

Help Us Translate

- 0:04 Welcome back. In this video, you will learn about Kurt Lewin's, change management theory and how to use it. Kurt Lewin was the founder of modern social psychology.
- 0:16 Born in Prussia, he received a PhD from the University of Berlin where he lectured for a number of years at the Psychological Institute before immigrating to the US in 1933.
- 0:29 In 1944, Lewin established the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Its purpose was to support the application of the theory of social psychology in studying the outcomes off the application.
- 0:46 He oversaw the research center for three years until his death in 1947. Kurt Lewin proposed a simple way of understanding organizational change via a three stages model, also known as the Planned Approach to Organizational Change. The three stages model theory of unfreeze, change, refreeze is a simple way to break down and explain organizational change. We start with communicating why the change is needed, unfreeze. We lead people by empowering them to find new ways of doing things and adopting these new ways, change. And that we bring the organization back to stability by freezing it in this new state.
- 1:30 The cycle gets repeated with the next change. Lewin used an example of ice to explain the process of change in the three stages model. He said that if you had an ice cube and realized you needed a different shape of a nice cube, what would you have to do to change it?
- 1:48 You'd have to unfreeze or melt it. Pour it into a new mold for this new shape and refreeze it. The result would be the differently shaped ice cube that you needed.
- 2:01 The process of modifying an ice cube is similar to what we're aiming to do with an organization. Lewin's three stages model consists of three stages.
- 2:12 One, unfreeze, two, change, three, freeze.
- 2:22 Let's look at each of these stages in sequential order. The first stage of when you change, is unfreeze.
- 2:30 Before initiating it change process. Lewin advised having a clear understanding of why the change was needed. Why do we need to change anything at all?
- 2:42 What benefits do we believe we will realize by going through the process? During the first stage, we have to shake things up and start breaking the status quo. When we initiate change, three insights are critical for making the unfreeze stage a success. One, we have to explain in the compelling way why

the change is needed. What are the consequences of not changing, and the benefits the change will provide? I recommend using data and analytics to develop a powerful reason for the change.

- 3:18 Declining sales figures in revenue, low customer service scores, rising employees injuries or high attrition rates are a few example of what you could use to support the reason behind the need for change. Two, when beginning the process of change, we have to start with foundational beliefs in values. Do we have the right set of values and beliefs to support the change we're seeking? It's not, these values and beliefs we'll need to change before we can introduce a new way of doing things. For example, think of a visit to a doctor's office. When something bothers you, you go to see your doctor, and you hope he can help find and fix the root cause of the problem. You do not want to receive medication from him that will just mask the symptoms, because what you really want is to live a happy and healthy life long term, change is similar. Often, we initiate change because we experience the symptoms of an issue.
- 4:19 Even if we fix the symptoms, they will return sooner or later unless we find and address the root causes underlying the symptoms. Three, initiating change is difficult and it makes people uncomfortable.
- 4:34 Remember the Valley of Despair curve.
- 4:37 Suppose you can imagine the gravity of combined emotional distress in an organization when everyone goes through an emotional journey caused by change.
- 4:47 It's no surprise then that things get shaky during the unfreeze stage because the change triggers an emotional response.
- 4:55 People will be motivated to return to equilibrium as they face this temporary crisis. Once the change gets set in motion in the unfreeze state, people begin to develop new ways of doing things to resolve the uncertainty. This is a trademark offstage to change. To accept and actively participate in the process, leaders must explain what individual benefit a change will deliver. From the employee perspective it sounds like, what's in it for me, or why should I support this change?
- 5:28 It's a common misconception that employees will support the change just because it will benefit the company. It's critical to get buying at an individual level by communicating how a particular change will make an individual employee's life better. Both unfreeze and change stages take time. Leadership support during this change stage has to be strong. Employees have to have a sense of understanding of the need for change. They need to know why it's important for the organization to change along with having a sense of belonging to the organization in order for them to support change in sustaining long term. After the changes have been adopted and have time to sink in we freeze an organization again. During the refreeze stage, changes get institutionalized by being embedded into processes and procedures.

- 6:25 During the refreeze stage, employees get closure. This stage marks the end of change. As a leader, it's essential to summarize the outcomes of a change by communicating it through town hall meetings, emails and individual conversations. It's also important to recognize people in a positive way for going through an uncomfortable and sometimes even painful journey of change and to celebrate the success with them.
- 6:53 Without it, employees might feel like change is constant and never ending. Through a celebration and recognition, we can keep employees motivated and excited for the next time change happens. To summarize, Lewin's three stages model of unfreeze, change and freeze is a simple way to break down and explain the organizational change. Even though this model appears simple at first glance, it helps add structure in order to an otherwise complex process of change. And it has no limitations on how and when it can be applied.
- 7:30 Thanks for watching. I'll see you in the next video.