

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Force Field Analysis



The Force field Analysis tool can help to examine forces that drive change and how restraining forces counteract these, as well as help to identify factors that facilitate or hinder the desired outcomes.

The force field analysis was developed by Kurt Lewin, one of the pioneers in the field of change management. Today, it is used in companies to evaluate projects and change and also to make better go/no-go decisions.






Lewin's idea was that the status quo always represents an equilibrium state where forces of inertia are balanced by forces of change. For change to take place, however, the forces of change must be strengthened or the forces of inertia must be weakened.

This tool provides a structured framework that can be used to analyze factors influencing change, thus enabling organizations to identify obstacles and opportunities and facilitating more informed decision-making and effective implementation strategies.

The tool is particularly useful when the forces influencing a change project need to be analyzed and when the reasons for making this decision need to be communicated.

Duration 1.5–2.0 h or longer if done in a workshop setting	Participants project lead or project team	Facilitation flipchart, paper or whiteboard
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Force Field Analysis | Process

Describe the change project 5 min 	Identify the forces supporting the change 20 min 	Identify the forces hindering the change 20 min 	Evaluation 20 min 	Analysis and implementation 30–45 min 
<p>Describe your goal, your vision for the change and write it in the center of the sheet.</p>	<p>Consider what forces drive the change (i.e., internal or external forces). It is important to identify as many factors as possible. Get input from others if this is helpful (also in the next step). Note these on the left-hand side of the sheet.</p> <p>Examples of internal forces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdated machines. • Decreasing motivation. • The need to improve profitability or productivity. <p>Examples of external forces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volatile, uncertain environment. • Disruptive new technologies. • Trends (e.g., demographic, social, technological). 	<p>Brainstorm on the forces that are hindering the change or that do not favor it. Write these down on the right-hand side.</p> <p>Examples of internal factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of the unknown. • Loss of power or influence. • Existing organizational structures. • “That’s not how we do it”. • “Not-invented-here” resistance. <p>Examples of external factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing agreements, working relationships with partners. • Legal rules and regulations. • Existing customer relationships. • Lack of technology. 	<p>Rate the influence that each force has on your change project on a scale of 1–5 (1 = weak, 5 = strong). Then add up the ratings on each side.</p> <p>To visualize these effectively, draw arrows leading to each force. The length of the arrows indicates the strength of the influencing force (see example on the next page).</p>	<p>There are two ways to use the analysis: Decide whether to continue with the project or not. Take a close look at the results of the analysis and decide which forces you can strengthen and which you can weaken to make your project (more) successful. This allows you to develop specific actions, which will, in turn, influence the different factors.</p> <p>A good method to use here is OPERA (see Tool Description).</p>

Force Field Analysis | Example

