

Information Technology Project Management – Fifth Edition

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Managing Organizational Change, Resistance, & Conflict

Chapter 11

Learning Objectives

- ▶ Describe the discipline of organizational change management.
- ▶ Understand the impact of change.
- ▶ Describe how change can be viewed as a process and identify the emotional responses people might have when faced with change.
- ▶ Apply the concepts and ideas in this chapter in order to develop a change management plan. This plan should focus on assessing the organization's willingness and ability to change, developing a change strategy, implementing and tracking the progress toward achieving the change and then evaluating whether the change was successful and documenting the lessons learned from those experiences.
- ▶ Discuss the nature of resistance and conflict and apply several techniques for dealing with conflict and resistance in an efficient and effective way.

Introduction

- ▶ Projects are planned organizational change
- ▶ Project managers and team members are agents of change
- ▶ When implementing the deliverables from a project, it is easy to underestimate the impact of the changes on organizational processes and the way people work
- ▶ The discipline of change management is the area of project management that helps smooth the transition and implementation of the new product or system

Managers & Technical People May Have The False Beliefs

- ▶ People want this change.
- ▶ Monday morning we' ll turn on the system and they' ll use it.
- ▶ A good training program will answer all of their questions and then they' ll love it.
- ▶ Our people have been through a lot of change – what' s one more change going to matter?
- ▶ We see the need for helping our people adjust, but we had to cut something.
- ▶ They have two choices. They can change or they can leave.

Reactions to Change

- ▶ At any given point in our lives, we all go through various changes
 - ▶ School
 - ▶ Family
 - ▶ Personal
- ▶ We have all been through change - but how do we think about and manage it?
- ▶ Dealing with the people issues, or soft side of technology, is an area that most technical people do not enjoy.
- ▶ Many technical people and managers naively believe that the users within the organization will gladly embrace a new system if it is built properly.

In Reality, ...

- ▶ Some people believe that it is easier to gain compliance than it is to gain acceptance
 - ▶ It assumes that everyone will comply and that compliance is long lasting
- ▶ Unfortunately,
 - ▶ The change may not occur
 - ▶ People will comply for a time and then do things to get around the change
 - ▶ Users will accept only a portion of the change
- ▶ And the full benefits of the project are never realized or only after a great deal of time and resources are expended

