Interactions in Organizational Change

Using Influence Tactics to Initiate Change

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In these turbulent times of globalization, technological innovation, and intense competition, change is essential for the survival and prosperity of business organizations. Leaders bear a major responsibility for advocating, initiating, and facilitating major changes in the organization. There are many opportunities to influence change. Leaders influence subordinates to implement 'top-down' change. Leaders influence bosses to approve and support a 'bottom-up' change. Leaders influence peers to join in a coalition to gain approval from higher management for a proposed change. Leaders also seek assistance from peers in implementing a change that has already been authorized by higher management.

This chapter describes how interpersonal influence is exerted in attempts by individual leaders to initiate or facilitate organizational change. The chapter begins with a description of findings in research on dyadic influence tactics. Next is a review of research on how managers use influence tactics to initiate change in organizations. Then the limiting and facilitating conditions for initiating change are discussed, followed by guidelines for using specific tactics effectively. The chapter ends with some suggestions for future research.

DYADIC INFLUENCE TACTICS

The term 'proactive influence tactic' describes a form of observable behavior used by one person (the 'agent') to influence someone else (the 'target') to carry out a request or support a change. A number of studies have identified distinct types of proactive influence tactics (e.g., Kipnis et al., 1980; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990). Building on the earlier work, Yukl and his colleagues (e.g., Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Yukl, 2002) have identified a variety of proactive influence tactics that are relevant for influencing subordinates, peers, and superiors in large organizations. Following is a brief description of 10 tactics that appear to be distinct and relevant for most managers.

1. RATIONAL PERSUASION

This tactic involves the use of explanations, logical arguments, and factual evidence to show that a request or proposal is feasible and relevant for attaining task objectives. Rational persuasion is a flexible tactic that can be used for most types of requests or proposals. Strong forms of rational persuasion include a detailed explanation of the reasons why proposed change is important, and presentation of concrete evidence that it is feasible. Rational persuasion is most appropriate when the target person shares the same task objectives as the manager but disagrees about the best way to attain the objectives.

If the agent and target person have incompatible objectives, then rational persuasion is unlikely to be successful. The effective use of rational persuasion also depends on the agent's persuasive skill, expertise about the request or proposal, and credibility with target persons.

2. Inspirational Appeals

This tactic involves an attempt to develop enthusiasm and commitment by arousing strong emotions and linking a request or proposal to a person's values and ideals. Some bases for ideological appeals include the desire of people to be important, to feel useful, to develop and use their skills, to accomplish something worthwhile, to perform an exceptional feat, to be a member of the best team, or to participate in an exciting effort to make things better. No tangible rewards are promised, only the prospect that the target person will feel good as a result of doing something that is noble and just, making an important contribution, performing an exceptional feat, or serving God and country. To formulate an appropriate appeal, the manager must have insight into the values, hopes, and fears of the person or group to be influenced. The effectiveness of an inspirational appeal also depends on communication skills such as the ability to use vivid imagery and metaphors, to manipulate symbols, and to employ voice and gestures to generate enthusiasm and excitement.

3. Consultation

With consultation the target person is invited to participate in determining how to improve a proposal or in planning how to implement a policy or change that has already been approved. In effect, consultation is one form of empowerment. The use of consultation is more likely to be effective when the agent and target person have compatible objectives (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). A target person with different objectives may decline to participate or use participation as an opportunity to resist change (e.g., slow it down, dilute it). For this reason, it is sometimes necessary to use rational persuasion or inspirational appeals in combination with consultation to bolster target commitment to the change objectives.

4. Exchange

This influence tactic involves the explicit or implicit offer to provide something the target person wants in return for carrying out a request or supporting a proposal. Exchange tactics are especially useful when the target person is reluctant about complying with a request because it offers no important benefits and would involve considerable effort and inconvenience. Exchange provides a way to increase the benefits enough to make it worthwhile for the target person to comply with the request. An essential condition for using this tactic is control over something the target person desires enough to justify compliance. The incentive may involve a wide range of tangible or intangible benefits (e.g., a pay increase or promotion, scarce resources, information, assistance on another task, assistance in advancing the target's career). Sometimes the incentive may be vague rather than explicit, such as a promise to return the favor in some unspecified way at a future time. An offer to exchange benefits will not be effective unless the target person perceives that the agent is able and willing to carry out the agreement.

5. Collaboration

This influence tactic involves an offer to provide necessary resources or assistance if the target person will carry out a request or approve a proposal. Collaboration may seem similar to exchange in that both tactics involve an offer to do something for the target person. However, there are important differences

in the underlying motivational processes and facilitating conditions. Exchange involves increasing the benefits to be obtained by carrying out a request, and it is especially appropriate when the benefits of compliance would otherwise be low for the target person. Collaboration involves reducing the difficulty of carrying out a request, and it is especially appropriate when compliance would be difficult or costly for the target person. Exchange usually involves an impersonal trade of unrelated benefits, whereas collaboration usually involves a joint effort to accomplish the same task or objective.

