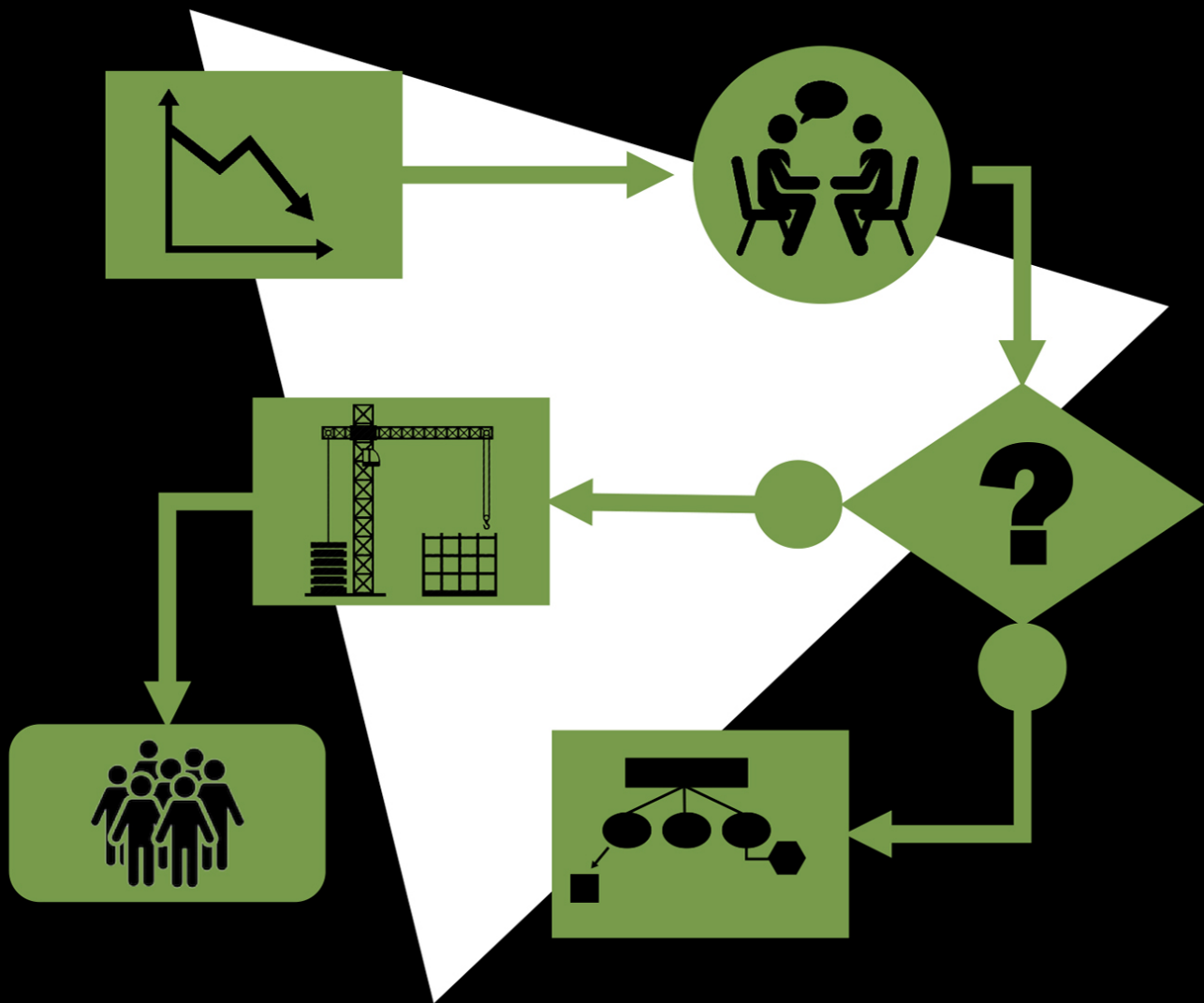


# LEADING CHANGE

## IN MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS:

### EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY BOOK



**FIRST EDITION**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMAND, LEADERSHIP, AND MANAGEMENT

**UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE**

# LEADING CHANGE IN MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY BOOK

*1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION*

*TOM GALVIN*

*DEPARTMENT OF COMMAND, LEADERSHIP, AND  
MANAGEMENT*

*SCHOOL OF STRATEGIC LANDPOWER*

*U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE, PA*

\*\*\*\*\*

This publication is subject to Title 17, United States Code, Sections 101 and 105. It is in the public domain and may not be copyrighted.

\*\*\*\*\*

Comments pertaining to this book are invited and should be forwarded to the Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, School of Strategic Landpower, U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013-5240.

\*\*\*\*\*

All Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) and U.S. Army War College (USAWC) Press publications may be downloaded free of charge from the SSI website. Hard copies of certain reports may also be obtained through the U.S. Government Bookstore's website at <https://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

SSI publications may be quoted or reprinted in part or in full with permission and appropriate credit given to the U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA. Contact SSI by visiting our website at the following address: <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/>.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Practitioner's Corner is a part of the USAWC Publications site reserved for USAWC faculty publications of educational value. These may be quoted or reprinted in part or in full with permission and credit given to the authors, editors, or departments as appropriate. Visit <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu> for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) is the U.S. Army's institute for geostrategic and national research and analysis. SSI supports the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) curricula, provides direct analysis for Army and Department of Defense leadership, and serves as a bridge to the wider strategic community. SSI studies are published by the USAWC Press and distributed to key strategic leaders in the Army and Department of Defense, the military educational system, Congress, the media, other think tanks and defense institutes, and major colleges and universities.

\*\*\*\*\*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	III
HOW TO USE THIS ACTIVITY BOOK.....	V
ACTIVITY ONE: CONSTRUCTING THE CHANGE STORY .....	1
ACTIVITY TWO: DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM .....	9
ACTIVITY THREE: DEVELOPING THE CHANGE VISION .....	19
ACTIVITY FOUR: DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT (VISION OF THE WAYS).....	27
ACTIVITY FIVE: CONSTRUCTING THE CHANGE PLAN ARCHITECTURE .....	35
ACTIVITY SIX: PREPARING FOR LAUNCH .....	47

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. THE SIX ACTIVITIES IN THIS BOOK.....	VI
FIGURE 2. WEISBORD'S SIX-BOX MODEL.....	11
FIGURE 3. LIFE CYCLE MOTOR AS PLANNED CHANGE .....	36
FIGURE 4. TELEOLOGICAL MOTOR IN PRACTICE.....	37
FIGURE 5. EVOLUTIONARY AND DIALECTIC MOTORS .....	38
FIGURE 6. LAUNCH PLANNING ACTIONS.....	48

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. ELEMENTS OF THE CHANGE STORY .....	4
TABLE 2. WORKSHEET FOR THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR CHANGE STORY.....	6
TABLE 3. BULLIS' OVERVIEW OF FORECASTING METHODOLOGIES.....	20
TABLE 4. CHIN AND BENNE'S FOUR APPROACHES SUMMARIZED .....	30
TABLE 5. VAN DE VEN & POOLE'S MOTORS OF CHANGE, ADAPTED FOR PLANNED CHANGE EFFORTS .....	41



## HOW TO USE THIS ACTIVITY BOOK

Since 2014, when I assumed responsibility for the LM2214: Leading Change elective in the U.S. Army War College resident program, I found that my students were hungry for tools to help them navigate the difficult terrain of leading and managing change. While the eight-step approach of John Kotter was successful in getting students to recognize that change in large bureaucratic organizations was possible, his book *Leading Change* was clearly insufficient for direct application in military organizations. One reason is expressed exceptionally well in the works of Andrew Pettigrew who showed how the processes of change, the content of the change, and the external and internal contexts are interdependent.

This led to an effort to fill in a lot of the gaps left in Kotter's simple but context-free method. In my doctoral studies at George Washington University, I had the opportunity to learn from experienced scholars and consultants in the fields of organizational behavior, design, development, and management science. It became readily apparent to me that many of the unanswered questions and debates among War College students in seminar actually had answers among the classics of organizational theory. The result was the monograph *Leading Change in Military Organizations*, now available through the U.S. Army War College Publications website.

But back to the Leading Change course. I saw leading change as both a communication skill and an art. While traditional seminar dialogue helped address some of the ideas and concepts of change, students needed to learn by doing – by putting the tools into practice at a low level and experimenting. In academic years 2017-2019, I developed a series of exercises designed to help students put what they learned in practice. Students came into the course with a problem to solve necessitating a change effort, and therefore had the ability to connect all the activities together. In a three-hour block, I would reserve the middle hour for an experiential workshop that followed initial discussion of the concepts. Then the final hour will allow the students to discuss what they learned – what was easiest or most difficult, what additional information

would be required, and how the organization may react to the results.

The 2019 iteration of the course saw these activities stabilize and mature – not only through use in the resident program but also as external and internal consultant with various organizations, and in communications with scholars and professional military educators. This activity book will *not* be a silver bullet for any change effort, but provides a slate of activities and exercises that can be used in educational or leader development settings to help organizations understand the complexity and dynamics of leading change – and eschew the idea that any simple model will lead to success.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

This text contains six activities representing six discrete actions in preparing for planned change. These six steps are shown in Figure 1, and each one has an activity established for it. Each activity is designed to be conducted over 45-minute period with each student working independently on a problem of their own choice. When I conduct these activities, I facilitate them by providing each step in sequence, 2-3 minutes apart. I also provide personal insights based on the previous seminar dialogue.

A similar facilitated approach is recommended if your organization is going to use these tools in a group setting or as the foundation of a leader development program. Activities One (change story) and Two (diagnosis) could easily fill an afternoon and lead to due-outs for members to research additional information about their organization. Activities Three and Four could be reserved for the leadership or done as facilitated activities for the whole organization.

### CAUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

There are important limitations to using this activity book. In practice, these activities represent only a small portion of the work required to properly plan a change effort. Transformation change in a large organization

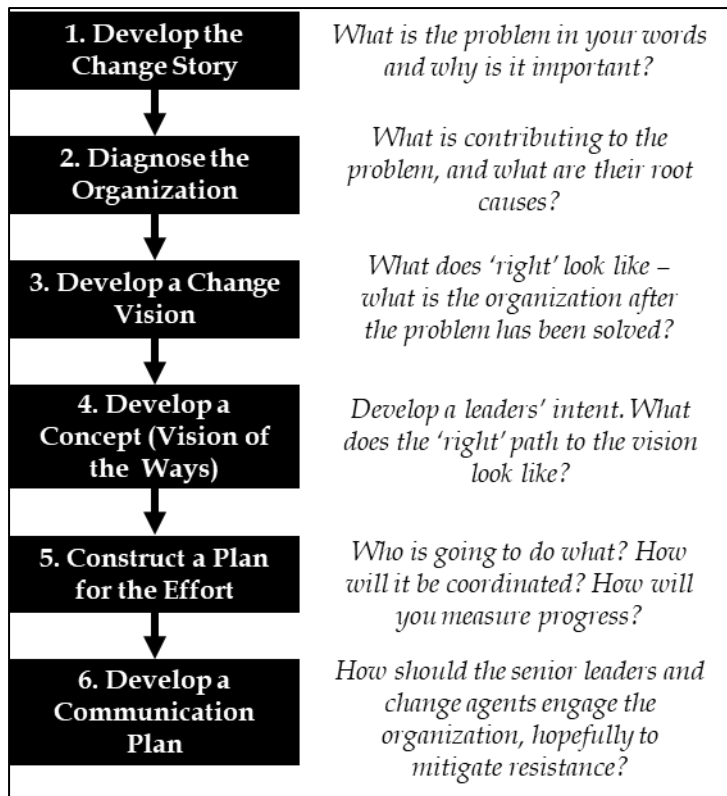


Figure 1. The Six Activities in This Book

could take weeks or months to plan, and this workbook does not promise shortcuts. It does, however, provide opportunities to conduct the change planning more efficiently and with improved participation from the members. Even the change story (Activity One) is likely to be controversial as members and stakeholders may have completely different views of the problem. It is recommended that each activity be afforded reflection time by the participants and journals or after-action review notes kept. Reflection addresses the artistic and creative challenges associated with change. Finding the right words that capture the essence of the activity could take time. It is important not to rush.

It is also important not to treat the activities as strictly sequential. The conduct of later activities may necessitate updates or adjustments to earlier ones. This is normal and to be expected. In some instances, it may be necessary to re-state the problem if the resulting plan proves infeasible or unsustainable. In other instances, circumstances (e.g., external pressures, crisis situations) necessitate quick action. Leaders may therefore need to anchor on the change story or

vision to get the process moving. As Pettigrew's work shows (see the Leading Change Primer for more information), the context will drive the process required to plan and implement change.

These activities are not fixed in stone, but have emerged over the course of time. Each iteration of the Leading Change elective has provided me with new insights and ideas. Feedback is welcome and encouraged. The intent for this activity book to be revised and released on a two- or three-year cycle, commensurate with updates to its companion monograph *Leading Change in Military Organizations*.

#### PREPARATION FOR USE OF THE WORKBOOK ALONE

In educational settings, this workbook should be used with the companion monograph, but in professional development settings that is probably infeasible. If this book is used to conduct a professional or leader development event or as the basis for developing an actual change effort, then leaders should require participants to identify (or have identified) a real change problem that they wish to solve for the organization. This should be a problem that the participants are sufficiently familiar with so they can perform the activities without need for significant outside research.

Participants should also have access to this workbook as a read-ahead. It is not recommended to have participants go into these activities cold, because many of these activities deviate from the popular change management literature and may be confusing. Participants will benefit from understanding the roadmap that this activity book follows and the logic that binds all these activities together.

It is equally important that facilitators be very familiar with the activities in advance so to answer questions. Although the activities are largely self-explanatory, facilitators should have set of questions at their disposal to help participants within the organization's context.

## ACTIVITY ONE: CONSTRUCTING THE CHANGE STORY

*There is always a problem to be solved in military organizations. Something is broken, inefficient, unbalanced, underperforming – it can be described in many ways. If you are the one perceiving the problem, how are you going to convince leaders that your problem has merit and is worth solving?*

*What we want to do is make sure that you have identified the problem in your own mind and using your own words. After all, if you cannot articulate the problem to yourself, it will be that much more difficult to articulate the problem to others, including leaders who could champion the effort.*

*One approach is to organize the problem into a change story, one that shows the compelling need for change rationally and logically, yet also in an inspiring way. It puts the onus on the leader to make a choice – to continue on the present path, which may lead to greater problems, or to implement change. This activity will help you develop your change story.*

Humans are natural storytellers. We love a good story, and all good stories are about *change*—ordinarily in the protagonist. Consider popular stories like the *Harry Potter* series. Each book placed the protagonist, Harry Potter, in a situation demanding change. From the need to leave the home of the Dursleys and attend Hogwarts in the first novel to overcoming self-doubt to face Lord Voldemort in the final battle, Harry underwent tremendous growth and maturity in each adventure. Audiences loved them. As of 2017, over 400 million Harry Potter books have been sold.

Successful fiction writing involves conflict and tension – *on every single page!*<sup>1</sup> If there is no conflict, there is no story. Readers will simply put the book down. Conflict not only engages the reader, it makes characters memorable. We empathize with characters who overcome conflict, change, and grow.

Can one leverage this in organizational settings to spur change? Absolutely, but is not easy. Organizations make difficult protagonists. It is tough to convey the same sense of conflict and tension in such an abstract entity. So the approach taken in this activity is to personify the need for change. The protagonist will therefore be either the change agent (e.g., you) or the leader who would be the change effort's champion.

Table 1 shows the structure of a change story, and the following sections briefly describe each element. The change story situates the protagonist at the *current state*, in which the problem is present and apparent—the organization is broken, inefficient, unbalanced, underperforming, or something else. The protagonist now faces a choice. One option is to keep the organization on the present path, which may lead to a future state where the organization is weaker, the *undesired future state*. The other, preferred, option is to change the organization's course to a better situation where the problem is corrected (or at least mitigated). This is the *desired future state*.

