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Force Field Analysis

TOOLS

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Kurt Lewin

Developed by Kurt Lewin Force Field Analysis is a tool for analysing the opposing forces involved in change. It can be used at any level (personal, team, organisational) to identify the forces that may work against change initiatives.

Lewin viewed organisations as systems in which the present situation was not a static pattern but a dynamic balance of forces working in opposite directions. In any situation there are both driving forces that push for change and restraining forces that act against change. In order for any change to be successful the driving forces must exceed the restraining forces.
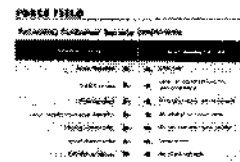
We Recommend SmartDraw 2007 Suite Edition for Force Field Analysis

smartdraw.com

SmartDraw 2007 is the all-new easy software for drawing quality force field analysis, QFD documents, flowcharts, org charts, and more. Saferpak recommends SmartDraw 2007 because of its:

- Over 30 helpful wizards that walk you through the steps of creating an Force Field Analysis diagram
- Over 3 dozen new features and tools to make your drawings look like they were done by a pro
- Over 60,000 professionally designed symbols and templates to use in your diagrams.

Click Here to Try SmartDraw FREE

Example force field analysis

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To carry out a Force Field Analysis:

- State the current situation

- Describe the ideal situation

- Identify where the current situation will go if no action is taken

- List all the forces driving change toward your ideal situation

- List all the forces resisting change toward your ideal situation

- Interrogate all of the forces: Are they valid? Can they be changed? Which are the

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critical forces?

- Allocate a score to each of the forces using a numerical scale e.g. (1) extremely weak (10) extremely strong

- Chart the forces by listing (to strength scale) the driving forces on the left and restraining forces on the right. The chart allows one to visualise the forces at work and determine whether change is viable and progress can occur

- The viability of the change programme can be affected by decreasing the strength of the restraining forces or by increasing the strength of driving forces. Care needs to be exercised when increasing driving forces as this can create new, or increase the strength of existing restraining forces

Further reading

The Memory Jogger II: A Pocket Guide of Tools for Continuous Improvement
Michael Brassard

This handy Pocket Guide uses graphics and easy-to-understand text to describe what the tools are, why they're used, and how to use them. Tools are explained using real-life examples from all types of organisations, making them easy for everyone to understand and apply. The 22 Tools covered are
Activity Network Diagram, Affinity Diagram, Brainstorming, Cause & Effect (Fishbone), Check Sheets, Control Charts, Data Points, Flowchart, Force Field Analysis, Histograms, Interrelationship Digraph (ID), Matrix Diagram, Multivoting, Pareto Chart, Prioritization Matrices, Problem Solving Model, Process Capability, Radar Chart, Run Chart, Scatter Diagram, Team Guidelines, Tree Diagram, Process Decision, Program Chart, Nominal Group Technique (NGT).

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Links

Accel Team
An excellent overview of Force Field Analysis...

Australian Continuous Improvement Group
Brief worked example of a Force Field Analysis - includes a template...

The World Bank Group
Some interesting practical examples showing the wide application of Force Field Analysis including The Status of Primary Education in Bihar State India...

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Tool 10: Force field analysis

This tool is used when there is resistance to change, in order to minimise conflict. The forces driving change as well as those resisting change are examined and strategies developed which build on the drivers for change and reduce the resistance to change are developed.

It is useful to consider the Pareto principle (Tool 6) which states that 80% of the pressure for change or resistance to change will be from 20% of the drivers or resistors to change.

