Tool 16: Force Field Analysis

Aim of the tool

To assess the strengths of the various factors influencing an intervention, both positively and negatively.

When to use it?

This tool can be used at different stages of an intervention. At the design stage but also at the evaluation.
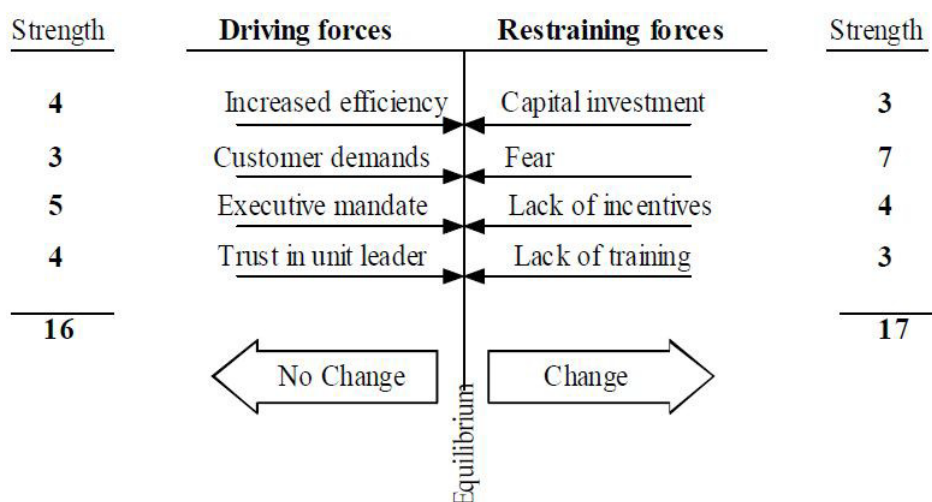
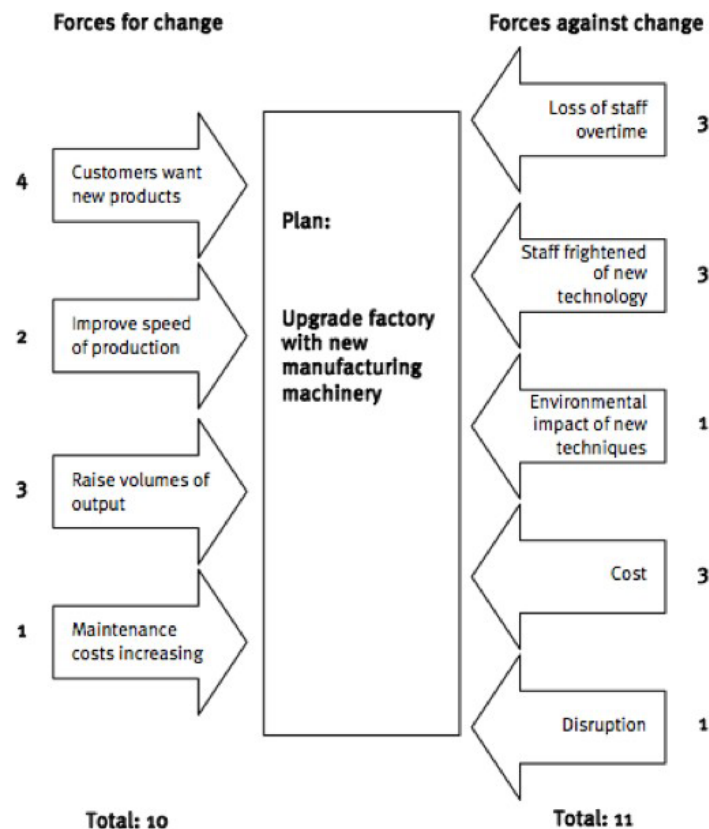---

What is a Force Field Analysis?

Force field analysis is a valuable change-management tool.

Kurt Lewin's force field analysis evaluates the net impact of all forces that influence change. These forces can be divided into two groups: driving forces and restraining forces. Driving forces are all forces that push for and promote change. These change drivers promote and encourage the change process.

Some examples of driving forces are executive mandate, customer demands, and increased efficiency. Restraining forces are forces that make change more difficult. These forces counteract driving forces and lead to the avoidance or resistance of change. Some examples of restraining forces are fear, lack of training, and the lack of incentives. When these two sets of forces are equal change is in a static state of equilibrium meaning that no movement towards or away from change is happening.

Examples

Strength	Driving forces	Restraining forces	Strength
4	Increased efficiency	Capital investment	3
3	Customer demands	Fear	7
5	Executive mandate	Lack of incentives	4
4	Trust in unit leader	Lack of training	3
16	No Change	Change	**17**

Equilibrium

Forces for change		Forces against change	
4	Customers want new products	Loss of staff overtime	3
	Plan:	Staff frightened of new technology	3
2	Improve speed of production	**Upgrade factory with new manufacturing machinery**	
		Environmental impact of new techniques	1
3	Raise volumes of output		
		Cost	3
1	Maintenance costs increasing		
		Disruption	1
Total: 10		**Total: 11**	

Force Field Analysis - Step by step

Although there are several different methods and variations for conducting force field analysis, there are commonalities among all of them. The steps outlined below (in the context of a businesssetting) capture many of these commonalities and represent the process needed for successful implementation of a typical force field analysis.

1. Identify and understand the current state.
2. Identify and understand the desired goal state. This could be a desired (policy) goal orobjective.
3. Identify and list driving forces acting to support the change. It is important to list all forces regardless of their seemingly small influence. Driving forces are forces acting tomove the current state towards the goal state.
4. Identify and list restraining forces acting to hinder the change. Remember restrainingforces are forces holding the current state back from the goal state.
5. For each force, designate the level of influence using a numerical scale e.g. 1= extremelyweak and 7= extremely strong.
6. Chart the forces by listing the driving forces on the left and restraining forces on the

right. Also chart the numbers allocated in step 5 next to their related force.

7. By adding up the scores on both sides, the feasibility of the desired change can be evaluated given current and potential forces at work.
8. Discuss how the change can be affected by decreasing the strength of the restraining forces or by increasing the strength of driving forces.
9. Discuss action strategies to eliminate the restraining forces and to capitalize on the driving forces.

Learn more

On Kurt Lewin's field theory: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force–field_analysis

Partly based on: Stephen Wells (2006). Force Field Analysis – Mini-Tutorial Quality Management. https://arifpermana.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/force-field-mini-tutorial.pdf

BetterEvaluation: https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/methods/force-field-analysis