LEADERSHIP HEADQUARTERS

Force Field Analysis

ANALYSING THE PRESSURES FOR AND AGAINST CHANGE

Force Field Analysis is a useful decision-making technique. It helps you make a decision by analysing the forces 'for' and 'against' a change, and communicating the reasoning behind your decision.

You can use it for two purposes: to decide whether to go ahead with the change; or to increase your chances of success, by strengthening the forces supporting change and weakening those against it.

ABOUT THE TOOL

Force Field Analysis was created by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. Lewin originally used the tool in his work as a social psychologist. However, today Force Field Analysis is also used in business, for making and communicating go/no-go decisions.

To use the tool, list all of the factors (forces) for and against your decision or change. Then score each factor based on its influence, and add up the scores for and against change to find out which of these wins.

You can then look at strengthening the forces that support the change and managing the forces against the change, so that it's more successful.

HOW TO USE THE TOOL

To carry out a Force Field Analysis, use a blank sheet of paper or whiteboard.

Then describe your plan or proposal for change in a box in the middle of the paper. List the forces for change in a column on the left-hand side, and the forces against change in a column on the right-hand side.

As you do this, consider the following questions:

- What business benefit will the change deliver?
- Who supports the change? Who is against it? Why?
- How easy will it be to make the change? Are there enough time and resources to make it work?
- What costs are involved?
- What other business processes will be affected by the change?
- What are the risks?

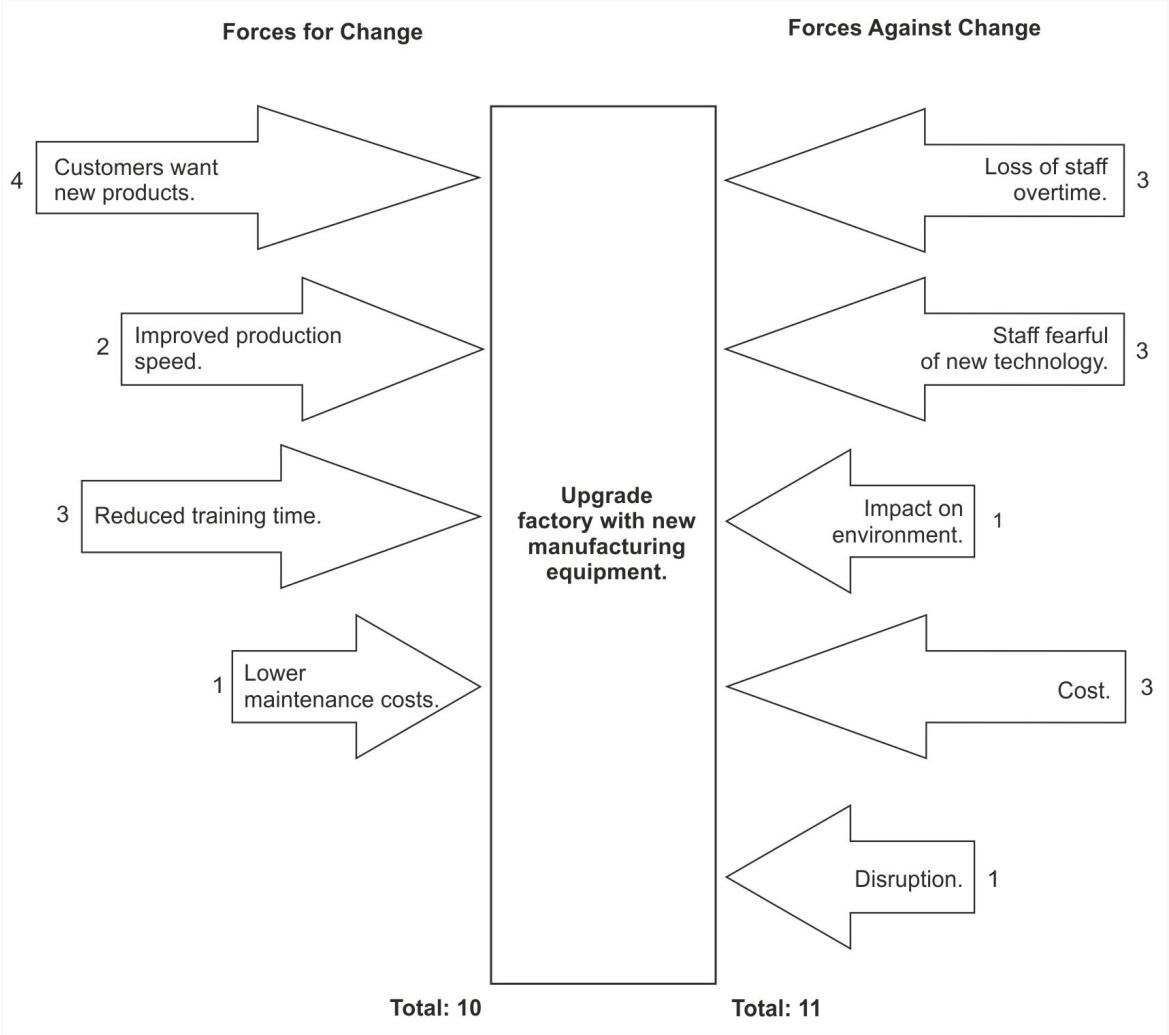
It's important to identify as many of the factors that will influence the change as you can. Where appropriate, involve other people, such as team members or experts in your organisation.

Next, assign a score to each force, from, 1 (weak) to 5 (strong), and then add up the scores for each column (for and against).

For a visual representation of the influence that each force has, draw arrows around them. Use bigger arrows for the forces that will have a greater influence on the change, and smaller arrows for forces that will have less of an influence.

For example, imagine that you're planning to install new manufacturing equipment in your factory. You might draw up a Force Field Analysis like the one on the following page.

DIAGRAM 16.1 FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS



USING YOUR ANALYSIS

Once the Force Field Analysis is completed, it can be used it in two ways:

1. To decide whether or not to move forward with the decision or change.

2. To think about how you can strengthen the forces that supports the change and weakens the forces opposing it, so that the change is more successful.

If you had to implement the project in the example above, the analysis might suggest a number of changes that you could make to the initial plan. For instance, you could:

- Train staff ("Cost" +1) to minimise the fear of technology ("Staff uncomfortable with new technology" -2).

- Show staff that change is necessary for business survival (new force that supports the change, +2).

- Show staff that new machines would introduce variety and interest to their jobs (new force that supports the change, +1).

- Raise wages to reflect new productivity ("Cost" +1, "Loss of overtime" -2).

- Install slightly different machines with filters that eliminate pollution ("Impact on environment" -1).

- These changes would swing the balance from 11:10 (against the plan), to 13:8 (in favour of the plan).

EXERCISE 16.2 FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

The purpose of this exercise is to learn about applying the concepts of a Force Field Analysis. Using the template below on an A4 sheet of paper, identify a project that you are planning in your workplace and complete the Force Field Analysis.

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE		GOAL	FORCES AGAINST CHANGE	
SCORE	DRIVING FORCE		RESTRAINING FORCES	SCORE
TOTAL				TOTAL