Bite-Sized Training™
Managing Change

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1. Introduction

Change management is a familiar phrase these days. But despite this, all too often, people talk about change management without really knowing what it is, or what is involved.

Because change is the new status quo, it is really important you and your team understand how it applies to the people it touches and to the organization as a whole. You don't have to be a change management expert to appreciate the nuances of managing change.

Regardless of your role in the actual change process, you need to be able to adopt a change mindset and be able to make a positive contribution to change initiatives that cross your path.

This **Bite-Sized Training™** session is designed to get you thinking about what change management is and become more aware of what

is involved when leaders have to make changes. In a Bite-Sized lesson that you can do in around one hour, we'll:

- Help you understand why organizational change is so difficult.
- Test your personal tolerance for ambiguity.
- Show you a model for understanding and communicating what change really is.
- Outline what you can do to effect change more smoothly.

When you're finished with this lesson, you should feel very comfortable with the concept of change management and be prepared to assist with making the change process successful. Next time you're facing a change initiative, use this workbook with your whole team so that everyone understands the challenges of change better.

2. The Difficulty with Change

Change is not a natural state. It demands that you act or think in a way that you haven't done previously. Because of the uncertainly that goes hand-in-hand with change, there's often a great deal of resistance to it.

Change, though, is what provides new and improved ways of accomplishing what is currently being done. It's a necessary component of growth and advancement.

Simply being told that change is a good thing doesn't necessarily mean people will automatically believe you, and embrace the transition with zeal. Sometimes the best way to convince yourself and others that change really is positive is to think about how change has affected you personally.

When you get in touch with how you've reacted to change in the past, you can bring a renewed attitude and perspective toward the change that you're currently facing.

Action: Use the following exercise to think about changes you've experienced, the resistance you had initially, and then use the benefit of hindsight to put change in the right perspective. (Do this for a change originated by someone else, rather than a change you've initiated or led yourself.)

Think of a major change that you were involved with at work. Describe the situation briefly:
What was the direct impact of the change on you?
How did you first learn about the change?

Think back and describe how you first felt about the change.

How did your feelings and perception change over time?

What triggered your revised view of the change?

Thinking about the change from your current vantage point, describe the process and the outcome.

Note the differences between how you felt then, and how you feel now, and briefly record what you attribute the difference to.

Having completed the exercise, you should have much more understanding about how people react to change in general. It"s very normal to be upset, wary, or even hostile at first. As time goes by, and you have the advantage of seeing the positive outcomes of the change, your attitude usually becomes more positive.

Remembering your own reactions helps you build empathy for what others are going through, and this makes you much more prepared to handle the objections and resistance you"ll likely encounter.

Tip:
This is a great exercise for yourself and your team whenever you are facing change or faced with implementing change. By understanding your own reactions to change, it"s much easier to relate to others who are being asked to change, and help them through the process as much as possible.

You might also like to take the opportunity to reflect on how your experiences map onto the change curve – a model describing the transition stages of personal and organizational change.

3. Tolerance for Ambiguity

Understanding your own reactions to change is very helpful, but it"s also useful to understand how well you tolerate uncertainly and ambiguity in general.

Everyone has a different capacity for dealing with change in their environment. By looking at your personal ability to deal with change, you can better understand your reactions and the reactions of your team or others affected by change.

This increased self-awareness will help you prepare others for change and potentially lead a change initiative.

The questions on the next page are based on the scale that Budner developed in his 1962 article entitled "Intolerance of Ambiguity as a Personality Variable."

