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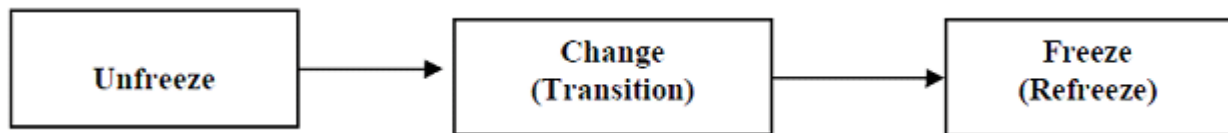
Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model: The Planned Approach to Organizational Change

## Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model: The Planned Approach to Organizational Change

Kurt Lewin's Three Stages model or the Planned Approach to Organizational is one of the cornerstone models which is relevant in the present scenario even. Lewin, a social scientist and a physicist, during early 1950s propounded a simple framework for understanding the process of organizational change known as the Three-Stage Theory which he referred as Unfreeze, Change (Transition) and Freeze (Refreeze).

According to Lewin, Change for any individual or an organization is a complicated journey which may not be very simple and mostly involves several stages of transitions or misunderstandings before attaining the stage of equilibrium or stability.

*For explaining the process of organizational change, he used the analogy of how an ice block changes its shape to transform into a cone of ice through the process of unfreezing.*



Source: [www.strategies-for-managing-change.com](http://www.strategies-for-managing-change.com)

**Stage 1 - Unfreezing:** This is the first stage of transition and one of the most critical stages in the entire process of change management. It involves improving the readiness as well as the willingness of people to change by fostering a realization for moving from the existing comfort zone to a transformed situation. It involves making people aware of the need for change and improving their motivation for accepting the new ways of working for better results. During this stage, effective communication plays a vital role in getting the desired support and involvement of the people in the change process.

**Stage 2 - Change:** This stage can also be regarded as the stage of Transition or the stage of actual implementation of change. It involves the acceptance of the new ways of doing things. This is the stage in which the people are unfrozen, and the actual change is implemented. During this stage, careful planning, effective communication and encouraging the involvement of individuals for endorsing the change is necessary. It is believed that this stage of transition is not that easy due to the uncertainties or people are fearful of the consequences of adopting a change process.

**Stage 3 - Freeze (Refreezing):** During this stage, the people move from the stage of transition (change) to a much more stable state which we can regard as the state of equilibrium. The stage of Refreezing is the ultimate stage in which people accept or internalize the new ways of working or change, accept it as a part of their life and establish new

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The three stages of Change Management can be aptly explained through the aid of an example of Nissan Motor Company which was on the stage of bankruptcy due to the issues of high debts and dipping market share.

During that period, Carlos Ghosn took charge as the head of the Japanese automaker who was faced with the challenge of implementing a radical change and turning around the operations of Nissan, yet by keeping the resistance to change under control which was inevitable under such circumstances by forming cross-functional teams to recommend a robust plan of change in different functional areas. For facing the business challenges, he developed a change management strategy and involved the employees in the process of change management through effective communication and reinforcement of desired behaviours. For refreezing the behavioural change of the employees, he introduced performance-based pay, implemented an open system of feedback for guiding and facilitating the employees in accepting the new behaviour patterns at work.

According to **Branch (2002, p. 4)**, Lewin's change management model can be implemented in three ways:

1. Changing the behaviour, attitudes, skills of the individuals working in the organization.
2. Changing the existing organizational structures, systems and processes
3. Changing the organizational climate, culture and interpersonal style.

Lewin's model stressed on the interdependence of various units as well as subunits in an organization. This model assumes that organizations function under static conditions and move from one state of stability to another state of stability in a planned way, but the present day organizations function in turbulent scenarios and uncertain business environments. Furthermore, several critics criticized Lewin's planned approach to change management for the following reasons:

- It was criticized for being too simple and mechanistic, as a result of which it may not be applicable for the present organizational scenario.
- Lewin's Planned change model fails to take into consideration the radical or transformational change; it is only useful if incremental change is implemented in an organization
- This model ignores the role of Power & Politics and conflicts. Moreover, it ignores the importance of feelings and experiences of employees which play a crucial role in the entire change process. The model is very plan or goal driven.
- This model supports top-down approach to change management and ignores the importance of bottom-up approach in the change management process.