### CAPTURING THE CURRENT STATE

Militaries are preparedness organizations whose day-to-day activities serve to ensure the organization is prepared to perform its mission—such as prosecuting war or maintaining peace.

There are two ways of using preparedness language to express dissatisfaction with the current state. One is to express a comparative advantage against a potential opposing force. For example, a military has a comparative advantage over another military if it has an important capability that the opponent lacks. This is useful when adversaries are known and understood, providing an easy baseline with which to compare one's own capabilities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to the great writers who conducted the *A Novel Idea* series of fiction-writing workshops (Perry County Center for the Arts, Perry County, Pennsylvania) for this insight. They stressed that non-fiction writing also benefits from the same idea. Any strategy,

plan, or other communication must place the central choice or tension out front and focus on it throughout the text. This both makes the text more interesting to read and helps the recommendations more closely solve the underlying problem.



The second way is to compare the military organization's present capabilities against itself at another point of time, usually in the past. &&&

In many cases, however, militaries use comparative advantage more against itself at a different time than it does other militaries. In other words, a military will recognize when its own capabilities are decreasing or degrading, and thus will compare itself to a previous time when those capabilities were strong and relevant. This time-based perspective allows the military to explain the impacts of a problem in clear terms. The language of preparedness therefore provides a stable set of measures that allow the problem to be explained as comparative disadvantages affecting the force's potential to fight in the next war.

Military preparedness literature provides various descriptors of comparative advantage.<sup>2</sup> These provide the adjectives and adverbs to describe the impact of a problem in terms of the military's potential abilities to fight and win on the battlefield. Eight are listed below:

- *Aligned with Assigned Roles and Missions* – How well or poorly does the organization's mission and structure match what is actually needed to fight and win? A problem of alignment is when the organization has the wrong capabilities with which to fight – like having horse cavalry when armored cavalry was becoming common.
- *Overmatch (or Qualitative Superiority)* – Does the organization lack a capability that it needs to fight and win against anticipated opponents, or do they have overmatch over the organization? Modernization brings new materiel capabilities to sustain such overmatch, but there is also a human dimension. Leader development, education, resiliency and fitness also provide overmatch.
- *Sufficient (or Quantitatively Superior)* – Given a capability, does the organization lack capacity—manpower, materiel,

information, etc.--to fulfill its responsibilities? Numbers of ready units provide only part of the answer, which includes how many of them can deploy where needed to influence the situation and seize initiative.

- *Adaptable* – To what extent is the organization ill-structured, equipped, trained, and ready to handle uncertainty, or the requisite variety of missions it may face? It is a potential problem if, during the fight, the organization finds itself incapable of realigning or restructuring its capabilities as required to sustain comparative advantage.
- *Interoperable* – Does the problem indicate an inability to plug-and-play with others, internally or externally? Is the organization inhibited from assembling capabilities into tailored force packages for employment? Is the organization unable to add or subtract capabilities with minimal disruption to those employed? Can the force package interoperate with external entities, such as other government agencies or allies and coalition partners? Interoperable organizations maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of its parts.
- *Mobilizable and Sustainable* – Can the organization respond to a mission requirement as quickly as needed? This can include assessment of the qualities and locations of available facilities, infrastructure, outsourced capabilities, logistics, and other critical support for operations. It also addresses surge capacity to set the theater and project national power.
- *With Foresight* – How well does (or can) the organization balance short-term with long-term requirements, such as ensuring proper manning and equipping for today while continuously modernizing for the future? This

<sup>2</sup> These are derived from the eight *principles of preparedness* discussed in Thomas P. Galvin, ed., *Defense Management Primer*, 1<sup>st</sup>

Ed. (Carlisle, PA: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, 2018).

principle speaks directly to risks associated with trading current unit readiness for modernization. Balance is critical.

- *With Will to be Prepared* – Is the organization lacking the resources or access to national resources such that it is unable to be prepared? Or, is the organization signaling to adversaries that the organization is in any way unprepared to fight and win and appears unable to become prepared?

#### CAPTURING THE DECISION AND PATHS TO FUTURE STATES

So now consider the decision facing the organization. Note that Table 1 shows one option with a straight arrow – leading from the current state to the *undesired future state*, a future in which the organization is worse off in some way. This depicts a decision to sustain the status quo or exercise the wrong decision that keeps the organization generally on the same path.

What is the undesired future state? What you will do is forecast – project forward – the current state into the future. Each of the eight principles of preparedness used to describe the current state has an analogous worse case in the undesired future state. Some examples:

- If the current state includes a condition where an adversary has overmatch (superior capabilities), then one can forecast that if the organization does nothing, it would succumb to *defeat* or *irrelevance* against said adversary.
- If the current state includes a problem with interoperability, then the future may see *conflict* or *disunity* during operations because the organization cannot work with others.

Note that the forecast is constructed rationally and logically – not emotionally. You wish to avoid sounding alarmist by overstating the effects of the wrong decision. A rationally derived outcome is more likely to convince others of the severity of the problem.

You will then do the same to derive the *desired future state*, in which a proper decision is

made and a change effort takes place. At this point, it is not necessary to know what the change effort will look like, only to assume that a decision to pursue change will alter the path of the organization. The same principles of preparedness can be used to generate the desired forecasts, as follows:


- If the current state describes the inability to mobilize or surge capabilities in response to changes in the environment, then a choice for change should lead to the organization being able to *grow* and be more *responsive* to the environment.
- If the current state includes a lack of capacity to perform its mission to the fullest extent expected, the choice for change should lead to *robustness*.

To construct the change story, you then takes these three states and situate the leader or decision maker at the point of decision. This is best done in prose form rather than bullets or simple statements. Use the story structure to its best advantage and inspire the decision maker, rather than merely inform.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVITY

This activity allows you to develop the three states in question – the current state, undesired future state, and desired future state. Then you will develop the change story and situate the leader at the point of decision. Take the easy road and watch the organization lose its competitive advantage. Take the tougher road toward change and see the organization sustain and regain its competitive advantage. Which would you choose?

Table 1. Elements of the Change Story

			<p><i>Current State</i> – Indicators of the problem as presently perceived by the change agent</p> <p><i>Undesired Future State</i> – Change agent forecast of the the future where the current state is combined with the wrong decision or a non-decision (maintain current path)</p> <p><i>Desired Future State</i> – Change agent forecast of the the future where the right decision to pursue change corrects or mitigates the problems of the current state.</p>		
<i>Principle of Preparedness</i>	<i>(A) Descriptors for Current State</i>	<i>(B) Forecasting Undesired Future State</i>	<i>(C) Forecasting Desired Future State</i>		
Alignment with the Environment	Misalignment; incorrect roles or missions	Irrelevance; Obsolescence	Clarified roles and missions; ready for next mission		
Qualitative Overmatch	Overmatched against enemy; lack of capability to perform mission	Defeat; Being Deterred or Dissuaded; Forced to Retreat	Sustained/re-established advantage; position of strength		
Quantitative Sufficiency	Insufficient quantity or capacity to satisfy operational demand	Running out; overexpenditure; lost quality; breakdown of capability	Robust; versatile; responsive		
Interoperability	Not interoperable; cannot connect to or work with others	Conflict; disunity; tension; disagreement; barriers to unity	Plug and play capability; connected; unified effort / action		
Adaptability	Stuck; stovepiped; rigid; inflexible;	Forfeited competitive advantage; unable to respond or keep up	Versatile; agile; responsive; forward-thinking		
Mobilizability and Sustainability	Unable to generate capability or capacity when needed or sustain it	Fragile; slow; vulnerable	Capacity for growth and transformation; responsive		
Foresight	Unable to balance current and future needs; short-term focus	Loss of vision; short-sightedness; reactive; a step behind others	Forward-leaning; innovative; strategic; leading organization		
Will	Lack of initiative; ability to devote energy, resources, etc. to mission	Stagnant; overworked; underfunded; low morale; broken culture and climate	Proactive; anticipating; energetic; exciting; inspiring; motivating		

## CONDUCT OF ACTIVITY ONE: CONSTRUCTING THE CHANGE STORY

**1. NAME THE ORGANIZATION AND THE OPPONENT / OTHER:**

a. Name your organization. *For the duration of this activity (and all subsequent activities) to consistently take the perspective of this organization and its leaders.*

b. Name the organization(s) you will use to establish comparative advantage. It could be one of the following or some combination: (1) a competitor or adversary (*threat-based*), or (2) your organization at a different time (*capabilities-based*, e.g., comparing against the organization during the Cold War).

**2. DESCRIBE THE *CURRENT STATE*:**

a. Using the chart on the previous page, write down notes or bullet points that describe the present indicators of the problem using language based on the descriptors in Column A. You do not need to use the exact words in the column, but they must reflect a weakness or vulnerability in one of the principles of preparedness listed in Table 1.

b. In Column A in Table 2, review the list of indicators and distill down to a list of three to five bullet points that will serve as your Current State description.

*Table 2. Worksheet for the Elements of Your Change Story*

<i>(A) Descriptors for Current State</i>	<i>(B) Forecasting Undesired Future State</i>	<i>(C) Forecasting Desired Future State</i>
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.

### **3. DESCRIBE THE *UNDESIRED FUTURE STATE* AND *DESIRED FUTURE STATE*:**

Now for each entry in the first column of the above table, fill out the other two columns with corresponding forecasts that align with the descriptors in Columns B and C in Table 1. Ensure that there is a logical, not overstated or exaggerated, connection from Column A to each corresponding entry in Columns B and C.

**4. RESTATE THE CHANGE STORY IN PROSE:**

Finally, we convert the change story to true story form. Take the current state and the two forecasts and rewrite as a simple narrative, situating the leader at the decision point, represented by the star in Table 1. Explain in the narrative that the current state places the leader at the decision point, because doing nothing or making the wrong decision will make things worse, as described by the undesired future state. Then explain what urgency of change, showing how a right decision (again, the details of which are not yet known) would lead the organization to a desired future state.

**4. RESTATE THE CHANGE STORY IN PROSE (CONTINUED):**

## ACTIVITY TWO: DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM

*Ordinarily, one might expect that problems should be diagnosed first, before developing the change story. At the strategic level, however, things are different. The information necessary to define the problem in detail is not always available as internal and external stakeholders may not be able or willing to provide the information without justification. When a leader legitimizes the change story, the organization is provided suitable justification for supporting the effort and contributing to the extra effort needed to perform data collection and analysis.*

*Throughout the history of organizational development, scholars have endeavored to devise practical tools to help leaders perform data collection and data analysis. Most tools provide ready-made categorizations of information and expected relationships among them. Some are intended for use in facilitated participatory sessions, while others involve surveys to be administered among members across the organization. Some are complex; others relatively simple. Regardless, each tool represents a way of looking at the problem and determining what information is on-hand or needed.*

*This activity allows students to conduct rudimentary data collection and analysis using one tool – Weisbord's six-box model. However, the activity is designed such that any preferred diagnostic model can be used.*

To effect change, it is important to determine what needs to be changed. This seemingly obvious statement belies a rather complex issue. It is usually easy to identify outcomes that one finds problematic, but it is the inputs and the processes that one must change. But in very large organizations, *which* inputs and processes must change? The environment is naturally dynamic, so finding the true root causes of the organization's problems is difficult. For military organizations, the hierarchy adds to the complexity of seeking root causes as one must decide both what needs to be changed *and at which level*. Different subunits may have completely different perspectives on whether or not a change effort is urgent or even required. An Army-level mandate from the Pentagon may not resonate much at a battalion in Fort X in the continental U.S. or Base Y in a forward deployed location.

The challenge for change agents within a very large organization is to get past the symptoms and indicators of a problem and seek the root causes. This helps address the issue of changes being, or appearing to be, externally driven. Recasting the sense of urgency in terms of underlying causes help separate the crisis from the problem and positions leaders to demonstrate more ownership of the change. There are many diagnostic models available, but most have a common structure that involves feedback loops –

moving from signal detection to data collection to analysis to findings. As internal consultants, leaders identify signals of problems through interactions with other members and stakeholders, observations, and performance indicators. Complaints, difficulties, or unsatisfying experiences are potential signals. If the leader chooses to investigate, the next step is to determine what data to collect, from where, and how.

There is an art and a science to diagnosis—most academic work has fallen more in the science arena. This activity involves the use of tools developed scientifically, but also incorporates the art of diagnostic reasoning to answer the question *what is the best explanation for the situation we find ourselves?*

### CHALLENGES OF PERFORMING A DIAGNOSIS

For large distributed organizations like militaries, the desired data may not be readily available. One cause is that the data might not exist and must be generated. Although bureaucracies naturally collect and manage lots of data, it is possible that none of it provides useful information about the present problem. If this is the case, gathering the data requires extra effort and energy on the part of the organization, energy already in short supply. The second problem is when the data is context-specific that



aggregating or synthesizing it may lead to skewed analysis. A third challenge is need-to-know or other sensitivities suggesting that data is available but not appropriate for provision to a change agent. So, the change agent must plan for the data collection—what is the data needed, where would it come from, how would it be defined, and what are the risks to its handling and exposure?

Another challenge is showing causation. In complex adaptive systems, causation is indeed very difficult to show. But coming up with the explanations for negative indicators uncovered in the previous activity will be difficult.

A third challenge is the degree to which the diagnostic effort influences the organization. Knowledge that a diagnostic effort is underway can cause members of the organization to react or respond—negatively or positively. But even in position situations, unwanted or unneeded support or facilitation in data gathering can lead to a skewed diagnosis, and one must question whether there are attempts to hide or suppress *bad* data.

In a 1990 article, change scholar Michael Harrison presented three dilemmas that consultants and change agents typically face.<sup>1</sup> The first is the *goals dilemma* that governs the scope of the effort. Is the intent to pursue a narrow issue that change agents can diagnose and report upon quickly, or does it require a much broader and longer-term effort? The second is the *participation dilemma*, described as follows: Does the consultant decide to do it all, or involve others? Discretion may mandate the former, especially if the subject of the diagnosis is sensitive and ripe for organizational backlash. The third dilemma relates to *politics*, which Harrison defined as regarding who benefits from the organizational assessment – the whole organization or just a specific entity?<sup>2</sup>

The above also highlights two important ethical concerns that warrant the internal consultant's attention. First is the importance of

*confidentiality*, particularly when studying problems within an organization that may shed light on poor performance of individuals.<sup>3</sup> Trust is absolutely critical for the internal consultant, both with the sponsor and with any and all participants; the internal consultant must do everything possible to maintain this trust.

The second is *objectivity* and removal of bias, including when the sponsor appears to be pursuing the study with preconceived outcomes in mind.<sup>4</sup> This is particularly important in defense enterprise situations whereby senior defense officials are looking to justify a *fait accompli* despite substantive evidence supporting a different course of action. Unfortunately, the pre-made decision may well have come from much higher authorities and the sponsor may have no choice. In such cases, the consultant has a responsibility to present, in an unbiased manner, the available evidence and his/her recommendation in the best interest of the organization. This is not always easy and may require courage on the part of the change agent.

#### THE WEISBORD SIX-BOX MODEL AND OTHER TOOLS

Marvin Weisbord proposed his six-box model for organizational diagnosis in 1976 as a simple tool for helping organizations assemble the right data for determining problems in performance. The model derived from Weisbord's many years of business consulting, but he also considered how the model could be used in public sector settings (most change management tools are designed for general use across any kind of organization—public/private, large/small, etc.).

