

How Organizations Address Resistance: Understanding Change Management

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the types of resistance encountered during organizational change and explores how organizations address these challenges through the change management process. It provides practical examples to enhance the understanding of resistance, as well as the stressors induced by both resistance and change. Furthermore, it discusses how effective training programs can help individuals navigate these phases. Successful change management integrates strategies to support both individuals and organizations in adapting to evolving circumstances. Since the mid-20th century, frameworks like Kurt Lewin's "Three-Stage Model" and William Bridges' "Transition Model" have outlined key approaches for managing change. Despite these contributions, resistance remains a significant challenge, arising from personal, intellectual, and cultural factors. As primary agents of change, organizational leaders must utilize structured processes, tools, and models—such as ADKAR and McKinsey's 7S—to effectively address resistance and implement change. This paper delves into the complexities of organizational change, the critical role of leadership, and strategies to mitigate resistance, highlighting the importance of cultivating a culture of adaptability to ensure long-term success in a dynamic business environment.

Keywords: Change management, resistance, phases of change, practical examples.

JEL Classification: D23, D83, J24, M14, M53.

1. Introduction

"Change" is not synonymous with "transition" (Easter, 2020). Change refers to situational shifts, such as a new site, structure, or procedure, whereas transition is the psychological process individuals undergo to adapt to these changes (Easter, 2020). While change is external, transition is an internal experience (Bridges, 2012; Ndoma-Egba, 2014). Effective change management practices are designed not only to respond to the challenges of organizational change but also to proactively plan for them.

Over the years, thousands of books have been published discussing changes in administrative systems, along with strategies and models to address the challenges of managing change. Since the mid-20th century, significant research has been conducted, revealing that many companies have struggled or even failed because they either resisted change or underestimated the importance of change management (Ramos, 2021). In the wake of these challenges, the role of change management has gained prominence in organizational leadership.

In today's dynamic business environment, leaders and supervisors must address various pressures, including compliance with new government regulations, adopting innovations, navigating intense competition, integrating advanced technologies, and responding to evolving employee needs. Most organizations recognize the urgency of adapting their management styles regularly, with minor adjustments occurring annually and more substantial transformations every three to five years.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in facilitating successful change. Research by Kaur et al. (2024) emphasizes that aligning leadership styles with team needs significantly impacts team cohesion and overall project outcomes. Consequently, leadership can be a decisive factor in overcoming resistance

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by fostering team cohesion and guiding the organization through transitional phases.

Overview

The concept of managerial change emerged as early as the mid-20th century, with Kurt Lewin introducing the foundational “Three Steps Model of Change” in the 1940s (Ramos, 2021). This was followed by Everett Rogers' seminal work *The Diffusion of Innovations* (1962), which explored the process through which new ideas and technologies spread within societies. Later, the development of the “Transition Bridge” model in 1979 marked a significant shift in the understanding of change as a new paradigm (Ramos, 2021).

Despite these early contributions, the formal adoption of change management as a defined policy or methodology within industrial and enterprise environments faced considerable resistance. It was not until the late 1990s and early 2000s that structured organizational change processes gained widespread acceptance and became officially recognized as part of organizational strategy (Ramos, 2021). The rapid growth of the change management industry during this period can be attributed to tangible factors, particularly the accelerated pace of innovation. Processes that once required years to design, develop, test, and deploy were now being completed within months or even weeks. This shift necessitated a reorganization of corporate cultures to meet evolving market demands effectively (Demuyakor, 2021).

Following this revolution, numerous models, frameworks, and books emerged to promote the principles of effective change management. For example, works such as “Change the Culture, Change the Game” by Roger Connors and Tom Smith, and Linda Ackerman Anderson’s “Beyond Change Management” (2010), provided actionable insights into navigating organizational transformation. Concurrently, organizations like the Association of Change Management Professionals (ACMP) developed certifications and standards to support the growing industry (Ramos, 2021).

Recent research further highlights the critical role of communication in managing resistance to change. For instance, Haque (2024) emphasizes the importance of fostering transparent communication and implementing stress-reduction practices to mitigate performance losses during transitional periods. These findings underscore the necessity of open and consistent communication as a means to address resistance effectively, ensuring smoother transitions in organizational change processes.

Change is an inherent aspect of organizational evolution and a critical driver for maintaining competitiveness in dynamic markets. Despite its importance, change can be challenging to implement, particularly due to the psychological and operational adjustments it demands from individuals and organizations alike. The process of “letting go” – releasing old habits, systems, or ways of working – is often one of the most difficult aspects of change. A lack of effective leadership to guide employees through this transitional phase is frequently cited as a key factor in the failure of organizational change initiatives.