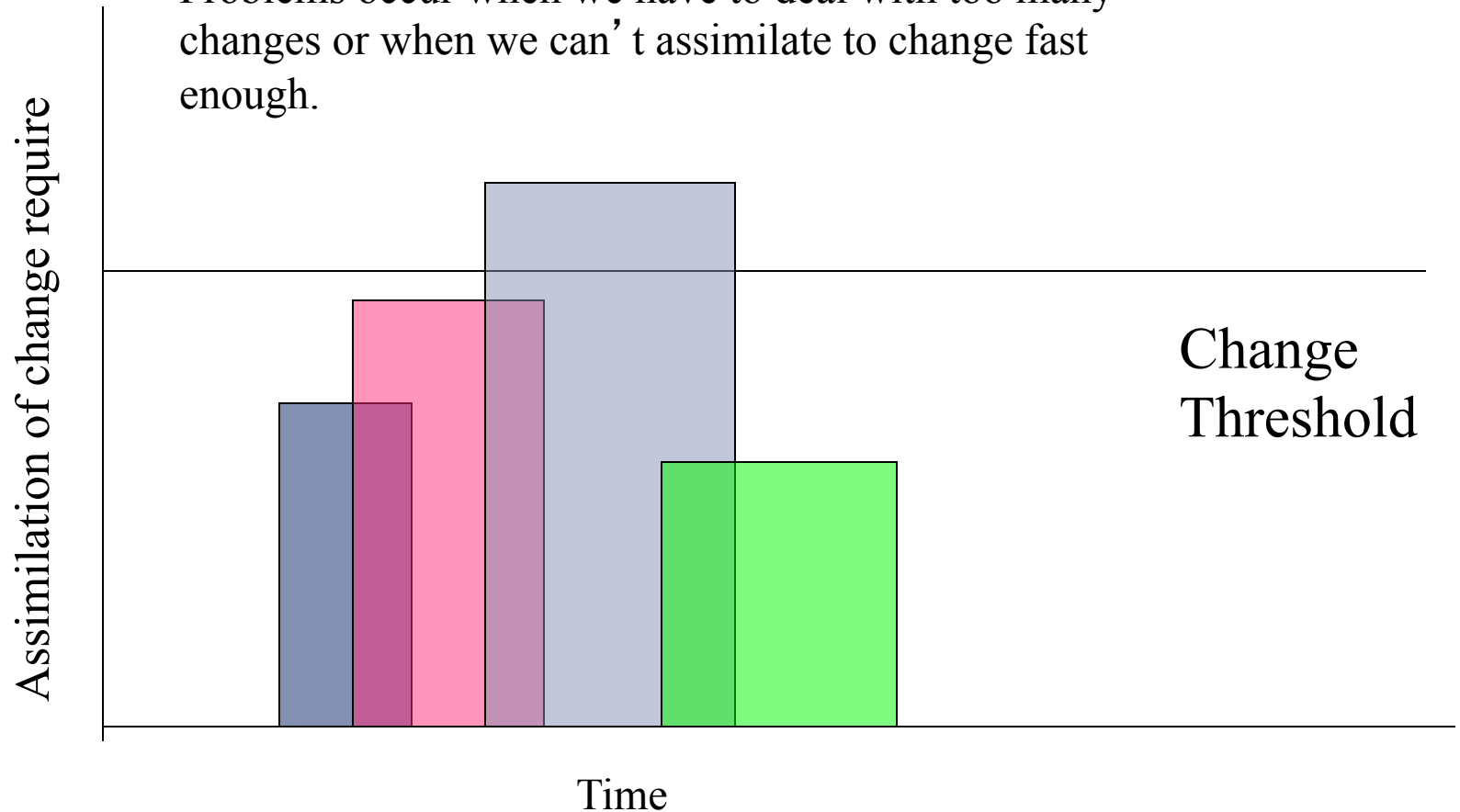
The Nature of Change

- ▶ Whether we view change as positive (anticipation) or negative (dread), there is a certain amount of stress that accompanies each change.
 - ▶ Change has an *Impact*.
 - ▶ Change is a *Process*.
 - ▶ Change is *Emotional*.