Weisbord's diagnostic model incorporated both formal and informal structures and processes, which he expressed as the system that exists on paper versus what people actually do.<sup>5</sup> Organizational leaders can use the model two ways – either to assess strengths and weaknesses in general or to conduct a forensic analysis on a particular product or service that failed to meet

<sup>1</sup> Michael I. Harrison, "Hard Choices in Diagnosing Organizations," *Journal of Management Consulting* 6, no. 1 (1990): 13-21.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Lippitt and Ronald Lippitt, *The Consulting Process in Action*, 2nd ed. (San Diego, CA: University Associates, 1994), 97.

<sup>5</sup> Salvatore Falletta, *Organizational Diagnostic Models: A Review and Synthesis*, Human Resources Intelligence Report (Sacramento, CA: Leadersphere, 2008), 9. Also see Weisbord, 432.

expectations. Applying Weisbord's model can help ascertain the differences (and their relative importance) between formal and informal systems -- between *what is* and *what ought to be*.

It is called the *six-box* model because of its depiction as six *boxes* representing six distinct but interdependent sets of data needed to determine the scope and character of the problem and look for causes. The model is depicted in Figure 2.<sup>6</sup>

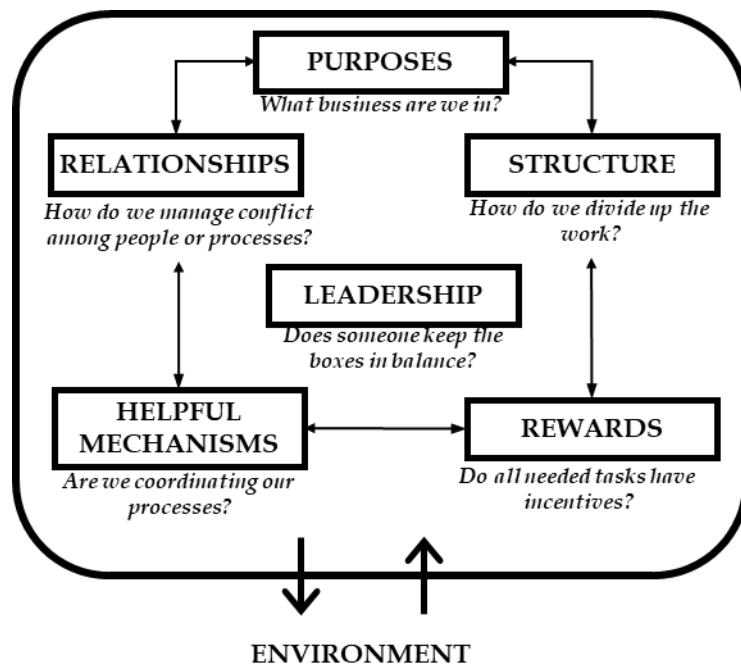


Figure 2. Weisbord's Six-Box Model

Other models differ from Weisbord in the numbers of categories of data sought and the character of the relationships among them. Another significant model from the organizational development literature is the Burke-Litwin model of 1982 that included over a dozen *boxes* divided into two nested levels -- transactional factors that govern the management of routine activities and transformational factors associated with leading strategic change in the organization.<sup>7</sup> The Nadler-Tushman congruence model of 1980 uses

an input-transformation-output structure to gauge how an organization's strategy is operationalized with the outcomes providing feedback to the strategy.<sup>8</sup> Again, the categorizations and relationships may differ in how each model utilizes available data, but there is enough congruence that change agents can comfortably choose which model is best suited for the diagnostic effort at hand.

#### ART OF DIAGNOSIS – BACKWARD CHAINING

Science looks for clear, measurable explanations of phenomena. It builds its knowledge through (a) *induction* to observe a phenomenon and propose generalizable concepts and constructs, and (b) *deduction* to form hypotheses for testing and experimentation to validate or refute what was induced. Science can explain why a particular action occurred, but it is less useful for assessing the quality of choices made or filtering out what is important, salient, or relevant toward the next choice.

*Diagnosis* is another type of reasoning altogether. It takes the available observations and data about a phenomenon and determines the best possible explanation for its occurrence. It exercises one's intuition and professional judgment.

Consider a common application of diagnosis – the medical doctor communicating with a patient complaining of a cough. To a non-professional, a basic internal search is likely to generate dozens of possible explanations for the cough – from minor issues such as the common cold or allergic reaction to serious diseases such as emphysema or lung cancer.<sup>9</sup> But to a doctor, there are other important data points to consider where determining which of these explanations are best. What are the age, gender, medical history, and recent activities (e.g., travel) of the

<sup>6</sup> Marvin R. Weisbord, "Organizational Diagnosis: Six Places to Look for Trouble With or Without a Theory," *Group and Organizational Dynamics* 1, no. 4 (December 1976): 430-447, 432. Adapted by author using modified descriptions of the boxes.

<sup>7</sup> W. Warner Burke and George H. Litwin, "A Causal Model of Organizational Performance and Change," *Journal of Management* 18, no. 3 (1992): 523-545.

<sup>8</sup> David A. Nadler and Michael L. Tushman, "A Model for Diagnosing Organizational Behavior," *Organizational Dynamics* 9, no. 2 (1980): 35-51.

<sup>9</sup> See Mayo Clinic Staff, "Symptoms: Cough," *Mayo Clinic Website*, January 11, 2018, available at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/symptoms/cough/basics/causes/sym-20050846> (accessed May 7, 2019).

patient? What kind of cough is it? Intuition allows the doctor to connect data points together or identify gaps in knowledge or understanding, suggesting additional questions to ask of the patient. As more knowledge is gathered, some explanations are ruled out as unlikely, while other new ones emerge as possibilities. By the end, the doctor has: (a) narrowed it down to one and only one and thus prescribes treatment, (b) narrowed it down to a very select few and orders tests to gather important information, (c) recognizes a lack of sufficient expertise to confirm a diagnosis and refers the patient to an expert or specialist, or (d) some combination of the above.<sup>10</sup>

While there are simple rules that can help eliminate possibilities or generate new ones, the art of diagnosis comes in the weighing of different explanations that both appear plausible, while recognizing that neither can be proven true.<sup>11</sup> Various heuristics can be used to help the change agent make such a determination. The following are examples of such heuristics. If we have two potential causes (A and B) as possible explanations for a set of *symptoms* or outcomes, we might choose A over B if:

- A is a simpler explanation than B
- A explains a significantly larger subset of the outcomes than B
- A is determined to be more statistically probable than B
- There is greater uncertainty in B than there is in A<sup>12</sup>

Now, if A is determined to be a cause of the symptoms present, what caused A? And might that provide a better explanation for the symptoms observed? This is where backward chaining can become both blessing and curse. It is possible that there is a greater root cause that, if corrected, could solve the problem. But that root cause could be a symptom of something else. We want to find an explanation that is sufficiently connected to the problem on-hand, such that the ultimate treatment – the change

effort – results the problem being solved. If one goes too far backward, the solution may be too far removed from the present problem to be useful. Or, the change effort may have to address both the short-term symptoms *and* the deeper root issues.

## STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVITY

There are two major components to the activity – data collection through the Weisbord six-box model (although you may substitute any equivalent model) and data analysis through diagnostic reasoning. In the data collection phase, it is not only important to identify what data is on hand but also what data is needed – either what exists but must be accessed or what must be generated and how.

In the data analysis phase, you will connect information together using simplified methods of qualitative analysis and weigh the explanations. This will be an iterative process. For a developmental or educational setting, it may suffice to iterate only once to determine an underlying cause of the problem. In an organizational setting, there may be many iterations as members will likely weigh the data differently and decide that other explanations are better – no different than how doctors will disagree on a medical diagnosis.

It is possible that the outcome of this activity will result in a refinement of the change story in Activity One. This is to be expected. It is also possible that the diagnosis will be incomplete. You might then have to continue developing the change effort with only a preliminary diagnosis. This is also to be expected when solving problems in large, complex organizations – there is always the potential to require more information. The change agent or the leader has to make the determination that the time for more study is past and it is instead time to act.

<sup>10</sup> For a more thorough treatment of backward chaining, see Stuart J. Russell and Peter Norvig, *Artificial intelligence: a modern approach*, 3rd ed. (Harlow, UK: Pearson, 2009), 337-344.

<sup>11</sup> This is known as *abductive reasoning*. See Igor Douven, "Abduction," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, revised April 28, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abduction/#DedIndAbd> (accessed May 7, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> These represent four of many different varieties of abductive reasoning: logic-based, set-cover, probabilistic, and Bayesian (or subjective). See Wikipedia, "Abductive Reasoning," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abductive\\_reasoning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abductive_reasoning) (retrieved May 7, 2019), section "Formalization of Abduction."

## CONDUCT OF ACTIVITY TWO: DIAGNOSING THE PROBLEM

**1. COLLECT AND ORGANIZE THE DATA (WEISBORD SIX-BOX VERSION):**

a. Set the organizational boundary and describe (in bullet form) key external aspects of the problem that the organization cannot control but are critical to understanding the problem. These can include stakeholders with power and influence over the organization, social factors, environmental factors, etc.

b. Fill in the below boxes with as much information as possible. Copy the below table as continuation sheets as needed. It is suggested that you lay out all six boxes in front of you at once – this way you can easily move from one box to the other as information comes to light. *If you are using a different model, construct a similar table with the appropriate categories of data delineated. Also, have any graphic depiction of the model handy to show anticipated relationships among the data.*

<p><b><u>PURPOSES:</u></b> What is the mission of the organization and how does it relate to the problem? In what ways does the problem indicate misalignment between the mission and the environmental factors expressed in 1a?</p>	<p><b><u>STRUCTURE:</u></b> What aspects of the formal organization affect the problem? Consider the formal organizational structure that establishes both the staff and the subordinate elements, and vertical/horizontal relationships by function.</p>

<p><u>RELATIONSHIPS</u>: What relationships are involved in the problem – between people (superior-subordinate, peer, other), units, people and technologies or processes? Who depends on whom? How are these relationships interdependent? How is conflict managed, and in what ways does that worsen the problem?</p>	<p><u>REWARDS</u>: What motivates members with respect to the problem? How do members' sense of achievement, recognition, or advancement influence their behaviors or attitudes, and how does that contribute to the problem? How do behaviors of supervisors, working conditions, or company policies and administration align with what motivates members?</p>
<p><u>HELPFUL MECHANISMS</u>: List all procedures, policies, 'battle rhythm' events, communication channels, reporting requirements, staff actions, facilities and infrastructure capabilities and limitations, programming and budgeting, and other activities embedded in the culture influence the problem.</p>	<p><u>LEADERSHIP</u>: What actions of the leaders (commander/director or leadership team) are involved in the problem space? Consider how leaders define the mission and purpose of the organization, exercise presence or embody the organization, manage and resolve conflict, interact with the external environment, etc.</p>

## 2. ANALYZE THE DATA (ITERATIVE PROCESS):

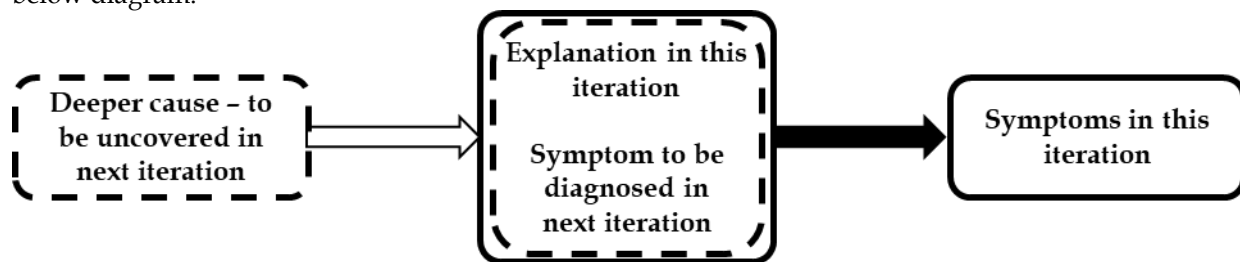
a. Take the information from Step 1b and identify relationships among them – perhaps one causes the other, or the two appear correlated in some way, or they represent symptoms of a greater problem. The following (derived from Miles & Hubermann, 1994) are some ways to identify these connections. You may add them to the boxes above directly or list/diagram the additional findings in the space below or on scratch paper. Identify what findings are symptoms and what constitutes their explanations.

- *Patterns and themes.* Does a set of data represent similarities or differences among various contexts?
- *Developing explanations.* Is there a yet-unstated reason or explanation for individual pieces of data, or among patterns of data?
- *Clustering.* Are there patterns to the patterns? Does this provide a deeper explanation to the problem?
- *Making metaphors.* Can a metaphor be used to explain what are otherwise very complex ideas or indicators of the problem?
- *Counting.* Do any of the data represent chronic or persistent issues that result in recurrence of particular findings? How pervasive are they?
- *Comparison and Contrast.* How do the findings/symptoms compare or contrast between subordinate units or between subordinate units and the headquarters? Are the differences unexpected or difficult to explain readily?
- *Partitioning.* Does any pattern found actually represent two or more distinct patterns, each of which may be its own finding?

b. Review the key symptoms and compare possible explanations. Also, identify requirements for additional data needed. Use the next pages for additional scratch work as needed. Consider the following in your analysis:

- Are there alternative – plausible yet unstated – explanations for the symptoms? What data may be required to support or test these alternative explanations?
- If you have multiple explanations for a given symptom, how do they compare?
  - Is one simpler or more direct than the other?
  - Is one more encompassing than the other, explaining a wider range of symptoms?
  - Is one statistically more likely than the other? (e.g., the stronger explanation may be more far-fetched or unusual, and thus less likely)
  - Is there greater uncertainty in one explanation vice the other? Can that uncertainty be addressed by seeking more or different information?

c. Repeat Step 2 by taking the set of explanations and backward reasoning toward their causes, per the below diagram:



- Consider the possibility that the deeper cause *is* the best explanation for the main symptom, and the intermediate steps in the causal chain are unneeded, and/or.
- Ensure that the resulting chains of causes and effects reflects a likelihood that the curing of intermediate symptoms are necessary for curing the overall problem. The chain may provide insights as to how the change effort would be structured.

2. ANALYZE THE DATA (CONTINUED):



**2. ANALYZE THE DATA (CONTINUED):**

## ACTIVITY THREE: DEVELOPING THE CHANGE VISION

*What does a successful future for the organization look like after the change effort is “complete”? This is the purpose of vision, a mental image of a desired future state. After determining the problem and its likely causes, the senior leader develops a vision and disseminates it internally and externally. The goal is a shared understanding of the desired future with the problem solved, in hopes of building of unified effort in support of the change.*

*You may be asking about the difference between the vision in this activity and the desired future state built into the change story in Activity One. In this activity, one bounds the desired future state based on what a leader determines is suitable, feasible, and acceptable for the change effort. It may be less or more than what the change story addresses, usually less. And if it is less, it means that the change effort will only solve a part of the problem – the unsolved portion therefore becomes a matter of a subsequent change effort, or assumed by the leader as risk!*

*This activity takes the change story and the diagnostic effort and develops what is, in essence, a marketing plan for the change effort. Not only will it produce a clear and consistent vision, it will foster the leader's ability to communicate it to others, in hopes of generating the needed resources and energy to put the change effort into motion.*

Constructing the future is as simple as building a mental image, but this is not enough to spur a change effort. The mental image must be expressible in terms that stakeholders, organizational members, and others can understand. You must therefore update the change story to reflect any additional information gathered in Activity Two while also bounding the future states according to what leaders legitimize as the *official* change effort. A way to go about this is to turn the causal chains around and think forward. Based on the identified root causes that the change effort is going to target, what do we expect (or hope) the change effort will accomplish?

If the change effort encompasses the entirety of the problem, then the desired future state and the change vision should be the same. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. Parts of the desired future state may be beyond the time frame, scope, or resources that leaders are willing to commit to the change effort. For example, the desired future state may take ten years, but the leaders must act within a two or three-year time frame, commensurate with their tenures. Consequentially, leaders may find it suitable to ensure forward momentum in the short term and allow their successors the freedom to decide on the effort's continuance on their own terms.

