Managing Change

Lesson 3

WESTON COLLEGE

Mindful Education

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Study Information and Tips

This Study Text replicates the video content for the lesson

Supplementary knowledge can also be found in the information sheets and text boxes that accompany the videos, as well as in the resources in the Insights section

Activities to help you consolidate your knowledge are deliberately delivered through practice questions and exercises found in the Test and Apply sections on the VLE. These help you to further build on your knowledge and apply the learning in a way that supports your assessment

You can use this Study Text to test your understanding of the learning content at the end of each lesson. It may also be helpful to refer to it when preparing for your assessments

We recommend that you also produce your own notes in addition to the Study Text. Research has shown that handwritten notes can be very effective for learning retention

If you decide to print this Study Text, set the layout to print 4 or 6 slides per page to save on paper and ink

Planning and Implementing Change – Part 1

Make the case for change at your organisation

Planning for change and the tools you can use

Risks and barriers to change

Making the Case for Change

As we saw in the previous lesson, the first step in any change management process is to get people on board with the change.

All of the major models we have discussed refer to the importance of preparing the ground for change by disrupting the status quo in some way.

Lewin talked of ‘unfreezing’ the current attitudes and opinions of people within the organisation; Kotter spoke of ‘creating a sense of urgency’ around the need for change; and Beckhard and Harris discussed the importance of creating a ‘vision’ of what the new organisation will look like.

Rationale for Change

While the exact language used in each of these models is different, the central idea is the same: the first step in any organisational change is to specify the rationale for it – and to get senior management and the rest of the organisation to buy into this rationale.

Essentially, you need to tell people why the organisation needs to change. What's in it for them?

It's important not to get confused between the rationale and the internal and external factors that can influence and drive change, which we covered in the first lesson.

Rationale for Change (cont.)

The rationale for change takes these driving factors and translates them into a business case that will persuade key stakeholders in the organisation that change is required – because it will bring benefits.

As we saw in the first lesson, many different factors, both inside and outside an organisation, might trigger a need for change.

Perhaps a new competitor has emerged and is taking a share of your market? Maybe there have been some recent technological developments that would allow you to improve your operations? Or perhaps new regulations have been introduced that affect the way you operate?

Making an Effective Business Case

Whatever the factor driving the change, you need to translate the issue into a business case that will convince the organisation's decision-makers that there is a need to take action. You need their commitment to the change process – and for them to supply the resources to make it happen.

An effective business case will make a clear, direct link between your planned change and the organisation's objectives. It should set out a vision of what the organisation will look like after the change, and the benefits this will bring in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

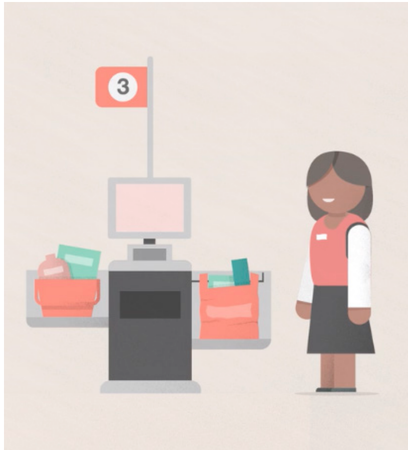
Making an Effective Business Case (cont.)

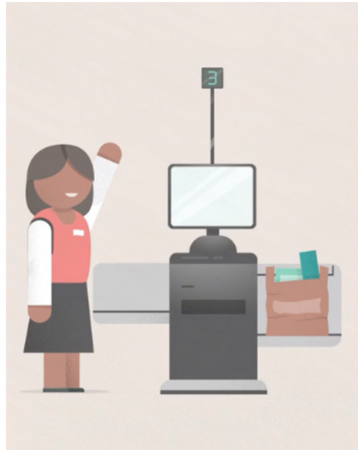
However, a business case also needs to be realistic, acknowledging the costs of the project and the possible risks. If it is not open and transparent about these issues, the business will not be prepared for them if and when they arise, and the whole change project could be jeopardised.