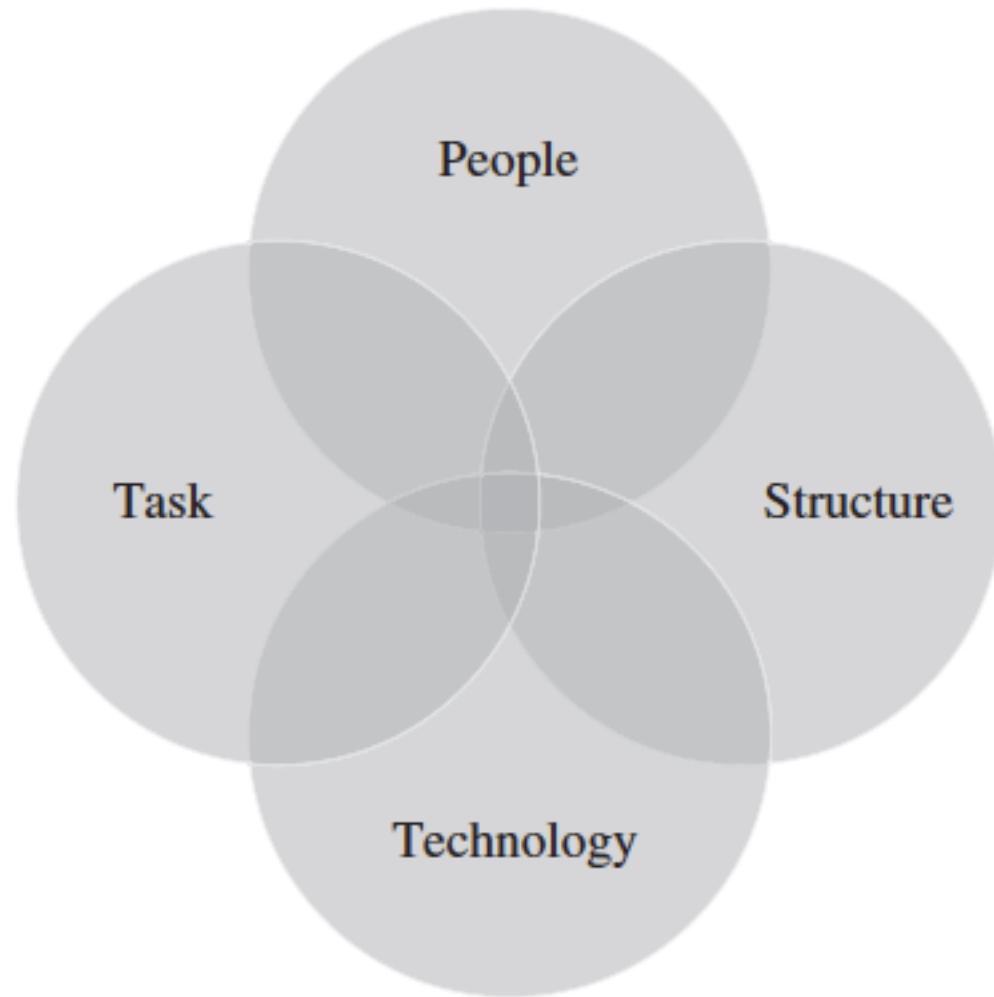
Assimilating Change

Assimilation is the process we use to adjust to positive or negative changes.

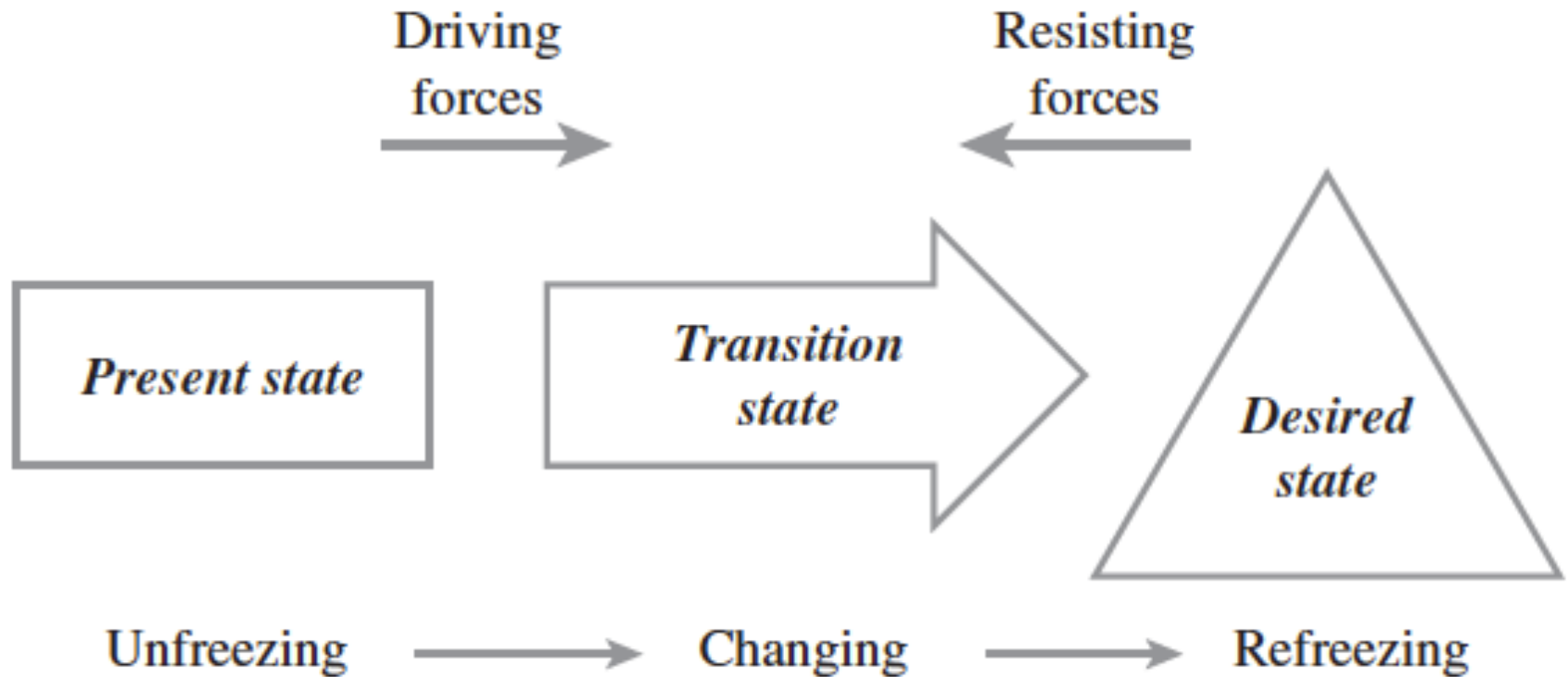
Problems occur when we have to deal with too many changes or when we can't assimilate to change fast enough.