Action: Respond to each statement indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with it. Use the following rating scale:

7 – Strongly Agree   3 – Slightly Disagree
6 – Moderately Agree   2 – Moderately Disagree
5 – Slightly Agree   1 – Strongly Disagree
4 – Neither Agree nor Disagree

Rating	Statement
	1. If the expert can't provide a definitive answer, he or she probably doesn't know much.
	2. It would be interesting to live in a different country and experience a foreign culture.
	3. Every problem has a solution.
	4. If you live a scheduled or regimented life, you miss out on the joys of life.
	5. The type of job I most prefer is one where my duties and responsibilities are very clear and certain.
	6. I like trying to solve complex problems.
	7. Breaking down a complicated issue into small, simple problems rarely leads to success in the long run.
	8. Originality and not being afraid to be different are traits found in the most interesting and inspiring people.
	9. It's always better to face the known than the unknown.
	10. If a person sees an issue as black and white, he or she is failing to appreciate the complexity of the problem.
	11. If you have a predicable life you are in an enviable position.
	12. Most of the important decisions we need to make in life are based on incomplete or insufficient information.
	13. In a social setting I prefer to know the people rather than facing a group of unfamiliar faces.
	14. When you are given vague directions you have an opportunity to express your creativity and innovativeness.
	15. An ideal world is one where everyone has similar values and morals.
	16. The sign of a good leader is when he or she challenges you to see the world from a different perspective.

Scoring: The scale is designed to measure your intolerance for ambiguity, therefore, the higher the score the less at ease you are with uncertainty. Before adding up your rating scores, each of the even numbered statements must be reverse scored. This means a 7 becomes a 1, a 6 becomes a 2, a 5 becomes a 3 and vice versa.

There are three subscales included in the assessment:

1. Novelty – measuring how threatening you find new situations, or challenges which you have not previously encountered.

2. Complexity – measuring your tolerance for highly complex situations with many variables.

3. Insolubility – measuring how comfortable you are with ambiguous situations where there is no obvious solution.

Calculate each subscale separately and then total your score at the end. (Remember to use the corrected score!)

Novelty:

S. 2 ____ + S. 9 ____ + S. 11 ____ + S. 13 ____ = ☐

Complexity:

S. 4 ___ + S. 5 ___ + S. 6 ___ + S. 7 ___ + S. 8 ___ + S. 10 ___ + S. 14 ___ +

S. 15 ___ + S. 16 ___ = ☐

Insolubility:

S. 1 ____ + S. 3 ____ + S. 12 ____ = ☐

Total: ☐

The average score is between 44 and 48. Scoring higher than that is an indication that you have a greater than average intolerance for ambiguity and uncertainly. This may mean that your perception of change is less favorable than average. However, this is strictly a self awareness test and the results have not been validated. It is important to treat your answers as a guide to discovering your attitude toward change and perhaps working on seeing the positive aspects of change in the workplace.

Tip:
This is a great tool for sharing with your co-workers. It will help them identify how well they cope with uncertainty and this self-awareness can help them to develop greater tolerance. Related to the concept of tolerating ambiguity is a person's locus of control. This is a measure of how much a person attributes things in life happening by chance versus by choice. To read more about this concept and measurement, see our article here.

# 4. Modeling Change with Lewin's Model of Change Management

Understanding your own feelings toward change is one way of anticipating how others will feel so that you can better assist them as they deal with the process of change. Another way to do this is to make the idea of change real and tangible for them. Too often, change is thought of as an ethereal and dreaded unknown. By expressing it in terms that make sense to people, you can begin an honest dialogue about what is happening and how people are feeling.

One of the most succinct ways of looking at change was proposed by Kurt Lewin in the 1950s. As a physicist, he brought change down to a physical level. He likened the process of change to the processes involved when changing the physical properties of water. He called his model "Unfreeze – Change – Refreeze". (You can read more about it here.)

By applying this model to a proposed change you communicate the change process effectively, and help yourself and others see how it will take shape over the course of the project.

Lewin"s model likens change to the process of unfreezing and then refreezing a block of ice in a different/changed shape. So you"re now going to create your own ice model of an impending change.

Action: Think of an upcoming change you foresee at your workplace or one that you have recently gone through. Briefly describe the existing situation in the block of ice below.

