

Using a metaphor to clarify culture can help a change agent identify the "leverage points" for a successful transition.

Metaphors for Change: **The ALPs Model of Change Management**

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As difficult as the term *organizational culture* may be to define, it is a very real force—one that any change agent ignores at great peril.

The model presented here is designed to aid the change agent—whether a manager or a consultant—effectively implement complex organizational change by pinpointing Access Leverage Points (ALPs) within the culture where the change is to take place. These ALPs are critical aspects of the culture that can often aid, but sometimes impede, the introduction and management of organizational change efforts.

The model is not intended to help identify the types of change necessary in an organization. Rather, its use increases the change agent's cultural awareness, and enables the change agent to develop specific intervention strategies for the facilitation of change.

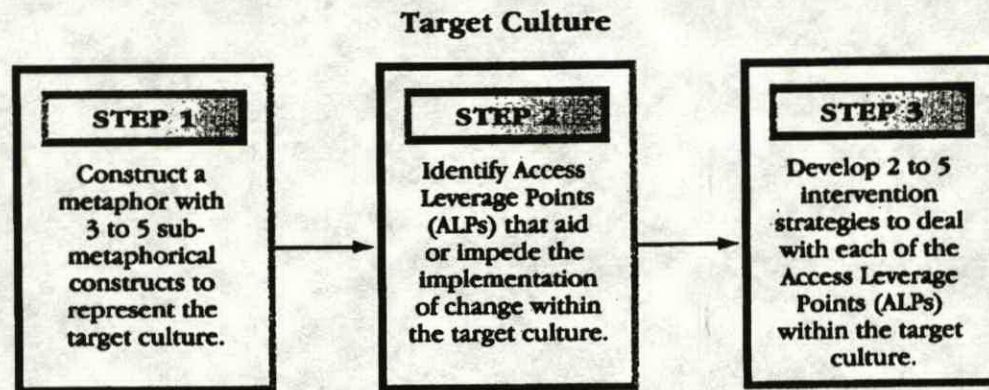
While other authors have identified particular "technical" aspects of organizational change, the underlying premise of the ALPs model is that organizational change is largely a "tactical" process, one where attention to key aspects of the culture can aid in managing the process. Thus, one important use for the model is to aid in planning change efforts.

In different circumstances, this model can also be used to orient new managers or foreign nationals to the important aspects of their new culture.

The ALPs model for managing complex organizational change is a three-step process, as illustrated in Exhibit 1. The first step involves the development of a detailed metaphor to represent the target culture. The second step identifies the Access Leverage Points (ALPs) within that culture. The third step entails the development of intervention strategies to deal with each of the ALPs.

Culture can be conceptualized at a number of overlapping levels: national, organizational, departmental, and even at the work group level. The more specifically one can identify the target culture, the more the ALPs model approach can aid the organizational change effort. For illustration purposes, we have focused on national culture in this article because well developed metaphors at the national level already exist. By doing so, the specific intervention strategies we identify will have broader application than would strategies developed for a specific work group. However, it is important to realize that the same three-step process can be used as a tool

EXHIBIT 1
THE ALPS MODEL FOR MANAGING COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE



in managing organizational change efforts at any level.

DIMENSIONAL APPROACHES TO CULTURE

Many researchers have developed sets of dimensions to help define cultures. Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck, two pioneers in cross-cultural anthropology, proposed six dimensions to describe the assumptions of a society:

- Are people good or bad, or both?
- Do people subjugate nature or live in harmony with nature?
- Is the society oriented toward individualism or collectivism?
- Is the society a "being" or "doing" society?
- What are people's perceptions of public and private space?
- What is the society's temporal orientation toward the past, present, or future?

Another pioneer in cross-cultural research, Edward T. Hall, focused on communication patterns in his four dimensions:

- context and the level of explicit information required;
- space, especially personal space;
- time, in terms of monochronic versus

polychronic orientation; and

- aspects of information flow related to the structure and speed of messages and communication.

Geert Hofstede, a prominent Dutch researcher, developed what is perhaps the most influential dimensional approach to the description of culture in international business. His empirically based study identified four dimensions, later expanded to five, to describe national cultures:

- *power distance*: the disparity of power distribution in a society;
- *uncertainty avoidance*: the degree of acceptance of uncertainty;
- *individualism-collectivism*: the degree of self- versus group-orientation;
- *masculinity-femininity*: the orientation toward aggressiveness; and
- *time orientation*: static tradition-oriented versus dynamic future-oriented.