To this point, we still have not been specific on the treatment planned. While it is probable

that enough is not known about the problem that one can anticipate the regimen, this Activity works under the presumption that the treatment is still up for debate.

### FORECASTING EFFECTS OF TREATMENT

Let's take the medical analogy from Activity Two and think about how the treatment will work. The doctor has completed a diagnosis of the patient's ailment and has prescribed medication, therapy, or other interventions as appropriate. If the source of the cough was deemed to be a seasonal allergy from elevated pollen levels, the doctor might prescribe an allergy medication. These typically relieve symptoms, but do not necessarily negate the causes of the allergy. Moreover, the treatment does not guarantee success. The medication may not relieve any symptoms or could cause side effects. Also, the patient may forget to take the medication. The doctor could refer the patient to an allergist, who may be in a position to identify the allergen and prescribe a more effective treatment. But, the costs may exceed the benefit to the patient (esp. if insurance does not cover it.)

The *change vision* is therefore a focused version of the overall vision, as expressed in the desired future state. What will the organization look like after a successful intervention – when the change effort has been implemented as prescribed and completed? In corporate world,

John Kotter asks questions such as how realizing the change vision would affect customers, stockholders, and employees.<sup>1</sup> When changing military organizations, the same question applies. How would realizing the change vision affect the nation, other government agencies, service members, the defense industrial base, allied nations and partners, and the nation's adversaries? Leaders and change agents need to have answers ready for these questions they promote the vision.

While the change vision must be inspirational, there has to be a logic to the underlying story that connects today with the future. A way of going about this is *forecasting*, using various techniques to rationally construct the future based on what is known both historically and present-day. Forecasting is different from *prediction*, which is a more general activity of expressing a future state. One can predict something will happen at some future time without the use of a model or time frame (e.g., *it will snow next winter*). Forecasting is more probabilistic, requiring a methodological approach to analyze data and relationships to identify a plausible outcome according to an established timeline.<sup>2</sup> For present purposes, the focus of the forecast is not to deduce all possible future outcomes but to determine the most likely one where the problem is solved.

There are many techniques for constructing forecasts dependent on the quantity and quality of data available, consensus or dissensus of interpretation, and the time horizons. A seminar 1971 article in *Harvard Business Review* by Chambers, Mullick, and Smith presented a compendium of these techniques to help leaders choose.<sup>3</sup> U.S. Army War College professor Craig Bullis summarized a number of forecasting

Table 3. Bullis' Overview of Forecasting Methodologies

	Potential Benefits	Potential Shortcomings
Qualitative Forecasting (exploiting individual and group expertise to propose possible futures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverages recent tacit knowledge.</li> <li>• Capable of providing a quick response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to the perspectives of those included in the group.</li> <li>• Leadership is required to manage the perspectives and egos in the group</li> </ul>
Quantitative Forecasting (gathering and manipulating data to provide estimates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate estimates of the outcome variable.</li> <li>• Assertions supported by "objective data" can better align with many cultural expectations.</li> <li>• Identification and measurement requirements of variables can cause the organization to more rigorously evaluate existing methods, processes, and outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model estimates are only as comprehensive as the variables included.</li> <li>• Some critical variables do not lend to precise measurement.</li> <li>• Accurate models of the underlying behavior may not exist.</li> <li>• Correlation ≠ Causation.</li> </ul>
Scenario-writing and estimating (both qualitative and quantitative for forecasting a specific future)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates leaders' consideration of many aspects associated with a unique possible future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time consuming.</li> <li>• Requires multiple models and forecasts to capture the complexity of most strategic issues.</li> </ul>

techniques, shown in Table 3 and described below.

The types of forecasts that change agents perform tend to be *qualitative* because of the reliance on expertise. These methods involve the leader or change agent gathering perspectives in the forms of stories, opinions, or qualitative assessments of data. Examples include the Delphi method involves explicit gathering of perspectives from subject matter experts, market research methods that test the probability of outcomes from the creation of new capabilities, and historical analogy that use the past to project the future.<sup>4</sup> Although Chambers et al. imply that such methods involve participation by others, they do not require it. Leaders may elect to forecast based on their own experience, but at the

<sup>1</sup> Kotter.

<sup>2</sup> There is much debate over the distinction between prediction and forecasting. I chose these definitions based on ResearchGate, "What is the difference between Prediction and Forecast?" *ResearchGate.net*,

[https://www.researchgate.net/post/What\\_is\\_the\\_difference\\_between\\_Prediction\\_and\\_Forecast](https://www.researchgate.net/post/What_is_the_difference_between_Prediction_and_Forecast) (accessed May 24, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> John C. Chambers, Satinder K. Mullick, and Donald D. Smith, "How to Choose the Right Forecasting Technique," *Harvard Business Review* 49, no. 4 (July 1971): 45-74.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

risk of overlooking factors that experts might identify.

*Quantitative* methods can be useful for projecting trends and patterns into the future, so long as the available data is reliable.<sup>5</sup> These sorts of time-based forecasts are very important in military culture when it comes to resources and readiness, such as projecting future costs.<sup>6</sup>

The third variety is *scenario-based*, that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. This variety forecasts based on descriptions of the current situation projected into the future. It takes a broader view than pure qualitative and quantitative approaches that tend to focus on particular factors and metrics to generate more reliable forecasts. Scenario-based forecasts address many factors at once, which decreases their reliability but renders them more comprehensive and acceptable.<sup>7</sup>

Forecasting is not a one-time activity. Rather, it is a continuous action of scanning and assessing the external environment. Each engagement with experts or reading of the data provides feedback that leaders use to re-assess the forecast. The goal is for the vision to gain clarity in the leaders' minds, which in turn allows greater clarity to be expressed as the leader engages with others. Clarity is critical to forecasting, and ultimately the final vision.<sup>8</sup> Leaders can express a clear vision in fewer words, but with greater consistency in meaning.

### CHANGE VISIONS AND VISION STATEMENTS

Forecasting provides the substance of vision, the description of the future as anticipated. But communicating the vision should do more than merely inform others of the expected accomplishments. It must also inspire. The mental image of the future that resides in the leader's mind must be put into words.

This is the purpose of a *vision statement* – a symbolic representation of the change vision that can be transmitted. Change visions and vision

statements are often confused because much of the change management literature focuses on the latter but calls them the former. This is misleading; they are different.

It is easy to identify a bad vision statement, but extraordinarily difficult to prepare a good one. Here's an example of a common mistake. Let's assume a leader in an unnamed command has decided to use *A Winning Organization* as the vision. There may be reasons to like it -- it is common sense that a vision statement be simple, clear, and above all short. Long vision statements can be difficult to remember, and the aim is for the vision statement to be passed on further to others. The leader cannot possibly do all the communicating.

The most important quality of a vision statement is its ability to cause others to recreate the same mental image as the one that the leader has created, and to accept that image as reflecting the desired future state. But this assumes everyone will recreate that same mental image as the leader. Words can mean many things, and sometimes a particular word can trigger the wrong image. If someone had bad experiences in previous organizations, *winning* could mean something like winning at all costs, including misuse or abuse of members. To others, the vision may feel a little too present-day, such as *but we already are a winning organization!* The vision statement has clearly missed the mark.

In essence, this is a problem of *telling* vice *showing*. When we tell, we use nouns and adjectives trying to explain to others precisely what we had in our minds, not trusting them to come up with a similar image. What they do construct feels static, like a pretty picture hanging on the wall. Not inspiring.

Instead, the vision statement should capture the spirit of the desired future state and the path to it – it should be a *vision of action*. Rather than tell others where we are going, show them what it feels like to get there and be there. Make the vision statement deliver a dynamic desired future, one where the change effort does more

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> For example, E. Deacon Maddox, "Improving Tactical Cost Forecasting to Optimize Readiness," *Army.mil*, May 5, 2014, [https://www.army.mil/article/125005/improving\\_tactical\\_cost\\_forecasting\\_to\\_optimize\\_readiness](https://www.army.mil/article/125005/improving_tactical_cost_forecasting_to_optimize_readiness) (accessed May 24, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Rob J. Hyndman and George Athanasopoulos, *Forecasting: Principles and Practice*, online version (Melbourne, Australia: Online Open-Access Textbooks, 2018), section 4.5, [https://otexts.com/img/fpp2\\_cover.jpg](https://otexts.com/img/fpp2_cover.jpg) (accessed May 7, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Kotter, 73.

than solve a problem, it represents a change in how the organization thinks about itself. It should inspire more change. This is done by using verbs rather than nouns and adjectives.

So in our example, instead of *a winning organization*, one might instead incorporate action phrases to describe what it means to win. The action phrases can mirror those from the table in Activity One, such as mobilize rapidly, reward innovation, operate better with allies and partners, or defeat any adversary. Write such phrases so they both reflect how the organization behaves in the future with the problem solved, and how the members will behave and act in that future time.

## STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVITY

The first goal is to forecast the results of the change effort. What is the expected delta between what we can effect and the overall desired future state? We want the results to be realistic and convincing, not overreaching. Leaders may have other reasons to overstate the effects, but this should be left to the leader.

Second is to construct the accompanying vision statement expressing the effects of the effort. You will prepare action phrases that summarize how the organization behaves in the future with the problem solved and treatment completed. What will being a member be like?

## CONDUCT OF ACTIVITY THREE: DEVELOPING THE CHANGE VISION

**1. DEVELOP THE CHANGE VISION:**

a. Set parameters of the change effort, which may differ from the original change story as expressed in Activity One. What is the timeframe for the change effort, which may be less than the time necessary to achieve the full desired future state?

b. Assuming that the organization devotes sufficient energy to the change effort, project what the organization should accomplish within the timeframe established.

c. What is left over from the desired future state? Put another way, what will be left to either follow-on (branch or sequel) efforts to this change, or be addressed under a different change effort?

d. Prepare the change vision in a paragraph. What will be accomplished within the designated time frame? What might not be accomplished or might have to be accomplished another way?

## 2. DEVELOP THE VISION STATEMENT AND OTHER SYMBOLS OF THE CHANGE EFFORT:

The *vision statement* is a word-symbol of the change effort that captures the essence and meaning of the vision without unnecessary details. Vision statements should be short, inspiring, simple, and easily spread among members and external audiences. However, they must also reflect the purpose and urgency of the change effort, and avoid being potentially confused with other initiatives.

a. Prepare a vision statement that is short, no more than one sentence but ideally less than ten words, that fits the above description.

b. Choose a short name for the change effort, such as a 2-4 word title, an acronym (e.g., SHARP) or other mix of words and symbols (e.g., WIN-T), or explain why a short name will not be used.



c. Develop branding for the change effort, as appropriate.

- Graphic or insignia, either specifically designed for the change or adaptation of existing symbol (e.g., Army change effort incorporating the Army's yellow-trimmed black star logo)
  - Include intended meaning of any symbols used in the graphic
- Products (e.g., may include physical and virtual products such as flags, coins, social media handles, etc.)

## ACTIVITY FOUR: DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT (VISION OF THE WAYS)

Now attention turns to the second level of visioning--the vision of the ways. In other words, what does the path from current state to desired future state look like? This will be referred to using the common military term of concept to differentiate it from strategy or plan. Strategies and plans come about once enough details about the change effort are sufficiently clear that the leaders and change agents can negotiate the means required. At the concept stage, the means discussion is actually a barrier to change. Members and stakeholders alike may fall into a zero-sum trap where they protect resources against harvesting and defend the status quo rather than listen to the proposed change effort and judge it on its merits.

It is important to recognize that there is no one solution or 'best way' to pursue a change effort. In fact, there are many approaches one can take. Organization scholars Chin and Benne consolidated the full range of extant change approaches into three general classes, and each of them can be used to pursue any change effort. This will be demonstrated in the Tale of Four Commanders.

This activity uses the common structure of a commander's intent to produce the backbone of a concept, largely focused on tying ends and ways with less (but not zero) regard for means.

Concepts are very familiar to military personnel. They provide clarity in presenting new ways of fighting, employing new capabilities, or looking at the complexity of future environments. For change efforts, concepts perform an important visioning function, allowing others to visualize *how* the change effort will work.

Another ways of looking at concepts is the function they perform in providing the leader's intentions – how does the leader see the organization participating in the effort? How will the organization achieve the change goals and ultimately solve the problem? What are the critical tasks that the organization must perform for the change effort to succeed?

Based on this, the *commander's intent* as expressed in U.S. military doctrine will serve as the primary construct, but also incorporate change approaches from Robert Chin and Kenneth Benne to describe the character of activities that the organization will perform.

### COMMANDER'S INTENT AS A CONSTRUCT

Military officers are accustomed to concepts, whether it is the concept of operations for a battle and a concept for large-scale organizational transformation such as the Army Operating

Concept.<sup>1</sup> The Primer will adapt the structure of the U.S. military's *commander's intent* as it contains the main elements of a concept. The commander's intent is defined as follows:

*A clear and concise expression of the **purpose of the operation and the desired military end state** that supports mission command, **provides focus** to the staff, and **helps subordinate and supporting commanders act** to achieve the commander's desired results **without further orders**, even when the operation does not unfold as planned.<sup>2</sup>*

For organizational change efforts, the above translates to the purpose of the change, the key tasks that the organization must accomplish, and how the change effort will be governed until termination when the desired future state is achieved. The purpose should express both the urgency of avoiding the undesired future state and the importance of pursuing the desired future state. The key tasks should list broad approaches to adjusting each of the preparedness variable, such as *what must the organization do to increase its capacity? Establish overmatch? Improve interoperability?* and so on. The governance structure can include estimates or expectations of time frame to complete the change, methods of

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *The Operations Process*, Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 2012).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Staff, January 2017).

oversight and reporting, and communication and synchronization tasks.

Like the vision of the ends, the concept should not include negations but may include actions to avoid and key risk factors that could cause early termination of the effort. Once all the elements are established, the concept should be described as a story telling of the journey from the current state to the desired state. Obstacles and barriers should be presented as challenges that the organization can and must overcome.

The three components of a commander's intent are: (1) statement of how the change effort will be accomplished, (2) listing of key tasks, and (3) end state of the change effort.

Two of the three are fairly easy to develop. The set of key tasks (2) should be necessary (and sufficient, if possible) for accomplishment of the change goal, but the set of key tasks should not be extensive or exhaustive. If too many, then one would presume that some tasks can be combined. While there is no magic number that the set of key tasks should not exceed, one should certainly scrutinize any listing with more than ten key tasks. The end state (3) is an expression of the conditions under which the change effort succeeds and therefore the effort can cease. These are easy because they typically leverage the work already done in previous activities and they do not require much specificity.

The statement of *how* (1) is different. For large complex organizations, this statement must set expectations of what subordinate units and members will do. As organizational scholars have shown, there is a wide range of possible approaches to the change effort, each of which could succeed. Chin and Benne (1989) conducted a historical analysis of change strategies studied during the previous century and narrowed them down to three classes: *rational-empirical*, *normative-reeducative*, and *power-coercive*.<sup>3</sup> Notably, the authors did not exercise value judgments as to which is better, but observed any change effort can exercise any of these approaches equally well. The illustration in the next section demonstrates.

## STORY OF THE FOUR COMMANDERS

Imaging a unit that is having a vehicle readiness problem as a new commander takes charge. This commander takes the requisite time to survey the organization and its processes and systems and determines that the best approach to correcting the readiness problems is through incentives and sanctions – in other words, carrots and sticks. For incentives, the commander institutes a *gold medal* incentive in which subordinate units that achieve higher standards are openly recognized. Members who institute best practices are given awards or other benefits. Staff officers are similarly incentivized for efficient behaviors such as reducing time it takes to order and receive parts. For those who status remains the same or gets worse, those units are sanctioned in some way. The commanders may be relieved for cause or singled out as not achieving the goals. Or, they may be sanctioned simply by being among the few not receiving rewards. Maybe this approach works, maybe not. In any case, this commander leaves after completing the command tour.