According to studies in change management, the most difficult factors to address during change include:

- **Resistance to Change:** Resistance is often rooted in fear of the unknown, loss of control, or skepticism about the benefits of change. Employees may feel uncertain about how changes will impact their roles, leading to anxiety and reluctance to adopt new practices (SK-Pharma, 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2016).
- **Emotional and Psychological Barriers:** Transitioning from familiar processes or routines to new systems can trigger stress, disengagement, and frustration among employees. Managing these emotional responses is crucial to ensuring the success of change initiatives (Daniellock.com, 2024).

- **Lack of Communication:** Poor communication exacerbates uncertainty, leading to confusion about the purpose, scope, and expected outcomes of change efforts. Transparent and consistent messaging is critical to building trust and clarity (Harvard Business Review, 2018; SK-Pharma, 2024).
- **Cultural Inertia:** Deeply ingrained organizational cultures can resist change, especially when long-standing values, norms, or hierarchies are challenged. Aligning cultural shifts with organizational goals requires time and strategic effort (Daniellock.com, 2024).
- **Leadership Gaps:** Ineffective or absent leadership during times of change can result in a lack of vision, unclear direction, and insufficient support for employees. Leaders play a vital role in motivating teams, addressing concerns, and fostering a sense of shared purpose (SK-Pharma, 2024; McKinsey, 2016).

The aim is “to describe change management, processes, models, and implementation.” The focus is on the different causes of resistance to change while briefly describing the importance of the key player and the leader roles in organizational change.

2. Literature Review

We frequently encounter term change management in academic lectures and professional discussions, often emphasized in contexts where organizations must adapt to remain competitive. However, it is crucial to understand what change management entails and how it operates. According to Ul Haque (2022), change management refers to a collective set of processes, tools, and methodologies that organizations design and implement to manage transitions, both internally and externally.

Recent insights by Haq et al. (2024) highlight the potential of targeted support programs in enhancing innovative capacities within organizations. Their findings suggest that structured change management programs can cultivate an innovative culture by reducing stressors that impede creativity. Stress, a well-documented inhibitor of innovation, requires proactive mitigation strategies within the framework of change management (Haque, 2024). Traditionally, change management focused on pre-implementation communication and training to prepare employees for new systems or processes (Wanner, 2013). In modern contexts, however, it has evolved into a strategic approach integral to organizational survival and competitiveness. Notably, during critical situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, change management served as a critical tool to navigate disruptions, enabling businesses to pivot and adapt to rapidly changing environments (Yamoah & Haque, 2022). This strategic perspective underscores its growing importance as a foundational component of organizational resilience.

Haque (2022) posits that “the only thing certain is death,” while all other aspects of life, including organizational and personal contexts, are subject to change. This inevitability of change often brings stress, experienced at various stages of transition. Change is integral not only to human life but also to the survival and growth of organizations. In businesses, change management becomes the critical mechanism to ensure the successful adoption of transformations. It is the force that enables organizations to emerge from inertia, adapt to evolving circumstances, and secure their existence.

The metaphor of an organization awakening from a deep slumber aptly highlights the urgency of change. Without an effective change management framework, the process of business migration becomes challenging, consuming excessive resources and time (Todnem, 2005). Numerous companies have faced bankruptcy due to their inability to recognize the importance of adaptation and proactive management of change initiatives.

Haque (2024) further underscores that resistance to change is compounded by knowledge hiding, which can negatively impact performance outcomes. This aligns with findings by Kaur and Haque (2024), who demonstrate that organizational changes can induce stress, leading to reduced

productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates. These adverse effects emphasize the need for wellness programs and supportive organizational practices to mitigate stress and facilitate smoother transitions. Some of the reasons and importance for change are highlighted in Figure 1.