## Lewin's Force Field Analysis

**Kurt Lewin's Force Field Analysis attempts to explain how the process of change works by diagnosing the driving and the restraining forces that lead to organizational change.** One side of the model represents the driving forces, and the other side represents the restraining forces. The driving forces push the organizations towards the new state, and the restraining forces are the factors which provide resistance to change or are regarded as the behaviours of the employees that block the process of change. According to Lewin, stability can be achieved when both the driving and restraining forces reach a stage of equilibrium, which should be approximately of equal strength from the opposite directions.

According to the Force Field Analysis model of Kurt Lewin, effective change happens by unfreezing the existing state of affairs or the current situation, moving to a changed or a desired situation and then refreezing for making the change relatively permanent. During the stage of Unfreezing, the driving forces should be made stronger to motivate a change in the behaviour or ways of working, while the restraining forces should be made weaker or removed. Driving forces create

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Any change process should start with informing the employees about the influence of the external driving forces like competitors, changing trends in the consumer demands and preferences, regulatory compliances and various other factors. Apart from this for implementing change effectively, the restraining forces should be reduced or removed.

The restraining forces or the resistance from the employees can be controlled by way of effective communication and involvement of the employees in the process, training initiatives for strengthening the new set of knowledge and skills, implementation of stress management techniques to help employees in coping with the stressors, negotiation for ensuring compliance and the last method is implementation of coercive measures if all the other measures fail and the need for change is urgent in nature.

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## Kotter's 8 step Model of Change

John Kotter (1996), a Harvard Business School Professor and a renowned change expert, in his book "Leading Change", introduced **8 Step Model of Change** which he developed on the basis of research of **100 organizations which were going through a process of change**.

The 8 steps in the process of change include: creating a sense of urgency, forming powerful guiding coalitions, developing a vision and a strategy, communicating the vision, removing obstacles and empowering employees for action, creating short-term wins, consolidating gains and strengthening change by anchoring change in the culture. Kotter's 8 step model can be explained with the help of the illustration given below:



(Source: Adapted from Kotter 1996)

### 1. Creating an Urgency: This can be done in the following ways:

- Identifying and highlighting the potential threats and the repercussions which might crop up in the future.
- Examining the opportunities which can be tapped through effective interventions.
- Initiate honest dialogues and discussions to make people think over the prevalent issues and give convincing reasons to them.
- Request the involvement and support of the industry people, key stakeholders and customers on the issue of change.

### 2. Forming Powerful Guiding Coalitions

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their involvement and commitment towards the entire process.

- Form a powerful change coalition who would be working as a team.
- Identify the weak areas in the coalition teams and ensure that the team involves many influential people from various cross functional departments and working in different levels in the company.

## 3. Developing a Vision and a Strategy

This can be achieved by:

- Determining the core values, defining the ultimate vision and the strategies for realizing a change in an organization.
- Ensure that the change leaders can describe the vision effectively and in a manner that people can easily understand and follow.

## 4. Communicating the Vision

- Communicate the change in the vision very often powerfully and convincingly. Connect the vision with all the crucial aspects like performance reviews, training, etc.
- Handle the concerns and issues of people honestly and with involvement.

## 5. Removing Obstacles

- Ensure that the organizational processes and structure are in place and aligned with the overall organizational vision.
- Continuously check for barriers or people who are resisting change. Implement proactive actions to remove the obstacles involved in the process of change.
- Reward people for endorsing change and supporting in the process.

## 6. Creating Short-Term Wins

- By creating short term wins early in the change process, you can give a feel of victory in the early stages of change.
- Create many short term targets instead of one long-term goal, which are achievable and less expensive and have lesser possibilities of failure.
- Reward the contributions of people who are involved in meeting the targets.

## 7. Consolidating Gains

- Achieve continuous improvement by analysing the success stories individually and improving from those individual experiences.

## 8. Anchoring Change in the Corporate Culture

- Discuss the successful stories related to change initiatives on every given opportunity.
- Ensure that the change becomes an integral part in your organizational culture and is visible in every organizational aspect.
- Ensure that the support of the existing company leaders as well as the new leaders continue to extend their support towards the change.

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- It is an easy step by step model which provides a clear description and guidance on the entire process of change and is relatively easy for being implemented.
- Emphasis is on the involvement and acceptability of the employees for the success in the overall process.
- Major emphasis is on preparing and building acceptability for change instead of the actual change process.