In comes the second commander, who instead decides that the problem can be resolved through training and education. Bringing in outside experts or leveraging untapped in-house expertise, the commander institutes a training regimen to address what are determined to be procedural shortcomings or experience gaps at small unit, large unit, and leader development levels. Maybe this approach works, maybe not. In any case, this commander leaves after completing the command tour.

The third commander arrives and is one who pays attention to the numbers. This commander wants to identify units or types of equipment requiring the greatest amount of resources. The strategy may be that the organization surges resources to correct problems the degrade subunit readiness to some low level, such as C-4. Changes to readiness levels may trigger resourcing decisions – a drop from C-1 to C-2 may necessitate a plus-up while raising from C-4 to C-2 may allow a reduction or redirection of resources to where needed. Maybe this approach

<sup>3</sup> Robert Chin and Kenneth D. Benne, "General Strategies for Effecting Changes in Human Systems," in W. G. Bennis, Kenneth D.

Benne, and Robert Chin (Eds.), *The Planning of Change*, 4th ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt, 1985), 22-45.

works, maybe not. In any case, this commander leaves after completing the command tour.

The fourth commander takes the guidon and decides that none of the earlier approaches are best and instead wishes to use member participation to get to the bottom of the problem. Focus groups, informal interviews, staff calls and other events provide opportunities to gather input and encourage members to devise solutions on their own, or make recommendations to leaders. Engagement also becomes the primary means for checking on progress, identifying new problems, and generating solutions. Maybe this approach works, maybe not. In any case, this commander leaves after completing the command tour.

Each of the commanders used a different approach to accomplish the same goal. The activities, behaviors, measures of merit, and communication all differed, yet were all equally well aligned for success (given no other specific information about the unit culture). The first commander employed a *power-coercive* approach the used rewards and sanctions as the driver for change. The second commander went *re-educative*, relying on training and established expertise as the driver. The third commander used a *rational-empirical* approach, while the fourth and final commander used a *normative* approach which relies on participation (e.g., in an after-action review).

Note that for present purposes, *normative-re-educative* is divided into two distinct approaches. This is because they represent two different ways that members are engaged and two different uses of available expertise. *Re-educative* approaches emphasizes change through training or education by using external or internal experts to change the behaviors of members. *Normative* approaches are more therapeutic, relying on the general expertise of members who must be encouraged to share their knowledge in a participative fashion.

While it is true that any change effort is going to employ some combination of participative fact-finding, training, data crunching, and carrots

and sticks; ordinarily one of these four dominates. Moreover, switching from one to another can cause tremendous confusing among the members and subordinate units – especially when one considers the geographic distribution within high level commands. If a change effort begins with a participative approach but then becomes driven by the numbers, distant locations are going to feel that their voice (initially listened to) is being taken away. Using rewards and sanctions as a way of guiding behavior can be undermined if the command switches to a training approach—the experts and consultants being employed may signal a betrayal or trust.

The character of the change effort is not a determinant of the best approach. Instead, change agents should make recommendations that consider: (1) the preferences of the leader, (2) preferences of the membership, reflective in the command's climate and culture, and (3) preferences or expectations of external stakeholders who may have vested interests in how things are done and express them through specified reporting requirements.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVITY

This activity will help identify the best approach to the change effort, springboarding the development of a *concept* (vision of the ways). It begins with a comparison of which of Chin & Benne's approaches seems best suited as the dominant feature of the change effort. You will then develop a prose description of the chosen approach in action.

What follows is the development of the key tasks and change effort end state. You will prepare these iteratively to ensure that the key task list is of appropriate length – sufficient to provide clarity of the necessary actions to achieve the vision while not being too exhaustive or restrictive to inhibit local ingenuity or innovation – and that the end state appropriately balances expectations for achieving the vision against what the approach should reasonably accomplish.

## CONDUCT OF ACTIVITY FOUR: DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT (VISION OF THE WAYS)

**1. DEVELOP THE OVERALL APPROACH, USING CHIN & BENNE'S STRATEGIES:**

Consider Chin & Benne's strategies as four options, each of equal worth for any change problem. In this first step, you will collect some data points to determine which makes the most sense given your organization and its preferences. By *most sense*, we mean best aligned with the problem and the acceptability of the solution. Will you follow the most commonly used or accepted approach? Or, will you shake things up a bit? Review Table 4 and answer the questions from the perspective of the whole change effort – not individual activities!

*Table 4. Chin and Benne's Four Approaches Summarized*

<p><b><u>RATIONAL-EMPIRICAL:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on data to drive change</li> <li>• Requires reliable metrics that help leaders understand progress or compare progress among different localities</li> <li>• Useful for large, complex change efforts, especially where the amount of data precludes attention to individual cases</li> <li>• Risks being perceived as impersonal; data can be expensive to collect and analyze, and may not accurately portray the problem or solution</li> <li>• Examples: Defense readiness reporting; Army installation management levels of service</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>POWER-COERCIVE:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on rewards &amp; sanctions to drive change</li> <li>• Requires readily defined and understood forms of rewards and sanctions to encourage desired behaviors and drive out undesired behaviors</li> <li>• Useful when the rewards and sanctions can be consistently applied across the organization and encourage shared understandings of desired behaviors</li> <li>• Risks being perceived as authoritarian, and requires very consistent application of the rewards and sanctions over time</li> <li>• Examples: Employees/service members of the year, various contests</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>RE-EDUCATIVE:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on training or educational activities to drive change</li> <li>• Requires identifiable expertise and individuals (trainers, consultants, etc.) to inculcate that expertise</li> <li>• Useful for change involving skills or knowledge not generally available to members or that is perishable</li> <li>• Risks being overdone, or not properly followed-up; members may fail to enact the trained behaviors; leaders may wrongly assumed that the training is enough</li> <li>• Examples: Chain teaching; exercises and wargames; professional military education</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>NORMATIVE:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on extant knowledge among members and venues for sharing experiences</li> <li>• Requires open participation among members with the ability to influence behaviors across the whole organization</li> <li>• Useful for change of a corrective nature (the organization has failed in some way and needs to look for answers within) or when the solution is unknown and needs to emerge through member participation</li> <li>• Risks being seen as unhelpful or a waste of time, especially in cultures expecting more direction from the leader</li> <li>• Examples: After-action reviews; sensing sessions; <i>brown bag</i> lunches</li> </ul>

- Which of these four strategies seem to fit your change problem the best and why?
- Which of these four strategies do *not* seem to fit your change problem and why?
- Select the best, and jot down some notes about how to use it *as the primary way of accomplishing the vision*. What kinds of activities would be performed across the organization? How would they be monitored to determine effectiveness, in the short-term and the long-term? What would be useful indicators that the approach is not working?

## 2. IDENTIFY KEY TASKS:

a. Develop an initial list of key tasks – activities that must be completed for the vision to be achieved. Brainstorm as many as you can, and then look to combine them into a shorter yet comprehensive list. Consider the main tasks suggested by the primary approach from Step 1, and then consider key enabling tasks in areas such as manpower, logistics, training or education, facilities or infrastructure, mobilization, resources, etc.

b. Continue to refine the above until you have reduced the list: (1) for smaller or homogeneous organizations, three to five; (2) for larger, more complex endeavors, seven to ten. Ensure the sum of accomplishing the tasks is aligned with vision achievement. Also, ensure that everyone in the organization is involved with and contributes to at least one key task.

### 3. DESCRIBE THE END STATE OF THE CHANGE EFFORT:

Provide a set of indicators—measures of success or conditions in the environment—that signal completion of the change effort. It does not necessarily equal the vision, as the change effort may only go so far.

### 4. FINALIZE THE CONCEPT NARRATIVE:

You will now take your answers to Step 1 and refine. Think about the path from the current state to the desired future state. What will the organization do to achieve the vision?

The narrative should focus on the primary approach chosen in Step 1 – how the organization will exercise that approach start to finish. If there are phases involved, explain in few words what the phases are and how the organization will know when phases begin or end. The key tasks and end state (Steps 2 and 3) are refined one more time.

a. Write the concept narrative. Try to keep it to a single paragraph with simple sentences. Nouns and verbs giving the 5Ws, minimize adjectives, adverbs, and other wordy language.



b. Write down the final list of key tasks, based on Step 2.

c. Write down the end state of the change effort, based on Step 3. Keep this to no more than three sentences. Details are not needed – the change plan will provide the details. General conditions are sufficient.

## ACTIVITY FIVE: CONSTRUCTING THE CHANGE PLAN ARCHITECTURE

*With the vision and concept established, leaders turn their attention to planning that assigns means against the ends and ways. Ideally, the organization assembles a planning team to handle the requisite details of putting the concept into action. However, leaders should still make the important decisions about structuring the change effort.*

*Military members are likely to recognize a common architecture – where a change effort is subdivided like a military campaign into ‘lines of effort’ representing subordinate efforts that are coordinated such that each reaches the same goal concurrently. There is analogously a main effort and supporting efforts with coordinating mechanisms and command and control oversight. However, this architecture only works well for certain types of change efforts, and applying it to other forms of change could result in change failure.*

*This activity covers several important elements of a plan architecture – how the work will be divided, how coordination among the divisions will occur, how the effort will be phased, and how progress will be measured and reported. Key will be to maintain suitability, feasibility, and acceptability of the plan as it comes to fruition while staying within the concept established in the previous activity. Although it might be desirable to have the concept and plan developed together, this may happen in cases where the concept is needed for the organization to request the necessary resources, the allocation of which is necessary for prudent planning.*

Planning is important for fostering successful change, but that does not mean that only the most detailed plans succeed. In large, complex organizations, detailed planning can be a detractor, draining needed energy away from other priority activities while causing the effort to appear top-heavy and driven-from-above. Those who have ever been on the wrong end of the ‘ten thousand mile screwdriver’ may rightfully complain if they perceived that the plan micromanages them. Sometimes change efforts can leverage existing bureaucratic structures that facilitate an efficient division of the work. Other times, these same structures can get in the way or be misapplied toward a change. Proper planning helps balance competing perspectives on the change effort and provides leaders with a useful blueprint that maximizes the chance of success.

This activity is the most complex of all those in this book. In it, you will develop a skeletal architecture that subdivides the effort, establishes oversight and governance, and manages overall progress. Although the steps are given in a sequence, these steps are interdependent. Responses for each step should co-evolve with responses to other steps.

### DIVIDING THE WORK

Military culture places a premium on unity of effort. So it is not surprising that a campaigning approach of subdividing the work into *lines of effort* is commonly applied to planned change even when it may not be the most appropriate. See Figure 3 for the generic use of this structure. Typically, the lines of effort are divided functionally to represent ordinary staff processes, which coalesce at the organizational level. The Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities (DOTMLPF) approach to weapon systems acquisition is a perfect example – each letter in the acronym represents a subordinate community of practice and the acquisition community provides oversight to the program as a whole. But this is not the only architecture used for change, and dividing by lines of effort may actually drive a change effort to failure.

In a 1995 review analyzing numerous theories of change, scholars Van de Ven and Poole noted Lewin’s concept was but one of many, and different forms of purposeful change could occur in an organization simultaneously. Rather than approaches, they referred to these forms as *motors* that differed according to the

scope and nature of change processes employed.<sup>1</sup> Each motor represents a general architecture for a change effort, and as motors can be combined, so too can the architectures of change efforts in military organizations.

The first motor has essentially already been presented – it is the *life-cycle motor* whereby there is a single change effort and it is planned start-to-finish. It befits the military cultural preference for unity of effort and clear delineation of subordinate responsibilities. See Figure 3.<sup>2</sup> The

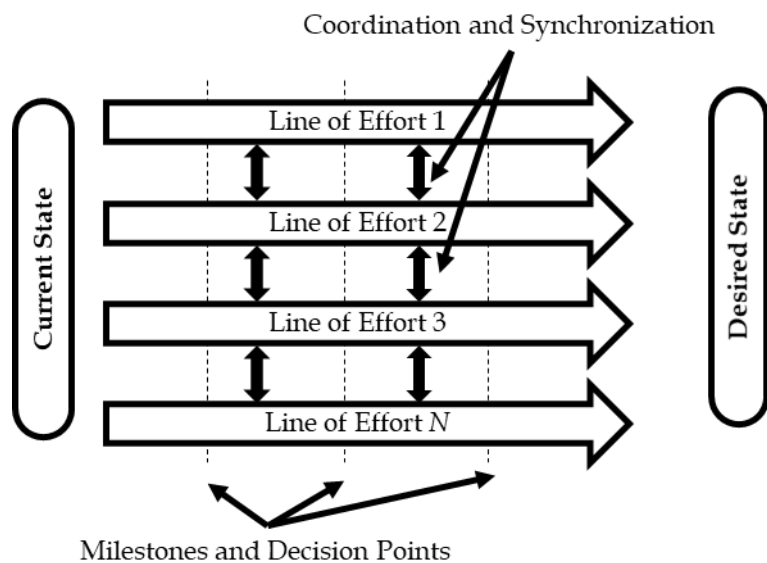


Figure 3. Life Cycle Motor as planned change

goal is to ensure progress along each line of effort is harmonized such that one does not advance too fast or too slow. Coordination among the lines of effort are very important, especially when it is necessary to share resources or information. Phasing is also simple – consider the dotted lines in the figure as representing transitions from one phase to another, marked by some sort of intermediate or partial goal. This provides the leadership with important indicators of progress and opportunities for decisions to continue, modify, or at worst terminate the effort.

The other motors work very differently from the life-cycle motor, and are less clearly aligned with military culture. But that does not mean they are not useful or inappropriate for planned

change in military organizations. Rather, in some cases they are prevalent in certain types of change, but it means that leaders must employ them differently than they may prefer.

### Teleological Motor and Culture Change

The teleological motor can be described as either top-down strategic direction or bottom-up innovation driving change toward a single desired goal. It functions on a cycle of negative feedback, in which the organization takes action ostensibly to pursue the goal and then adjusts based on the remaining delta to the goal, which Van de Ven and Poole called *dissatisfaction*.<sup>3</sup> The reassessment need not be formal, and in fact may occur in continuous fashion. However, the unclear or uncertain path could mean that the organization may spin its wheels – its change efforts continuously falling short, possibly even making things worse, while the goal remains elusive.

Consider the following practical example, shown in the next two Figures. After the New Year's you realize that too much Holiday revelry has led to a few extra pounds and insufficient exercise. Hence, you undertake a New Year's resolution to get fit and set a target – lose the weight and restore fitness. That goal represents 100% compliance with the New Year's resolution, whereas 0% represents the current state (0% in this case does not mean you are in 0% shape, but merely sets a baseline).

The top half of Figure 4 shows how you think (and how many leaders) the change effort will go. Exercise and diet; diet and exercise. Progress to the 100% goal would be steady.

But that's not how things turn out, is it? Moreover, that's not how the teleological motor actually works. Progress may or may not go forward. Look at the bottom half of Figure 4.<sup>4</sup> The first few pounds may come off naturally, but then what happens? You might reward yourself with

<sup>1</sup> Andrew H. Van de Ven and Marshall S. Poole, "Explaining Development and Change in Organizations," *Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3 (July 1995): 510-540.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., based loosely on Figure 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Original graphic drawn by author.

a treat or skip a day of exercise. Or the body naturally rebels. You regress. You try again and make a modest breakthrough. But then life gets in the way and you regress again. Then something happens – trying to *catch up* and *get back on track*, you overexert and pull or tear something. Crutches for a month. Now the original goal is no longer achievable – you must settle on a different goal, to be able to walk by the summer!