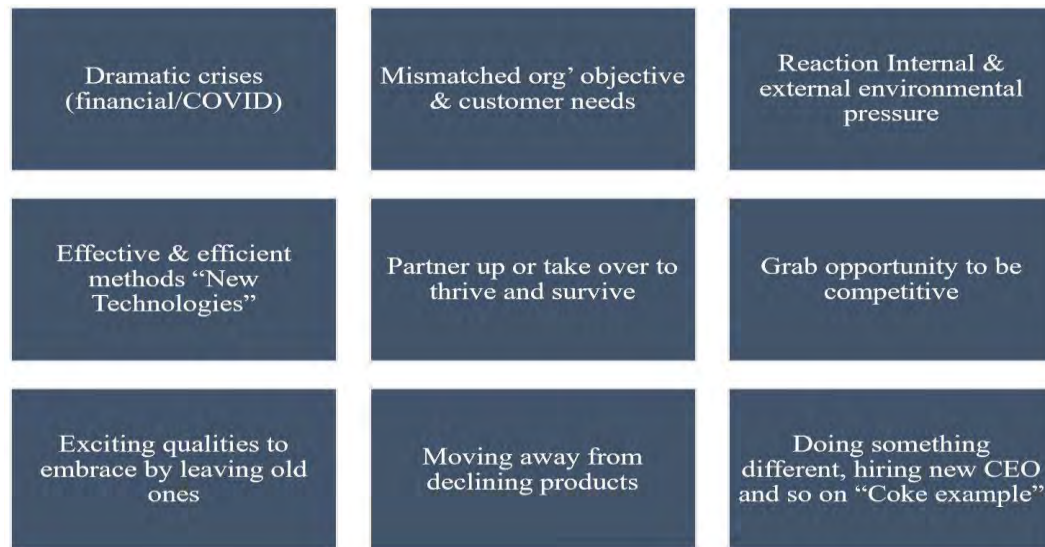


Figure 1: Reasons for organizations change (Ul Haque, 2022)

The concept of effective change management is crucial for organizations to mitigate risks and disruptions when implementing new processes and technologies. Proactive management ensures smoother transitions by anticipating challenges and addressing them before they escalate. Faizan and Haque (2015) explored this idea and highlighted that inadequate management of changes could lead to a "bullwhip effect" — a phenomenon where small fluctuations in demand or process changes amplify as they move through the supply chain or organizational processes, potentially leading to performance issues or inefficiencies. This effect can disrupt operations, cause delays, and increase costs, emphasizing the need for precise management practices to control the impact of such ripple effects.

Research on the bullwhip effect, which is rooted in supply chain management, aligns with this concept. For example, studies like those by Lee et al. (1997) demonstrate how fluctuations in demand, if not managed correctly, can lead to overreaction, inventory imbalances, and performance degradation. Other sources, such as Christopher (2011), suggest that the proper implementation of lean management and changing control processes can reduce these adverse outcomes by stabilizing operations and improving communication.

In short, effective change management helps organizations avoid significant operational risks by fostering a more controlled and informed approach to change, which prevents unintended disruptions like the bullwhip effect and supports long-term business stability.

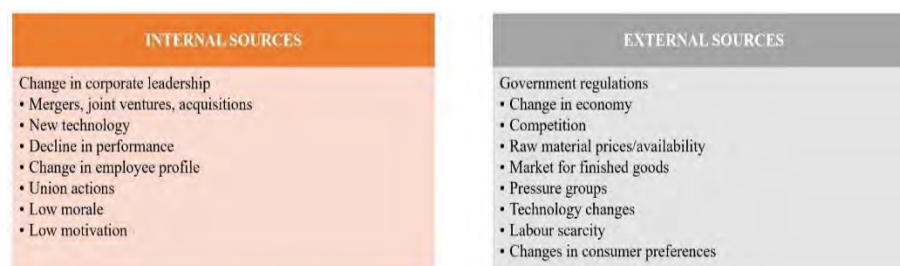


Figure 2: Internal and external sources (Triggers) to change (Ul Haque, 2022)

3. Methodology

This section outlines the secondary analysis method employed in this study to extract relevant information. Systematic analysis of literature often relies on secondary sources (Akhter & Haque, 2023; Haq et al., 2023; Haque & Yamoah, 2023; Haque et al., 2023). A wealth of research supports the effectiveness of secondary analysis as a method to explore research phenomena in depth, especially when the focus is on understanding themes in a cost-effective manner (Haque et al., 2023; Haque et al., 2017; Hussain et al., 2019; Rakov & Haque, 2023; Toor et al., 2023; Yamoah & Haque, 2023).

For this study, a purely qualitative approach was used to explore the topic comprehensively. In addition, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied during the selection of relevant literature, following the methodologies established by Jose & Kaur (2023) and Kaur (2023).

4. Models of Change Management

Selecting the right approach to change is crucial for businesses when the need for transformation is both clear and urgent. While many companies face significant challenges in implementing effective change processes, those that develop a well-defined strategy are more likely to achieve success. Understanding the various risks associated with change management helps organizations identify best practices for managing their change plans (Wanner, 2013).