Crucially, the business case should be written in a language your audience will understand. In most cases, this will be senior management. Their key concern will be the bottom line, so your business case should clearly explain how the planned change will drive revenue or cut costs.

Business Case – Example

Let’s take a look at an example. Steffi, the IT Manager at a large chain of supermarkets, has been told that the software used to run their self-service checkouts will no longer be supported by the supplier. This means that if the software develops a fault, it will be left to the business itself to fix the problem.





Steffi believes that the best option for the business is to buy new software, but she needs the board to sign off on the project. She puts together a business case to present the issue to them. It includes a forecast of the likely cost to the business, in repairs and lost sales, of future checkout failures if they keep the old software.

Business Case – Example (cont.)

She also presents the price of replacing the software with a new version, which the supplier will support.

The cost of buying the new software is less than the forecast cost of keeping the old software and having to carry out maintenance themselves. So Steffi is able to show senior management that – despite a big initial outlay to purchase the new software and train staff how to use it – this change will actually save the business money in the long run.

Business Case – Example (cont.)

Seeing this, senior management accept the business case and give Steffi the go ahead to start the change process.

In this example, the external factor driving the need for change was the loss of software support from the supplier. But the rationale for change was that buying new software would be more cost effective than retaining the old software.

Of course, as we have touched on already in this unit, to make change happen you not only need commitment from the top, you also need to take your peers and team members with you. In this example, getting each supermarket manager and their staff on board could prove a sticking point. We'll cover how you can engage these other groups in the change later in the unit.

Planning and Implementing Change

We've looked at how you can specify the rationale for change, and use this to help initiate the change process by bringing senior management on board. But this is just the first step. To be successful, every stage of the change management process must be carefully planned.

We have already examined several major models of change management in this unit, including Lewin's Force-Field Analysis and 3-Step model, Kotter's 8-Step approach to transformation, and Beckhard and Harris's Change Equation.

Practical Steps

While these models are useful for thinking in theoretical terms about delivering change, they do not offer much practical guidance.

So what practical steps do you need to take to deliver effective change? How should you approach the process?

The key is to plan. Change is always a time of uncertainty – but having a well-defined plan can reduce any unease that managers and employees may feel about the process, and bring a sense of direction to the project.

Overall Strategy

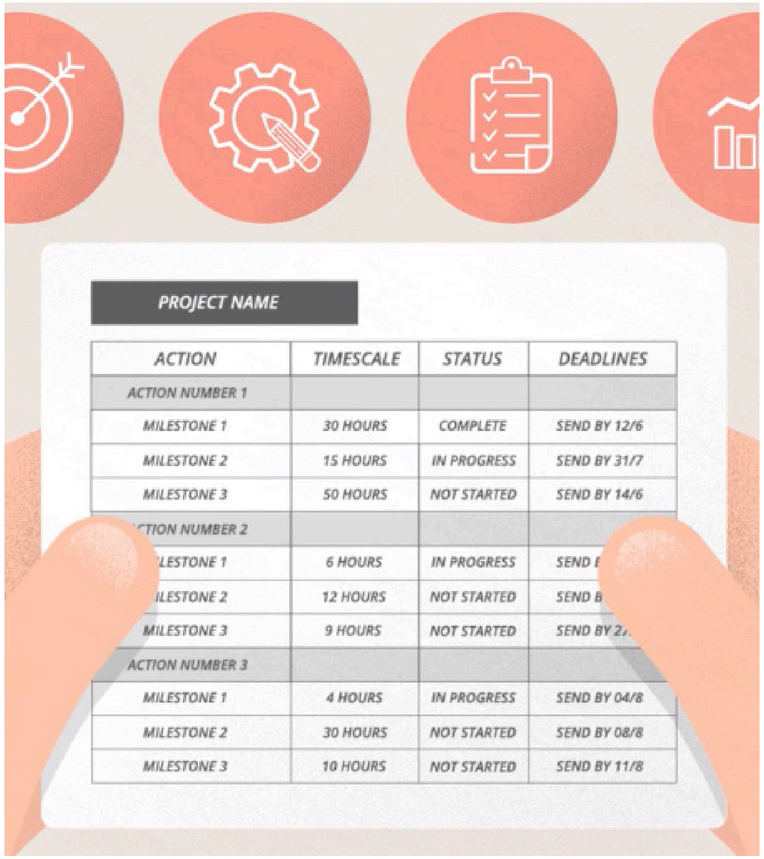
A good plan will begin by setting out the overall strategy for the change process. This will include:

- Objectives – that is, what you aim to achieve through the change project
- Resources – what you will need to achieve these goals. This may include funding as well as physical resources and employees
- Responsibilities – you will need to define roles and responsibilities for everyone who is involved in delivering the project
- Measures of success – you need to set out the criteria you will use to judge whether the project has been successful

Plan of Action

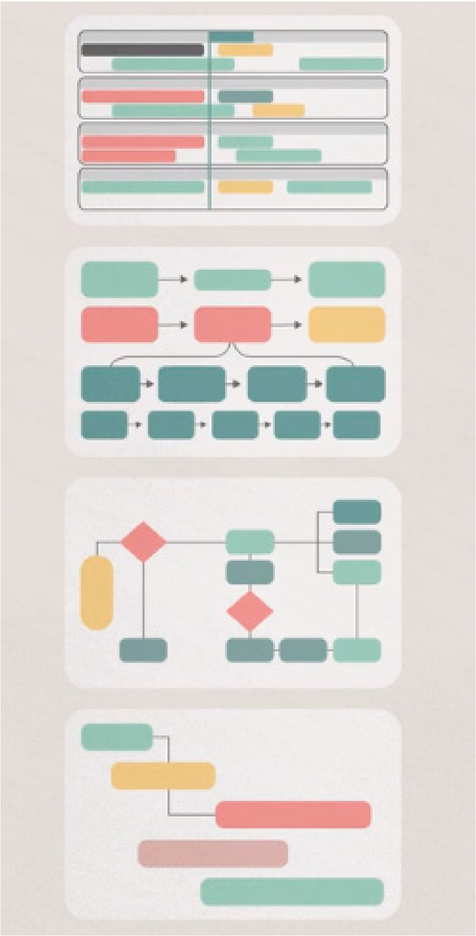
Once the overall strategy has been set, you can devise a plan of action. This will include details on:

- Actions – what you will actually do during the project to achieve your objectives
- Timescales – it can be helpful to set out how long each stage of the process should take, to ensure it stays on track
- Milestones – to help you assess your progress during the project. (You don't want to wait until the project has finished to check how you are doing, because if things don't go to plan, it will be too late to change course)
- Deadlines – the project needs an overall deadline, but you may also need other deadlines throughout the project to keep within the timescales



Tools for Planning

There are a number of tools you can use to help with devising and managing your action plan. They include roadmaps, flowcharts, process maps and Gantt charts – some of these will be familiar to anyone who has managed a complex project before.



Each of these tools sets out timelines for your planned actions, helping you visualise exactly what needs to be completed and by when. They break down the complete change plan into small, incremental steps, which can help make the whole process feel more achievable.

Gantt Chart

As an example, let's take a closer look at the Gantt chart. This tool was invented over 100 years ago by management consultant Henry Gantt, but it is still used very widely today.

Essentially, a Gantt chart is a simple but powerful bar chart that shows how the separate tasks within a project are scheduled over time. Each bar represents the beginning and end of an activity in a project. Where bars overlap, they represent tasks that can be carried out at the same time. In other places, one task may have to be completed before another can begin – these dependencies are indicated with simple links.

