

# Perspectives in change management

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Why is it difficult to enact change in organizations? Whether the need for change is due to increased global competition, shifts in consumer preferences, or stricter corporate ethics - change is inevitable. Organizations are faced with many forces of change: external forces such as demographic characteristics, advancements in technology, customer and market changes, social and political pressures, as well as internal forces such as low productivity and high turnover. Managers of today are faced with many challenges, none of which is seemingly more difficult to navigate than leading and facilitating organizational change successfully.

People are creatures of habit. Because of this basic human characteristic - they find trying new ways of behaving, difficult. They are often resistant to change for several reasons: individual predisposition to change, surprise and fear of the unknown, exhibiting a climate of mistrust, fear of failure, loss of status or job security, peer pressure, disruption of cultural traditions or group relationships, personality conflicts, lack of tact or poor timing, nonreinforcing reward systems, and past successes.

People are often more concerned with the implications of a change for themselves and their own interests, rather than taking the success of the business into consideration. Inadequate information or miscommunication can also affect a person's willingness to accept change easily. Their need for security and stability may override their willingness to accept change. There may also be disagreements between people as to the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed change process.

Along with the variety of reasons people resist change, there are several reasons why change processes just don't succeed. Allowing too much complacency, failing to build a substantial coalition, not understanding the need for a clear vision, failing to clearly communicate the vision, permitting roadblocks against the vision, not planning for short term results and not realizing them, declaring victory too soon, and failing to anchor changes in corporate culture create great difficulty in the encouragement, promotion, and facilitation of change within an organization.

Kaizen is a Japanese life philosophy that assumes every aspect of our life deserves to be improved upon constantly. This practice, when applied to a business setting, focuses on the continuous improvement of activities that allow for continual improvement of functions. It can be applied to many industries, in various applications and involves each and every employee. It can also apply to processes and helps aid in the elimination of waste (muda). The five key elements of Kaizen are: Teamwork, Personal Discipline, Improved Morale, Quality Circles, and Suggestions for Improvement.

The cycle of Kaizen activity can be defined as: Standardize an operation and activities; Measure the standardized operation (find cycle time and amount of in-process inventory); Gauge measurements against requirements; Innovate to meet requirements and increase productivity; Standardize the new, improved operations; and Continue cycle ad infinitum. Out of this foundation, the three key factors of Kaizen emerge: Elimination of Waste (muda) and inefficiency; The Kaizen 5-S Framework for good housekeeping; and Standardization.

The primary phases of the Kaizen 5-S Framework are encompassed within the following: Seiri (sorting) - the elimination of all unnecessary tools, parts, and instructions; Seiton (straightening or setting in order) - there is a place for everything and everything should be in its place; Seiso (sweeping or shining or cleanliness / systematic cleaning) - clean the workplace and all equipment, and keep it clean, tidy and organized; Seiketsu (standardizing) - work practices should be consistent and standardized; and Shitsuke (sustaining the discipline or self-discipline) - maintain and review standards.

Conducting a force-field analysis can help managers to create organizational change by determining whether the change is viable and progress can occur. According to Lewin, organizations create situations that are a dynamic balance between forces working in opposite directions. So, in order for any change to occur - the driving forces must exceed the restraining forces of the situation. In order to determine whether a change is viable, a force-field analysis uncovers the balance of power involved, the stakeholders and target groups, opponents and allies, and how you can influence each.

This is done by first describing the current, as well as the desired situations. By identifying where the current situation will go if no appropriate action is taken, one can better define a list of forces driving and resisting change toward the desired situation. This will help define whether the forces are valid, if they can be changed, and which are critical. Once each force has been given a score and charted, it can be determined whether change is viable and progress can occur. Managers can then discuss how the change

can be affected by decreasing or increasing the strength of the restraining and driving forces.

However, this process is not without its own set of obstacles, as increasing driving forces or decreasing restraining forces may very well increase or decrease other forces; or even create new ones. Based on what I have learned in this course, I will be able to more effectively manage the " people" component during a change management initiative at my organization by having an open mind, valuing diversity, being sensitive to others, leading by example, mentoring with purpose, encouraging creativity, upholding ethical business practices, and remaining highly committed to change efforts.

In order to effectively implement change, I will need to exhibit the appropriate behaviors necessary to lead organizational change; which will enhance the effectiveness of my organization and the well-being of its members. By creating a compelling reason why change is needed and a guiding coalition with enough power to lead the change, the vision and strategic plan to help guide the process of change will be realized.

By developing a consistent communication strategy, eliminating any barriers to change and using target elements of change; empowerment will be realized. Planning for and creating short-term improvements, recognizing and rewarding those who contribute to wins, and using credibility from short-term wins to create more change; the new approaches to change will be reinforced and anchored into the organization's culture ultimately creating success.