Whether organizations choose to adopt a structured framework or a tailored set of tools, selecting the most efficient method to handle change is vital. Change management processes are often complex, requiring significant investment in terms of resources and time. However, by utilizing dispute management systems, businesses can optimize these processes, ensuring that their plans align with the needs of partners and stakeholders. Such systems also provide clear guidelines, enabling organizations to implement change without starting from scratch each time. The importance of creating structured change management plans cannot be overstated, as these frameworks provide the necessary structure and flexibility for organizations to successfully navigate transformation. Effective change management involves careful planning, risk assessment, and continuous evaluation to ensure that all changes are beneficial and sustainable (Wanner, 2013; Kotter, 1996).

By aligning the right tools and methodologies with organizational goals, companies can mitigate the complexities of change, enhancing their chances for long-term success in a rapidly evolving business environment.

Role of Players in Change

The players of change within an organization typically include leaders, managers, employees, sponsors, consultants, and change experts. Change managers are the employees who lead the implementation of change management programs. These leaders often have experience guiding organized change efforts within the organization. Their role is critical, particularly during the planning phase, the implementation process, and in helping staff accept and adapt to change. Organizational leaders must have a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives behind the change initiative. However, many managers struggle to distinguish between developing or modifying organizational processes. According to our lecture, organizational change and organizational development are two separate concepts. While managers can evolve, this does not necessarily mean that they have changed, and vice versa.

Another common point of confusion for organizations during the change process is the difference between planning and implementation. Although organizations often dedicate significant time and resources to planning change, they tend to neglect the implementation phase, which is the most crucial in terms of achieving success and delivering lasting impact. The work of Haque (2022) emphasizes the need for leaders to adopt adaptive and empathetic leadership styles to address the unique stressors facing modern organizations. Once these stressors are managed effectively, leaders

are better positioned to guide change in a constructive manner. Governance also plays an essential role in the success of the change process (Dodoo et al., 2023).

Implementing change is often more challenging than planning it. This challenge can be more pronounced in the public sector compared to the private sector. The key players in organizational change bear a significant responsibility and must understand various components of the change process, including turnaround strategies, technological tools, and transformation practices — collectively known as the “three faces of change.” These leaders, also known as champions of change, must navigate these areas to effectively manage the transition. For example, Obuobi et al. (2023) argue that in customer relationship management, smooth transitions enhance stakeholder satisfaction, which is crucial for long-term success. Kumah et al. (2023) further suggest that functional diversity and strategic alignment are important contributors to effective change, especially when changes involve shifts in processes. However, it is not just leadership or stressors that determine the success of the change process. External factors also play a role in shaping outcomes. For instance, the work of Hasran et al. (2023) highlights the impact of external elements on the performance of SMEs during change initiatives. Social networks can also aid in adaptation, making the change management process more efficient, as hinted by Ogwu et al. (2022).

There are three primary types of organizational change that change agents should be aware of: evolutionary (growth), transitional (moving from the current state to a better one), and transformative (radical) change. Understanding which type of change applies to a given situation is critical to selecting the most effective approach. In addition, there are five widely recognized change management models that organizations can utilize to guide their transformation: Kotter's 8-Step Model, McKinsey's 7S Framework, ADKAR, Kübler-Ross, and Lewin's Change Model (Wanner, 2013).

Yamoah et al. (2022) found that communication initiatives are vital in determining the choices made at various stages of the change process. To successfully navigate the stages of any change, key players must understand the different models and information available to them, along with the goals they aim to achieve. According to our lecture, not everyone in the organization should be 100% involved in the change process; it is crucial to define roles clearly.

Moreover, various studies have highlighted factors that can impact both change and organizational performance. These include ecological behavior (Farooq et al., 2021), sustainable practices (Adamovich et al., 2021; Al-Gasawneh et al., 2022), transparent communication (Bulut et al., 2021), the social and economic impact of changes (Haque, 2021), innovative work behavior and ethical leadership (Haque & Yamoah, 2021), and time pressure (Haque et al., 2021). Other significant contributors include sustainable choices (Haque et al., 2020), socio-economic complexities (Nair et al., 2020), pro-environmental behavior (Foster et al., 2022; Urbański et al., 2020), and organizational culture (Faizan & Haque, 2019; Haque et al., 2019; Urbański et al., 2019; Rahim et al., 2020). Additionally, factors such as organizational support mechanisms (Haque et al., 2020), adaptive leadership (Gusakov et al., 2020), authentic leadership (Haque et al., 2020), and technology (Kot et al., 2019; U-Hameed et al., 2019; Kot et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2020; Ślusarczyk & Haque, 2019; Ślusarczyk et al., 2020) all influence the success of change initiatives.

Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that stress, organizational politics, and leadership significantly impact performance (Haque & Aston, 2016; Haque et al., 2015; Haque et al., 2016; Haque et al., 2018; Javed et al., 2018; Imran et al., 2018). However, these factors contribute indirectly to the change management process to some extent. Furthermore, situational commitment may develop among employees during the change process, as highlighted by Haque & Yamoah (2014), suggesting that employees' engagement levels can fluctuate based on the context of the organizational changes.

Role of Leader in Organizational Change

Leaders play a crucial role in driving organizational change. They are not only communicators and advocates but also coaches and liaisons. The success of any change initiative often hinges on the commitment and belief of leadership in the importance of the change. Without strong leadership, many organizations struggle in their change efforts (Ul Haque, 2022, Ch. 2). Notably, research by Younas et al. (2022) highlights the significance of inclusive leadership and psychological empowerment, which, while not directly linked, can contribute to successful change management. While managers implement the plans and strategies set forth by leaders, it is the leaders who reflect, generate new ideas, and encourage their teams to embrace the change. As discussed in our conference, managers tend to focus on the speed of change, whereas leaders provide the necessary direction. In this way, change management can be seen as reactive, whereas change leadership is inherently proactive. Consequently, the role of leadership is paramount to ensuring the success of any organizational change (Ul Haque, 2022, Ch. 3).

Implementation & Process of Change Management

Leaders require robust support systems to successfully navigate the change process. A steering committee, for example, can help monitor progress, critically assess risks, and define the scope of change. While leaders have strategies, planning frameworks, and implementation steps, it is crucial that they review each step to ensure that progress is not lost or derailed. Without such checks, there is a significant risk of losing control over the change process. Despite the valuable support from directors, sponsors, staff, and the steering committee, the leader remains the ultimate champion of change.

In addition to these collaborative efforts, leaders must be vigilant when executing the change process. The change journey begins with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and the recognition and rewards for the change champion are directly tied to the commitment and contributions of all parties involved (Sofat, Kiran, & Kaushik, 2015). Effective leadership in change management demands a combination of careful planning, constant assessment, and inclusive participation from the entire organization.

Management, culture, and resources are equally important

During the planning phase of organizational change, leaders must carefully consider several critical factors about their organization, such as its capacity for change, available resources, systems, and procedures. These elements directly influence the organization's ability to navigate and implement change successfully. Understanding these factors is essential for leaders to avoid or reduce resistance to change, as a mismatch between organizational readiness and the demands of change can create significant barriers.

An organization's capacity to manage change—especially in the face of a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment—relies on effective and efficient resource management (Ul Haque, 2022, Ch. 3). This involves balancing management, culture, and resources, all of which are crucial for responding to an increasingly unstable environment. Leaders must consider how each of these elements interacts to support or hinder change efforts.

Capacity building is a holistic capability that encompasses three key dimensions: (a) skill sets and human resources, (b) formal systems and procedures, and (c) culture, values, and organizational standards. These dimensions are intertwined, and leaders must be adept at navigating them to successfully implement organizational change (Wanner, 2013; Yamoah & Haque, 2022). By carefully managing these areas, leaders can lay the foundation for effective change, ensuring that the organization is well-equipped to adapt and thrive in a dynamic environment.

5. Resistance During Change

Dealing with resistance during organizational change is indeed a challenging task, but avoiding it only complicates the change process (Ul Haque, 2022, Ch. 5). Resistance is a natural psychological and physiological response to change, as participants in some studies have pointed out (Stouten, Rousseau, & De Cremer, 2018). While modern perspectives often emphasize resilience over resistance, it's important to recognize that resistance itself is not inherently damaging. In fact, effective management and mitigation of resistance is essential to successful change management. This can be achieved through proactive measures that focus on building awareness, fostering acceptance, and encouraging accountability (Kot et al., 2024). The work of Yamoah & Haque (2023) also highlighted the need for strategies to navigate institutional voids, leverage innovation, and foster sustainable growth, especially in volatile and dynamic environments. These approaches, which focus on resilience and adaptability, can be particularly useful when organizations face significant challenges during change.