Illustration
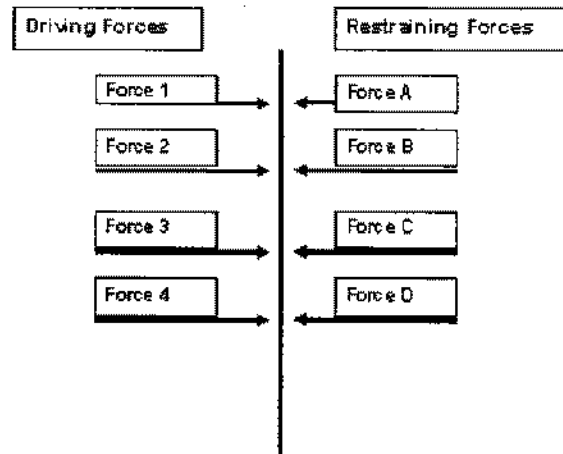
Method

- Identify all stakeholders with an interest in the process being improved.
- Clarify the proposed improvement with the stakeholders.
- Draw a line down the centre of a page. Forces from left to right are driving the improvement. Forces from right to left are resisting the improvement.
- Brainstorm (Tool 4), the forces driving change. Represent them as arrows on the left hand side of the line.
- Brainstorm (Tool 4), the forces resisting change. Represent them as arrows on the right hand side of the line.
- Identify ways to build on those driving change, and reduce or remove those resisting change.

Page last modified: 02 June 2003.

Tool 4 : Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique used to generate large quantities of ideas from a group of people. It is often used in identifying possible causes of an effect or possible solutions. It is best undertaken with between six and ten people.

Brainstorming is underpinned by the following principles:

- People must feel safe to join in
- No judgement is allowed during brainstorming
- People should strive to generate as many ideas as possible
- People should be encouraged to be a s creative as possible
- People should be encouraged to build on each others ideas
- Person recording writes down exactly what is said

Formal brainstorming involves going around the group recording one idea at a time. This can be slow and may lack spontaneity. Informal brainstorming involves people shouting out idea as soon as they think of them. It is very spontaneous, but there is a risk that the more outspoken may dominate. Silent methods can be used in which everyone initially records there own ideas. This ensures greater involvement but may not allow development of ideas.

Method

- Facilitator reminds the group of the rules of brainstorming
- Facilitator ensures that everyone in the group understands the topic to be brainstormed
- Allow a few minutes for people to record their first thoughts silently
- Start with one person in the group and record their contribution on a Post-it Note
- Move to the next person and record their idea
- Continue going round the group recording one idea at a time
- Once the ideas have been generated then the group can order them into a manageable number of sub groups
- Sometimes it may be helpful to classify the ideas raised as those that are: totally within the influence of the team (T), partially within the influence of the team (P), and those which can not be directly influenced by the team (N). The team can then start resolving those issues classified as totally within its influence first, followed by those that are partially within its influence. Those it cannot influence should be passed on to others better positioned to resolve them.

Tool 6: The Pareto principle (The 80 / 20 Rule)

The Pareto principle is used for prioritising tasks. It assists in identifying the critical few issues on which to focus. In any process it has been found that 20% of the root causes account for 80% of the symptoms. For instance 20% of symptom presenting to a GP will account for 80% of the referrals to secondary care. 20% or patients generate 80% of the work.

This tool helps separate the critical few from the uncritical.

It is thus worth considering the following points as one investigates the "critical few".

- How long will it take to produce the desired change?
- What will the impact on the present service be?
- What is the likely impact on the organisation?
- Decide on priorities.

This is a very useful tool for identifying the key areas to concentrate on. For example when commencing an improvement project this tool can help demonstrate which are the more critical areas to concentrate on.

Method

- Use measurement charts or simple check lists to collect data relating to a particular subject, e.g. symptom types presenting to primary care.
- Plot the data using simple line graphs, bar charts or pie charts.
- Identify the 80%; the "Critical Few". In this example we would see numbers of patients presenting within symptom groups. The results would demonstrate that 20% of those symptom groups account for 80% of the patients. Thus investigating the 20% symptom group would cover 80% of the events.
- Agree areas for further investigation. Be aware that some of the 20% may have complex root causes within very complex processes, and so not so accessible to change as some of the others identified.

Example of Pareto diagram

The following example shows an analysis of the time spent by receptionist running a clinic.

a Time Spent by Clinic Receptionist