

Force Field Analysis

Purpose: Force Field Analysis is a general tool for systematically analyzing the factors found in complex problems. It frames problems in terms of factors or pressures that support the status quo (restraining forces) and those pressures that support change in the desired direction (driving forces). A factor can be people, resources, attitudes, traditions, regulations, values, needs, desires, etc. As a tool for managing change, Force Field Analysis helps identify those factors that must be addressed and monitored if change is to be successful.

Procedure:

Step 1 Defining the Problem

What is the nature of our current situation that is unacceptable and needs modification? It is useful to separate the specific problem from those things that are working well.

Step 2 Defining the Change Objective

What is the desired situation that would be worth working toward? Be as specific as possible.

Step 3 Identifying the Driving Forces

What are the factors or pressures that support change in the desired direction? What are the relative strengths of these forces? Place these driving forces on the chart on the Force Field Analysis diagram as labeled arrows with the length of the arrow reflecting the relative strength of each force. What are the inter-relationships among the driving forces?

Step 4 Identifying the Restraining Forces

What are the factors or pressures that resist the proposed change and maintain the status quo? Represent these forces on the diagram as you did those for the driving forces. What are the inter-relationships among the restraining forces?

Step 5 Developing the Comprehensive Change Strategy

The diagram created in steps three and four reflect what could be called a state of quasi-stationary equilibrium. Although this is a relatively stable state, movement can be achieved altering the factors currently contributing to this equilibrium. Change can occur as a result of any combination of the following:

- strengthening any of the driving forces
- adding new driving forces (possibly by transforming a former restraining force)
- removing or reducing any of the restraining forces

Step 5 should also include some consideration of some of the possible unintended consequences when equilibrium forces are altered (e.g. increase resistance, new alliances, fear, etc.).

STATUS QUO LINE

Driving Forces →

← Restraining Forces



GAP ANALYSIS

The Way Things Are

Steps to Get There

The Way I Want Them