## Disadvantages of Kotter's Model

- Since it is a step by step model, skipping even a single step might result in serious problems.
- The process is quite time consuming (Rose 2002).
- The model is essentially top-down and discourages any scope for participation or co-creation.
- Can build frustration and dissatisfaction among the employees if the individual requirements are given due attention.

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Contingency model of Change management: Dunphy and Stace's model of Change

## Contingency Model of Change Management: Dunphy and Stace's Model of Change

The contingency model is an extended version of Lewin's three step in which Dunphy and Stace (1988, 1992 and 1993), explained the process of change from the transformational organization perspective.

**Dunphy and Stace (1993)**, put forth a situational or contingency model of change, which emphasized on the fact that organizations should vary their change strategies in accordance with the environmental changes for arriving at an 'optimum fit'. It further discussed that organizations differ in terms of structure, processes and key values which they espouse, and it is due to these differences; the organizations may not be influenced by the similar situational variables. Dexter Dunphy and Doug Stace, through their contingency model proposed that depending upon the environment, both the managers as well as the change agents should vary their change strategies. They focus on the environmental factors as well as the forces of leadership which play a crucial role in any change process.

According to them, change can be categorized into four different types: **fine tuning, modular transformation, incremental adjustment and corporate transformation**. Both the authors reckoned that the change need not only happen on an incremental basis but can also take place on a radical or discontinuous basis. They equally highlighted that the transformational change could be both consultative as well as coercive in nature.

### Dunphy and Stace Described 4 Styles of Leadership

1. **Collaborative Style:** The collaborative leadership style attracts large scale participation from the employees of the organization in the important decisions related to the future and equally related to the method for implementing organizational change.
2. **Consultative Style:** The Consultative Style of Leaders consult the employees before implementing organizational change by involving them little in the process of goal setting related to their area of expertise.
3. **Directive Style:** The Directive Style of Leadership involves least participation from the employees in the decision-making process related with the organizational future, instead this kind of leadership uses authority for implementing vital decisions related to the organizational change.
4. **Coercive Style:** This form of leadership exercises coercion or force for implementing organizational change on the members of the organization either by involving the outside parties or involving the managers/executives in the process.

In continuation with this, both argued that:

- **Incremental change** can be more appropriate when an organization is already maintaining its best fit and require small changes in certain parameters. Hence the change need not be implemented rapidly or abruptly to ensure smooth organizational transition.
- **Transformational change** can be necessary in situations when an organization is faced with a position of disequilibrium or is out of the fit, as a result of which a quick action is needed or transformational change is required for ensuring the survivability of the organization.

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- **Coercive modes** of change can be useful if at all any change faces large-scale opposition from the target interest groups.

Based on the interaction between the Scale of Change and Management/Leadership style, Dunphy and Stace propounded a model of 5 different types of Change.

Style of change management	Scale of change			
	Fine tuning	Incremental adjustment	Modular transformation	Corporate transformation
<b>Collaborative</b>		<i>Developmental transition</i> (constant change)		<i>Charismatic transformations</i> (inspirational change)
<b>Consultive</b>				
<b>Directive</b>		<i>Task-focused transition</i> (constant change)		
<b>Coercive</b>	<i>Taylorism</i> (avoiding change or making small adjustments)			<i>Turnarounds</i> (frame-breaking change)

Source: Stace & Dunphy 2001:22.

The salient features of these 5 types of change are given below:

1. **Taylorism:** This is the kind of change in which the change is usually avoided, and small adjustments are made. This kind of change results in lower organizational performance
2. **Developmental Transition:** This kind of change is facilitating in nature as it focuses on employee development, use of TQM, improving communication and expansion of services, achieving continuous improvement in service quality and team building measures.
3. **Task-Focused Transition:** This technique focuses on new techniques and new procedures, new products and services and is also based on constant reorganizations.
4. **Charismatic Transitions:** As a Charismatic or a popular leader, through effective communication and development of trust or faith, the change can be implemented smoothly with the willingness of the followers associated with it.

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## Limitations of the Model

- This model has been criticized of being Normative with only limited empirical evidence.
- This model has been criticized due to its excess of dependency on the change drivers and the leadership style which they adopt for implementation of organizational change instead of analysing the organizational factors.

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## Mintzberg and Quinn's Model of Change

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1. **Organizational Age and Size:** This is one of the most important factors as according to Mintzberg and Quinn, formalized behaviour are practised in much older organizations, while larger organizations have more elaborate structures and larger structures reflect the age of the industry since it got established.

