



THE INSTITUTE OF
LEADERSHIP
& MANAGEMENT

No.10

Leadership Essentials

Leading Change

Visionary leaders recognise the need for change and constantly adapt



Communication comes in both word and deed. Nothing undermines change more than behavior by important individuals that is inconsistent with the verbal communication. (Kotter, 2012)

What is change?

Kotter (2012) describes 'change' as a process of altering the way in which things are done. Change is necessary to allow organisations to continue to improve and to develop their procedures and systems, and to respond to other influences. All organisations need to respond to both internal drivers (such as over-reliance on existing methods) and external drivers (such as a change to legislation) in order to achieve goals and support continuous improvement.

The success of your organisation will rely on the ability of the leadership team and employees to respond effectively to the need for change as a result of internal or external influences and factors.

Evaluating the need for change

The first step to leading change effectively is to clearly evaluate the need for change. You can do this by examining the internal and external drivers for change. The external factors are usually reviewed as part of an 'environment scan' described in the terms of PESTLE: Political, Economic, Social, Technology, Legal and Environmental factors. (Change Management Institute, 2013)

That is:

Political: What political factors are likely to affect the organisation?

Economic: What economic factors are likely to affect the organisation?

Sociological: What sociological and cultural aspects are likely to affect the organisation?

Technological: What technological changes are likely to affect the organisation?

Legal: What current and impending legislation is likely to affect the organisation?

Environmental: What environmental considerations are likely to affect the organisation?

Examples of external drivers	Examples of internal drivers
Political/legal changes (e.g. the requirement for 18 to 24 year olds to be paid the national minimum wage), social changes (e.g. the shift in demographics meaning people are living longer so now we have 4 generations in the workplace) and technological changes (e.g. new developments in robotics and artificial intelligence).	Lack of skills (e.g. needing to re-train employees to deal with the demand for higher level technical skills), recruitment and staff development strategies (e.g. to respond to high staff turnover) and apathy (e.g. continuing to use antiquated or ineffective systems for tracking productivity).

Once you have identified the need for change and identified a potential solution, there are a number of tools you can use to test the viability of your ideas. Kurt Lewin's Force Field Analysis is a credible tool that is used to analyse the forces both for and against change. (Mindtools, 2017)

Force Field Analysis

To carry out a Force Field Analysis, follow the 5 steps below:

1. Describe your plan for change
2. Identify the Forces for change
3. Identify the Forces against change
4. Rate each of the Forces

5. Analyse and draw up your action plan

Lewin further developed this concept to incorporate a three-step model that considers the process of change as 'unfreezing', 'changing' and 'refreezing'. (See 'Change Management Models', below)

Change Management Models

There are numerous theories of managing change. Many of these view the change process as comprising of a series of steps that those leading change need to follow.

Kurt Lewin's three-step model views the process of change as 'unfreezing', 'changing' and 'refreezing'. This analogy can be related to water: a block of ice first needs to unfreeze before it can change shape, and then needs to refreeze to maintain this new shape.

UNFREEZE	CHANGE	REFREEZE
During this stage you need to prepare stakeholders to accept change	In this stage people start to do things differently as new approaches are introduced	Once change is embraced, refreezing takes place so that this becomes fully embedded in organisational operations – an important step before further change is introduced

However, in the current environment of constant change, 're-freezing' needs to be a more flexible state to ensure organisations can respond swiftly to internal and external influences. (Kotter International, 2014)

An extension of this idea is **John Kotter's eight step model of change:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CREATE a sense of urgency	BUILD a guiding coalition	FORM a strategic vision and initiatives	ENLIST a volunteer army	ENABLE action by removing barriers	GENERATE short-term wins	SUSTAIN acceleration	INSTITUTE change

Leading Change

'Kouzes and Posner (2017) further suggest that those leading and managing change need:

The ability to inspire a shared vision	The ability to engage and involve stakeholders	Effective communication skills	Effective interpersonal skills	Motivation and the ability to motivate others	The ability to see the bigger picture	The ability to challenge the process
--	--	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	---	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Communication and ensuring that staff members understand the need for change, and are supported to embrace this, are arguably the most important skills you need to possess as a leader of change.

Nevertheless, however well you plan for change, it is likely that you will encounter some resistance or challenge. The reasons why people may resist change include:

- Fear of the unknown/loss of control, e.g. fears that job roles may be adversely affected or at risk
- Inability to cope (perceived or real), employees may feel incapable of carrying out new tasks/approaches
- Poor communication from change leaders, lack of support and understanding for those struggling
- Previous negative experiences of change

Top Tips for leading and managing change:

- Provide a clear rationale for change.
- Plan and apply a framework/step-by-step process for change.
- Communicate your plans and ensure that they are understood.
- Make sure that the timing of change is considered where possible and that previous change has been consolidated.
- Understand the reasons for resistance to change and support individuals to overcome these.
- Be honest about the impact of change.
- Review progress and take restorative action where required.

References

- Change Management Institute (2013). **The Effective Change Manager: The change management body of knowledge**. 1st Ed. Brisbane: Kuhn Corp. Press.
- Kotter International (2014). **8-Step Process**. <https://www.kotterinternational.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change/>
- Kotter, J. P (2012). **Leading Change**. USA: Harvard Business Review Press
- Mindtools (2017). **Lewin's Change Management Model: Understanding the Three Stages of Change**. https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_94.htm
- Reflect & Learn (n.d.). **A Causal Model of Organizational Performance & Change** (Burke & Litwin Model) <http://www.reflectlearn.org/discover/a-causal-model-of-organizational-performance-change-burke-litwin-model>
- Strebel, P. (1996). **Why Do Employees Resist Change?** The Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/1996/05/why-do-employees-resist-change>
- The Leadership Challenge (n.d.). **The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership Model**. <http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/about-section-our-approach.aspx>
- Wu, T. (2010). **Strategic choice – Johnson and Scholes' Suitable, Achievable, Acceptable Model**. The Learning Centre. https://www.tolobranca.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SFA-Matrix-learning_strategic_choice.pdf



Dimensions of Leadership

The Institute of Leadership & Management's Dimensions of Leadership offer, often elusive, insights into great leadership. This is not a static representation but an evolving description of the complex nature of leadership activity.

Find out more at www.InstituteLM.com/learning/dimensions-of-leadership.html

