

9.5: Managing Change

Learning Objectives

1. How do managers deal with change?

To this point in the chapter, we have focused on factors that influence the need for change. We have also discussed how to think about the dimensions of change that may be needed. In this section, we will describe different approaches to designing and implementing change.

Change management is the process of designing and implementing change. Most leaders are responsible for some degree of change management. In addition, as indicated in the introduction, **organizational development (OD)** is a specialized field that focuses on how to design and manage change (Cummings & Worley, 2019).

An **OD consultant** is someone who has expertise in change management processes. An internal consultant is someone who works as an employee of an organization and focuses on how to create change from within that organization. An external consultant is an OD specialist hired to provide outside expertise for a short period of time, usually for a major change effort. Leaders are more effective in managing change if they understand the common practices for managing change as well as the perspectives and practices used by OD specialists.

Basic Assumptions about Change

There are numerous models of change available to managers, and it can be difficult to discern the differences between them when creating a planned change process. Many approaches and methodologies for developing organizations and managing change have been developed and practiced during the last century. Indeed, it can be daunting and confusing to sort through and understand which models are most appropriate and relevant for a particular situation. Every model of change has strengths and limitations, and it is important to understand what these may be. The type of change methodology used in a particular situation should be matched to the needs of that situation.

It may be helpful to use several questions when deciding on the appropriate approach to use in a planned change process.

A first question has to do with the starting place for the change: *Is the organization in a state of deficiency that needs significant fixing, or is it in a state of high performance where there exists a need for refining and tweaking?*

One common motivation for change is the perception that an organization may be in some state of dysfunction with significant and serious problems, somewhat like a patient in a hospital in need of serious medical attention. A dysfunctional organization may require transformational change, in which the fundamental assumptions, beliefs, and organizing ideas of the organization are thoroughly challenged and altered. This set of perceptions often leads to **deficit-based change**, in which leaders assume that employees will change if they know they will otherwise face negative consequences.

In contrast, leaders may perceive that an organization is highly functional, much like an Olympic athlete or highly accomplished team. A high-performing organization may require incremental change as the organization continues to build on solid fundamentals to refine and add to its capacity for high performance. This set of perceptions often leads to **abundance-based change**, in which leaders assume that employees will change if they can be inspired to aim for greater degrees of excellence in their work.

A second important question addresses the mechanisms of change: *What are our assumptions about how to create change?* This question is crucial because the answers determine the preferred designs for planned change and the perceptions of the effectiveness of the change.

Top-down change approaches rely on mechanistic assumptions about the nature of an organization. In this approach, a relatively small group of individuals in the organization will design a process and instruct others throughout the organization as to how the process of change should unfold. Most employees in the top-down approach play a passive role during the design process and are generally expected to follow the directions given to them by leaders in the organization. In other words, this approach to change relies on the formal organization to drive the legitimacy of the change.

The opposite of the top-down change approach is the **emergent** or **bottom-up approach**. This approach relies on the belief that employees will be more invested in change if they play some role in the process of designing the change. **Participatory management**, the inclusion of employees in the deliberations about key business decisions, is a common practice that aligns with the emergent approach to change.

The differences between top-down and bottom-up approaches can be dramatic. For example, following the top-down approach, leaders might determine that the organizational structure needs to be reconfigured to better accommodate a significant shift in its business. They might assume that they can implement the new structure and that employee routines and patterns of behavior will then change in a natural progression.

The bottom-up approach may reverse this logic. Employees might first work together to explore the tasks that are essential to a specific business problem, they might experiment with potential changes, and *then* managers might rearrange structures to match the new, emergent way of doing work. In contrast to the top-down approach, in a bottom-up process, a shift in structure may be a last step.

A challenge for many managers in the bottom-up approach is a perception that they cannot directly control planned changes. Rather, they must rely on processes that draw employees together and expect that employees will respond. This requires a leap of faith, trusting that the process of involving people will lead to desirable emergent changes.

In practice, top-down and bottom-up practices often work together. For example, leaders might exercise top-down authority to define and declare what change is necessary. Then, they might design processes that engage and empower employees throughout an organization to design how the change will be brought about. Working toward a generally defined goal, employees at all levels are highly engaged in the change process from beginning to end. This approach has the effect of encouraging self-organizing through the informal organization as employees make and implement decisions with minimal direction.

As a general rule of thumb, the more complex the potential change, the greater the need to involve employees in the process of planning and implementing change.

A final question addresses the mindset for change: What are our fundamental beliefs about people and change?