Young organizations which are relatively in the start-up stage, have relatively smaller structures and hence they spend less time on establishing formal traditions and practices which in due course of time may act as barriers to change. Hence the young organizations adjust with the change and accept the change. But on the other hand, the older organizations which have formal structures and strongly established traditions and practices find it difficult to adjust to the changes and are less flexible in their approach. Large organizations follow greater hierarchy required for supervising the employee activities and need to maintain greater control.

2. **Technical System:** Technical System constitutes the instruments used by the organization for producing the desired outputs. The Technical System can affect the organizational structure broadly in 3 different ways:

- Organizations which are highly regulated and dominated by the technical systems display more of bureaucratic structures.
- Organizations having highly complex technical systems, tend to delegate the process of decision making to highly skilled or professional staff for managing the technical staff.
- Organizations with automated technical systems tend to adopt much fluid and flexible structure, for proactively responding to the changing requirements of the times.

3. **Environment:** The environmental factors are the external factors which are beyond the organizational control, market driven forces, socio-political environment, economic changes and many others. The environmental factors influence the organizations in the following ways in terms of their adaptability with the change:

- Organizations which operate in dynamic environments tend to follow more organic structures
- Organizations which exist in complex environments adopt more decentralized structures.
- Organizations existing in diversified market conditions adopt market driven divisional structures
- Organizations operating in hostile environments adopt a more centralized form of structures.

4. **Nature of Control/Power:** The following considerations determine the extent to which power can influence change in an organization:

- More centralized and formalized structure is adopted by the organizations having greater external control.

The model further goes on to describing **5 main components of an organization** which influence the extent to which an organization need to change. These components are:

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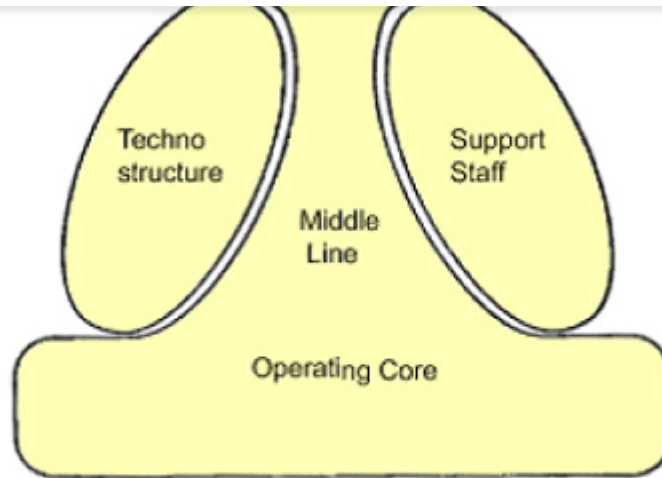


Figure 2.4a: The five basic components of an organisation

(Source: Adapted from Mintzberg 1992)

1. **Operating Core:** This constitutes the employees who perform the basic activities related to the process of production of various products and services.
2. **Strategic Apex:** This constitutes those group of people who are responsible for implementing strategic decisions for realizing the organizational mission and objectives. They enjoy power and control.
3. **Middle Line Managers:** The Middle Line Managers act as the intermediary and the link between the operating core and the strategic apex.
4. **Techno structure:** The analysts (employees) are hold the responsibility of planning and executing the change, implementing vital decisions related with the change and responsible for training other employees for implementing the change.
5. **Support Staff:** The Support Staff are primarily the specialized units.

According to Mintzberg, all the components need to blend for improved organizational functioning. He equally maintained that organizational structures can be identified as machine organization (bureaucracy), entrepreneurial organization, the innovative organization (adhocracy) and the divisional (diversified) organization.

He explained that machine organizations have more formalized structures and rely on standardized processes, routines and procedures are involved in the process of organizational functioning, is based on centralized decision-making process, and moreover, tasks are clustered or grouped in accordance with the functional departments.

He further described that machine organizations have a vertical structure, in which the decision making is centralized and the senior management implement decisions centrally. Since the machine organizations follow centralized decision making and are formalized structures like the government organizations, hence they can do well when it comes to handling the routine nature of works but not under circumstances when radical decisions are supposed to be implemented.

## Limitations of this Model

- The model skips the analysis of the relationship which exists between organizational effectiveness and the managerial behaviour.

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- The model does not take into consideration the factors before introducing the change like the roles of an effective or a successful change initiator.

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