Description of Pending Change:
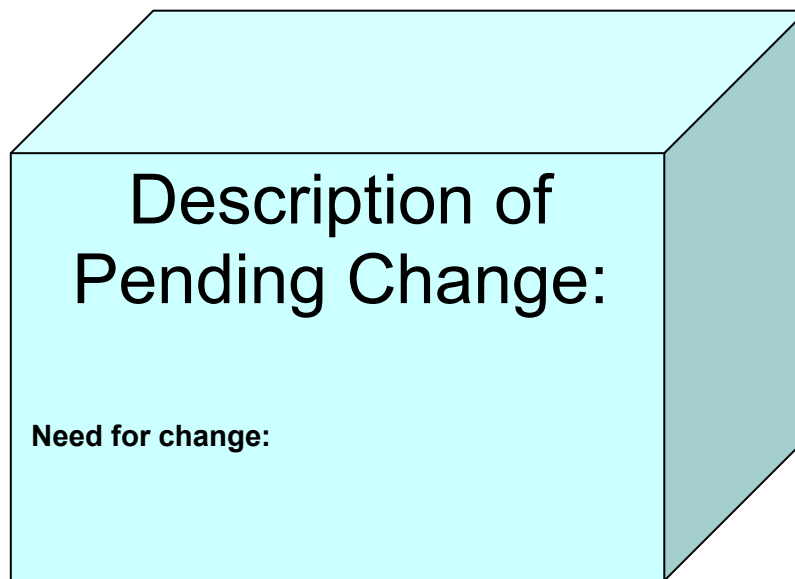
Need for change:

Think of the first step toward change as the process of unfreezing the block of ice and melting it into water.

By unfreezing, you put the ice in a state that is open to change. In an organization this means

that for change to begin, the organization must be prepared to accept the change.

Here are nine principles of change that you should consider when thinking about how best to introduce a change initiative in your organization:

- **Change should be organized and systematic.** This means gathering information on the current state of affairs, uncovering what happened in previous change attempts (good and bad), analyzing your findings, and developing a planned approached to achieve the desired end state. If you allow change just to "happen," the resulting chaos will throw everyone into survival mode. You need to know how ready the organization is to change as well as the history of change so you don"t repeat the same mistakes.

- **Successful change starts at the "top"** (or is at least demonstrably supported by the top). Change is difficult, even in the best of circumstances. When times get tough, people look to their leaders for direction. You have to make sure your leaders are walking the talk and modeling support for the desired outcome.

- **Successful change involves everyone.** Just because change needs to be led from the top doesn"t mean it should be pushed onto people. On the contrary, change must be discussed and planned for at every level of the organization. When you do this, you secure employee support for the systems and processes that will be put in place once the change initiative is underway. It won"t feel forced on them; rather, they will feel ownership in the problem and solution.

- **Communicate, communicate, communicate.** This can"t be emphasized enough. Change is stressful and not knowing what is happening creates fear, doubt, resentment, and anger. A change program must communicate why change is necessary, detail what to expect, and solicit continuous feedback from all participants. This ensures information is flowing up, down, and across company lines, and that core messages are being reinforced through multiple channels. With change, there is no such thing as over-communication.

- **Get personal with your change message.** Remember that change affects the people who are the organization. Tell people exactly what is expected of them, outline what their roles and responsibilities are, and put resources in place to support them during the change period. This shows care and concern and it communicates how committed the organization is to making the change a success.

- **Align your changes with values and ideas your employees can embrace.** People won"t easily be cajoled into doing something they don"t want to do or don"t believe in. Whenever you plan a program for change, make sure it aligns with the overall aims of your organization, and the people who work there. Whenever you create a connection at a values and beliefs level, you set up an equation for success.

- **Know how you will measure success**. The process of change can be time consuming, especially when you"re looking at transformational changes and not just reactionary ones. You need to be clear about what a successful change looks like and how you will know you have achieved it. Develop specific measures that you can monitor and evaluate regularly.

- **Appeal to reason.** People are, for the most part, rational, and they will respond favorably to a well-balanced explanation of why the changes are needed. By doing this with a comprehensive communication plan, you allow people to make up their own minds about whether they can support the changes and do what needs to be done to make them happen. The process of creating a rational argument for the change also helps the change leaders to become more aware of the issues surrounding the change, and less likely to veer off course when obstacles present themselves.