Gantt Chart – Example

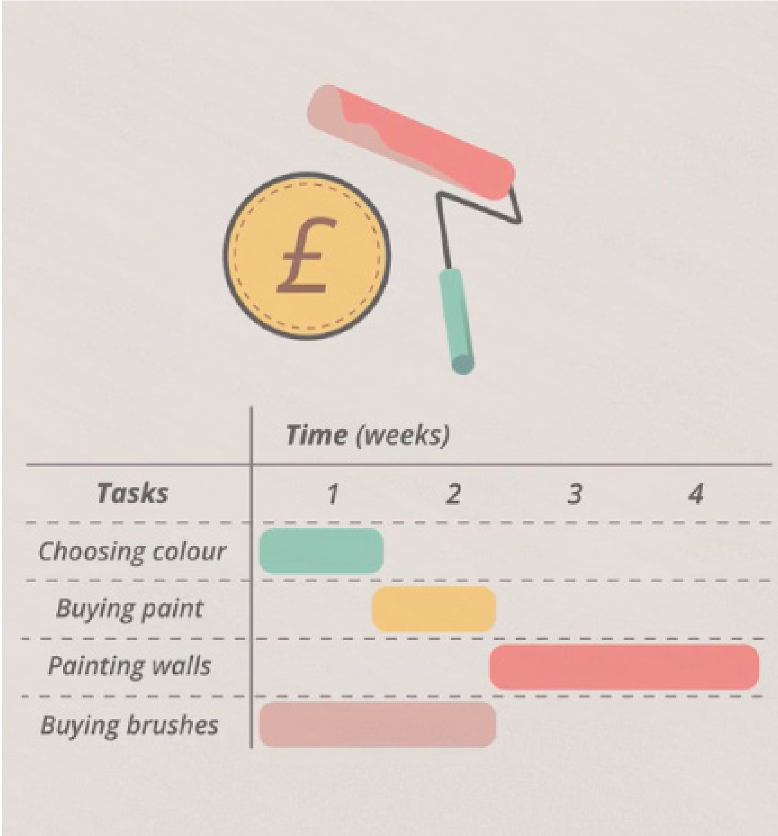
These interconnected tasks represent what is known as the critical path – if any one of these tasks gets delayed, it will have a knock-on effect on the whole project.

We can illustrate this with a simple example. Imagine you were going to redecorate your office. This project could be broken down into four separate tasks, and each task could be assigned a bar in your Gantt chart. The first task is to decide what colour you want to paint your office, so this would come first in your timeline. This must be completed before step two, which is buying the paint.

Gantt Chart – Example (cont.)

Only after this step is complete can you begin task three, painting the walls. These tasks represent a critical path – they must be completed in this order, and any delay will hold up the overall project.

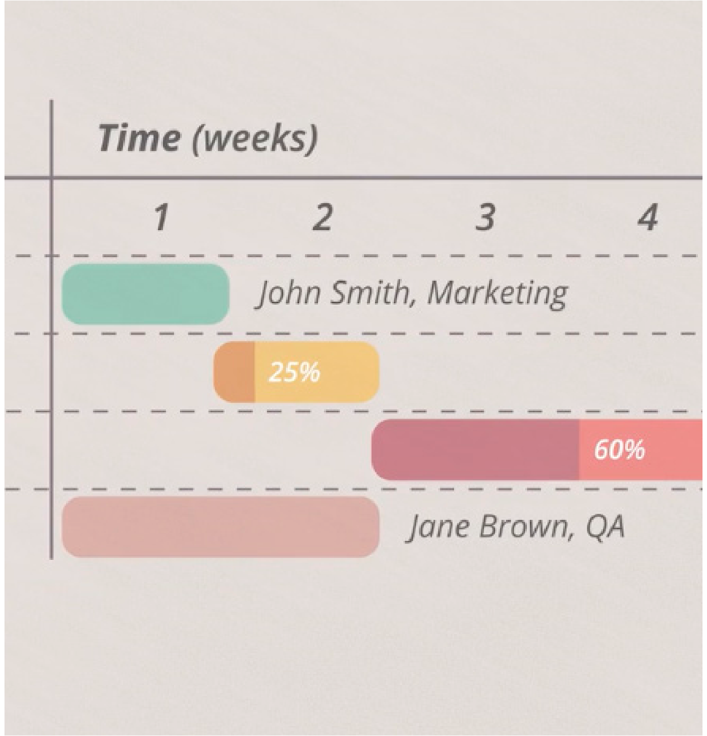
You will also need to buy some paint brushes, but this step can happen at any time during the project, up until you need to start painting the walls.