6. APPRISING

With this tactic the agent explains why a request or proposal is likely to benefit the target person as an individual. One example is to explain why carrying out a request will help to advance the target person's career. Another example is to explain why a proposed change will make the target person's job easier or more interesting. Apprising may involve the use of facts and logic, but unlike rational persuasion, the benefits described are for the target person as an individual, not for the organization. Unlike exchange tactics, the benefits to be obtained by the target person are a by-product of doing what the agent requests, not something the agent will provide. Use of apprising is more likely to be successful if the agent understands the target's needs and how a request or proposal may help to satisfy them. Because the agent makes assertions about likely benefits for the target, agent credibility is required for successful use of this tactic.

7. COALITION TACTICS

Coalition tactics involve getting help from other people to influence the target person. The coalition partners may be peers, subordinates, superiors, or outsiders. When assistance is provided by the superior of the target person, the tactic is usually called an 'upward appeal'. Another distinct type of coalition tactic is to use a prior endorsement by other people to help influence the target person to support your proposal. To be helpful, the endorsements should come from people whom the person respects. Coalition tactics are usually used in combination with one or more of the other influence tactics. For example, the agent may bring along a supporter when meeting with the target person, and both agents may use rational persuasion to influence the target person.

8. PERSONAL APPEALS

A personal appeal involves asking someone to do a favor out of friendship or loyalty to the agent. This influence tactic is not feasible when the target person dislikes the agent or is indifferent about what happens to the agent. The stronger the friendship or loyalty, the more one can ask of the target person. Of course, if referent power is very strong and the request is not excessive, then a personal appeal should not be necessary to make the friendship salient to the request. Personal appeals are most likely to be used when asking for a personal favor, and the target person is more likely to be a lateral peer rather than a subordinate or boss.

9. INGRATIATION

Ingratiation is behavior that makes the target person feel better about the agent. Examples include giving compliments, doing unsolicited favors, behaving deferentially and respectfully, and acting especially friendly. When ingratiation is perceived to be sincere, it tends to strengthen positive regard and make a target person more willing to consider the agent's request. However, when ingratiation is used just before making a request, it is likely to be viewed as manipulative by the target person. Therefore,

this tactic is less useful for an immediate influence attempt than as a longer-term strategy to improve relationships with people.

10. PRESSURE

Pressure tactics include threats, warnings, and assertive behavior such as repeated demands or frequent checking to see if the person has complied with a request. These tactics are sometimes successful in inducing compliance with a request, particularly if the target person is just lazy or apathetic rather than strongly opposed to it. However, pressure is unlikely to result in target commitment, and it may have serious side effects. Hard forms of pressure (e.g., threats, warnings, demands) are likely to cause resentment and undermine working relationships. Softer forms of pressure (e.g., making persistent requests, setting a specific deadline for compliance) are less likely to have adverse side effects.

RESEARCH ON DYADIC TACTICS

A number of studies have been conducted to determine how often the various tactics are used with subordinates, peers, and bosses, and the relative effectiveness of each type of influence tactic when used alone or in different combinations. Most of this research has involved the general use of influence tactics without regard to the specific objectives of the influence attempt. It is not clear whether the results apply to the specific objective of initiating major change in an organization. Nevertheless, because the findings in this research may provide some insights about the tactics that are useful for initiating change, the major findings will be reviewed briefly in this section of the chapter.

TACTICS AND DIRECTION OF INFLUENCE

The direction of influence involves the authority relationship between the agent and target, namely whether the target is a subordinate, lateral peer, or boss. Some tactics are easier to use in one direction than in another. Yukl and Tracey (1992) proposed that several interrelated factors determine the selection of influence tactics for a particular influence attempt. These factors include: (1) consistency with prevailing social norms and role expectations about use of the tactic in that context; (2) agent possession of an appropriate power base for use of the tactic in that context; (3) appropriateness for the objective of the influence attempt; (4) level of target resistance encountered or anticipated; and (5) costs of using the tactic in relation to likely benefits. According to Yukl and Tracey (1992), most agents are likely to select tactics that are socially acceptable, that are feasible in terms of the agent's position and personal power in relation to the target, that are not costly (in terms of time, effort, loss of resources, or alienation of the target), and that are likely to be effective for a particular objective given the anticipated level of resistance by the target.

