

FAQ: Organizational Change

Question 1: What factors in an organizational environment drive change?

Answer 1: Factors that drive change may be internal or external. Internal factors may include gaps in performance or needs for training to keep pace with external changes. Strategic planning within an organization must regularly examine subtle changes in performance to increase the chance that training will be an effective solution.

In a business organization, the best data often come from systematic and uniform employee reviews. In a school setting, standardized testing is typically the best measure of change.

Most often, an institutional change is driven by external changes. These may include a change in funding, the community, or way of doing business (such as the need to incorporate technology). Organizations must be aware of the forces shaping their learning environment and stay ahead of the curve in anticipating how these external forces will impact the organization.

Transformational leadership skills have been shown to be effective when used in organizations that are experiencing a lot of organizational change. It seems that more participative leadership style helps followers feel like they are a part of the organizational change. People seem to be more committed to the change process when they help to create it. Transformational leaders are likely to involve the employees in the creation and execution of the organizational change.

Question 2: How do leaders effectively address resistance to change?

Answer 2: Change takes people out of their routine and forces them to think and act outside of their comfort zone. People naturally resist change because it forces the brain to organize itself in different ways. One example that almost everyone can relate to is a change in a favorite grocery store. Think of the discomfort felt when things are not in their normal place.

This discomfort becomes acceptable to the extent that people can see the benefits of the new level of performance. People do a personal cost-benefit analysis to determine what potential value a change may have for them. The expression *WIIFM* (What's In It For Me) is their primary concern, and one that must be communicated effectively.

This means careful but flexible planning, involving key stakeholders and

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communication of measurable progress during implementation. By involving those most affected by change in the initial planning process, people increase the chance of their personal acceptance and are more likely to advocate for the change.