



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Agents of Change

Change is essential and people eventually learn to accept it. However, why or how change is brought about still intrigues almost everyone. There are two types of changes—those that just happen, and those that are planned. Change should not be treated as an accidental occurrence. Visualize all changes as proactive, purposeful, intentional and goal-oriented activities, as if they all were planned changes.

What are the goals of planned change?

Planned changes seek improvement in an organization's ability to adapt to changes in its environment. They also try to cause changes in employee behavior.

Who is responsible?

Change agents are primarily responsible for any changes within the organization. They can be managers or non-managers, employees or outside consultants. The most common change agents are outsiders who can challenge the organization's conventional wisdom. Outsiders can offer a more objective perspective than insiders, but they are handicapped by an inadequate understanding of the organization and its history, culture, operating procedures and personnel. Thus, it is advisable to also have an internal champion for the change program to succeed.

Traits of the change agent

- Promotes change actively and enthusiastically
- Builds support for change within the organization
- Overcomes resistance
- Innovative
- Self-confident
- Persistent
- Energetic
- Willing to take a risk

Change affects....

Change affects structure, technology, physical setting and people.

Structure

Changing conditions demand organizational structural changes, and the change agent needs to make sure this happens. Structural changes involve making alterations in authority relations, coordination mechanisms, job design or similar structural variables.

Organizational structure, because of its degree of complexity, formalization and centralization, is a prime target for change. For instance, a horizontal organization may



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undergo a drastic change in order to become a flat organization. Actual structural design can also be modified. The redesigning of jobs or schedules, refining of job descriptions, enrichment of jobs, or introduction of flexible work hours are all change options that an agent may consider.

Technology

Civilization is constantly in flux as far as technology is concerned. Automation, computerization and the introduction of new equipment, tools or methods are the major technological changes that mankind has experienced in the 20th century.

Automation is a technological change that replaces men with machines. Computerization, the most important technological change of this century, changed the face of every organization.

Physical setting

Whatever changes happen to the physical setting, they should not have any impact on organizational or individual performance.

People

Change has the greatest impact on people. Change agents have the crucial responsibility of helping individuals and groups to work more effectively on the eve of change. This involves changing the attitudes and behaviors of organizational members through communication, decision-making and problem solving.