All of these approaches have great value and offer significant insight into our understanding of broad national cultural similarities and differences. However, as Martin Gannon, professor of international management at the University of Maryland-College Park and his associates demonstrate, by reducing cultures to just a few dimensions these approaches lack depth in describing cultural mind-sets used in daily activities, and ignore the institu-

tional molding of these mind-sets. The limitations of the dimensional approach become especially problematic when we are interested in comparing a limited number of cultures, or more particularly when attempting to develop an in-depth understanding of a specific culture.

For example, Hofstede groups Great Britain and the United States very closely; our own, perhaps more sophisticated statistical analyses confirm this grouping. However, anyone who has worked in both countries knows there are very real differences that these comparisons simply do not reveal. These differences become especially noticeable under the conditions of major change efforts. Using the ALPs model provides a more descriptive and focused approach to culture representation for these situations.

METAPHORICAL APPROACHES TO CULTURE

People frequently use metaphors in daily life to ease communication; researchers are increasingly employing them to represent and characterize cultures. Gareth Morgan, professor of administrative studies at York University, Toronto, developed several metaphors to describe organizations. His metaphors provide examples of organizational forms, but do not fulfill the requirements of the ALPs model. However, Clifford Geertz, a cross-cultural anthropologist who has written extensively on Indonesian cultures, and, particularly, Gannon and associates present several examples of the types of metaphors that we advocate developing for use in the ALPs model. They describe a single overarching metaphor with several submetaphorical constructs to represent the culture under consideration.

Some criticize the use of a single metaphor as too simple. However, the risk is not in simplification, since this is the deliberate intent of any representational model and certainly of the metaphor, but rather in oversimplification to the point of distortion or inaccuracy. To avoid this pitfall, and following the approach advocated by Gannon and his associates, the

ALPs model requires a reasonable level of sophistication in the detail of the metaphor, appropriate to the situation. We offer examples, particularly in an international context, to illustrate the development of a metaphor.

Some also criticize the single metaphor as merely a pejorative stereotype. But consider the intent of the cultural metaphor. The ALPs model approach adheres to the five criteria specified by Nancy Adler, professor of organization behavior and cross-cultural management at McGill University, regarding the constructive use of stereotypes when describing the behavioral norms of a particular group. Adler states that stereotypes are useful only when "(1) consciously held, (2) descriptive and non-judgmental, (3) accurate, (4) used as the first best guess, and (5) modified with experience." These criteria particularly apply to the use of a metaphor. The metaphor is not intended as a universal syllogism applicable to all individuals, but rather becomes a form of socio-typing, providing guidance in understanding the mind-set of a culture. Stereotyping is appropriate only at the group or community level of analysis and should be subject to limiting assumptions.

While Gannon and associates developed their approach at the national culture level, we advocate it for developing metaphors to represent culture at many levels: national, organizational, departmental, or even at the work-group level. At whatever level of analysis, a rich metaphor aids in understanding the mind-set of the culture where change is planned.

THE ALPS MODEL APPROACH

Step one. The change agent begins the ALPs model approach by selecting a single overarching metaphor to represent the target culture. The metaphor can either be developed in conjunction with people within the culture who will be affected by the change, or evaluated, and if necessary, modified as a result of input from the participants. Following the selection of the metaphor, the agent should develop three to five submetaphorical constructs as part of, and consistent with, the



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overarching metaphor. These subconstructs, along with the overarching metaphor, provide anchors, or benchmarks, from which to develop a rich and focused understanding of the cultural mind-set.

Step two. After choosing the metaphor and augmenting it with three to five subconstructs, the change agent must then isolate Access Leverage Points (ALPs) within the target culture. These ALPs are aspects of the culture that provide powerful opportunities to act as catalysts for change, or could present serious roadblocks or impediments to change. For example, if a culture values tradition then the implications for introducing and managing change are quite different from a culture where history is less central to social norms. However, the ALPs model does not present a complete cultural analysis, but rather narrows the focus of the change agent to the most salient aspects of the target culture relating to the management of change.