However, resistance to change is often rooted in personal and organizational factors. In my experience, while leaders may be open to change, senior managers can sometimes be resistant due to concerns about budget, time, and stress. This resistance can create problems, as their refusal to engage in change can prevent necessary transformation (Ul Haque, 2022, Ch. 6). Similarly, many managers may resist change simply to avoid involvement, as was the case in my previous company. Individuals and organizations face many options in response to change, and the right approach may not always be immediately obvious. This makes it crucial to carefully assess and consider all responses to change to avoid stagnation and missed opportunities for growth.

Categories of Resistance to Change

People often resist change due to fear, insecurity, and confusion, and these emotional responses can be significant barriers to successful organizational transformation. Confidence, a positive attitude, and the development of new skills can help alleviate this resistance (Betty, 2016). People question "How will this affect me?" and may be skeptical about the benefits of change, which leads to the persistence of resistance. As Betty (2016) suggests, simplicity is often the hardest form of resistance to overcome, as people may prefer familiarity and stability even when change might be beneficial.

- **Personal Resistance:** Personal resistance is typically rooted in fear of personal loss or uncertainty about the future. Individuals worry about how changes will impact their roles, job security, or work-life balance. This type of resistance is especially pronounced when people perceive that changes in the organization might directly affect their power or status. The more varied and complex the working conditions, the greater the likelihood of personal resistance, as diverse environments heighten anxiety and uncertainty.
- **Intellectual Resistance:** This form of resistance arises when employees fail to see the benefits of the change or misunderstand the need for it. Some may be content with their current situation and see no reason to change, believing that change will demand time, money, and effort. Others may simply not understand the goals of the change, leading to confusion and a lack of clarity. Without adequate information, employees may be unable to grasp the purpose behind changes, leaving them uncertain and resistant.
- **Cultural Resistance:** Cultural resistance occurs when employees believe that the proposed changes conflict with the organization's norms and values. This type of resistance can be challenging to overcome, especially if change managers are perceived as unreliable or disconnected from the workforce. When the change threatens to disrupt deeply ingrained cultural values, employees may struggle to accept it, seeing it as a violation of the organization's core principles. Such resistance often persists if employees feel that the cultural identity of the organization is being undermined (Ul Haque, 2022).

Overall, addressing resistance at the personal, intellectual, and cultural levels requires a multifaceted approach, including clear communication, the involvement of employees in the change process, and fostering a culture of trust and adaptability.

Methods and Tips for Overcoming Resistance

William Bridges' model of change is indeed an effective approach to overcoming group resistance, as it emphasizes the psychological and emotional aspects of change. This model highlights that for successful transformation, individuals must go through three phases: ending, neutral zone, and new beginning. By helping employees navigate these emotional stages, leaders can ease resistance and foster smoother transitions (Bridges, 2009).

Supported by various studies, managers can face and overcome resistance by adopting several strategies. First, it's crucial to recognize that resistance is a natural response to change, and it doesn't necessarily hinder progress unless it is ignored or mishandled. The most important factor is the commitment to continual change, with a strong belief that success will ultimately follow if the change process is managed correctly (Mariana & Violeta, 2011; Faizan & Haque, 2016). Leaders must be proactive and demonstrate resilience in the face of resistance. Here are some effective strategies for leaders and managers:

- **Ensure Senior Management Alignment:** It is essential for senior management to fully support and align with the vision behind the change. This sets the tone for the entire organization and ensures that the leadership is unified in its approach to change (Haque et al., 2019).
- **Communicate Change Effectively:** Open, transparent, and frequent communication is key to reducing uncertainty and resistance. Stakeholders should be informed about the change process early and kept in the loop throughout (Faizan & Haque, 2016). Communication helps build trust and reduces anxiety among employees.
- **Identify and Address Resistance Early:** Resistance is inevitable, but it's critical to address it promptly. By identifying potential resistors early, leaders can address concerns and misunderstandings before they escalate into larger issues. Personalized interactions and providing space for feedback can go a long way (Haque, 2022; Ul Haque, 2022).
- **Involve Key Stakeholders:** As mentioned, key stakeholders can make or break a project. Engaging them early on and involving them in decision-making increases their investment in the change process, leading to smoother implementation (Mariana & Violeta, 2011).

Below are some tips for leaders and managers to consider when implementing their change.