These propositions can be used to derive hypotheses about likely directional differences in the use of each type of influence tactics. Research by Yukl and his colleagues supported most of the hypotheses (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992; Yukl et al., 1993). Rational persuasion is a flexible tactic that is used frequently in all directions and for most types of influence attempts. This tactic is especially prominent in upward influence attempts because of the difficulty of using most other proactive tactics with bosses. Coalitions are useful for both lateral and upward influence attempts, but they are not used much with subordinates. Consultation, inspirational appeals, exchange, legitimating, personal appeals, collaboration, and apprising are used more to influence subordinates and peers than to influence bosses. Most of these directional differences have also been supported by other researchers (e.g., Kipnis et al., 1980; Erez et al., 1986; Bennebroek Gravenhorst & Boonstra, 1998); the few discrepancies may reflect differences in nationality of the managers, type of organization, and the operational definition and measurement of the influence tactics.

EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIVIDUAL TACTICS

Several studies have examined the relative effectiveness of individual influence tactics. The studies differ with regard to the type of research method used and the types of tactics included. In survey field studies, targets or agents described how often the agent used each type of influence tactic, and researchers examined the correlation between these scores and influence effectiveness (e.g., Barry & Bateman, 1992; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). In research using influence incidents, agents or targets described an influence attempt and its outcome, then researchers coded the incident in terms of the tactics used by the agent (e.g., Schilit & Locke, 1982; Yukl et al., 1996). In field research with scenarios, managers rated the relative effectiveness of various tactics for influencing targets in several representative situations (e.g., Yukl et al., 2003). In experimental studies, one or more tactics were manipulated to examine the effect on target compliance or commitment (e.g., Barry & Shapiro, 1992; Yukl et al., 1999). Even though differences among studies make it more difficult to compare results, there appears to be considerable consistency in results for most tactics.

Consultation, collaboration, and inspirational appeals are three of the most effective tactics for influencing target commitment to carry out a request or support a proposal. Rational persuasion can also be very effective, depending on how it is used. A weak form of rational persuasion (e.g., a brief explanation, an assertion without supporting evidence) is much less effective than a stronger form of rational persuasion (e.g., a detailed proposal, elaborate documentation).

Ingratiation, exchange, and apprising are moderately effective for influencing subordinates and peers, but these tactics are difficult to use for influencing superiors. Agents have little to exchange in an upward direction, and to offer such an exchange is contrary to role expectations for a subordinate. Apprising is not feasible unless a subordinate has exclusive knowledge about likely personal benefits for a superior, which seldom occurs. Ingratiation is not very useful for proactive influence attempts in an upward direction, because this tactic is likely to be viewed as manipulative by the boss.

Personal appeals can be useful for influencing a target person with whom the agent has a somewhat friendly relationship (especially a lateral peer). However, this tactic is only relevant for certain types of requests (e.g., get assistance, get a personal favor), and the outcome is likely to be compliance rather than commitment. Personal appeals are not likely to be of much use for gaining support or approval for a major change.

Pressure and legitimating tactics are very unlikely to result in target commitment, but each of these tactics can be useful for eliciting compliance with a request that does not require initiative, dedication, and persistence by the target person. Little support was found in the research for the effectiveness of coalition tactics. The consequences of using coalitions probably depends on the influence objective and the tactics used by coalition partner(s).

Overall, some tactics tend to be more effective than others, but the outcome of any particular influence attempt is affected strongly by other factors in addition to the type of influence tactics used by the agent. Some examples include the agent's power and authority, the agent's expertise and credibility, the agent's influence skills, the relationship between agent and target (e.g., trust, friendship), and the target's perception of the request (e.g., important, legitimate, feasible). Any tactic can result in resistance if it is not used in a skillful manner, or if it is used for a request that is improper or unethical.

EFFECTIVENESS OF TACTIC COMBINATIONS

Many influence attempts involve the use of more than one type of influence tactic. Only a few studies have examined use of tactic combinations (e.g., Case et al., 1988; Barry & Shapiro, 1992; Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Emans et al., 1999), but some tentative conclusions can be drawn from the available research.

Whether a combination of two or more tactics is better than a single tactic depends on which tactics are combined. The potency of the individual tactics is a major determinant of effectiveness for an

influence attempt involving more than one tactic. For example, the effectiveness of pressure is likely to be increased by combining it with rational persuasion but not by combining it with legitimating tactics (Falbe & Yukl, 1992). The effectiveness of a tactic combination may also depend on the extent to which the component tactics are compatible with each other. Compatible tactics are easy to use together and they enhance each other's effectiveness. Rational persuasion is a flexible tactic that is usually compatible with any of the other tactics. Some other tactics are clearly incompatible. For example, pressure tactics are likely to be incompatible with personal appeals or ingratiation because they weaken feelings of friendship and loyalty. Knowing how to successfully combine different influence tactics requires considerable insight and skill.

