

Managing Complex Change – Alterman Model

OVERVIEW: Initiating change can be overwhelming to navigate and manage. This model, based on research by Lippitt and Knoster, can provide a framework to help assess the readiness for effective change. According to the model, there are six elements required for an increased level of change effectiveness: **Vision, Consensus, Skills, Motivations, Resources,** and an **Action Plan**. If any one of these elements are missing, the change effort could fail with a variety of negative outcomes. By taking the time to assess these elements in the context of the change taking place, it serves to better inform leadership, decision makers, action officers, and change managers, with insight to enable more effective and successful change.

Vision	+	Consensus	+	Skills	+	Motivations	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Success
X	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	=	Confusion
✓	+	X	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	=	Sabotage
✓	+	✓	+	X	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	=	Anxiety
✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	X	+	✓	+	✓	=	Resistance
✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	X	+	✓	=	Frustration
✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	✓	+	X	=	False Starts

CHANGE ELEMENTS: The following describes the elements of change in more detail. Keep in mind, these are high-level and universal. You might want to consider further defining each of the elements in the context of the change that is being considered to bring more clarity to your assessment.

- **Vision:** Clear and compelling vision is critical to successful change management. Leaders must establish a shared understanding of the desired outcome and communicate it effectively to all stakeholders. A lack of vision can lead to **confusion** because there won't be a guiding star during the change process.
- **Consensus:** The idea is that leaders cannot assume they have to power to push through change without gaining a consensus, or the buy-in for change. Without it, there is a risk of **sabotage**.
- **Skills:** Individuals and teams must have the necessary skills and competencies to support the change. If not, leaders must provide training and development opportunities. If there is a lack of skills, feelings of not being prepared or informed on how to do the work can lead to feelings of **anxiety**.
- **Motivations (Incentives):** Change is difficult, so providing incentives to motivate and reward individuals and teams for their efforts is important. Incentives can take many forms, such as recognition, promotions, or financial rewards. Additionally, individual and team motivations to embrace the change intrinsically (motivation) should also be considered. If lacking, the result could be a high degree of **resistance**.
- **Resources:** Leaders must ensure that sufficient resources, such as time, money, or technology, are available to support the change effort. Without adequate resources, the change initiative is likely to fail, to include high levels of **frustration**.
- **Action Plan:** Finally, leaders must create a detailed action plan that outlines the steps required to achieve the vision. The action plan should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) and communicated effectively to all stakeholders. Without a plan, **false starts** could result, forcing a restart or even scrapping the change.

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CHANGE ASSESSMENT: Having a good understanding of our current state situation will help us create a baseline upon which to build. If the elements mentioned above are present and high levels of readiness, the likelihood of success is high. **If any one of the elements are missing, the change effort could fail with a variety of negative outcomes.** *NOTE: While these elements are universal, they may have different meanings in different contexts or situations. Consider how each of the elements might be further defined in the context of the change taking place.*

How do you rate our level of change readiness in these elements? This will provide us with insight into the potential success of change efforts, but also the likelihood of general negative outcomes. This also forces us to think about actions we must take to mitigate potential negative outcomes, but also reinforce success.

- **Assign** a score of **low** (1), **medium** (7), or **high** (10) to each element.
- Add up the points for a **total score** and divide by 6 for the **average score**.
- **Overall** likelihood of success is, or **low** (1-6), **medium** (7-8), or **high** (9-10).
- **NOTE:** *This scale is weighted to emphasize the impact of having any of the elements being rated low.*

Vision	+	Consensus	+	Skills	+	Motivations	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Success (Total ___ ÷ 6)



Based on your assessment, how does this inform your thoughts on individual or organizational levels of readiness for change? What elements of change need focus? Are there potential negative outcomes based on our current state?