



TenStep Supplemental Paper

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Embracing the Five Forces

The success of an organization or an individual lies in overcoming resistances and embracing change. Organizational change can take the form of an expansion strategy, merger or acquisition, a six-sigma or an IPO initiative. Change for individuals however, can be a move in career or job or work behaviors. Facing these changes and overcoming resistance can be tricky but not impossible!

This article gives a bird's eye view of the forces of change that force organizations and individuals adapt to them.

Force 1, Global village: The concept of globalization and a global economy makes more sense today than two decades ago. By the late 1980s more and more organizations were willing to establish their units in a foreign land that was more cost effective in terms of taxes, labor and other resources.

This shift has resulted in mobilization of individuals in geographical locations. Then arose a need for these organizations and their employees to change their work behaviors according to the custom of the new location. The prediction that by 2015, about three million white-collar jobs in the US would be outsourced to different countries itself proves the point.

Force 2, Techno Centric: Another major force of change is the shift of focus of organizations from manpower to technology. These technological changes have helped organizations improve their business by mechanizing some of the routine jobs. Machines like automated teller machines and electronic voice mails for instance, have replaced bank tellers.

This has brought in a two-way change. On the one hand technology has enabled employee participation in decision-making and knowledge sharing organization wide. On the other hand it has also increased lay offs and downsizing. Organizations and individuals alike have to adapt to this change; the former by utilizing employee potential to the maximum and the latter by adapting to the new technology.

Force 3, Customer is the king: The global transition from a seller's market to a buyer's market is another major force of change. Gone are the days when customers had no choice but to take what the sellers offered them. With an open economy customers today have the option of better quality, service and convenience with competitive prices. They can also decide the time, mode and place of delivery of goods.

This has increased the organization's need to change according to customer's demand. The efficiency in serving the customer determines an organization's success or failure.

Force 4, Knowledge edge: The shift to a knowledge economy has brought tremendous changes in the way organizations function today. Technically skilled workers, who were earlier difficult to come across, today form a major part of the workforce.

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Such highly skilled workers are more involved in performing specialized tasks. The less important ones are done either by paraprofessionals or temporary workers.

Force 5, Loyalty pact: A decade ago organizations offered job security and a considerably fair compensation to keep their workers. In return the employees were committed and loyal to their organization. Today however, employees do not get the same job security and employers cannot expect loyalty of the same order. Change has become a constant feature of business.

Therefore organizations and individuals today value loyalty that comes from a shared vision and purpose.

The winners

Organizations that consider changes the cause of chaos and confusion are rarely successful whereas those that look upon them as the perfect ground for personal growth and learning reap the rewards.

Here is a checklist that can help organizations face changes.

- What forces of change are presently influencing the organization?
- What are the current strengths of an organization?
- Which of these strengths would help the organization to succeed in future?
- What new strengths has the organization acquired and what can it acquire in the near future?
- What are the changes in the work behaviors, attitudes and skills of the organization?

Given below are a few tips to master the art of change.

- First understand the forces of change and their impact on the organization
- Steer clear of problems that crop up while adapting to change. Seeking the help of peers, superiors, family members and even subordinates can help.
- Organizations should orient employees to face unexpected changes. This helps ease post change tension.
- Organizations should have clearly defined goals and direct their actions and the resulting changes towards the achievement of these goals.

Remember this

The writing on the wall is clear. Change is inevitable. Organizations are left with two choices – they either adapt to change, implement necessary strategies to do so and survive or resist change and be doomed to failure.