Pressure is a tactic that has serious limitations and side effects when used alone. However, pressure may facilitate the effectiveness of an influence attempt if combined with a softer tactic. Pressure is sometimes necessary to get the target person to take the agent seriously enough to even listen to the agent's rational proposal or to participate in joint problem-solving. In a survey study of police officers in Spain, Emans et al. (1999) showed that hard tactics such as pressure and legitimating increased behavioral compliance to some extent when combined with a high level of rational persuasion and exchange, or with a high level of consultation and inspirational appeals. However, there was not a significant enhancing effect of hard tactics when the criterion variable was attitudinal change by the target person. More research is needed to clarify the complex interaction among different types of tactics.

RESEARCH ON DYADIC TACTICS USED TO INITIATE CHANGE

Only a small number of studies have examined the use of dyadic influence tactics to initiate or facilitate change in organizations. These studies will be reviewed briefly to see what insights they provide about the tactics that are most likely to be used and their relative effectiveness.

Schein (1987) interviewed managers in the United States and Great Britain to collect descriptive incidents about influence behavior used to initiate change. The incidents were content analyzed to identify distinct tactics. These tactics were included in a checklist administered to another sample of managers, who indicated which tactics were used more often in successful than in unsuccessful influence attempts with subordinates. Tactics significantly more likely to be successful included using data to convince others (strong rational persuasion), forming coalitions, working around roadblocks (probably collaboration), focusing on target needs (probably apprising), and being persistent (pressure). Using organizational rules (legitimating) was less likely to be successful, and there was no significant difference for offering favors or monetary rewards (exchange).

Bennebroek Gravenhorst and Boonstra (1998) conducted a survey study in 14 medium-sized Dutch organizations. The sample included line managers, staff specialists, consultants, and works council members in each organization. Respondents indicated how often they used each of nine influence tactics in attempts to implement change in their organization. The tactics used most often included rational persuasion, consultation, and inspirational appeals. There were few significant differences for the four types of respondents.

Some descriptive studies have used interviews to investigate how innovations are facilitated in large organizations (e.g., Schön, 1963; Burgelman, 1983; Kanter, 1983). This research suggests that a variety of influence tactics are used by the proponents of innovations. Although the focus in this research was not on identifying effective proactive tactics, it provides indirect support for the relevance of tactics such as rational persuasion, inspirational appeals, pressure, and coalitions.

Howell and Higgins (1990) conducted a study of influence tactics used by managers who were identified as change champions. Interviews revealed that the change champions used a greater variety of influence tactics than managers not identified as change champions. The change champions used more rational persuasion, coalition, pressure, and upward appeals. The champions were also more

TABLE 14.1 Perceived effectiveness of proactive tactics to influence a boss to support or approve a proposed change

Influence tactic	Effectiveness
Rational persuasion	4.4
Inspirational appeals	3.7
Collaboration	3.7
Consultation	3.3
Apprising	3.2
Coalition	3.0
Ingratiation	2.6
Pressure	2.2
Exchange	2.0
Personal appeal	1.8

Note: Based on ratings of tactic effectiveness on a 5-point (1–5) scale by 166 American managers.

likely to express strong conviction about ideological goals, which indicates greater use of inspirational appeals. Use of ingratiation and exchange did not differentiate between champions and non-champions.

Yukl et al. (2003) used fixed-response scenarios to determine which tactics are viewed as most effective for influencing a superior to approve a proposed change. The study included managers from China and Switzerland as well as the United States. Although cross-cultural differences were found for many of the tactics, the relative ranking of proactive influence tactics were moderately similar across countries. Table 14.1 shows the mean rating of tactic effectiveness for the American managers. The most effective tactics included rational persuasion, consultation, collaboration, inspirational appeals, and use of coalition partners. Supplementary research with open-ended versions of the scenarios suggests that a combination of different tactics is considered more effective than a single tactic.

It is difficult to draw any conclusions from this diverse set of studies. Some studies tried to identify which tactics are used most often to initiate change, and other studies assessed the relative effectiveness of specific tactics. The studies used different research methods (e.g., survey questionnaires, scenarios, critical incidents, case study), and each study included a somewhat different set of influence tactics. In general, the findings suggest that a variety of different tactics are used for influencing change, that these tactics are typically used in various combinations rather than alone, and that some tactics (or combinations) are more effective than others. The findings suggest that the most effective tactics for initiating change in organizations may be the same ones found to be effective for other types of influence objectives, namely rational persuasion, consultation, inspirational appeals, and collaboration. However, the findings also suggest that successful attempts to initiate change in organizations may include the use of some tactics that are not effective for more routine types of influence attempts (e.g., pressure, coalition, upward appeal). To confirm these preliminary insights and find more definitive answers will require further research.

