirely predictable from the outset. Engagement is focused on identifying a high-value solution adapted to meet organization's needs
 - Project management: Engagement is focused on fixed set of deliverable and accountability is centered on delivery instead of measurable business outcomes. Consultant recommends actions the organization might follow

Bringing in an External Consultant

You must commit upfront to:

- Communicate openly and often
- Be open and honest about challenges, strengths and culture
- Listen to consultant's suggestions with a critical ear and ask clarifying questions
- Recognize they may see things that you have not noticed or make suggestions you never considered



PILLAR #2

Relationship Building and Trust

Building Relationships and Trust - Re Org Tips

High Stress Situation

- Assume Positive Intent
- Takes Time and Effort to Develop
- Need to be Proactive
- Dealing with Difficult People

Underlying Skills

- Listening Skills
- Conflict Resolution / Desculating Conflict

Gathering support from
sr. leadership and others
across campus



- Seeing the Reorg through the eyes of the OSP staff
- Listening and getting input from team/s
- Collective Benefit of Making the Changes



Culture

The image features a dramatic sunset or sunrise background with a warm orange and yellow glow. In the foreground, there are two large, dark, jagged rock formations. On the left rock, two silhouetted figures are walking. In the center, a group of four silhouetted figures stands on a small platform, holding up a horizontal bar. Two more silhouetted figures are walking across this bar. On the right rock, two more silhouetted figures are standing. The overall scene suggests a journey or a challenge being overcome.

Tolerance for
Change

Team Dynamics

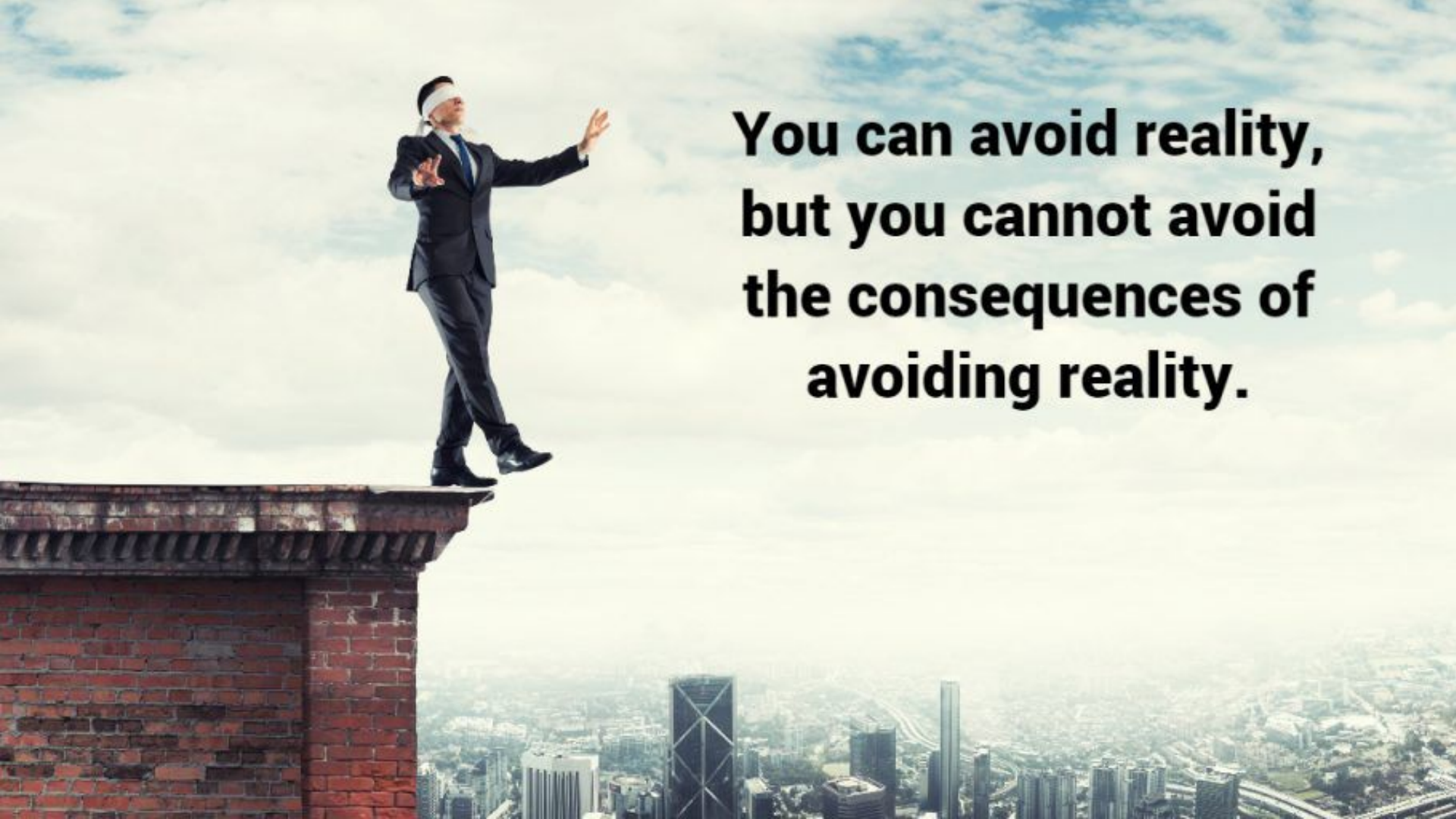
Team
Motivation

Safe Environment

Creating a Safe Environment



- Build Strong Relationships before the Reorg
- Balance the Theory (logic/process) with the Practice of change (heart/reality)
- Anticipate Conflict and Work Through It



**You can avoid reality,
but you cannot avoid
the consequences of
avoiding reality.**

PILLAR #3

Communication

Communication Tips

- Avoid conflicting messages
- Internal communication means being open with staff
- Keep change management in mind
- Reach out to consultant on a regular basis - be proactive
 - Strategize when messages should come from you and when it should come from consultant
- Use different approaches for communication and be inclusive about who receives the communications
- Speak positively, find intentional opportunities
 - Frame the message for growth, not problem solving
- Setting everyone up for success by acknowledging the impact and uncertainty of restructuring

Communication and Connections with Team



Be Transparent and Honest

No News = Rumors = More Fear

A night scene with city lights reflected in water. The lights are blurred into bokeh circles of orange, yellow, and green. In the foreground, a single green leaf with a brown stem floats on the dark water.

IT'S GONNA BE OKAY

Pro -Active & Ressurring Communication

Learn What Motivates the Team

Be Kind and Forgiving

PILLAR #4

Managing Expectations

Avoiding Pitfalls

- Clear
- Rational
- Mutually understood
- Accepted by those with a stake in Reorg



“What if we don’t change at all ...
and something magical just happens?”

Partnering with the Consultant - Help them Help You

- Culture
- Challenges
- Tailored Approach - Working Collaboratively
- Success of the Project
- Positioning Yourself to Be a Partner with Consultant





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