Practical Examples - HP and Ottawa Example

HP Example of Transition to Flexible Environment
HP was consolidated into a new company - Agilent. Everything was new, a new change initiative - New Generation Workplace (NGW). New filing cabinets were introduced and initially received higher skepticism. Reduced interpersonal communication and teamwork have caused anxiety among managers and subordinates. The majority resists the NGW approach.
Change in the External Competitive Environment
Confusion in the external market has increased the willingness to accept change. Despite being unhappy, employees embraced the practices so they could be competitive. Employees found that in times of stress, the company's managers took care of them and that they were ready to absorb change. Gradually everyone liked it, and everyone wanted to use the same one.
Lessons & key Takeaways
People are afraid of change, uncertainty, and disruption. It is essential not to underestimate the amount of resistance. External conditions, trust in the business, and skillful resistance management can reduce resistance and increase support for the change initiative.
Example of Ottawa "Defining The City Together"
Large-scale Cultural Transformation at the City of Ottawa (engaged employees in improving organizational performance).
Involving everyone in Change
Created and trained a cadre of "team leads" by <u>involving</u> employees, managers, and supervisors, reflects detailed roadmap for awareness before and during implementation process.
Lessons & key Takeaways
Involving employees in the process of change is way of creating awareness and preparedness. Pilot project have proven successful approach to assess the feasibility of project.

Figure 3: HP & Ottawa Example (Ul Haque, 2022)

Practical Examples - NASA Example

NASA Example
The Space Shuttle Columbia disaster is a classic example of when NASA ignored information 2 years earlier from the Department of Defense regarding foam insulation.
Ignoring Red Flags : Intellectual/Cultural Resistance Change
The mentality was to hide this problem because when it was known, even communicated there was not much the crew could have done. NASA was also limiting the investigation rather than accepting ignorance. They concluded that the organizational structure and processes were sufficiently flawed and that a compromise in security was expected regardless of who occupied the key decision-making positions.
Lessons & key Takeaways
Don't blind yourself to the risk around you. Only if NASA learned the lesson of the Challenger disaster would the Columbia tragedy not have happened.
NASA insulation foam falling off fuel tanks and hitting space shuttle. It was a failure to acknowledge and dealing with the elephant in the room.
The "HOW" Reflecting Change to Resistance...
Resistance is an elephant in the room. Something that is often seen as "undiscussable" thing. Resistance also come in shape of no one is acknowledging or willing to talk about it.
Resistance is bigger problem than outright sabotage. Sometimes punishing the risk takers is an elephant in the room while other time no one wants to talk about it.

Figure 4: NASA example (Ul Haque, 2022).

Practical Examples - Sunshine Resource Center “SRC” and Scania Example

Sunshine Resource Centre (SRC) Example

Sunshine Resource Centre (SRC) had a failed merger. The leader who took risk had no support from the board members and she was continually attacked by members who wanted another person.

Significance of removing obstacles and protecting risk takers...

Leader was laid off for budgetary reasons and she/he left in frustration.

Lessons & key Takeaways

When you give someone a charge to change, he/she is taking the risk.

Support the change player rather than playing politics to make it difficult for him/her.

Scania Example

Scania decided to work in collaboration with subsidiary company DynaMate rather than outsourcing tasks. First, lean construction pilot project was developed to see how much the size of the project and methods should be to complete.

Piloting before full execution

The task successfully completed in time with minimal resources used. However, there were many aspects that came as unrealistic or partially possible. Nonetheless, it helped company in the final implementation process.

Lessons & key Takeaways

Parallel initiative in different parts can improve the chances of survival of change.

Piloting before full execution is a logically sound approach to Pilot projects before full implementation.

Figure 5: SRC & SCANIA example (Ul Haque, 2022)

Practical Examples - Scotia Bank and AT&T Example

Example of Scotia Bank & AT&T

Scotia Bank improving customer services. Higher customer loyalty is when employees are satisfied and change for better demonstrating social reinforcement).

AT&T : Company merger and educational programs for Managers & ANZ sent a bottle of Champagne with a thanking card to employees on Christmas. This has positive impact on employees.

Tangible rewards, such as monetary incentives, bonus,

Social reinforcement methods, such as publicizing, praising, and recognizing supporters. A little recognition goes a long way.

Lessons & key Takeaways

Give positive feedback to those responsible for execution success and making strategy work.