Gantt Chart – Example (cont.)

A Gantt chart can be more involved than this. During the project, for example, you can shade or colour the bars to indicate progress made on each task. You can also annotate the chart to denote individuals or departments assigned to each task.

Important events or milestones within the project can also be marked. But at its heart, a Gantt chart is a very simple, yet highly effective way of visualising each step of a complex project.



Risks and Barriers to Change

We've looked at the importance of planning in change management. But even the best laid plans can be derailed if you do not also address the risks and barriers to change in your organisation.

Barriers to change can generally be classified at two levels:

- Those at an organisational level – that is, from within the business itself
- Those at an individual level – from the managers and employees within the organisation

Organisational Barriers to Change – Money

First, let's address **organisational barriers to change**. These barriers are generally quite easy to identify and are typically logistical – that is, they relate to the way the business and its resources are organised.

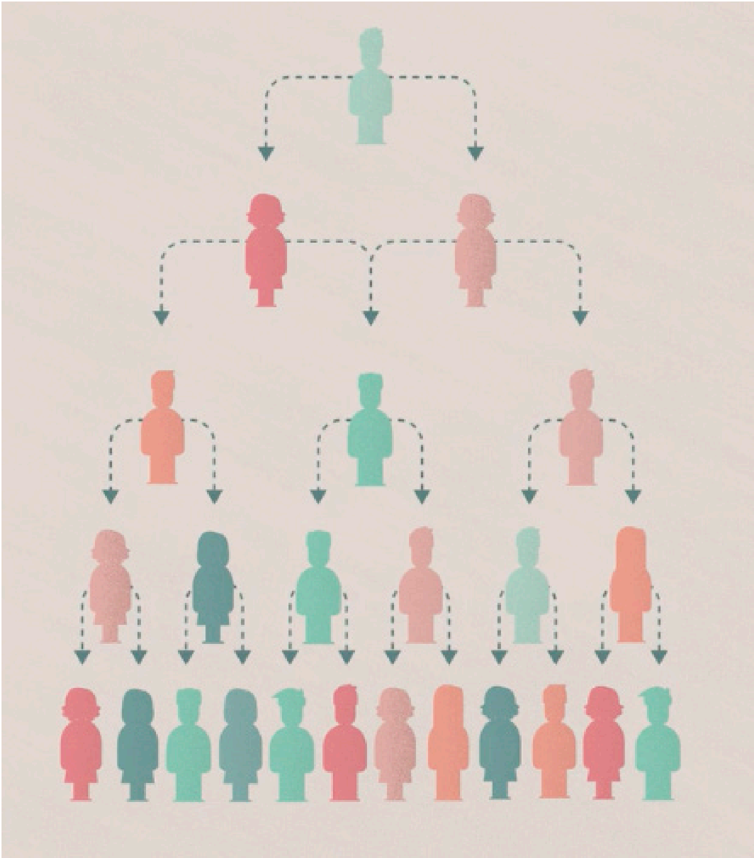
The biggest organisational barrier to change is usually money. If an organisation does not have the budget required to finance your planned change, then it won't happen.

