

## The Planned Change Process

To begin, the general purpose of planned change is to increase an organization's effectiveness. All approaches to planned change rely on theories that describe the various stages and processes of implementing change. There are dozens of models, and for our discussion, we will use the Bullock and Batten integrative model of planned change. This model is based on a review and synthesis of over 30 models of planned change.

The integrative model describes two major dimensions of change: change phases, or the sequential states of an organization processing change; and change processes, or the OD methods used to move an organization from one state to another.

Therefore, we will be considering the change process from both the consultant's and the organization's viewpoint.

The integrative model has four basic phases to it:

1. Exploration phase. In this phase the organization is involved in its first decision point; namely, whether or not to plan for specific change and commit resources to this effort. This is where we gain awareness of the need to change and are consequently motivated to move ahead or back off. This usually involves searching for OD resources and subsequently contracting for these resources. It is important that this be a collaborative process between consultant and members of the

organization. Frequently, nothing progresses beyond this point because of varying perceptions and politics associated with the need to change and/or because of resource constraints.

2. Planning phase. This phase involves understanding the problems facing the organization and planning the intervention to address these problems. Change processes start with diagnosing the organization's sources of problems. This involves collecting pertinent data, analyzing it and designing appropriate actions to improve the organization. This phase ends when key decision makers approve the proposed changes.

3. Action phase. This is the implementation phase. This includes change processes to move the organization from its current state to the desired state. During this phase actions are frequently measured periodically to assess progress and usually there is an internal group that champions or manages the change process. Plans are modified according to feedback and internal support is solicited. Outside and internal consultants frequently collaborate to move the change forward capitalizing on each other's strengths.

4. Integration phase. Once successful implementation has occurred, the desire of all involved is to sustain the change attained. This may involve the creation of reinforcing systems to reward the new desired behaviors and results, training and

development programs to develop new skills needed to sustain the change, and so on. The desire is for true assimilation of the new behaviors into the organization.

Now that is a quick overview of both processes and phases an organization goes through as it embraces a planned change effort. The processes and phases are theoretically distinct and important for the consultant and the organization to be aware of, but in practice they overlap and are not nearly as clear as the model represents.

### Organizational Issues

In this section we will deal with the many issues and decisions that are made as we proceed with a planned change effort. An initial consideration is readiness of the organization to embrace change. This is referred to by Kurt Lewin as the unfreezing process. This is essential for the organization consultant to assess carefully; frequently interventions fail because the conditions were not conducive to change. Other issues are: disengagement from the past, unfinished business and pride. When a change effort occurs, this typically disconfirms some or many of the existing behaviors in the organization. There will be significant resistance by organizational members if they sense their past efforts are belittled or demeaned. There needs to be a provision for saving face, closing out unfinished business and for psychological safety to move ahead. When change takes place and no time is spent acknowledging the good of the era that is ending and the value it created for

the organization, then members feel devalued.

Involvement is central to a successful change effort. Involvement leads to commitment and all of the processes should be highly collaborative. As a rule, if there is any question whether or not to involve someone, do it! Another issue is the interdependent nature of the many components of the organizational system.

When an intervention is focused on one aspect of the system, other systems are impacted by this. If we create a team building process intervention and we still have reward and recognition systems that inspire autonomy and independence, then we should look to see if we can create reinforcing systems that complement our efforts.

Stabilizing the change is another issue of significance and it is important for members who assisted in the change effort to be recognized for their contribution.

This will also serve to reinforce the change. Guardians of the new way of doing things or champions of the new change are crucial to sustaining the change.

Sometimes these are formal roles and other times informal leaders arise and they all play essential roles in this phase.

### Consultant Issues

We will address these issues from the point of view of the outside consultant although many of the issues will pertain to internal consultants as well. An initial consideration for the consultant pertains to the readiness of the client system for change. The unfreezing process is frequently a time-consuming, emotionally-

draining and difficult task. As a consultant you may not want to engage in the total process if the client system is not ready for change and you have only one or two champions who are eager to achieve better performance. You may spin your wheels and you may be better off working with clients that are largely unfrozen. If you decide to move ahead, you have the issue of contracting with the client organization and obtaining commitment of the key influencers to change. You have to understand and learn to deal with resistance to change. This may require that you be confrontive or it may require that you listen; it will certainly involve many curves you never anticipated at the onset of the consulting agreement. Where diagnosis is involved on your part, you will need to deal with the issue of gathering data, analyzing it and feeding it back to the organization.

At each step of the way you will be dealing with issues of empowerment. When to wear the expert hat and when to wear the process hat. Your objective is to empower the client organization to handle its own needs and to avoid creating dependencies by taking on the problems for the client. Your desire as a consultant is to be a resource and to develop consulting skills in your clients so they can better handle their own issues.

### Initial Decision Points

Obviously almost all of the issues discussed have decision points associated with them. However, there are two major sets of criteria Porras and Robertson have

created that pertain to the selection of the appropriate intervention:

A. Selection of a feasible intervention set based on:

1. Gap between actual and desired organizational states
2. Congruency among relevant organizational characteristics.

B. Selection of particular interventions, based on:

1. Readiness of the target system
2. Leverage points
3. Skill of the change agent.

### Options for Interventions

As you look holistically at your organization there will probably be needs in many areas. There are four major categories of organizational interventions and dozens of subcategories. The four major categories are:

1. Human process. These interventions are aimed at looking at the way people work together, deal with conflict, make decisions, and at other processes that are essential to group effectiveness.
2. Technostructural. These interventions deal with the linkages of people with organizational technologies and address issues such as task methods, job design, and

the structural issues such as division of labor and hierarchy.

3. Human resource. These interventions deal primarily with the successful integration of people in the organization and look at goal setting and appraisal systems, reward systems, career planning and development, stress management, and diversity.

4. Strategic. These interventions deal with how the organization will utilize its resources to accomplish its mission, best serve its customers, and thereby gain competitive advantage.

Now if I had more than an hour I would elaborate on many of these points, but in summary, planned change is a very complex phenomena and it is very helpful for the manager and the consultant to have models to express the interdependent realities of an organization. There are many issues to consider before engaging in a planned change effort; each issue has a set of decision points with the most critical being your initial directional choice and specific choice of the appropriate intervention. Once you have selected a specific intervention set, for example the mentioned option categories, you have several intervention options to choose from.