LIMITING CONDITIONS FOR INFLUENCING CHANGE

As noted earlier, the success of an attempt to initiate change depends on a number of factors in addition to influence tactics that are used. Characteristics of the agent, the target persons, and the situation can limit or enhance the effectiveness of an influence attempt. Relevant conditions for change-oriented influence attempts include ambiguity about the need for change, vested interests in avoiding change, the perceived expertise and credibility of the agent, the agent's authority, the agent's access to resources, and the agent's political power. Each condition will be described briefly in this section of the chapter.

AMBIGUITY ABOUT NEED FOR CHANGE

It is easier to initiate major change when there is an obvious crisis and people already realize that the current strategy or practices are no longer adequate to accomplish the unit's task objectives or mission. If the organization is prosperous and conditions are only gradually worsening, it is easy to deny the need for major change. Even when people acknowledge that change will eventually be necessary, they are often inclined to put it off as long as possible. In the absence of a widespread feeling of urgency, it is difficult to overcome the forces that support continuation of the current practices. Thus, it is not surprising that creating a sense of urgency is a recommended action for change agents in theories of change management (e.g., Kotter, 1996).

VESTED INTERESTS

It is more difficult to introduce change when there are powerful people in the organization who oppose the change because they perceive that it would have adverse consequences. Even when a change is beneficial for the organization, it is likely to have adverse consequences for some individual members, which can increase resistance. Change makes some expertise obsolete, and it requires learning new ways of doing the work. Shifts in power and status are likely, as some functions and types of expertise become less important. People who lack self-confidence and fear that they will become obsolete are likely to resist change. To convert probable opponents into converts (or at least to counter their negative influence), it is essential to identify them as early as possible and to discover the reason for their resistance.

PERCEIVED EXPERTISE AND CREDIBILITY

Agent expertise and credibility are relevant conditions for enhancing the effectiveness of influence attempts made by the agent. Howell and Higgins (1990) found that successful champions had more varied experience and greater previous involvement in innovations, which suggests that they had greater expertise and credibility. Agent expertise and credibility seem especially relevant for the effective use of rational persuasion. Relevant knowledge is necessary to explain why a request is important and feasible. Moreover, a rational appeal is likely to be more effective when made by someone who is perceived to have high expertise. Along with facts and logic, a rational appeal usually includes some assertions, inferences, and predictions that cannot be verified because the evidence is not available at that time. Thus, the success of the influence attempt will depend in part on whether the agent is seen as a credible and trustworthy source of opinions and inferences.

AUTHORITY

The authority of a manager can facilitate efforts to implement changes decided at the manager's level. Clear authority to make changes provides legitimacy for directives, which is likely to result in subordinate compliance. A manager's authority is usually backed up by other aspects of position power, including control over assignments, compensation, and dismissal. This power can be used to provide pressure on anyone who fails to implement the change. A case study by Poole et al. (1989) found that implementation of major changes in a bank were influenced more by pressure tactics (demands, threats, close monitoring) than by oral and written messages explaining the need for change (rational persuasion). Of course, pressure by itself is unlikely to elicit subordinate commitment (Falbe & Yukl, 1992).

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

To implement major change effectively usually requires access to tangible resources. Resources are needed to cover the cost of acquiring new equipment, training personnel, and paying for the performance decrement that typically occurs when people must learn to do things efficiently in a new way. The feasibility of a proposed change depends in part on the agent's access to the necessary resources. Control over resources also provides currency for trading with peers whose support and cooperation are needed to implement the change. Resources can be used to provide an incentive for people who might otherwise have little concern about the success or failure of a proposed change (Cohen & Bradford, 1991).

POLITICAL POWER

Major change in an organization usually requires an authorizing decision by powerful executives or decision groups. Such decisions are often controversial, especially when there is considerable disagreement about the best course of action for the organization. Change agents who have political power and skill are more likely to be successful in initiating and facilitating major changes in large organizations (Pfeffer, 1981; Porter et al., 1981; Kotter, 1985). However, political power can be used to oppose as well as to support change.

Political power to influence change can take a variety of forms. It is very helpful to have sympathetic representatives in key administrative positions or on decision groups. Such representatives can increase the likelihood that a change proposal will be reviewed favorably. It is easier to influence decisions about change if the agent (or allies) can establish the criteria used to evaluate alternative proposals. The criteria can be biased in favor of the proposal offered by the agent. Exclusive access to information about costs and benefits is another source of influence. The information can be selectively disseminated to bias change decisions.