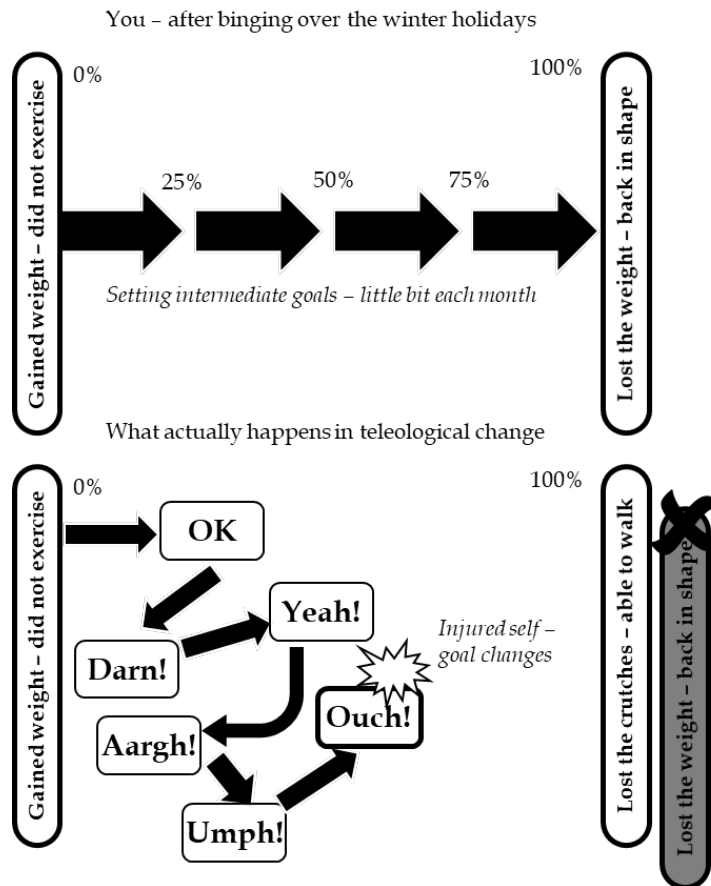


Figure 4. Teleological motor in practice

Virtually all forms of culture change operate this way. There is intent to drive 100% compliance in some behavior or attitude. But people differ in their interpretations of the goal and in their commitments toward it. Turnover, changes in the internal and external environments, and crises can cause progress to accelerate or revert. Activities may have to occur in phases, perhaps geographically or by

command, meaning that parts of the organization advance *faster* than others. And there is always the risk of full reversion, where the organization finds itself worse off than the current state – just as though our New Year's resolution candidate ended the change effort having *gained* weight!

How does one organize a change effort that must leverage the teleological motor? Key is the governance function addressed in the next section. There needs to be an agency established with the authorities and responsibilities to monitor the change effort, measure compliance toward the goal, and make recommendations or take actions as reversals inevitably occur.

### Evolutionary Motor and Experimentation

When the *evolutionary* motor is exercised, organizations pursue a predetermined set of goals in multiple ways, harnessing so-called best practices and abandoning those that do not work as well. Van de Ven and Poole used a Darwinian analogy to explain this motor, such that disparate units or members try new ideas or conduct formal experiments. Some are adopted, but notionally in a competitive environment only a few survive. The surviving ideas make adjustments to any environment changes. Meanwhile, new competing ideas enter the fray. Key for this motor is understanding that each of the prescribed change initiatives only affect a portion of the organization. See top of Figure 5.<sup>5</sup>

An important point about this motor is that the surviving ideas may not be the best ones. In fact, bad habits can emerge if inappropriate workarounds or unwanted behaviors are somehow rewarded and shared. These bad habits can crowd out the desired behaviors and present barriers to the desired future state. Thus, it is important for leaders to establish conditions by which selection is purposeful, whereby *best practices* or other positives are favored and unwanted habits eliminated.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted by author from Van de Ven and Poole, "Explaining Development," Figure 1.

The utility of this motor is in the use of experimentation and bottom-up mechanisms for fostering change. Delegation of responsibilities to localized contexts (e.g., experimental or contained, geographic, suborganizational, functional) provides the freedom for communities to experiment and innovate. A central governing authority needs the capacity to identify good practices as they emerge and evaluate them for suitability, acceptability, and transferability across the organization. They also identify emergent practices that should be stopped from spreading. Managing shared understandings is key to helping the overall organization maintain focus on the desired future state.

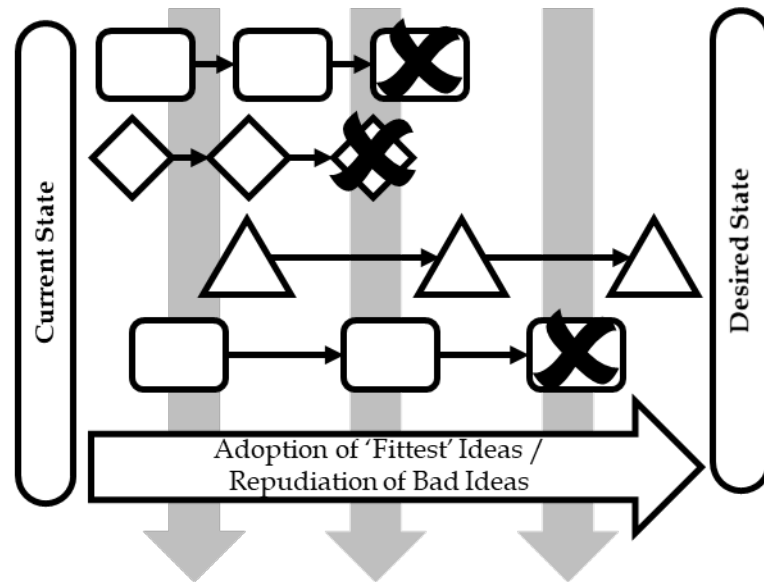
#### ***Dialectic Motor and Synthesis***

This final motor is one that is most problematic for military culture. Unity of effort may be the espoused norm, but this motor of change functions on division – the kinds of division that would be natural in any large complex organization.

The *dialectic* motor operates in the opposite fashion from the life-cycle motor – multiple-entities in a constructive mode. Internal controversy fuels the dialectic motor, whereby two (or more) views of how to accomplish things are in continuous conflict, creating conditions by which the organization evolves through the synthesis of the conflict.

Much change in human resource management fall into this category because human resource activities exercise a natural

Evolutionary. Shapes represent independent activities (experiments)



Dialectic. Two opposing perspectives – synthesis never durable

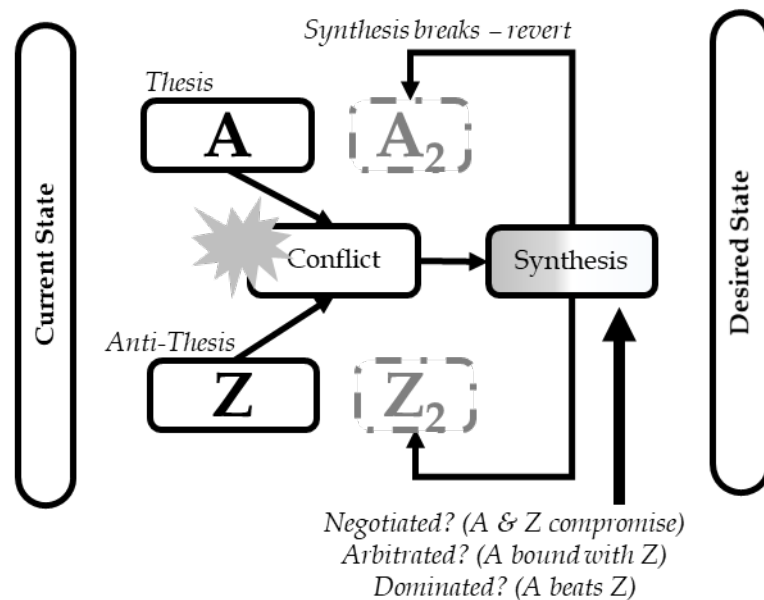


Figure 5. Evolutionary and dialectic motors

tension between a results orientation (reflective of the effects of HR actions) and a process orientation (reflective of the systemic attempts to make HR actions fair and equitable). The two orientations are in many ways dialectically opposed – it is difficult if not impossible to satisfy both. This is reflected in the bottom of Figure 5 where the perspectives are identified as *thesis* (A)

and *anti-thesis* (Z).<sup>6</sup> Conventional vs. counterinsurgency, professional organization vs. public sector bureaucracy, current readiness vs. modernization, joint orientation vs. service independence – the opposing perspectives can take different forms and represent everything from specific suborganizations to individual member preference. Regardless, those who are beholden to thesis A or anti-thesis Z will pursue their preferred perspective, possibly to the detriment of the other side.

Conditions in the environment (including top-down direction) may require the two perspectives to synthesize. But synthesis can take many forms. The most desirable from a military perspective would be a negotiated compromise where A and Z meet in the middle and both perspectives are at least partially satisfied. Another alternative is an arbitrated synthesis whereby the two perspectives remain mostly separated with synthesis involving only the minimal overlapping factors. This is referred to as arbitrated because this is often an imposed synthesis from outside. And then there is the synthesis where one prevails in total and the other is muted.

None of these syntheses are durable. As conditions change, the desire for A and Z to break the synthesis may increase. The negotiated compromise no longer holds. The arbitrated solution is no longer enforceable. Even the case of domination will be undermined as the weakened perspective will receive renewed attention and rise back to prominence. However, the two sides should not return to the status quo ante but instead to a new state that learned from the period of synthesis. One hopes that the cycle of synthesis and breakage contributes to overall forward progress.

## GOVERNANCE

The next part of the architecture is establishing authorities and responsibilities for overseeing the effort and ensuring progress. For present purposes, this will be done through an *office of primary responsibility* (OPR), which can be

an established formal organization or cross-functional working group. Regardless of the mechanism used, the OPR requires the following:

- Sufficient capability and capacity to monitor activities associated with the change effort. The OPR must be able to collect and analyze the necessary data to measure progress.
- Sufficient authority to direct activities on behalf of the senior leader.
- Sufficient authority and capacity to develop and publish reports to the senior leader as required or directed. This includes routine in-progress reviews. Such reports should also be available to the organizational membership.

These cannot be taken for granted, as one must assume that the OPR is not necessarily resourced for the additional responsibilities of managing change. Or, if the OPR is to be assembled from within the organization, that there could be an impact on other duties. Also, OPR responsibilities are inherent to the organization and cannot be outsourced. Even if particular capabilities and responsibilities are awarded to contractors, the decision making authorities that ensue are specifically vested in the organization's organic leadership.

## COORDINATING MECHANISMS

Change in large, complex organizations can take a long time – typically extending beyond the tenure of the leaders and change agents. Consequently, coordinating mechanisms are needed that enable the OPR to accomplish assigned goals. These are natural extensions of Connie Gersick's conceptions of time-driven and event-driven change.<sup>7</sup> Time-driven change establishes benchmarks and decisions based on the calendar, such as annual budgets or summer personnel rotations. Event-driven change causes decisions to occur based on conditions, often in the form of achieving measured progress. Defense acquisition *Milestone* decisions are examples – the decision is based on an acquisition program having satisfied conditions, thereby

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., adapted by author.

<sup>7</sup> Connie J. G. Gersick, "Pacing Strategic Change: The Case of a New Venture," *Academy of Management Journal* 37, no. 1 (February 1994): 9-45.

bringing about a decision brief to determine whether to continue.

When the life-cycle motor is exercised, one can break the change effort into *phases*, with intermediate goals as short-term targets indicating progress toward the overall vision. These are generally event-driven. As conditions within each line of effort meet the goal for the given phase, a decision can be made to move to the next phase.

Coordinating mechanisms could also involve regular *communications* to ensure continued attention on the effort. One can use in-progress reviews on a timely basis (e.g., monthly, quarterly), newsletters or other routine materials, and town hall meetings or similar gatherings to disseminate progress reports.

Finally, *measures of performance* and *measures of effectiveness* are needed. The former provides information about how well the activities within the change effort worked in isolation. Was the training completed successfully and was there retention of knowledge? Is the new capability being developed on schedule? The latter is more

difficult to measure as they are indirect. To what extent is the organization changing its behavior to match that of the desired future state? These measures need not be quantitative, and in fact certain types of change efforts may require qualitative data collection instead. Regardless, the measures must be applied consistently so that proper comparisons of measures can occur across the life-span of the change effort.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVITY

This activity is designed for a short period of time for the purposes of gathering ideas on developing the architecture of the change effort. The three steps follow the above text – first, you will divide the work, then identify a suitable governance structure, and then establish coordinating mechanisms.

Larger-scale workshops will differ in levels of detail and precision, but the components of the architecture remain the same. Also, the three main steps are designed to be iterative – a short-duration workshop may only perform one cycle, but a longer-duration workshop may do several.

## CONDUCT OF ACTIVITY FIVE: CONSTRUCTING THE CHANGE PLAN ARCHITECTURE

**1. IDENTIFY THE PRIMARY MOTORS OF CHANGE:**

In this first step, you will survey the motors of change identified by Van de Ven and Poole and determine their applicability to the change effort. The outcome will be a first cut at a structure for the plan – ideas about how the effort will be divided among members or subordinate organizations, and how coordination will occur to ensure progress. The results of Activity Four should help inform the approaches taken in this activity.

Review the table below and answer the following questions.

*Table 5. Van de Ven & Poole's motors of change, adapted for planned change efforts*

<p><u>LIFE-CYCLE:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change effort can be divided into discrete subordinate efforts (<i>lines of effort</i>) whose effects will combine to achieve the vision</li> <li>• Coordination is vital to ensure progress among all lines of effort is aligned.</li> <li>• Authorities and responsibilities for each line of effort must be clearly defined.</li> <li>• Useful when the key tasks (Activity Four) can be readily divided among subordinate orgs.</li> <li>• Risks being monolithic and top-down; can inhibit emergent change at the local level which may be more effective</li> <li>• Example: Acquisition (e.g., DOTMLPF)</li> </ul>	<p><u>TELEOLOGICAL (COMPLIANCE):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change effort depends on changes in organizational behavior and attitudes that are difficult to measure and can be reversed</li> <li>• Effort will include routinely measuring the gap between current and desired behaviors and conduct activities to close the gap</li> <li>• Generally conducted as a single line of effort oriented on the change goal monitored by a single office of primary responsibility (OPR)</li> <li>• Goals can be flexible and subject to change</li> <li>• Risks frustrating members; changes in behavior may be difficult to observe</li> <li>• Example: Culture changes (e.g., SHARP)</li> </ul>
<p><u>EVOLUTIONARY:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottom-up form of change in which units perform independent activities to pursue the change goal; best practices shared</li> <li>• Can involve planned experimentation, so long as the organization allows emergent bottom-up ideas (otherwise, it is probably life-cycle)</li> <li>• OPR monitors local activities to capture best practices and inhibit bad habits</li> <li>• Risks members developing improper work-arounds or undesired behaviors, which are then shared across the organization; also the outcomes and progress are far less certain</li> <li>• Example: Professional education, which often relies on individual initiatives for curriculum development and delivery</li> </ul>	<p><u>DIALECTIC:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes a powerful paradox that can either enable or inhibit change</li> <li>• Change occurs through efforts to build synthesis between two perspectives and maintain the synthesis as long as possible</li> <li>• Synthesis is not durable, and when it breaks it needs to be re-formed to avoid regression</li> <li>• Difficult to 'plan' – synthesis could involve negotiation or choosing one side or another, alienating the opposing perspective</li> <li>• Risks conflict (would be present anyway)</li> <li>• Examples: Human resource and manning, which often face the dialectic between the needs of the individual vs. organization</li> </ul>



a. Choose those motors that seem applicable to your change effort. Write them below and justify. It is possible these motors can be combined (for example, an overall life-cycle change may include a line of effort that is teleological).

b. Now tie the above to the Concept from Activity Four, especially the key tasks. Using the above motors, identify how the key tasks would be accomplished – who would do what, and which tasks depend on what progress?