- **Reassure, where you can.** People's first reaction when they hear about change is to worry about their status and their jobs. After all, people who have done well under the status quo genuinely can have a lot to lose. Others may worry unnecessarily, and may choose to "jump ship" rather than be forced out later. Think about how you're going to minimize the effects of change on people, and how you can help the casualties.

Action: Think about the change principles listed above. Then write down ways you can prepare your team, your co-workers, other stakeholders, and the organization for the change, and how you can help them accept it, in the puddle of water below.

Unfreezing
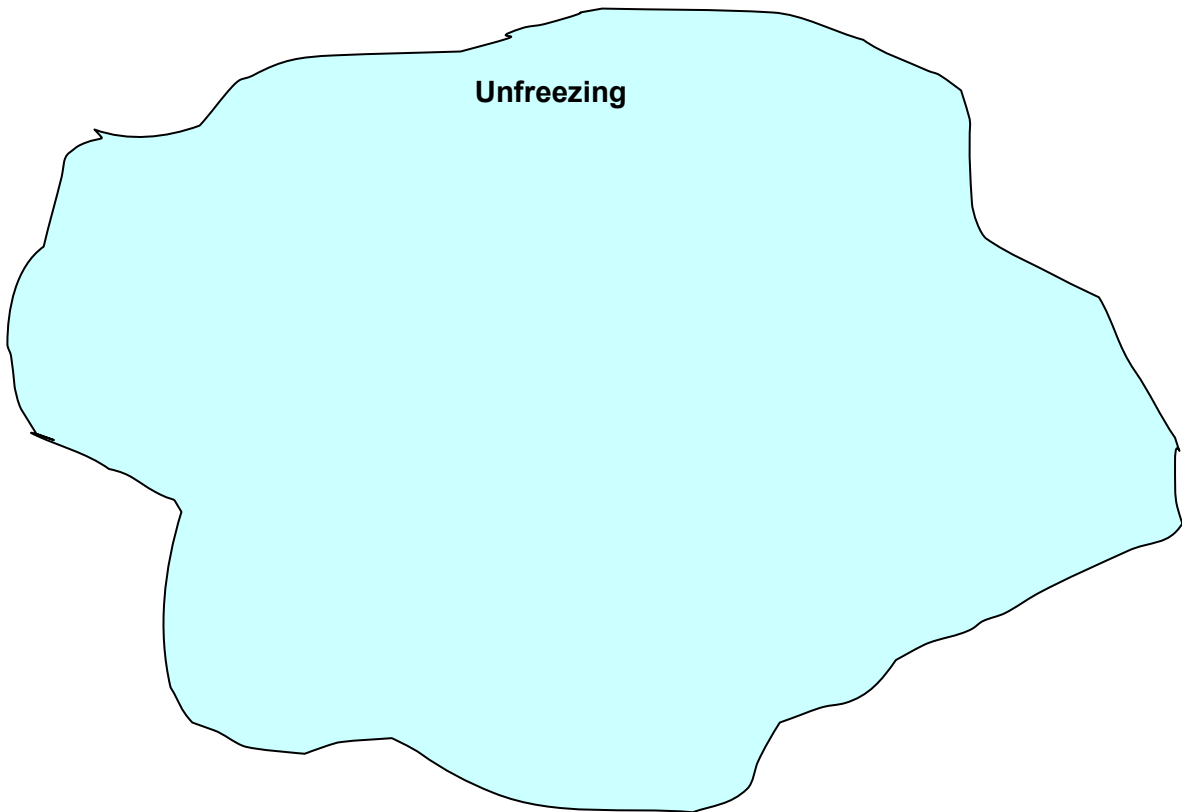
When you've put the organization into a state of preparedness, you need to make a new reality. Using the water model, you pour the water into a new molded shape. This is the change that is effected. At this stage of change, the organization and its people begin to behave in ways that support the desired change. To do this successfully you need to be aware of successful change tactics.