GUIDELINES FOR USING TACTICS TO INFLUENCE CHANGE

This final section of the chapter provides specific guidelines for using six specific influence tactics to influence commitment to change. The guidelines are based on leadership theory, practitioner insights, and findings in the limited research on dyadic influence. The guidelines are made without specification of the direction of influence or other factors that may enhance or limit use of the tactic. These factors should be considered carefully when attempting to use the guidelines, because they may be more relevant for some situations than for others. Additional guidelines about influencing people in organizations and specific examples of successful influence can be found in a number of books written for practitioners (Kotter, 1985; Cohen & Bradford, 1991; Haass, 1994; Conger, 1998).

RATIONAL PERSUASION

Rational appeals involve logical arguments and factual evidence that a request or proposed change is important for the organization and feasible for the target person. The following guidelines explain how a change agent can increase the effectiveness of rational persuasion:

- *Explain the urgent need for change.* To mobilize support for proposed changes, it is essential to explain why it is necessary and to create a sense of urgency about it. If evidence about the problem (or opportunity) can be obtained, it can be used to strengthen rational appeals about the need for change. Some examples include a summary of customer complaints each week with selective quotes

from irate customers, analyses of costs involved in correcting quality problems, and data showing that the unit is falling behind competitors on key indicators of performance.

- *Explain the benefits of the proposed change.* People are more likely to support a proposed change if they understand the reason why it is necessary and important. When asked to do something unusual, people may wonder whether it is really necessary or just an impulsive whim. Explain how a proposed change will benefit the team or organization. Examples of these benefits include reduced costs, higher efficiency, more customer satisfaction, improved product quality, higher sales, and larger profits.

- *Provide evidence that the proposed change is feasible.* It is not enough for a change proposal to be relevant, it must also be seen as practical and realistic to gain the person's enthusiastic support and cooperation. The target person may exaggerate the difficulties or obstacles. If the person has doubts about the feasibility of a request or proposal, provide supporting evidence for it. Explain the underlying theoretical rationale for assuming that a proposed plan of action will lead to the desired objective. Describe a specific sequence of action steps that could be used to accomplish the objective. Cite supporting evidence from empirical research (e.g., a pilot study, a survey showing a favorable response to a proposed new product, service, or change). Describe how a similar approach was successful when used in the past. If appropriate, provide an actual demonstration for the person to observe (seeing is believing).

- *Explain why the proposal is better than competing ones.* Sometimes a change proposal is competing with other proposals for the target person's support. In this case, it is not only necessary to show that your proposal is feasible, but also to show that it is better than any of the alternatives. Point out the advantages of your proposal in comparison to the alternatives (e.g., more likely to accomplish the objective, less costly, more likely to be approved, easier to implement, less risk of undesirable side effects). Point out the weaknesses and problems with each competing proposal. Your comparison will be more credible if you also acknowledge some advantages of competing proposals rather than ignoring them altogether, especially if the person is already aware of these advantages. If feasible, cite evidence from a test of the competing proposals to show that yours is better.

- *Explain how likely problems or concerns would be handled.* All proposals and plans have weaknesses and limitations. A proposal is more likely to be accepted if you anticipate any obvious limitations and find ways to deal with them. Explain how you would avoid potential problems, overcome likely obstacles, and minimize risks. If the person expresses any unanticipated concerns about your proposal, discuss ways to deal with these concerns as well, rather than ignoring them or dismissing them as unworthy of consideration.

INSPIRATIONAL APPEALS

An inspirational appeal is an attempt to develop enthusiasm and commitment by appealing to the person's emotions and values. The following guidelines explain how a change agent can increase the effectiveness of inspirational appeals:

- *Appeal to the person's ideals and values.* Most people aspire to be important, to feel useful, to accomplish something worthwhile, to make an important contribution, to perform an exceptional feat, to be a member of the best team, or to participate in an exciting effort to make things better. These aspirations are a good basis for inspirational appeals. For example, the task of developing a new type of software may be likened to the role of a missionary who is going to revolutionize the way computers are used in society. Some values and ideals that may be used as the basis for an inspirational appeal include liberty, freedom, justice, fairness, equality, humanitarianism, love, loyalty, excellence, truth, and progress.

- *Link the request to the person's self-image.* A proposed activity or assignment may be linked to values that are central to the target person's self-image as a professional, a member of an organization, an adherent of a particular religion, or a member of a political party. For example, most scientists have

strong values about the discovery of new knowledge and its application to improve humanity; most physicians and nurses have strong values about healing people and keeping them healthy. A proposed change or activity may be described as something that will advance new knowledge, improve health care, make the organization more effective, advance the cause, serve one's god, or demonstrate patriotism to one's country.