## 2. IDENTIFY THE GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS:

Write down notes on the governance mechanisms based on the following line of inquiry:

a. Who would be the OPR(s) for the change effort and why?

- For each usage of the life-cycle motor, which agency would be the overall OPR, and which agency would be the OPR for each subordinate line of effort?
- For each usage of the other three motors, which agency would be the OPR?
- For each OPR, identify whether or not the agency should/must be supplemented with representatives or other agencies to support the OPR function. The OPR must have sufficient capacity and authorities to perform monitoring, reporting, and directing of activities.
- Also for each OPR, identify the communication links with the leadership and other OPRs in the effort. How will they synchronize their efforts?

### 3. IDENTIFY THE MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS:

Also commensurate with the OPR's responsibilities are their measures of success. Some measures may be shared or interdependent, so this action doesn't require a one-to-one association of governance mechanisms to measures. Rather, the measures are likely to be associated with the key tasks in Activity Four.

- For each key task, identify the associated measure(s) of effectiveness. Validate that the measure properly indicates the desired progress toward completion of the key task
- For each measure, identify the following (who and how): (1) data entry and capture, (2) data analysis responsibilities, and (3) data reporting.

**4. ESTABLISH THE PLAN:**

This final action takes the above information and organizes it into a written plan and architecture diagram. The plan should be articulated in descriptive prose to explain how the change effort will proceed and what roles that members of the organization will play.

- a. Diagram the change effort below. Appropriately label the OPRs and annotate measures of effectiveness.

- b. Prepare, in prose, a word description of the change effort plan. Ensure each component of the diagram is expressed as who, what, when, and how, and how the governance mechanisms will operate. Include the measures of effectiveness and how they will be achieved.
- c. Compare the prose to the Vision and Concept (Activities Three and Four). Are they aligned? Correct and update as needed.

## ACTIVITY SIX: PREPARING FOR LAUNCH

*To this point, all the activities have focused on pre-launch planning. The organization has been committed to organizing a change effort, but has not yet 'launched' it – meaning that the leader can still stop the effort with minimal impact on the organization. This is despite the fact that knowledge of the organization's efforts thus far has already changed the organization, and the cancellation of the effort will be greeted with some combination of disappointment from supporters and elation from detractors.*

*'Launch' represents the point of no return. The leader has fully committed to the effort and organizational effort has gone beyond planning and into implementation.*

*However, there is no one way to launch the change effort. You may be accustomed to seeing a change effort announced publicly through a ceremony, with the senior leader speaking and something (a capability or logo or guidon) being unveiled. However, strategic level change sees launch not necessarily as a single event but as a phase of activities taking days to possible months and requiring extensive organizational energy – especially among the organization's leaders. OR, it may be completely subtle, known only to the leaders and OPR. Why? Perhaps the change effort's success depends on its activities blending in with ordinary routine activities. Perhaps there is significant resistance against the change from external stakeholders and there is a need to limit attention. But regardless, once the launch phase begins, it essentially takes another change effort to reverse the organization to the prior status quo.*

The idea of launch as a phase comes from W. Warner Burke, who proposed three distinct phases in planned change – pre-launch, launch, and post-launch.<sup>1</sup> Activities one through five represented pre-launch planning and preparations. Launch represents when implementation is underway, with expectations that affected members and stakeholders alike acknowledge and enact the plan as devised. Therefore, the launch phase involves significant communication. Activities often associated with launch phases include: (a) ceremonies that announce the beginning of implementation, (b) *road shows* where leaders or change agents travel around the organization or among external actors to engage and inform others over a period of time, and (c) command communications such as town hall meetings or all-hands, announcements over e-mail or social media or other, media activities, and others. Getting the word out is only half the battle. It is also about ensuring the purpose of the change effort and its plan are heard and understood among audiences.

In large, complex organizations, the launch phase can take weeks or months, because it may

take that long before the organization routinizes the change effort. Pre-planned short-term wins are also part of the launch phase as they demonstrate successful implementation and illustrate achievement of the vision. It is therefore important that such pre-planned events are postured for success while remaining authentic exemplars that could fail or underperform. Otherwise, it would be like an experiment designed to prove the hypothesis true – it will generate cynicism and distrust in the change. As it is, the launch phase is when resistance to change can be most acute, as detractors may take extensive measures to stop the effort while others who are more ambivalent will seek to distance themselves from the effort and avoid getting involved due to the potential disruption to their routines or schedule.

This activity will allow you to develop the beginnings of a launch plan, which will include the following elements (see Figure 6<sup>2</sup>): (1) the key messages and the audiences who must receive them, (2) responses to resistance, (3) a slate of events or activities for launch, and (4) measures of performance for launch events. These four

<sup>1</sup> W. Warner Burke, *Organization Change: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 273-295.

<sup>2</sup> Original graphic by author.

elements must be aligned with the change effort, but do not have to match the character of the overall plan. Rather, the launch phase is most likely conducted using the life-cycle motor as described in Activity Five. This is because the roles and requirements of a launch plan are straightforward and depend upon legitimacy conferred by the leader. Although some specific responsibilities could be delegated to members, the leader must own the launch, otherwise the members will presume a lack of leader commitment to the problem and the change effort.

### SETTING LAUNCH CONDITIONS

You must first determine the conditions under which the campaign can launch. There are two ways to set these conditions – *time-driven* or *event-driven*.

*Time-driven launches* are set to fixed dates on the calendar. The fixed date can be determined in many ways, but is often tied to an external condition that the organization either does not control or must leverage in order to bring attention to the campaign. At the enterprise level, launches might be based on the fiscal year to leverage the budgetary situation. Sometimes campaigns are time-driven based on the tenure of a senior leader or stakeholder whose departure could negatively affect the campaign. Other times they may be set arbitrarily, such as a leader deadline for action (e.g., “I want X done in 30 days”).

*Event-driven launches* are conditions-based. Once pre-determined desirable conditions have been verified in the environment, launch occurs as soon as practical. Or, if the campaign is the result of a crisis situation, the conditions have

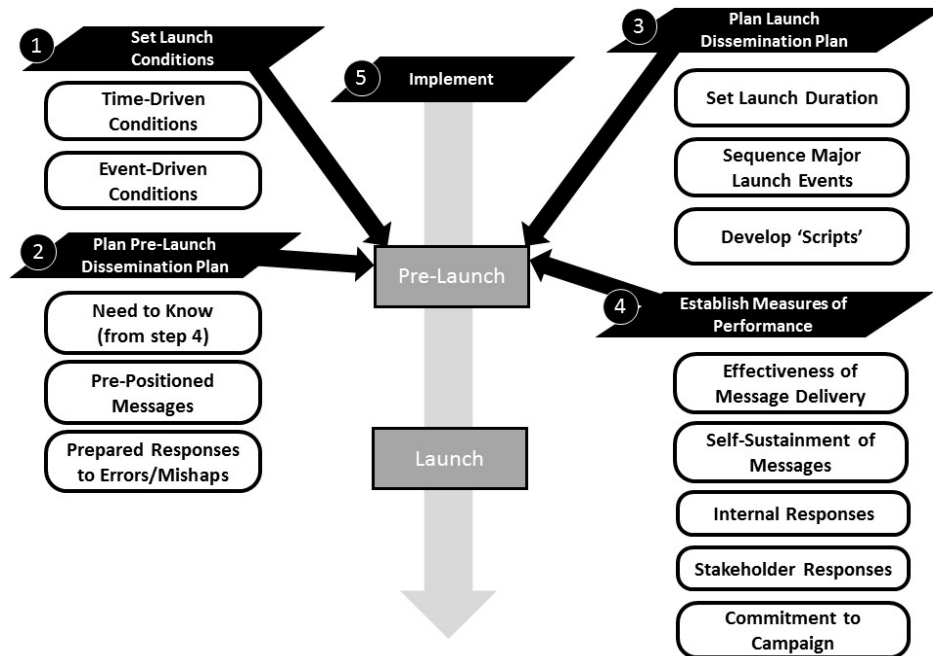


Figure 6. Launch Planning Actions

essentially already been met and launch must be immediate. There can be greater flexibility in event-driven launches for leaders to delay if the conditions aren't right – for example, socialization is incomplete, certain barriers to communication are yet unlifted, or the effects of other strategic events are unknown. However, leaders should be concerned about the length of time that passes, as the organization's commitment to the campaign can wither away, rendering the campaign overcome by other activities and forgotten.

### PRE-LAUNCH PLANNING

This encompasses steps 2 and 3 in the Figure. Especially in large, complex organizations, the information about the forthcoming launch must be pre-positioned among those who would help spread the message.

The pre-launch dissemination plan answers the following questions: *Who needs to know what now or before launch? Who needs not to know about the campaign now or before launch? Who needs to be prepared at launch to deliver messages – therefore which messages and to whom? How does the organization respond if news of the change effort is released too soon?*

Depending on the degree to which the previous Activities involved other members of the organization, launch can either be expected or completely surprising. In either case, the key is to limit the impacts of open resistance, especially if the effort is controversial. Therefore, pre-launch dissemination exercises a much greater degree of control over the message than will be present during the rest of the change effort. The goal is pre-positioning of the messages. At launch, all of the messages are delivered in synchronized fashion for maximum effect on the environment.

Once the above engagement is complete, the next step of launch planning takes place. This is when the leaders determine the specific series of events to release information on the effort. Launch is treated more as a window, and not a single discrete event. Although it often begins with a signature action such as major speech, rally, or pronouncement; it continues through follow-on engagements to ensure all parties (internal and external) receive the information and have their questions answered. Launch does not truly end until these initiating activities have been completed.

#### MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE FOR LAUNCH

During pre-launch and launch, the organization is largely concerned with measures of performance. However, it is more than whether the message was properly delivered, heard, or understood at the primary events. One must also consider how well the message spreads itself, and in what way. What are indicators that the effort is off to a running start, such that the initial activities stand a greater chance of success? Or what would indicate that the effort is potentially in trouble due to misunderstandings, misinformation, or perhaps even disinformation? It is not enough for the campaign to be known about, but that the campaign is known to be a solution to the organization's problem.

There are five steps in this activity, each of which mirror the five steps depicted in the above Figure. Each will be pursued in sequence. The end result will be the foundation for an effective communication plan to launch the change effort.

#### STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVITY

This activity follows the first four steps shown in Figure 6. You will first determine the launch conditions – will you choose to launch the effort in a time-driven fashion or event-driven, and why?

The second step is to conduct pre-launch dissemination. A way to think of this is how you will employ the guiding coalition of the change effort. Who must be consulted? Who must be excluded? What messages must be pre-positioned to promote the change effort? What talking points must be available when criticism of the change effort inevitably surfaces?

The third step is determining the launch actions – from the initial unveiling (which may or may not be a public event) to all the follow-on communications and engagements with stakeholders who were not included in the initial unveiling. How is the sequencing of these events determined? What will be conducted direct (e.g., face-to-face) vs. indirect (e.g., social media and the like)?

Determining measures of performance is the final step – and these will include indicators of success and of mounting barriers against the change. Each of these will represent data needing to be collected and analyzed, so it is important to keep these to the minimum necessary to provide a useful picture of the success of the launch. Although not explicit in this activity, it would be helpful for the measures to be also useful for (or at least aligned with) post-launch implementation.





## CONDUCT OF ACTIVITY SIX: PLANNING FOR LAUNCH

**1. SET THE LAUNCH CONDITIONS:**

Will the launch conditions be time-driven or event-driven? Time-driven means set to a fixed date on the calendar or associated with some externally scheduled event. Event-driven means launch when certain conditions are met, independent of the timing.

If time-driven, list the following: (a) calendar event and date (if known), and (b) whether launch must begin before, after, or concurrent with this event.

If event-driven, list the following: (a) conditions that will determine launch, and (b) how those conditions will be recognized.

## 2. DEVELOP PRE-LAUNCH DISSEMINATION PLAN:

- a. List internal audiences that have a need-to-know about the change effort prior to launch. What do they need to know, and how will the campaign benefit from their involvement?
- b. List external stakeholders that have a need-to-know about the change effort prior to launch. What do they need to know and what is the risk of not including them at this stage? Who are the appropriate members of the organization to engage with these stakeholders?
- c. List other external audiences who may serve an enabling role in setting favorable launch conditions or serving as trusted agents to the change effort. How may they contribute? Who should contact these audiences?
- d. List audiences who must *not* be aware of the change effort prior to launch. You may list opponents, as they may mobilize upon knowledge of the campaign's development, but also include audiences who might present barriers to implementation even if their intentions are good.

e. Develop a plan for engaging with these audiences. Include timing, pre-positioned messages and their handling (e.g., use of caveats such as 'predecisional'), talking points to address questions or controversies, and other instructions.

### 3. DEVELOP LAUNCH PLAN:

a. Identify the major launch events. Who will be the audience present? Who are the intended audiences not present, and how will the information from the launch reach them?

b. Identify critical follow-up events and engagements. Who are the key audiences to engage with directly? How will the organization be postured to address questions and garner feedback?

#### 4. ESTABLISH MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE:

The overall success of the change effort's launch is determined based on the following: (1) that the vision, concept, and plan are appropriately understood by all target audiences, and (2) that barriers to the change effort are mitigated such that the effort may proceed to implementation. The following categories represent different ways at analyzing the environment to determine the extent to which (1) and (2) are met.

a. Identify measures indicating the effectiveness of the launch messages. This may include the extent to which the measures have been communicated by the organization and understood by direct audiences.

b. Identify measures indicating the spread of the launch messages. This may include usage of social media or other means to further the messages (incl. without specific organization action) and the extent to which the messages are either opposed or modified in those spaces (e.g., due to misinformation, misunderstanding, or disinformation).

c. Identify measures indicating internal member and external stakeholder acceptance of the messages. To what extent is their commitment strengthened (or weakened) by the change effort?

d. Identify measures indicative of the launch having failed to set conditions for successful change – e.g., significant new barriers to the change effort.

## APPENDIX: COURSE OUTLINE FOR ‘LEADING CHANGE IN MILITARY ORGANIZATION’

*This workbook and the companion monograph ‘Leading Change in Military Organizations: Primer for Senior Leaders’ were crafted around the structure of a U.S. Army War College resident elective comprising ten three-hour lessons – of which each monograph chapter corresponded to one lesson with the tenth lesson reserved for student presentations. However, the material is quite flexible and can be adapted for professional development programs of any duration and length.*

*This appendix provides the structure for the resident elective LM2214: Leading Change as taught during academic years 2018 and 2019, adapted for this workbook. It includes lesson objectives, lesson structure, and key points of emphasis to allow instructors and facilitators to adapt the material to suit their own needs – whether it is educational, professional development, or working groups solving practical problems.*

The purpose of the LM2214 course is exploring issues and ideas behind leading organizational change efforts in militaries and putting them into practice to solve real-world problems. It combines seminar discussion with experiential learning activities. Among the subjects tackled in this elective are: theories of social and organizational change, leadership roles in driving top-down transformational change effort or fostering bottom-up innovative climates, and a more in-depth look at resistance and ambivalence toward change.

This appendix presents the course overview and materials used, followed by overviews of each lesson.

### COURSE OVERVIEW

The course was designed to combine seminar learning with experiential activities. In the early lessons, students selected a problem and would use in-class activities (such as those in this workbook) to build a change effort to fix the problem. Students prepared a reflective journal to record their insights and open questions, and this journal was the primary written requirement for the students. The final class day was reserved for student presentations on their chosen problem and how they synthesized the course materials to resolve it. The format was a poster session in which the classroom was arranged as a miniature academic conference, with one-third of the students presenting at one time and the remaining students circulating the room.