Step three. In the final step, the change agent specifies intervention strategies for dealing with each of the ALPs. We advocate specifying at least two but no more than five specific strategies for each ALP. Balance is the key, since too few strategies can leave the change agent without adequate flexibility, but too many strategies can lead to inadequate guidance and direction. To take advantage of the ALPs model, the change agent should use it as a tool to simplify and clarify the process of understanding the cultural mind-set, and to specify precise strategies to achieve the most effective results.

Let's Clarify—with a Metaphor

To summarize with a metaphor (one sure to bring a smile to anyone involved in change), introducing change in a culture is analogous to introducing a virus into an organic cell where there is resistance, but not immunity, to change. Much like a cell, a culture has semipermeable barriers that permit or block the introduction of the change (or virus). The ALPs identify key points of vulnerability or resistance in the culture (or cell wall). The successful management of ALPs facilitates the imple-

mentation of change. While many change efforts are successful without specifically identifying ALPs, we hope that by following a structured process the likelihood of successful change efforts will improve, especially if success is measured in the long-term acceptance of the changes (or infection). If a change agent is not attuned to the ALPs of a culture, then the group, much like a cell, will revert to its previous state upon removal of the change agent (or virus).

A METAPHOR FOR BRITAIN: THE TRADITIONAL BRITISH HOUSE

To illustrate the use of the ALPs model, we will draw contrasts between the management of change in Great Britain and in the United States. For convenience, we will adapt "The Traditional British House," the cultural metaphor developed by Gannon and his associates to reflect the British culture in organizational settings, and extract ALPs as they relate to the management of change. Finally, we will offer specific intervention strategies that change agents can use when engaged in change efforts in Britain.

The traditional British house, as Gannon and his associates' metaphor suggests, is a durable, long-lived entity based on tried, tested and historically successful designs. Without wishing to sound like a real estate broker, homes in Britain are commonly many hundreds of years old, yet still wind- and water-tight and highly desirable. The British home design offers few surprises, and change is often evolutionary, what Gannon calls a "slow chipping away...over the years." Gannon and his associates provide three submetaphorical constructs for the British house, through which key aspects of the British culture can be better understood:

- *laying the foundations of the house*: strong ties to their history, and political and economic institutions;
- *building the brick house*: aspects of growing up British; and
- *living in the traditional brick house*: key elements of being British.



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Each of these metaphorical constructs helps us understand the British organizational mind-set better.

Identifying the ALPs of Great Britain

Historical foundations of Britain. Britain's rich and powerful historical background can be likened to the foundations of the British house. The political, military, and economic influence of this nation once circumscribed the globe. Indeed, Christopher North aptly described the country as "His Majesties Dominions on which the sun never sets," a notion in which the British took great pride. Moreover, Charles Dickens wrote in *Great Expectations*, "We Britons had at that time particularly settled that it was treasonable to doubt our having and our being the best of everything." Although at times masked in severe cynicism, the pride in being British runs deep in the culture even today.

The first ALP related to introducing change in Britain is the *acceptance of tradition*. Though not necessarily a consciously held belief nor a preoccupation with tradition, the British desire to emphasize tradition and build on it is not surprising, considering their history of incredible achievement. Obvious illustrations abound: houses still standing strong after hundreds of years; one of the oldest Parliamentary systems in the world; one of the few remaining constitutional monarchies in the world that acts as a unifying force. The British seem to feel that if it still works and has lasted a long time, it must somehow be good. At the very least, tradition adds a feeling of stability in turbulent times.

Subtlety of language is the second British ALP relating to the management of change. Gannon and his associates observed that the British tend to be rather circumspect in their conversations; in all forms of communication, whether oral or written, subtlety is typical. Certainly the British commonly use language in a more subtle way than their American counterparts. This subtlety of language can be related back to the solid foundations of the British society, with conventions so long established and universally applied that every-

one "knows the rules." The underlying assumption means that language needs be less explicit than in the United States, where a largely immigrant population has a greater requirement for specificity and precise language. This ALP has a great impact on the management of change in Britain.

Socialization in Britain. The British tend to prefer brick homes as opposed to wood frame ones, which are more prevalent in the United States. Many of the newer homes in Great Britain are built to resemble the older, brick-style housing. With their great sense of order and tradition, the British hold architects of the past in high esteem. This relates to the third ALP, *probity of position*. In British English, this term refers to openness and uprightness in the recognition of position.