- *Link the request to a clear and appealing vision.* Efforts to introduce major changes or innovations are more likely to be successful when they involve an appealing vision of what could be accomplished or how the future could look if the proposed activity or change is implemented successfully. The vision may be an existing one the target person is known to embrace, or one created to help gain commitment to a new project or activity. The vision should emphasize ideological values rather than tangible economic benefits (used in rational appeals to self-interest). However, it is not necessary to ignore economic benefits; they may be integrated into the overall vision of what can be accomplished as long as it is clear that they are not the primary objective.

- *Use a dramatic, expressive style of speaking.* A dramatic, expressive style of speaking often increases the effectiveness of an emotional appeal. Conviction and intensity of feeling are communicated by one's voice (e.g., tone, inflection, pause), facial expressions, gestures, and body movement. Use a strong, clear tone of voice, but vary the pace and intensity. Use pauses at appropriate times to emphasize key words, maintain interest, and arouse excitement. Maintain strong eye contact, use strong gestures, and move around to display energy and intensity of feeling. Use rhyme, rhythm, and repetition of key words or phrases to emphasize the important ideas and build strong feelings.

- *Use positive, optimistic language.* Confidence and optimism about a new project or change can be contagious. It is especially important to foster optimism when the task is very difficult and people lack self-confidence. State your personal belief in the project and your strong commitment to see it through to a successful conclusion. Use positive language that communicates you are confident a proposed project or change will be successful. For example, talk about the wonderful things that 'will' happen when a change is made, rather than what 'may' happen.

- *Use colorful, emotional language.* The ideological aspects of an inspirational appeal can be communicated more effectively with language that includes vivid imagery, metaphors, anecdotes, and stories. Metaphors and analogies are especially effective when they excite the imagination and engage the listener in trying to make sense out of them. Anecdotes and stories are more effective if they invoke symbols with deep cultural roots, such as legendary heroes, sacred figures, and historical ordeals and triumphs. However, the forms of language selected for an inspirational appeal must be relevant or they will result in confusion and distraction rather than clearly linking the proposed change to listener values and beliefs.

CONSULTATION

Consultation increases the target person's motivation to carry out a request by allowing the person to participate in determining how it will be done. The following guidelines explain how a change agent can increase the effectiveness of consultation:

- *Ask for suggestions to improve a tentative proposal.* More participation is likely if you present a proposal as tentative and encourage people to improve it, rather than asking people to react to an elaborate plan that appears complete. People will be less inhibited about expressing concerns for a proposal that appears to be in the development stage rather than complete. The agent and target person should jointly explore ways to deal with any serious concerns or incorporate promising suggestions. A stronger version of this tactic is to ask the target person to write the initial draft of a proposal that you want him or her to support. Of course, this procedure is only feasible if the person agrees with you about the objective and has the expertise to develop a credible plan.

- *State your objective and ask how the person can help.* When you do not expect the target person to be enthusiastic about helping you accomplish an objective, it is helpful to explain why it is important (rational persuasion), then ask the person what he or she can do to help you attain it. If you have a good relationship, the target person is likely to suggest some ways to be of assistance. Show appreciation for any suggestions and explore their feasibility. Once the person has agreed to provide some assistance, it is easier to ask for additional things that build on the initial offer.
- *Involve the person in planning how to attain an objective.* In this variation of consultation, you present a general strategy, policy, or objective and ask the target person to suggest specific action steps for implementing it. If the action plan will be detailed, it is best to schedule a meeting at a later time to review the plan and reach a mutual agreement about it. This tactic is especially useful for assigning responsibilities to a subordinate to implement some aspect of a new project or change.
- *Respond to the person's concerns and suggestions.* Consultation is used mostly as a proactive influence tactic, but opportunities arise to use it also as a reactive tactic. Sometimes when asking the target person to carry out an assignment or provide assistance on a task, the person expresses concerns about it or suggestions for improving it. Whenever feasible, try to deal with the target person's concerns, even if it requires some modification of your initial plans. Ask the person for suggestions about how to deal with concerns. Good suggestions for improving an activity should be utilized whenever feasible.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration involves offering something that will make a proposed change less costly for the target person to approve or implement. The following guidelines explain how a change agent can increase the effectiveness of collaboration:

- *Offer to help the person implement a change.* One reason for opposing a proposed change is that it will entail a substantial investment of time and effort by the target person. If the costs and difficulties for the target person can be identified in advance, you can look for ways to avoid or minimize them. When asking a peer or boss to approve a proposed change, offer to help with the implementation. When asking a peer or subordinate to support a proposed change, offer to help the person implement it.
- *Offer to provide resources needed to do the task.* Additional resources are usually needed to implement a change. As noted earlier, lack of sufficient resources to pay for the change is a major reason for opposition to it by the people who must implement it. Thus, to build support for a proposed change, offer to provide or help obtain the necessary resources.
- *Offer to help solve problems that will be created by carrying out the request.* A request is more likely to be resisted if carrying it out will cause serious new problems for the target person. Try to anticipate such problems and be prepared to offer ways to avoid them or help the person deal with them. In many cases the agent will not be aware of the problems caused by a request, but target concerns can be elicited with the skillful use of consultation and active listening by the agent.

