

EXERCISE 5

FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS - RESISTING OR DRIVING FORCES?

In times of change there are always forces working for or against the change. A force field analysis is a helpful tool in identifying, analysing or reducing these forces. It is beneficial both as an individual or group exercise. Force field analysis is a visual way of mapping out the forces in any situation that keep the situation status quo. Its use leads to a clearer and more systematic appreciation of what is happening and shows how the situation can be changed.

The term "force field" comes from research done by social scientist Kurt Lewin. He observed that any social situation that appears stable is really in a state of dynamic tension between needs, aspirations, fears and other feelings of the people involved.

Purpose and objective

- Sets out the forces in any given situation in a diagram, showing the forces' direction, their strength and how they can be modified.
- At the end of the exercise everyone should be able to identify the key forces that work for us in striving towards the new, preferred status and the forces that work against us. Also outline what, how and who will do something about these identified forces.

Steps to take

The standard layout in a force field is shown on the next page.

Completing a force field analysis involves working through the steps below. You can do this individually or as a group.

1. Define the problem or challenge. Briefly describe the present condition ① and the desired condition ②.
2. Sort out the forces in terms of those that promote movement towards the desired condition ("driving" forces) and those who prevent movement towards the desired condition ("restraining" forces) ③.
3. It is helpful to group these under the following headings:
 - PERSONAL - inside me
 - INTERPERSONAL - between you and me
 - INTERGROUP - between groups
 - ORGANISATIONAL - inside the organisation
 - ENVIRONMENTAL - surrounding the organisation
4. Identify the two or three forces on each side that appear to be pushing hardest for change or resisting it most strongly. These are the forces that should receive most attention.
5. Discuss and agree on what, how and who will address the identified forces.

Time needed

You will need 30-60 minutes, including the introduction, exercise and reflection.

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FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

PRESENT CONDITIONS

DESIRED CONDITIONS

① Challenge/task:.....

② Preferred position:.....

Driving Forces

Restraining Forces