For an example of probity of position, consider the major role that status conferred by membership in professional organizations has in the British work place. Business cards often not only have a formal job title following the name, but also a list of initials indicating honorary titles, earned degrees, and membership in professional institutes.

The bifurcation of management and labor hierarchies also emphasizes the importance of position. One of authors of this article, a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, found that he needed to communicate with lawyers on a number of simple matters. But he was routinely asked to deal with other chartered surveyors as opposed to negotiating with lawyers to settle issues. In many industries, the juxtaposition of managerial hierarchies and organized labor hierarchies leads to formal, often intractable, work place agreements. A gulf has developed that even Margaret Thatcher could not totally close.

Furthermore, building the brick house, or growing up in Britain, means that, compared with American children, British children are expected to behave, be controlled and not spoiled, and above all know their place and not be thought precocious—a clear precursor to fitting into society, and particularly into organizations.

British home-building follows what one

might term a ceremonial procession, related to the fourth ALP, *use of ceremony*. In the United States homes are built in very short order. In Great Britain the process can take much longer. One of the authors observed a new office building under construction between Picadilly Circus and Leicester Square in London. Upon his first arrival in Britain, construction was well under way. However, more than three years later the four-story building was not yet completed. In the United States construction industry, a 40-story building would have been completed in the same time frame (although maybe not to the same specifications).

The other author experienced a similar trend while working for a development corporation in the Home Counties of London. Construction of just the infrastructure (roads, sewers, etc.), that in America might be completed within months, often took years to complete. This was not due to difficulties associated with the development, but rather the methodical procedures involved. The British seemed to take a certain comfort in things being done a particular way; the result was often that developments took many years from breaking ground to completion. Just as the construction industry uses ceremony, there is a role for it in all aspects of British life. This use of ceremony, while slowing the pace of life in Britain, also ties in to their history.

The Queen presiding over the ceremonial opening of Parliament each year to mark the beginning of a new legislative session may be termed an anachronism, but opening ceremonies are common. By comparison, in the United States ceremonies frequently mark the end of, and especially celebrate, accomplishments. Using ceremony to mark the beginning of new organizational initiatives clearly has a role in the management of change in Britain.

Awareness of traditions as a way of life in Britain. The fifth British ALP is *disposition toward following rules*. This willingness to follow rules manifests itself in many ways, often associated with aspects of privacy. The British home shows evidence of this in its division into many small rooms, each with a door. Fur-

ther, because everyone is expected to know the rules, the average Briton obeys them with little fear that others will gain undue advantage through rule circumvention.

An example you will see on every street in Britain is the propensity to "queue up." People are more willing to wait patiently in line than in other countries. Where their American counterparts might form a "huddle" around a bus entrance, the British are more likely to form a nice orderly line and wait their turn. This behavior also takes place on highways where the British assiduously follow "lane discipline," with overtaking only on the right. The rules are clearly written down and followed. Compare this to the United States, where drivers interpret the overtaking rules more flexibly, and the idea of maintaining such lane discipline is an anathema. Yet because British society tends to obey rules more strictly, they can become a double-edged sword—both a convenience in efficient communication for those in the know, and yet an unquestioned barrier to change.

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS: HOW ACCESS LEVERAGE POINTS IMPACT THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

Let's take a closer look at each of the previously identified ALPs. For each leverage point, we offer examples of organizational change efforts in Great Britain, along with examples of their counterpoints in the United States. The majority of examples are drawn from actual experience and consulting engagements in both countries: in Great Britain, from experiences at the reorganization of a major British firm, and in the United States, from many sources.

Acceptance of tradition (ALP 1). The British acceptance of tradition creates something of a dilemma for a change agent, placing the agent in a delicate role. Disregarding tradition is often tempting and convenient, or sometimes the agent fails to recognize its importance. But this can be fatal to organizational change efforts. To succeed, the change

agent must work through the established traditions.

