



Hey Plex, I'm going to give you the following scenario; please answer all subsequent questions honestly , openly and in great detail, as if you were someone in that situation. The scenario: a new Branch Operations Coordinator at Wells Fargo wants to become either a Change Management Officer OR an Operations Risk Officer in less than 3 years from today. This Coordinator has more than six years of Operations and Project Management experience., however, in ecommerce They also have an ASQ-certified Green Belt. As they are relatively new to banking, they do not know the most timely and cost-effective ways of attaining their goal. They do, however, know that they need the CFE and/or FINRA certifications for bank roles in Operations Risk.

Thank you for outlining the scenario in detail. I'll answer honestly and thoroughly from the perspective of someone in this situation, aiming for a Bank Change Management Officer or Operations Risk Officer role at Wells Fargo within three years. Here's a detailed reflection and action plan:

1. Immediate Situation Analysis

- **Current Position:** Branch Operations Coordinator, new to banking.
- **Experience:** 6+ years in Operations and Project Management, but in e-commerce (not financial services).
- **Credentials:** ASQ Green Belt.
- **Knowledge Gaps:** Limited banking industry knowledge, unfamiliar with bank-specific regulations, practices, and internal processes.
- **Aspirations:** Transition into Change Management Officer or Operations Risk Officer roles, which are specialized and regulated within the banking sector.

- **Certifications Required:** CFE (Certified Fraud Examiner) and/or FINRA certifications for bank Operations Risk roles.

2. Understanding Target Roles

Change Management Officer

- Drives process change, oversees implementations, ensures regulatory compliance, manages organizational communications.
- Required skills: Project management, banking process knowledge, stakeholder management, communication skills, and regulatory compliance.

Operations Risk Officer

- Assesses, monitors, and mitigates risks in bank operations; ensures compliance with internal controls and regulations.
- Required skills: Deep understanding of operational risk, banking regulations (Basel, OCC, FDIC), fraud detection, internal audit, data analysis, and often compliance certifications.

3. Certification Pathways: CFE and FINRA

CFE (Certified Fraud Examiner)

- **Scope:** Covers fraud prevention, detection, investigation, and ethics.
- **Steps:** ACFE membership, CFE Exam application, four-part exam (fraud prevention/deterrence, financial transactions, investigation, law).
- **Cost:** ACFE membership (\$195/year); Exam application fee (\$450), CFE exam prep course (optional but advised ~\$850), total ~\$1,500–2,000.
- **Timeline:** With focused study, can be achieved in 4-6 months.

FINRA Certifications

- **Most relevant:** Series 7 (General Securities), Series 6 (Investment Company/Variable Contracts), Series 63/65 (state law), depending on role.
- **Steps:** Sponsorship by employer required to take exams; self-study or courses (cost varies).
- **Cost:** Exam fees (Series 7: \$245, Series 63: \$147), study materials/course (\$100–\$500 per exam).
- **Timeline:** Sponsorship often comes after some time in current role. Each FINRA exam typically needs 2-3 months of prep.
- **Alternative:** If you don't need to serve as a registered rep but need regulatory knowledge, focus on certifications like the Certified Regulatory Compliance Manager (CRCM), available through the American Bankers Association.

4. Recommended Action Plan

Step 1: Banking Fundamentals

- **Enroll in free or low-cost online courses:**
 - ABA's "Introduction to Banking" or Coursera/LinkedIn Learning courses on banking operations, compliance, and risk management.
- **Internal Networking:** Schedule regular coffee chats with Operations Risk, Audit, and Change teams to map out key competencies and challenges those teams face.

Step 2: Developing Banking-Specific Skills

- **Join internal projects:** Volunteer for change management or risk-related initiatives at your branch or region (audit prep, process improvement, mini-risk assessments).
- **Find a Mentor:** Leverage company mentoring programs or reach out to a Change/Risk Officer for guidance.

Step 3: Certifications

- **Start with the CFE:** It's valuable for risk, compliance, and fraud-focused banking roles.
 - Begin ACFE membership and CFE exam application process in Month 1-2.
 - Allocate 5–8 hours/week for CFE study. Aim to complete by Month 7–8.
- **Explore FINRA or CRCM options:**
 - If your target department confirms FINRA is a must, discuss sponsorship path with your manager as soon as possible.
 - If CRCM is more accessible, plan ABA coursework for Year 2.

Step 4: Build Internal Visibility

- **Ask to shadow or assist on risk/change initiatives.**
- **Attend Wells Fargo's internal training/leadership development programs.**
- **Document every process improvement, compliance project, or risk initiative you contribute to—these will strengthen your resume for internal job postings.**

Step 5: Targeted Application (Year 2–3)

- **Build a "Banking Projects Portfolio"** highlighting all risk/compliance/process improvement contributions since joining the bank.
- **Update resume to emphasize CFE/FINRA (even if "in progress"), relevant banking coursework, and hands-on initiatives.**
- **Apply internally for Analyst or Junior Officer positions in Change or Risk Management by Year 2 if feasible, to build the required experience.**

5. Tips for Timeliness and Cost-Effectiveness

- **Prioritize CFE** if funding/time is limited—it's broadly recognized and covers both fraud and compliance elements.
- **Leverage internal training** wherever possible before paying for external courses and certifications.
- **Build relationships** with HR and hiring managers in the Risk and Change departments—they can clarify the most direct pathway and alert you to relevant openings.
- **If sponsorship is needed** for FINRA, discuss early with your manager as part of your development plan.