The most recognized authority on change management tactics is John Kotter. He is a Harvard professor, world-renowned authority on leadership and change, and the author of the highly respected, 1998 book titled "Winning at Change Leader to Leader." These are the first seven of his eight steps for implementing successful transformations:

Establish Urgency – inspire people to change by identifying and communicating the realities of the situation. What are the forces that make this change imperative? Outline the consequences of not changing, and bring the results of successful change to life.

Form a Guiding Coalition – put together a team of **leaders** who have the ability to inspire others and encourage everyone to pull together. These people need to have an emotional as well as

rational commitment to the change and be willing and able to spread their passion throughout the organization.

Create a Strategic Vision – decide where you are going and develop a strategic plan that will get you there. Make sure your change leaders and the entire team are clear about the vision.

Communicate the Vision – applying a key principle of change, use all the means available to you to communicate what you intend to change, why, and how. Remember that one of your key modes of communication is having your leaders model the desired behavior.

Empower your Employees to Act – pave the way for change by removing obstacles and providing as much support, resource, and feedback as you can. Be sure to recognize the efforts of employees and allow them to effect changes in their own way.

Create Short-Term Wins – set change goals in small increments so you can enjoy success early on. This builds the momentum for change and encourages everyone to press forward and participate.

Consolidate your Gains to Produce More Gains – as your change momentum builds, use the successful outcomes to generate more ideas for change. Evaluate all your systems and policies for inconsistencies with the current change movement.

> **Tip:**
> You can learn more about Kotter"s 8-Step Change Model in [this article](#).

Action: Think about Kotter"s tactics for implementing change and decide how you will help your organization start to take on a new form and implement the desired changes. What do you expect to happen and how do people need to act and think in order to bring about the change? What can you do to assist this process? Write down your ideas in the cylinder mold on the next page.
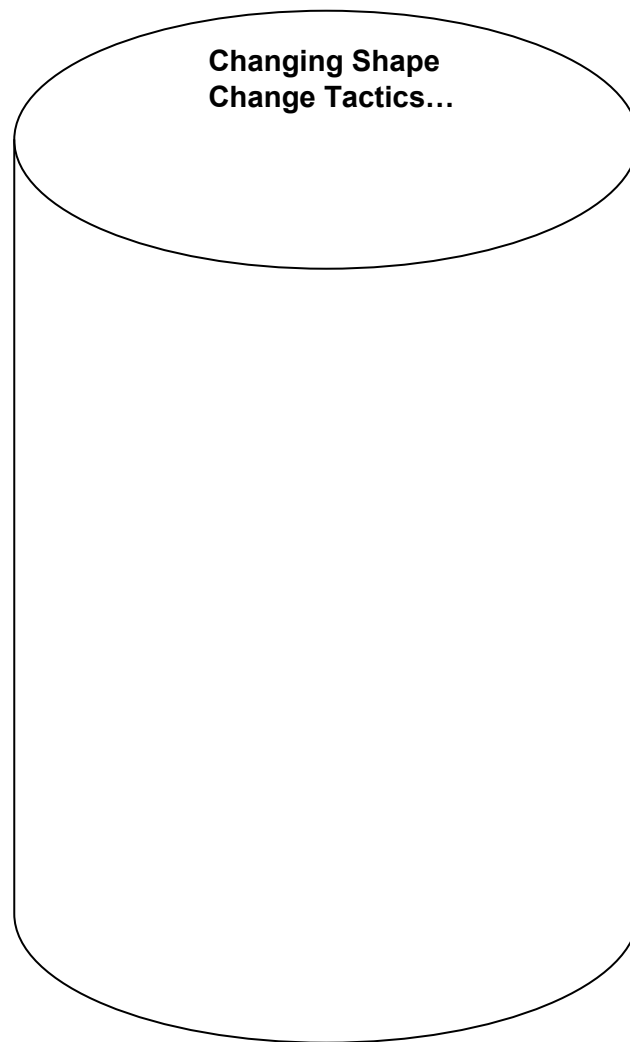
**Changing Shape
Change Tactics…**

The last step in Lewin"s model requires refreezing the water to create the new shape. Here you are ensuring the change was accomplished successfully, making sure that it"s incorporated into all facets of the organization. Kotter calls this last step (which is also the eighth step in his Change Model) "Anchoring the Change." For long lasting results, the change must become inherent in the corporate culture. For instance, you"ll need to:

- Align the behavior of new staff with the changes you"ve implemented.