One of the major components of the British firm's reorganization effort was a strategy for managing product quality. Rather than merely introducing a cavalier approach to quality management, we designed an implementation plan that would build on the traditions already established in the firm. We took an existing "program" operating in only one area of the firm, kept the name largely unchanged, and transformed it into an organization-wide quality strategy "process." In an internal consulting report, the original program had been described as "lacking in focus, accountability and action." So although it was a long way from being a sound foundation, it had the powerful advantage of existing—a tradition.

the philosophy on which the document stands. Charles Hampden-Turner and Alfons Trompenaars, an English and Dutch scholar, respectively, in *The Seven Cultures of Capitalism*, represent the difference between the two cultures graphically, with managers' concepts of the role of past, present, and future represented by a series of circles. The British concepts were a sequence of circles, with the present overlapping with the past and a little apart from the future. The American concepts showed a similar sequential configuration, but the circle representing the present was clearly separate from the past, and touched the future.

Subtlety of language (ALP 2). While the new quality process at the British firm was ultimately a success, its implementation was not always certain. Several managers' subtle use

If a change is not attuned to the ALPs of a culture, then the group, like a cell, will revert to its previous state upon removal of the change agent.

Instead of viewing the program as an impediment to change, ALP 1 creates a fresh perspective. The program became a building block. By building on established tradition and introducing the quality strategy incrementally, we were able to introduce fundamental widespread change without the degree of resistance from incumbents that might otherwise have occurred. The strategic change's true nature was massive, establishing an integrated, cross-functional, multi-year time horizon for managing and introducing quality improvements across all product lines.

By contrast, the United States is much less concerned with preserving tradition. For example, while one might consider the U.S. Constitution the most fundamental tradition in the United States, the country is constantly eroding and reinterpreting the very fabric of

of language nearly sidetracked the entire effort. In one particularly important instance, we chose to present the new strategy to key managers by staging a major presentation, designed to disseminate information about the new strategy, demonstrate the linkage to the past, and establish a framework for future efforts. In order to hold this event, we had to convince the "owner" of the existing program of both the need for the event, and the need for all of the top executives of the firm to attend.

Since the original program had several problems, the owner was naturally reluctant to hold such a public event with all of the top executives, and thus advertise its shortcomings. However, the language he used indicated anything but reluctance. He made such statements as "we are 99 percent together on

this," in reference to the event's format, content, and audience. Yet when push came to shove and the timing for the event became critical, he dug in his heels. His one percent lack of support turned out to be 100 percent disagreement with the entire event. An appreciation for ALP 2 enabled us not only to anticipate potential problems, but also to develop an alternative approach in advance. The event went on as planned.

By contrast, during an organizational diagnosis at the departmental level of an American *Fortune* 500 company commissioned by its chief financial officer, the treasurer was not at all happy with the idea of some consultant "snooping around" his department. In unequivocal terms he made it clear, in a very loud voice with the door of his office wide open so that many of his staff could hear, that he intended to thwart the organizational diagnosis efforts. He did not use subtle language.

Probity of position (ALP 3). The "owner" of the original program at the British firm first aired his refusal to endorse the presentation in a meeting attended by all those directly reporting to him. Prior to this meeting, we had met with all of his direct reports on numerous occasions to plan the event. They had all, individually, indicated their support. Yet in this meeting, when the manager openly expressed his desire to stop the event and subsequently asked for input, all the direct reports supported the manager in his opposition.

The pressure was growing, and it looked as though the crucial presentation might be undermined. After the meeting, we met privately with the manager to discuss the future of the event. We informed him that his boss fully supported the event. Albeit a little late, by being cognizant of ALP 3 and meeting with him in private, we ensured that the probity of his position would not be disturbed; he would be able to inform his subordinates of the change in plan rather than have his views publicly overridden.

By contrast, a medium-sized American publishing firm had much less concern for the probity of position at the organizational level during the development of their five-year strategic business plan. To arrive at the final

plan, they held a series of meetings and brainstorming sessions in which little to no regard for formal position was demonstrated. All individuals were encouraged to be mavericks and to push for their own agendas. However, when the final plan was pulled together, the total resources of the firm were focused on one mission, and they more than tripled in size during the next five-year period.

Use of ceremony (ALP 4). We designed the presentation of the new quality strategy process at the British firm to mark the beginning of the project, and to establish credibility for the course of action. The event had, in part, a ceremonial function with elements of ritual and drama. The top managers from all departments and product lines attended. To our knowledge, this firm had never held an event of this scope. It was designed to impress, and it was a great success. Subsequently, they commissioned us to conduct two additional events to ensure proper exposure to lower ranking individuals.

