

Leading change



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Leading Change Lewin has made a very rational approach towards explaining the way change effectively takes place by dividing the whole process into three stages of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. Unfreezing is the stage when the organizational personnel are convinced about the flaws and drawbacks in their conventional and customized beliefs and work practices. The personnel are made aware of the potential ways the conventional practices are hindering the organizational progress and they are made to realize that a change is needed to fix the things. This is not the stage of action. It is instead, a stage when the leader/manager seeks the consent of the persons involved in or affected by the change. It takes time, but once people have been convinced, the objective of unfreezing has been attained. In the stage of change, the manager/leader reduces the restraining forces, and increases the forces supporting the change. This may include reducing the employees' fears of economic or personal loss as well as getting rid of the opponents while there is a simultaneous process of increasing the support for change that may include increasing the incentives for change. When restraining forces are sufficiently low, increasing just the driving forces may suffice. But increasing the driving forces without lowering the restraining forces when they are significant may instigate retaliation and resistance. The stage of refreezing is also time-consuming like the unfreezing stage. The stage of freezing consists of four sub-phases of defiance, rage, bereavement and adaptation. Immediately after the change, people deny that it was altogether necessary. When this does not work, they become outraged but lack of power to alter the managerial decision puts them into bereavement, and finally, they become used to the change and adapt themselves according to it. Change is a time-consuming process and the

managers/leaders must give it due time to implement effectively. Culture is one of the most fundamental determinants of the success or failure of a change strategy. Organizational culture is the outcome of beliefs, norms, trends and traditions that have long been in place in the organization. These integrate into one another to develop a culture. “ Culture somehow implies that rituals, climate, values, and behaviors bind together into a coherent whole. This patterning or integration is the essence of what we mean by “ culture.”” (Schein, 1992 cited in Dooley, n. d., p. 2). Anything new that happens to the organization is sieved through this net of culture. Culture influences the choice of an effective change strategy by shaping the responses of organizational personnel. Hence, in order for managers/leaders to develop an effective change strategy, it is imperative that they take sufficient time to study the organizational history and culture in order to familiarize themselves with the potential driving and restraining forces that function in the organization and control the psyche of the organizational personnel. Having a vision is not just an academic or public relations concept. It is an essential element in delivering change. At the end of the day, it is the manager/leader’s vision that fundamentally acts as the driving force for the change. Without a solid vision, a manager/leader can not formulate an effective change strategy and would only create a mess. Vision suggests the manager/leader the necessary course of action that can help him achieve the target with least inconvenience and in the least possible time. References: Dooley, J. (n. d.). Cultural Aspects of Systemic Change Management. Retrieved from <http://www.well.com/user/dooley/culture.pdf>.