This is where the business case comes in. If your rationale for change is good enough – and shows it will have a significant positive impact on the organisation's bottom line – then senior management will usually find a way to give you the funds you need. If not, you may need to revise your planned change to ensure it's affordable.

Organisational Barriers to Change – Hierarchy

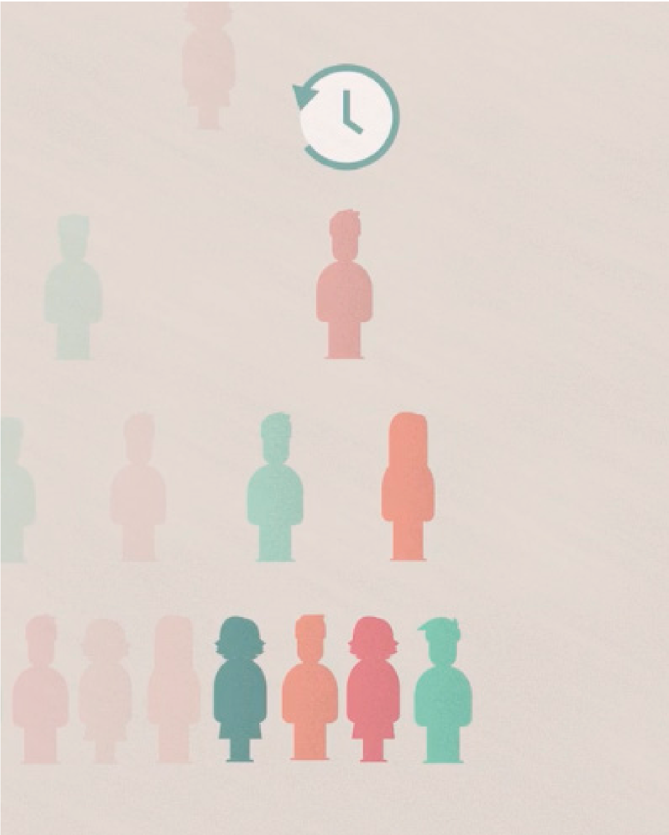
Aside from money, issues with the way an organisation is structured can impede change. A hierarchical management structure can cause problems, for example, as it can make communicating the reasons for change more difficult.

The more levels these messages have to trickle through, the greater scope there is for misunderstanding and confusion.



Organisational Barriers to Change – Communication

Communications can also be difficult in organisations where a lot of employees work remotely, or where there is a high number of shift workers.



While these organisational barriers each present their own unique problems, they are all within the control of the business. Overcoming them is usually a matter of logistics. For example, communications can be improved by seeking regular feedback from employees, to make sure they understand the messages coming down from senior management. We'll explore the importance of communication during change in more detail in the next lesson.

Individuals' Barriers to Change

The second category of barriers to change – **individual resistance** – can be more difficult to manage, as they often involve emotions.

It is sometimes said that "organisations don't change, people do". It is certainly true that employees can prove a big barrier to change within a business.

As we have discussed throughout this unit, change can be difficult for people, and they will react to it in different ways. While some people may embrace change, the majority are likely to show at least some resistance. And people may resist change for all manner of reasons.

Kotter and Schlesinger’s Types of Individual Resistance

In 1979, Harvard professors John Kotter and Leonard Schlesinger published a seminal article, in which they identified four main ‘types’ of individual resistance to change:

- The first is self-interest – people may resist change because they feel it will leave them in a worse position.
- The second is misunderstanding or a lack of trust. If people don’t fully understand, or trust, leadership’s reasons for change, they are unlikely to get on board.
- Third, people may have different assessments of the business case for change, and may conclude that there are more costs or fewer benefits to the change than management are presenting to them – not only for the business but for themselves as well.
- Finally, some individuals may simply have a low tolerance for change. It may make them feel anxious or insecure, so emotionally they may not be able to adapt.

Kotter and Schlesinger – Overcoming Resistance

Kotter and Schlesinger also set out several methods for overcoming this kind of resistance.