In our experience, ceremonies have a different emphasis in the United States. Clearly Americans lay great store in highly professional presentation proposals, but they are less ceremonial in nature. The emphasis is more on the celebration of success at the end of a project. For example, most companies and organizations have awards banquets. One year-end awards banquet attended by one of the authors at an American manufacturing facility recognized individuals for their efforts in bringing about significant improvements. However, a couple of months after the awards were presented, the organization slashed its work force dramatically, award winners and non-winners alike.

Disposition toward rules (ALP 5). In certain industries where the division of management and organized labor is particularly important, the rigid application of rules negotiated in an attempt to alleviate confrontation (especially relating to job demarcation and procedural matters) can make change management difficult. Even with the strident efforts of Margaret Thatcher, obstacles remain; there is an ingrained reluctance to change established procedures.

EXHIBIT 2
SUMMARY OF THE BRITISH CULTURAL METAPHOR (THE TRADITIONAL BRITISH HOUSE),
ACCESS LEVERAGE POINTS (ALPs), AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Step 1 The Sub-Metaphorical Constructs	Step 2 The Access Leverage Points	Step 3 The Intervention Strategies
Historical Foundations of Great Britain	Acceptance of Tradition	Identify relevant tradition(s).
		Demonstrate how the change builds on tradition(s).
		Involve people in the change to enhance ownership.
	Subtlety of Language	Discount overt stimuli.
		Pay strict attention to subtle clues.
		Engage in diplomatic behavior.
Socialization in Great Britain	Probity of position	Ensure contact at appropriate level.
		Demonstrate top management commitment.
		Involve key stakeholders.
	Use of Ceremony	Involve top managers in ceremonies.
		Use ceremonies to mark the beginning of change.
		Employ symbolism and ritual.
Awareness of Traditions as a Way of Life in Great Britain	Disposition Toward Rules	Specify rules precisely.
		Specify rules as guidelines.
		Build upon existing rules.

At the British firm, our consulting team got bogged down in arcane rules so frequently that we coined a term to refer to this phenomenon. We called it "getting quagged," from the root "quagmire." One outstanding example had to do with computer printouts of parts lists. At an earlier stage in the implementation of the parts management computer system, someone decided that one standard report was needed, to be distributed to several people in each product area. This report consisted of somewhere in the neighborhood of 10,000 pages, and stood about three feet tall. It contained all of the data necessary

for parts management, but not in a usable form. All those who received it thought it was wasteful, burdensome, and not very helpful. Each person only referred to a couple hundred of the pages with any regularity, and moreover, each would have preferred different formats. However, since this was the established procedure, none of the users challenged the format and pressed for change.

Yet, with an appreciation for ALP 5, this disposition toward rules can be advantageous. During the implementation of the quality strategy process, we built on the British propensity to follow procedures and

established a set of written guidelines: the principles of the strategy, the information flow for the process, the organization structure required to support it, the job descriptions of key players in the process, and management tools to aid in the process. We enhanced the formality and credibility of the guidelines by getting senior managers to sign them prior to the organization-wide distribution. Following distribution, consulting staff worked with area management to ensure consistent application of the process to each of the product lines.

How might this approach work in the United States? Probably not so well. In America people often follow the dictum that "rules are made to be broken." People are in a hurry to get things done, whether that means double parking in order to run a quick errand or ignoring overly constrictive rules to get the product out the door. And others tolerate this attitude. People will accommodate the errant parker and drive around, or the boss will acknowledge the successful result and ignore the circumvention of rules.

One author worked for a multimillion dollar start-up company where the written work procedures were created after the event to reflect current practices, rather than ahead of time to dictate them. It was a question of seeing what worked and going with it. In another instance, one of the authors was commissioned to create an employee development program for a tightly knit work group of a non-profit organization. The management team of this group wanted an integrated system that would ensure that employees were developed to meet the emerging needs. We created a document complete with information flow, management tools, and clearly defined responsibilities. The process outlined was very well received, but never fully implemented because individuals were reluctant to follow the "rules"; they wished to retain individual discretion.

ALPs in Perspective

Any culture has certain characteristics that create forces for or against the management

of change. We do not mean to imply, however, that the five Access Leverage Points identified in this article fully define the British culture, or that they may not equally well apply in other cultures. Rather, we expose those aspects of the culture to which one must pay special attention when managing change. As our contrasting illustrations demonstrate, ALPs can take on very different meanings in different cultures.