Impact of Organizational Change (Leavitt's Model)

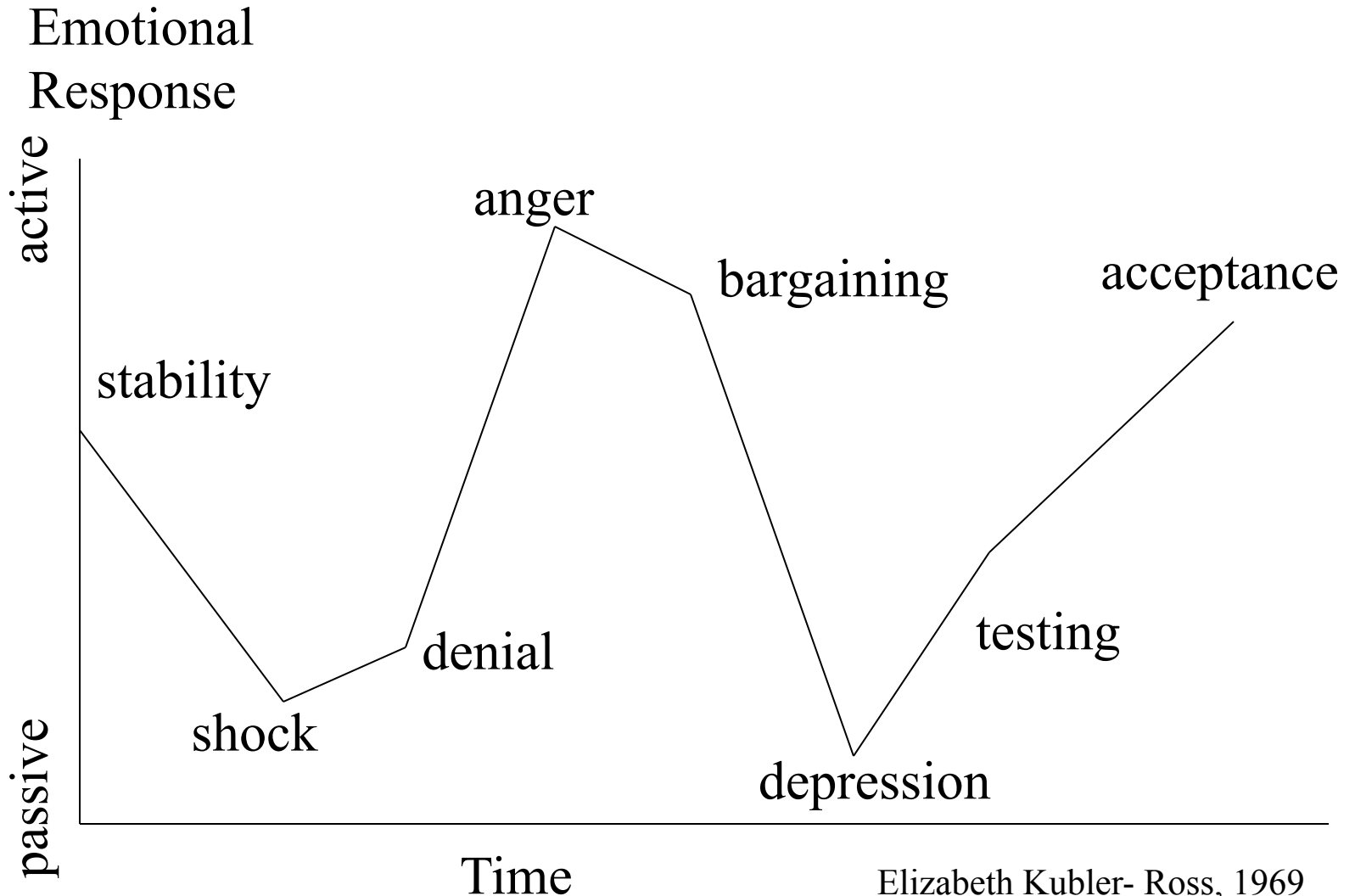


Change is a Process



Force Field Analysis – Lewin, 1951

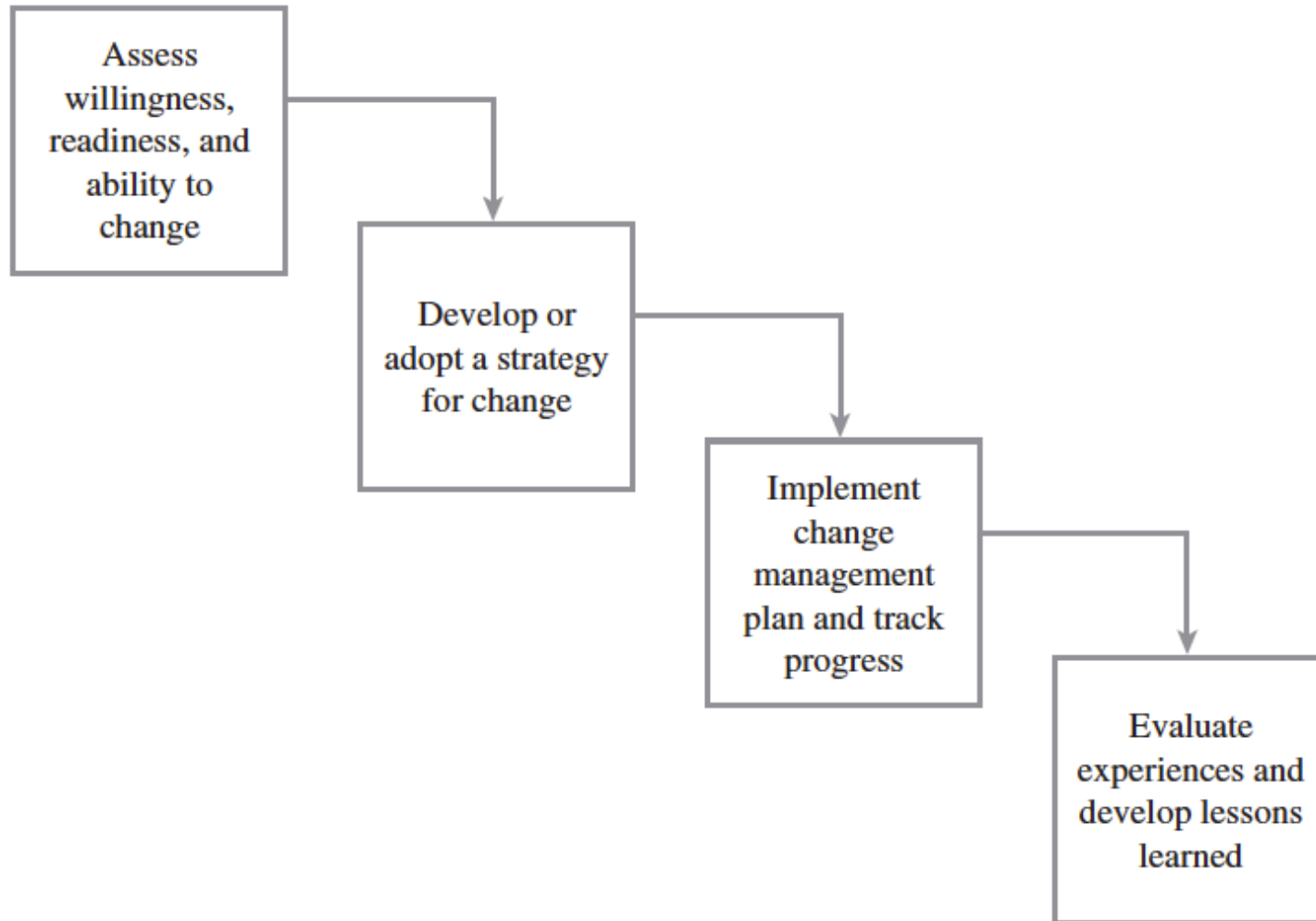
Emotional Responses to Change



Five Stages of Grieving

- ▶ **Denial**
 - ▶ Shock and disbelief
- ▶ **Anger**
 - ▶ Blaming others for the change
- ▶ **Bargaining**
 - ▶ Attempts to make deals to avoid the change
 - ▶ Looks for ways to extend the status quo
- ▶ **Depression**
 - ▶ Admits that change is inevitable and understands the impact
- ▶ **Acceptance**
 - ▶ Coming to grips with the change
 - ▶ Moving on to the new state

Change Management Plan



Assess Willingness, Readiness, and Ability to Change

▶ Sponsor

- ▶ Initiating vs. sustaining sponsor

▶ Change Agents

- ▶ The project manager and team

▶ Targets of Change

- ▶ The users, customers, etc.
- ▶ Must understand
 - ▶ The real impacts of the change
 - ▶ The breadth of change
 - ▶ What's over and what's not
 - ▶ Whether the rules for success have changed