- Ensure that leaders continue to support the change.
- Connect the changes to organizational success every chance you get.

Action: Think of ways you can ensure the change is incorporated into the fabric of your organization. How will it be applied to your reward and recognition program? How will you announce the changes? How will you instill pride and ownership of the change in the people who work in the organization? Write your ideas in the frozen cylinder on the next page.

Refreezing
Ways of Embedding Change…
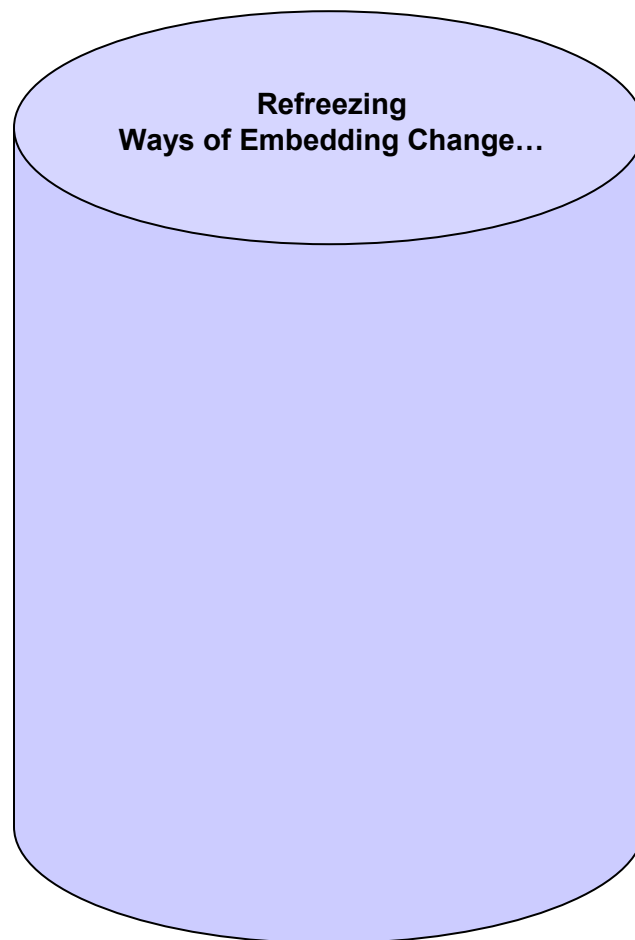
Through doing these exercises, you've probably developed some new ideas for how to implement change in your organization successfully. You can build on these ideas further by working through additional Mind Tools resources. (We've provided some suggestions in the box in the right.)

Further Reading:
As well as looking at what you should do, it"s sometimes helpful to also consider what not to do; examining both sides gives a fuller picture.

There are also other change models which you may find helpful: The Burke-Litwin Change Model, identifies how different organizational elements influence outcomes of the change program. The ADKAR Change Model identifies the communication goals for each phase of your project.

5. Key Learning Points

Whether you're the leader of change or part of the team being led, understanding how change is perceived and how to provide support to yourself and others through a change initiative is a very useful skill. Understanding how you reacted to change and your personal tolerance for change will give you valuable insight into how others might perceive the situation.

When thinking about change, Lewin's model provides a wonderfully concrete interpretation that is easy to apply to the communication and planning of a change initiative.

You‚ll probably have the opportunity to participate in change management in some form or another. Being prepared for what that means to you and the people around you will help you play a positive and instrumental role in the overall process.