What is important, however, is that the identification of ALPs has very practical implications for managing change in a given culture. Exhibit 2 summarizes the British cultural metaphor, the ALPs, and intervention strategies. The box on page 34 provides recommendations on how these principles can be applied for managing change in Britain.

CONCLUSION

We have not attempted to provide an in-depth understanding of the British culture. Instead, our focus has been on specific components of the culture that relate to the introduction and management of change. By examining a major reorganization effort of one company in Great Britain, we demonstrated how each of the key cultural attributes we identified has an impact in organizational life. By integrating this analysis, we provided several intervention strategies that individuals can adopt to deal effectively with each of the ALPs.

Moreover, this article demonstrates a simple three-step process for identifying the key aspects of a culture that must be attended to during the process of implementing organizational change. This process can also be applied at any level of culture. The organization level is perhaps where the framework will become most powerful, provided that the underlying metaphor is carefully selected.

Additionally, the ALPs model can be useful as a management training tool to familiarize new managers with the salient aspects of the culture they are entering, or to assimilate foreign nationals as they enter a new country.

Recommendations for Managing Change in Britain

Acceptance of tradition (ALP 1). The British culture is built on solid traditions. Frequently an appreciation for the way things were previously done must be accommodated and incorporated in the change process. The intervention strategies for dealing with the British concern for tradition include:

- identifying the tradition(s) associated with the desired change(s);
- demonstrating how the change extends and reinforces the tradition(s); and
- encouraging individuals to work through the change so that they develop ownership of the change.

Subtlety of language (ALP 2). The British use language in a subtle manner, perhaps because of their greater homogeneity and greater respect for tradition than exists in the United States. The strategies for dealing with the British use of subtle language include:

- discounting overt stimuli;
- paying strict attention to subtle clues, especially in conversation; and
- engaging in diplomatic behavior as opposed to dictatorial behavior.

Probity of position (ALP 3). As opposed to their American counterparts, the British have much more awareness of formal position. Approaches for dealing with the probity of position in Britain include:

- ensuring contact is made at the appropriate level within the organization;

- ensuring top managers are sold before public commitment to a strategy with middle managers;
- subtly demonstrating top management conviction to your course of action; and
- careful identification of other key stakeholders, and ensuring their inclusion within the change process.

Use of ceremony (ALP 4). The British use of ceremony emphasizes marking the beginning of projects and courses of action. When using ceremonies in Britain it is important to focus on the following intervention strategies:

- involving key managers in ceremonies, while being aware of the probity of position;
- using ceremonies to mark the "psychological" beginning of a change to tie into traditional perspectives; and
- incorporating symbolism and ritual, such as passing the keys over or signing the documents, making it an event of importance.

Disposition toward rules (ALP 5). As noted earlier, the British tend to follow rules once they are in place. This propensity should be exploited in organizational change efforts through the following key strategies:

- defining rules precisely, otherwise disjointed efforts or reversion to tradition will result;
- defining the rules as a set of guidelines, and not dictums to be followed; and
- being aware of what has gone before to anticipate reactions to the new rules.

Perhaps other uses also exist. However, the important thing to note is that by following a structured process, one is more likely to identify the key aspects of a culture that relate to the introduction and management of change, thereby enabling greater likelihood of success.

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

There have been several dimensional approaches to understanding national cultures, the most notable of which is Geert Hofstede, "Motivation, Leadership, and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad?" (*Organizational Dynamics*, Summer 1980). For a more detailed description of this work, see Hofstede's *Cultures Consequences* (Sage, 1984). Nancy Adler also provides an excellent overview of the dimensional approach to culture and the ways culture can impact the management of organizations in her book *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior* (PWS-Kent, 1991).

For a sophisticated statistical analysis of the

grouping of countries according to work-related attitudes and values, readers are referred to Charles Osmond and Craig Pearce's working paper entitled "Workplace Attitudes and Values, and a Global Pattern of Nations: An Application of Latent Class Modeling" (CIBER working paper series, University of Maryland, 1995).

Recently there has been significant interest in the use of metaphors to understand the subtle differences between national cultures not captured by dimensional approaches. The most notable work in this area is Martin Gannon and Associates, *Understanding Global Cultures: Metaphorical Journeys Through 17 Countries* (Sage, 1994).



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