### Materials

The materials required were the following:

- *Leading Change in Military Organizations: Primer for Senior Leaders* as the primary textbook
- Experiential activities, such as included in this Workbook or others of the instructor’s choosing
- Case studies for seminar discussion

The experiential activities have been conducted for both groups and individuals. In the classroom setting where each student likely has a unique problem of interest, the individual approach worked better. Group activities work well when there is a clear common problem that the team can work on together without having to resort to significant outside research or data collection.

Case studies can be one of two forms: (a) *lesson specific*, in which particular lesson outcomes are emphasized, or (b) *course-wide*, in which a larger case study is reviewed with each course. I have done both and found advantages and disadvantages of each. Lesson specific cases allows for selection of smaller scale events or vignettes to illustrate the topic, but it falls on the instructor to connect all the disparate cases together as one narrative. Course-wide cases allow for discussions of larger transformational events and the ability to see the big picture and how all the lessons connect together. However, it may be difficult to find a single case that touches on each of the lessons.

I used a RAND study<sup>1</sup> on the Future Combat System as the course-wide case once and found it useful, but the study focused more on the technical details during execution and lacked adequate discussion on how the problems statements and vision were articulated.

### Course Learning Outcomes

The course learning outcomes follow. Outcomes listed in bold represent the minimum set of outcomes for any educational, developmental, or practical use of these materials.

1. **Comprehend the challenges and opportunities facing senior leaders as they lead change in military organizations.**
2. Apply concepts, models, and theories of social and organizational change.
3. **Analyze the external and internal contexts of large complex organizations to describe and explain the need for change.**
4. Apply concepts, models, and theories of resistance, ambivalence, and other barriers to change.
5. **Apply methods and procedures for developing and articulating visions and vision statements.**
6. Synthesize feasible, suitable, and acceptable change strategies and plans.
7. Analyze existing change efforts in large complex organizations to determine whether they should be sustained, modified, or terminated.

Each outcome corresponds to at least one lesson. The three bolded outcomes (1, 3, and 5) focus on strategic decision-making and senior leader communications essential for the initiation of change. Outcome 3, in particular, is related to Activity One in this workbook on problem identification, upon which all other activities in this book depend.

### Course Structure and Lessons

The following are the lessons in the course, the first nine of which match the titles of the nine chapters in the monograph. Those lessons in **bold** are those corresponding to the bolded lesson outcomes above. These lessons can easily be consolidated and combined to suit available time and the requirements of the program:

1. **The Challenges of “Leading Change” in Military Organizations**
2. Senior Leaders as Change Agents
3. Ideas About Social Change
4. **Defining the Change Problem**
5. **Diagnosing the Organization**
6. **Envisioning the Change**
7. Addressing Resistance and Ambivalence
8. Planning and Implementing Change
9. Inheriting, Sustaining, and Terminating Change Efforts
10. Student Presentations

Lessons 4 through 9 correspond to Activities One through Six in this workbook. Thus, students have the opportunity during the first three lessons to select their preferred problem to solve through a change effort. Not all steps in any given Activity were performed due to time constraints, however any omitted steps were incorporated into the seminar discussion.

The general lesson structure follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Hour: Seminar dialogue on the lesson topics using the monograph and selected case study
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Hour: Experiential activities
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour: Insights from the experiential activity, further dialogue on the topic and its connections to previous material

---

<sup>1</sup> Christopher G. Pernin, Elliot Axelband, Jeffrey A. Drezner, Brian B. Dille, John Gordon IV, Bruce J. Held, K. Scott McMahon, Walter L. Perry, Christopher Rizzi, and Akhil R. Shah, Peter A. Wilson, Jerry M. Sollinger, *Lessons from the Army's Future Combat*

## LESSON PLANS

### ***Lesson 1 – The Challenges of “Leading Change” in Military Organizations***

This lesson introduces the course and expands upon student or participant prior knowledge about organizational change and vision. The focus for the initial lesson is on the challenge of change in *military* organizations. What are natural difficulties that military organizations face when trying to change?

Required readings include the monograph Foreword, Introduction, and chapter 1. These explain the challenges of change and the shortcomings of common change models found in the commercial sector when applied to military organizations. Chapter 1 of the monograph situates the student in the role of change agent, which frequently involves internal consultation. What are the major challenges facing leaders who recognize the need for change?

Commentaries on why change is difficult are also recommended. One example is Suzanne Nielsen, “An Army Transformed: The U.S. Army’s Post-Vietnam Recovery and the Dynamics of Change in Military Organizations,” *The Letort Papers*, September 10, 2010, <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1020> (accessed October 26, 2017), pages 4-24. This reading provides a good opening study on the painful lessons learned from a historical change effort – the Army’s post-Vietnam recovery. The Introduction of the Galvin primer generalizes these lessons and discusses the problems that military leaders face when driving change in their organizations.

I typically open the course by having the students conduct a brainstorming exercise on the worst examples of change in their organizations. It only requires a few minutes, as participants will readily produce a number of well-traveled tales of disastrous change. Along with being a good icebreaker, the exercise allows the facilitator to tell the participants to set aside all the bad stuff and spend the rest of the time focusing on how to foster successful change.

### ***Lesson 2 – Senior Leaders as Change Agents***

So what is the role of senior leaders in large military organizations regarding change? To

serve as change agents, those maintaining the organization’s competitive advantage. *Change agents* are internal consultants, members of the organization who consult and advise leaders on what to change, how, and why. The message is that complacency is a military organization’s greatest internal threat – what can leaders do to promote an environment that fosters continuous improvement?

Required readings include Chapter 2 of the monograph that defines and explains the roles and challenges of being a change agent and internal consultant. Additional readings can focus on stories of individuals who successfully drove change as opposed to individuals who failed. Students are likely to provide personal examples of such failures. As with Lesson 1, the intent is to limit discussions of failures – focus on insights but do not dwell on the stories no matter how entertaining they may be.

### ***Lesson 3 – Ideas About Social Change***

Historically when studied at the macro level, social and organizational change are viewed very similarly. How it occurs in a society is similar to how it occurs in an organization, only the power structures and networks differ. At the strategic level, changes in the defense enterprise influence civil-military relations and therefore social structures. The reverse is also true.

This lesson presents a number of constructs that students can use to describe and explain the change that is going on in the environment – whether previous assignments, private social life, or the strategic-level environment to which they will soon enter. It will show that change is not merely a top-down directed affair from above, the common form of change seen in the military. Change also occurs in the competition of ideas.

Required readings include Chapter 3 of the monograph that presents several concepts of social change such as *open systems theory*, *complex adaptive systems*, and processes of *institutionalization*. The middle period can be used to apply these models to a social phenomenon of the students’ choosing. Possible topics include diversity & inclusion, political polarization, and ordinary civil-military relations. The more controversial the topic, the better.



### ***Lesson 4 – Defining the Change Problem***

This lesson is the first to use the Activity structure. Students by now have a problem they wish to solve, and will use this lesson to define it and articulate it. Students will situate themselves within an organization that is plagued by: (a) unsatisfactory performance, (b) misalignment with the environment, (c) low morale or commitment, or (d) other recognized problem. What are the first steps that the leader should take to confirm the existence and articulate a problem? What steps follow that lead to an active change effort?

Students may be accustomed to the idea that problem definition follows a thorough analysis of the organization. At the strategic level, the opposite is more likely – the problem must be defined first and communicated among the organization's leadership such that they become convinced to pursue data collection on the problem. The change problem in this case is more like a hypothesis to be tested than a declaration.

The lesson also covers the tools or 'levers' that change agents must master to describe and explain problems – levels of analysis, scope of the problem/change effort, pacing of change, and artifacts of culture (e.g., institution theory). With these, students can begin to describe the indicators of problems that they perceive, so that (in the next lesson) they can pursue evidence.

Required readings include Chapter 4 of the monograph and case studies on problem determination. At a minimum, students should complete Activity One, steps 1 through 3 – articulating the current state, desired future state, and undesired future state.

### ***Lesson 5 – Diagnosing the Organization***

Diagnosis is the art of identifying the best explanation for a phenomenon. In the context of organizations, diagnosis serves the same purpose as with a medical visit – to find the best possible explanation for what ails the organization. This is difficult in large organizations because of the quantity (and reliability) of information available and the density of structures and processes in hierarchical organizations like the U.S. military. To translate the perception that a problem exists to a clear understanding and explanation of the

problem's source often requires a systematic approach to data collection and analysis.

Required readings should include Chapter 5 of the monograph, which presents two of many diagnostic models available, and reports comparing and contrasting other models, including those currently in use. These models help students understand the organization's behaviors and relationships with the environment so they can collect the right data, analyze it to confirm or deny the existence of a problem, and predict the results if no action is taken.

At a minimum, students should complete both steps of Activity Two at a superficial level. For example, in step 1, students can list a representative example for each factor rather than an exhaustive list. For step 2, students may only need to select one factor for iterative analysis.

### ***Lesson 6 – Envisioning the Change***

In Lesson 4, students defined the desired future state in which the entire problem was solved. However when it comes to the resulting change effort, it may not be possible to solve the entire problem as identified – perhaps the time window is too great or the environment too uncertain. Nevertheless, the change effort requires its own desired outcome. This will be the *change vision*.

Students will learn a process for developing the change vision—a mental image of the outcomes of the change effort—and a vision statement, a 'bumper sticker' or symbol that will convey the meaning of the vision to others. Students will also understand the relationship between vision and vision statement.

In very large organizations, expressing the desired future state is not enough. Leaders and members alike deserve a fair understanding of how the organization is going to achieve the desired state through the change effort. In military parlance, this is the commander's intent, expressing purpose, key tasks, and an end state when a campaign or military operation will end. For change efforts, the equivalent is the *concept* that describes the purpose and key activities necessary to reach the desired end state. The U.S.

Army, for example, uses concept documents to describe both the ends and, at a broad level, the ways associated with a doctrinal change. A good concept will help the organization develop suitable, feasible, and acceptable change plans in Lesson 7.

Required readings include Chapter 6 of the monograph and case readings demonstrating the successful translation of the problem definition to a change vision. The cases should include how the vision was formed and articulated both internally and externally to the organization.

Activity Three is fairly challenging, and time may only allow for completion of step 1 on crafting the change vision, and some portion of step 2 on developing the associated symbols of the change effort. Students should be encouraged to reflect on their vision products in preparation for Activity Four (concept development) in the next lesson.

### ***Lesson 7: Addressing Resistance and Ambivalence***

*Note: This lessons reflects a departure from the structure of monograph, which will be corrected when the monograph is next revised.*

This lesson addresses matter of resistance and ambivalence from the organization, as it is often the how that causes change efforts to derail as it is conceived in the minds of leaders. The experiential activity is concept development, which follows on from the previous lesson. Students should not only develop the ‘vision of the ways’ – what does the right path to the vision look like – but also think about how the concept will be articulated so to address potential sources of internal resistance.

Common change management literature treats resistance as a universal negative that must be overcome or suppressed. In reality, there are many degrees of resistance, and some can be beneficial by allowing dissonant ideas to correct potential flaws in the change effort. Moreover at the strategic level, *ambivalence* is the greater enemy of planned change. Individual resistors can be identified and dealt with, but large-scale change is often undermined by disagreements

over the problem definition, urgency of the problem, approaches used to resolve it, perceived second- and third-order effects of pursuing change, competition for resources, and other unforeseen or unanticipated issues. How the change agent predicts and addresses such issues goes a long way toward getting a change effort past the idea stage and into execution.

Required readings include a portion of Chapter 7 (pp. 86-91 only) and all of Chapter 8 of the monograph, and should also include academic or business literature readings on resistance – in particular readings about systemic forms of resistance that are not necessarily borne of the will of any particular member.<sup>2</sup> Case studies should focus on examples of how poor handling of resistance led to change failure (rather than on examples of resistance itself).

Activity Four does not address resistance or ambivalence directly. Rather, it causes students to develop the elements of the concept, from which they should account for resistance against *how* the change effort will proceed. Communicating the change effort will be the focus for Activity Six.

### ***Lesson 8: Planning and Implementing Change***

This lesson covers pre-launch planning for the life of the change effort, including launch and post-launch sustainment. Too often, leaders and change agents will work toward a successful launch and assume that the effort will go on automatic thereafter. Clearly, this is a recipe for failure.

How will the leader ensure progress in the change effort? What is the best way to divide the labor and coordinate across subordinate activities? What will be the ‘phases’, and what will be used as ‘decision points’ for moving from one ‘phase’ to another? What will be the prime short-term and lag indicators of success and failure? What will ensure the continued legitimacy of the change effort after turnover of the leadership and change agents?

Required readings for this lesson include the remainder of Chapter 7 and case readings covering the design and architecture of the

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Ann Gilley, Marisha Godek, and Jerry W. Gilley, “Change, Resistance, and the Organizational Immune

System,” *SAM Advanced Management Journal* 74, no. 4 (October 2009): 4-10.

change effort – covering how the work is divided within the organization, who will oversee the effort and how, and all the initial coordinating mechanisms required to ensure success.

Ideally, students should complete (at least superficially) steps 1 through 3 of Activity Five during this lesson. Of primary importance is step 1 – the architecture, as steps 2 and 3 logically follow.

### **Lesson 9 – Inheriting, Sustaining, and Terminating Change**

*Note: Activity Six deviates from the lesson by focusing on communicating the change effort rather than situating the student in positions of having to inherit and sustain a change effort. This is partly because of the difficulties of setting what amount to hypothetical contexts in an experiential setting. Moreover, communicating the change involves setting conditions by which leadership of the effort can be transferred to incoming leaders.*

Many students arrive at their next duty stations and find themselves in the midst of several on-going change efforts. Because many change efforts outlive their initiators, particularly in the military where individuals rotate every two to three years, the need to sustain a change effort to its completion is ever-present. But how does one determine when change efforts should be sustained? Or should they be redirected, terminated, reversed, or rebuilt?

Of course, not all change is top-driven or deliberately planned. Quite a number of great ideas come from the rank and file. However, once an innovative idea has taken root, at which point does it need to be brought ‘into the system’ and converted into a deliberate change? Should it be at all, if the process of assimilation fundamentally changes the character of the innovation? These will be explored both in theory and in practice.

Because sustainment of change is heavily context-dependent, there is not a general-purpose experiential activity useful for directly reinforcing the lesson outcomes. Instead, Activity Six follows the planning and implementation with launch preparation – what events or actions will define the beginning of the change effort.

Required readings include Chapter 9 and the conclusion of the monograph. Case study

readings should emphasize the challenges of sustaining change over the long-haul, or matters of change fatigue and other cultural barriers to change.

Activity Six is quite robust, but each of the four steps is important. Facilitators can consolidate the questions within each step to single questions each to simplify and streamline the exercise for time. The most important step is #3, the actual launch plan, where students are expected to map out the major events associated with the launch period.

### **Lesson 10 – Student Presentations**

The format and assessment of the course outcomes via student presentations is left to the facilitator. The format traditionally used in the Leading Change course is a *poster session*, whereby students use a whiteboard or poster board to create a visual display of their chosen change effort and solution, and then engage with other students as they circulate the room in a convention or conference-type setting. The advantages are that students are able to engage continuously for periods of time on their topic rather than sitting and awaiting ‘their turn’ for presenting.

Over a three-hour period with 15 or 16 students, the class is divided into three ‘rounds.’ In each round, 1/3 of the class (five to six students) post on a whiteboard in the classroom. For 40 minutes, the rest of the class circulates among the presenters and engage. Presenters are told to have an ‘elevator speech’ prepared of not more than a minute and have one-page handouts available. Students learn that the intense engagement period causes them to update their ideas. It is not recommended to lengthen the time – presenters will be tired after 40 minutes. Facilitators should allow 15 minutes between rounds to allow time for setup.

A brief after-action review of the poster session and the course should follow the third round. This allows for reflection and sharing of insights that emerged from the engagement.



For this and other publications, visit us at [armywarcollege.edu](http://armywarcollege.edu)