Develop or Adopt a Strategy for Change

- ▶ **Rational–Empirical Approach**
 - ▶ Picture, Purpose, Part to Play
- ▶ **Normative-Reeducation Approach**
 - ▶ Focus on the core values, beliefs, and established relationships that make up the culture of the group.
- ▶ **Power-Coercive Approach**
 - ▶ Compliance through the exercise of power
- ▶ **Environmental-Adaptive Approach**
 - ▶ Although people may avoid disruption and loss, they can still adapt to change

Implement the Change Management Plan and Track Progress

▶ Communication

- ▶ Watch out for the rumor mill!
- ▶ Media is important.
- ▶ Must flow in both directions.
- ▶ What you *don't say* is as important as what you *do say*!

Evaluate Experiences, Develop Lessons Learned, and Communicate Best Practices

▶ LESSONS LEARNED –

- ▶ Experiences should be documented and made available to other project teams

▶ BEST PRACTICES –

- ▶ Provide consistent communication and involvement – **WIIFM (What's In It For Me)**
- ▶ Determine support needs - where do people go for help and information?
- ▶ Measure and communicate progress (Quick Wins)
- ▶ Build the need for change (“Burning Platform”)
- ▶ Ensure visible, consistent sponsorship
- ▶ Allow the disenchanted to vent
 - ▶ Listen, listen, ... and listen some more

Resistance and Conflict

- ▶ Resistance should be anticipated from the outset of the project
- ▶ Resistance can be either overt, in the form of memos, meetings, etc., or covert, in the form of sabotage, foot dragging, politicking, etc.
- ▶ Resistance can arise for many valid reasons.
 - ▶ E.g., Response time of the system is too slow or lacks requested features and functionality
- ▶ Resistance due to cultural or behavioral reasons is harder to rationalize, but still can keep a project from reaching its intended goal

Why Do People Resist Change?

- ▶ People may perceive the change as requiring more time and energy than they are willing to invest.
- ▶ People may feel that a change will mean giving up something that is familiar, comfortable, and predictable.
- ▶ People may be annoyed with the disruption caused by the change, even if they know that it will be beneficial in the long run.
- ▶ People may believe that the change is being imposed on them externally, and their egos will not tolerate being told what to do.
- ▶ People may resist because of the way the decision to change was announced or because it was forced on them.

Conflict Management

- ▶ Focuses on preventing, managing, or resolving conflicts.
- ▶ It is important to identify potential conflicts as early as possible so that the conflict can be addressed.
- ▶ Although conflict can be positive and help form new ideas and establish commitment, negative conflict left unresolved can lead to damaged relationships, mistrust, unresolved issues, continued stress, dysfunctional behavior, and low productivity and morale.

Although conflict is one of the things most of us dislike intensely, it is inevitable. Most often when we try to avoid conflict, it will nevertheless seek us out. Some people wrongly hope that conflict will go away if it is ignored. In fact, conflict ignored is more likely to get worse, which can significantly reduce project performance. The best way to reduce conflict is to confront it.

(Verma, 1998, p. 367)

Types of Conflict

▶ *Traditional View*

- ▶ All conflict should be avoided
 - ▶ “Why can’t we all just get along?”

▶ *Contemporary View*

- ▶ Conflict is inevitable and natural
- ▶ Positive conflict stimulates ideas
 - ▶ “Let’s agree to disagree!”
- ▶ Negative conflict can be damaging

▶ *Interactionist View*

- ▶ Conflict is necessary for performance
 - ▶ “Devil’s advocate”

Approaches to Conflict

- ▶ **Avoidance**
 - ▶ Retreat, withdraw, or ignore conflict
- ▶ **Accommodation**
 - ▶ Appease the parties in conflict
- ▶ **Forcing**
 - ▶ Dominant authority resolves conflict
- ▶ **Compromise**
 - ▶ Bargaining
- ▶ **Collaboration**
 - ▶ Confronting and attempting to solve the problem by incorporating different ideas, viewpoints, and perspectives.

Approach to Conflict Situation

- ▶ Each conflict situation is unique and the choice of an approach to resolve conflict depends on:
 - ▶ Type of conflict and its relative importance to the project.
 - ▶ Time pressure to resolve the conflict.
 - ▶ Position of power or authority of the parties involved.
 - ▶ Whether the emphasis is on maintaining the goals, objectives of the project or maintaining relationships.