The first and most important of these methods is **education and communication**. It is especially useful when resistance to change is based on inadequate or inaccurate information, but this method requires time and effort.

The next method is **participation and involvement**. Giving employees the chance to contribute to plans for change can help gain their commitment. However, it can be very time consuming and it can also lead to poor solutions if it is not managed carefully.

Kotter and Schlesinger – Overcoming Resistance (cont.)

A third way in which managers can deal with resistance is by offering **facilitation and support.** It could mean giving employees training in new skills or even just giving them time off during a demanding period of change.

This can help employees overcome their fear of change and provide them with valuable emotional support – but, again, it is time consuming and can be expensive.

Kotter and Schlesinger – Overcoming Resistance (cont.)

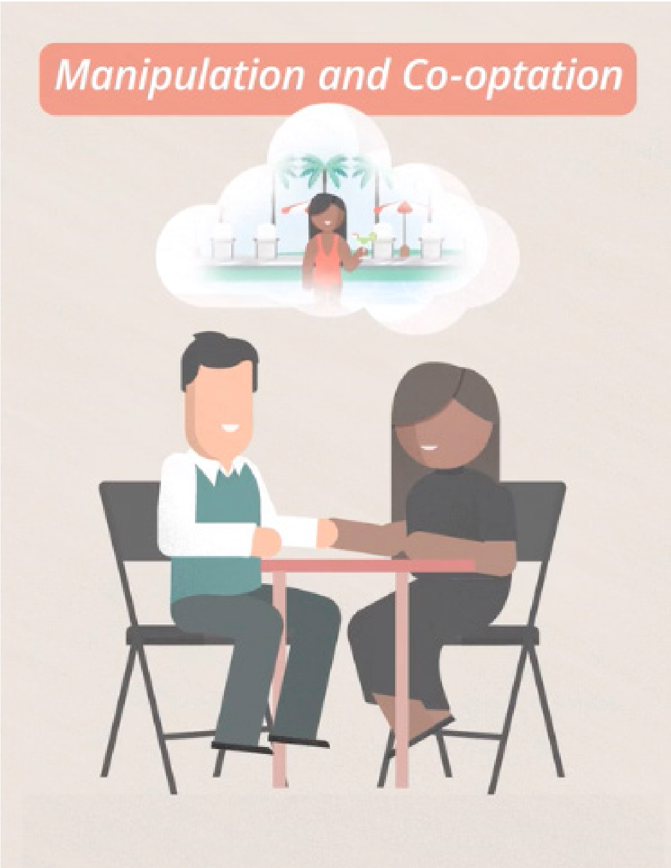
Another way to manage resistance is to **negotiate** with employees and reach an agreement with them. For example, you could offer employees a bonus or a pay rise in exchange for supporting your planned change.

This can be a useful approach for dealing with groups who have the power and influence to disrupt your change, but it could also open you up to further negotiations and even blackmail later down the line.

Manipulation and Co-optation

In some situations, Kotter and Schlesinger admit that managers may engage in **manipulation and co-optation** to overcome resistance. This could involve giving someone with influence a desirable role in the change process, in order to win their support.

But it is not a genuine attempt to involve the individual – the manager does not want their ideas, only their endorsement. Such an approach can backfire, as most people are likely to react with anger if they discover that they have been manipulated in this way.



Coercion

Finally, some managers choose to deal with resistance through coercion – forcing employees to accept a change by threatening them with the sack or with being overlooked for future promotions. This can be useful where a change needs to be implemented very quickly but, again, this is a highly risky approach, and people will inevitably resent being treated this way.

Kotter and Schlesinger do not recommend any one of these approaches over another – each has its pros and cons. As a manager, you will need to decide how best to overcome any resistance to change that you might encounter.

Recap

In this lesson, you have learned about:

- Make the case for change at your organisation
- Planning for change and the tools you can use
- Risks and barriers to change