APPRISING

Apprising involves explanations about ways the change is likely to benefit the target person. If the target person is a member of the same organization, the focus of apprising is on potential benefits for the target person as an individual rather than on benefits for the organization. If the target person is not a member of the same organization, apprising may also involve potential benefits for constituents represented by the target person if attaining these benefits is important to the person. The following guidelines explain how a change agent can increase the effectiveness of apprising:

- *Explain how the change would help the person's career.* Explain how the proposed change will benefit the target person in terms of personal development and career advancement. Potential benefits include an opportunity to learn new skills, an opportunity to earn more money, and an opportunity to advance one's career by meeting important people, demonstrating competence, and gaining visibility.

- *Explain how the change will make the person's job easier or more enjoyable.* Another potential benefit of a proposed change is to make the person's job easier to do by reducing unnecessary tasks, solving recurring problems, providing more timely and accurate information, and removing obstacles and unnecessary controls. The change may also involve doing things that are interesting and enjoyable for the person. Explain how the change will result in these benefits for the target person.

- *Explain the benefits for an external target's constituents.* When the target person represents a different organization (e.g., client, supplier, labor union, government agency, political party) and is sincerely concerned about constituents, then it is appropriate to explain how a proposed change is likely to benefit the target person's organization or increase tangible benefits for the target person's constituents.

COALITION TACTICS

Coalition tactics involve other people in an influence attempt, either directly or indirectly. This tactic can take a variety of forms, and guidelines are presented for using them:

- *Mention credible people who support your proposal.* One type of coalition tactic is to mention the names of others who support your proposal or request. The endorsers should be credible people whom the target person respects so that their endorsement is likely to have some influence. If you anticipate that endorsements are needed, it is best to get them before you begin the influence attempt with the target person.

- *Bring someone along to help you in an influence attempt.* Another form of coalition is to bring along somebody whom the target person respects when you make an influence attempt. This tactic is appropriate for an unusual request or proposal made to a target person who is expected to be reluctant about complying with the request or supporting the proposal. It is usually more effective to have an ally join you to actually help with an influence attempt than to merely mention the person's name as an endorser of your request or proposal. A variation of this approach is to arrange a group meeting that includes one or more target persons that you want to influence and one or more allies who are prepared to actively support your proposals.

- *Get other people to provide evidence or an endorsement.* Another coalition tactic is to enlist the aid of other people whom the target person likes and respects. The coalition partners may provide supporting evidence, or they may take a more active role and attempt to influence the target person by using influence tactics. Sometimes it is useful to have coalition partners 'soften up' the target person prior to your influence attempt. For example, when you want to suggest a change to a peer in another functional area, it is useful to have credible allies in that same function prepare the peer to be more receptive to your proposal. A coalition partner can verify you are competent and trustworthy before you attempt to influence a target person who does not know you very well. Before proposing a controversial change, it may be desirable to have someone who is influential 'set the stage' for your proposal by explaining why there is need for a change.

- *Ask for help from someone with higher authority.* An 'upward appeal' is to ask someone in higher authority to tell the target person to comply with your request. For example, if a peer is reluctant to carry out a request, you can ask the boss of the peer for assistance. Likewise, if your boss refuses to comply with a request, you can appeal to higher management. This tactic is very risky, because the target person usually views it as coercive and may resent it enough to resist, despite the increased

pressure for compliance. Upward appeals should be used only as a last resort for influence attempts with a peer or boss who refuses to comply with a request that is clearly legitimate and very important to you.

FUTURE RESEARCH

To implement a major change often requires the support and cooperation of many people in the organization as well as outsiders. Managers use a variety of influence tactics to initiate change, and some progress has been made in identifying the most useful tactics. However, the amount of research is still very limited, and only tentative conclusions can be reached.

To make further progress will require more research, and some of this research must employ stronger research methods. Moreover, it is essential in future research to take more of a systems perspective on influencing change in organizations. We will not be able to really understand how managers initiate and facilitate change without some intensive, longitudinal studies of the influence processes. In addition to specific influence tactics (used alone and in combinations), researchers should measure contextual variables that are likely to limit or facilitate an influence attempt. Finally, researchers should consider not only the proactive influence behavior of a single agent toward a single target, but also the recip-rocal influence processes that invariably occur over time among the multiple parties (including other proponents and opponents) who jointly determine the success of an attempt to initiate major change in an organization.

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