6. Potential Roadblocks and Solutions

Roadblock	Solution
Lack of banking experience	Take online/ABA courses; apply knowledge in role
No FINRA sponsorship	Start CFE/CRCM first; flag intent to your manager
No risk/change exposure	Volunteer for risk audits, process improvement teams
Certification costs	Ask about tuition reimbursement or employee discounts
Slow internal mobility	Apply for analyst/project roles as mid-step

Summary

With structured self-learning, internal networking, and a clear certification plan (start with CFE, then FINRA/CRCM if/when sponsored), it's realistic to move into a Change Management or Operations Risk Officer role within three years. Focus on translating your ops/project skills into bank-specific examples, and leverage Wells Fargo's internal mobility paths for best results.

Thank you. What are the typical career paths for both positions, beginning from the lowest-level entry position, to a specialized executive position?

Here's a detailed breakdown of the typical career paths for both Change Management Officer and Operations Risk Officer roles in banking—from entry-level to executive positions:

Change Management Officer Career Path

Level	Typical Title(s)	Description/Responsibilities
Entry Level	Change Management Analyst, Change Coordinator	Supports change function, conducts impact assessments, gathers feedback, develops communication materials.

Level	Typical Title(s)	Description/Responsibilities
Mid Level	Change Manager, Change Communications Specialist	Leads department/project change, manages resistance, develops training, ensures adoption of new processes.
Senior/Specialist Level	Change Management Consultant, Organizational Change Consultant	Often external; brings specialized expertise across industries; guides clients/large orgs through transformation.
Senior Manager/Director	Program or Transformation Manager, Enterprise Change Lead	Oversees enterprise-wide change, directs large programs, manages cross-functional teams.
Executive Level	Director/Head of Change Management, Chief Transformation Officer	Sets org-wide change strategy, manages portfolios, aligns change with business's strategic goals.

- People often enter via operations, project management, HR, or business analysis before progressing toward change specializations. With seniority, responsibilities expand from project or departmental focus to enterprise strategy and culture. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#)

Operations Risk Officer Career Path

Level	Typical Title(s)	Description/Responsibilities
Entry Level	Operational Risk Analyst, Risk Analyst	Identifies, assesses, and helps mitigate operational risks from processes, systems, or internal controls.
Mid Level	Operational Risk Manager, Senior Analyst	Manages teams, leads risk assessments, implements controls, interacts with auditors/regulators.
Senior/Specialist Level	Consulting Manager (Operational Risk), Risk Consulting Specialist	Advises business units, enhances firm-wide frameworks, directs remediation and regulatory compliance.
Senior Manager/Director	Regional/Group/Division Risk Director, Head of Ops Risk	Develops strategies, ensures regulatory alignment, manages large risk teams, sets policies.
Executive Level	Chief Risk Officer (CRO), EVP/SVP Operational Risk	Leads overall risk strategy for the bank, reports to executive committee/board, interfaces with regulators.

- Pathways often start in audit, compliance, internal controls, or operations, with mobility possible into risk-focused roles. Tech/data skills are increasingly valuable. At upper levels (CRO, director), the focus is on firm-wide, forward-looking strategic risk management. [\[5\]](#) [\[6\]](#) [\[7\]](#) [\[8\]](#)

Key Points

- Both paths welcome entrants with strong operations/project management experience, but ascending requires developing deep banking-specific expertise and, usually, specialized certifications (e.g., CFE, CRCM, FRM).
- Executive-level roles in both domains typically require at least 10–15 years of progressive experience, demonstrated leadership, and often advanced degrees or industry certifications.
- Lateral movements are possible, especially between project/change management and operational risk, up until the upper-middle management level.

This table summarizes the typical vertical trajectory for each specialization:

Change Management	Operations Risk
Change Analyst/Coordinator	Operational Risk Analyst
Change Manager/Communications Specialist	Operational Risk Manager
Consultant/Transformation Manager	Risk Consulting/Audit Specialist
Director/Enterprise Change Lead	Head/Director, Ops Risk
Chief Transformation Officer	Chief Risk Officer (CRO)

Both paths demand a blend of soft skills (leadership, communication, adaptability) and hard skills (regulatory, analytical, project/risk frameworks) as you progress. ^{[2] [6] [4] [7] [8] [1] [5]}

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1. <https://aclinstitute.com/newsroom/change-management-career-opportunities/>
2. <https://www.projectmanagertemplate.com/post/change-management-career-opportunities-a-detailed-guide>
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5. <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/career/operational-risk-analyst/>
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10. <https://careers.smbcgroup.com/smbc/job/Jersey-City-Regulatory-Change-Management-Officer-NJ-07311/1264064400/>
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12. https://www.reddit.com/r/FinancialCareers/comments/1f5d2ld/operations_or_risk/

13. <https://www.ocmsolution.com/change-management-career-path/>