Activities, such as milestone or progress celebrations, are very important for encouraging teamwork and persisting with change

Figure 6: Scotia BANK and AT&T (Ul Haque, 2022)

*Practical Examples - El Salvador & Great Western Brewing Company Example***El Salvador Example :**

After decade of civil war continue to persist with New Salvadoran Ministry of Education (MINED) in 1992. The results improved with time. Enrollment increased to 90% by 2010, and the literacy rate of adult reached to 80%.

Element that keeps the implementation of change in focus

Persistence is continuing with the process and not letting it slip at any point. They found that this program had an impact on the students' overall level of consciousness. After this new education program, students now learn in different ways than in the past and in a wider variety of extracurricular settings, such as internships, volunteer activities or dual enrollment programs.

Lessons & key Takeaways

This is the most interesting example, which I appreciate because this program in El Salvador succeeds in improving the level of education.

I believe they manage to keep a positive imprint and show the world their own identity.

Great Western Brewing Company Example

The Company was on verge of collapse when they decided to let employees participate and provide suggestions on improving sales. It worked to improve quality of product.

Employee involvement in change process

Making an employee a partner will help you in bringing desired changes.

Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) companies grow faster than non-ESOP by 8 to 10%. Participation makes a difference to the outcomes of your change initiative.

Lessons & key Takeaways

Be creative and think of the ways that suits your change and your organization.

Figure 7: El Salvador & GWB Example (Ul Haque, 2022).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Leading change is a multifaceted challenge that requires a deep understanding of organizational dynamics, strategies, and human psychology. As we explored in our lecture, organizational change is not merely about altering processes or structures; it involves adapting the culture, systems, and behaviors within an organization. Organizational change and organizational development are often conflated but differ in scope and focus: while organizational development is a broader, long-term process aimed at improving the overall health of the organization, change management is more about guiding specific transformations, whether internal or external (Kotter, 1996).

Implementing change is notoriously more difficult than planning it, and this is particularly true in the public sector, where bureaucratic structures can slow down decision-making and implementation (Haque, 2020). As you mentioned, leaders, particularly champions of change, must plan, manage, and sustain the change process, which includes handling resistance effectively. Resistance is a natural response to change, but by managing it proactively, leaders can guide their organizations through smooth transitions (Mariana & Violeta, 2011). Successful leaders understand the three faces of change—Turnaround, Tools & Technology, and Transformation—and adapt their strategies accordingly.

A key aspect of effective change management is creating a comprehensive resistance management plan, which includes a variety of strategies, tools, and models. The use of models such as Kotter's 8-Step Model or Lewin's Change Management Model helps leaders approach resistance in a structured way, focusing on awareness, knowledge, and communication to manage attitudes and behaviors (Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947). By integrating internal processes, infrastructure, training, and culture into the change plan, leaders can create a more resilient and adaptable organization (Beckman & Christensen, 2016).

Looking ahead, the future of change management will likely be shaped by evolving organizational cultures, technologies, and business practices. While Agile methodology is widely used in software development and project management, it may not be the best fit for change management due to the complex, ongoing nature of organizational transformations (Smith, 2019). However, tools like digital

change management and data-driven decision-making will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of change initiatives.

To enhance the success of change management practices, organizations should focus on keeping change processes simple and incremental. Haque (2020) advocates for gradual steps rather than drastic leaps, as small changes allow for more manageable transitions and reduce the risk of disrupting existing structures. The future of change management will likely involve integrating culture, resources, and management systems in a way that makes the change process smoother and more widely accepted by all stakeholders (Smith, 2019).

This research provides an extensive exploration of change management processes, models, and resistance strategies; however, several limitations were encountered. The study relies heavily on secondary sources, such as established literature and lecture materials, which limit the inclusion of primary empirical data or case studies to validate theoretical insights. Additionally, the focus is primarily on traditional management frameworks (e.g., Lewin's and Bridges' models), which may not fully reflect the dynamic needs of contemporary organizations adapting to digital transformation or Agile methodologies. The research also generalizes findings across industries, potentially overlooking sector-specific challenges or cultural variations in organizational change. Lastly, the perspectives of employees and other stakeholders are underrepresented, creating an opportunity to explore more inclusive and participatory approaches to change in future studies.

For future research, emphasis should be placed on integrating modern tools such as digital change management platforms and data-driven methodologies to reflect evolving practices. Longitudinal studies tracking the success of specific change strategies in diverse organizational contexts could provide valuable insights. Further exploration into how leadership styles influence employee adaptability and engagement during transitions could deepen understanding of resistance management. By focusing on these areas, future research can build upon the foundation laid here to address the gaps and respond to the evolving demands of organizational change.

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