Again, a simplistic dichotomy is helpful for defining the approach that may be employed to create change. In the **conventional mindset**, leaders assume that most people are inclined to resist change, and therefore, they must be managed in a way that encourages them to accept change. In this view, people in an organization may be seen as objects, sometimes even as obstacles, that **must be** managed or controlled. When leaders use conventional methods, they demonstrate a tendency to assume that their perspectives are more informed, sound, and logical than the perspectives of employees. They will work hard to convince employees about the correctness of their decisions, relying on logic to prove the point. They may be inclined to use methods that may be seen by employees as manipulative or coercive. Some authors claim that the conventional mindset is the default or dominant mode of change in most organizations (Quinn, 2015).

In contrast, in the **positive or appreciative mindset**, leaders assume that people are inclined to embrace change when they are respected as individuals with intrinsic worth, agency, and capability. In this view, employees in an organization may be seen as partners, sometimes even as champions of change, who can do significant things. When leaders use appreciative methods, they involve employees through meaningful dialogue and seek to lead with a sense of purpose. They may start the change process by highlighting the values that people may hold in common to establish an environment in which employees develop a strong sense of connection with one another. With a strong social infrastructure, they involve employees through participatory processes that allow them to develop common goals and processes for achieving significant changes.



Exhibit 9.7 IBM building in China IBM is a U.S.-based company with several divisions organized geographically. Pictured here is the “Dragon Building,” their China-based headquarters. (Credit: bfishshadow/ flickr/ Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0))

The three questions we have raised here can lead to many variations in the way that leaders design and implement change. For example, it is possible for a change process to be deficit-based, top-down, and conventional, while another change process may be abundance-based, bottom-up, and positive. Other change processes may be mixed in their design and delivery—for example, starting with a deficit-based perspective yet choosing to use an abundance-based design to create transformational change through a bottom-up, participatory, appreciative process. In today's business environment, it is rare to find an approach that purely fits any of these categories.

We will next turn to a discussion of common change models that may be analyzed through the three questions just raised.

✓ Sustainability and Responsible Management

Why Is the National Hockey League Interested in Climate Change, and Why Did They Hire Kim Davis?

Because of demographics, with most of their employees coming from northern U.S. states, Canada, and northern European countries, there was probably no organization more racially uniform than the National Hockey League. In these days of increased attention to social issues and changing demographics, the NHL needed a drastic shift in its approach to inclusivity and the social issues it addresses. Two of the best people to usher in change, they decided, were an accomplished executive untouched by old-guard hockey culture and a former player.

Kim Davis knew that she was different from many executives, managers, coaches, and players in the National Hockey League. She welcomed the challenge, and it was a major attraction that led her to accept the position. She looks like no one else holding the position of executive vice president at the NHL, which has primarily been run by (a) men and (b) white men in its history of more than 100 years. The league signaled a long-overdue shift in thinking when it named Davis, a black woman, as executive vice president of social impact, growth initiatives, and legislative affairs.

In a time when the NHL is trying to adapt and become more welcoming to those who feel they don't belong or haven't been allowed to belong in the sport, the perfect person to initiate change was someone from the outside, someone free of a hockey culture that has become stale by current social standards.

Especially compared with the other major North American pro sports, hockey sometimes unfairly gets accused of being tone-deaf or at least resistant to change. The league is working hard to improve its commitment to inclusivity with initiatives such as the Declaration of Principles and Hockey Is For Everyone, but change doesn't come easy for players, coaches, administrators, and fans of the sport. Davis represents the NHL's attempt to shepherd the game through social change—internally and externally. That's been her area of expertise throughout her professional life. At JPMorgan Chase, she endured nine different mergers, and her job was to help her employees prepare for change.

"Most people aren't comfortable with change, and often when they say that, what they really mean is that they are comfortable with change, but they aren't comfortable with change happening to *them*," she said. "It's all about what happens to us, so how, as a leader, do you help people get through that?"

"We may not be able to control that fan and that microcosm of society that is over-indexed in our sport," she said. "Over time it will change as we introduce new fans, and guess what? Even that classic model of our fans, that white male, generationally, their kids, they're not buying into that even if their parents are."

"Find another hockey executive who will touch a topic like that without tap dancing." And that's why Kim Davis is here. She's the outsider turned insider, the voice of those formerly neglected. And she's just getting started.

Regarding climate change, why did the NHL attend the historic climate change conference in Paris? As NHL President Gary Bettman states: "Our game, which is probably unique to most other professional sports, is so tied to the environment. We need cold weather; we need fresh water to play. Therefore, our game is directly impacted by climate change and freshwater scarcity. So, we developed NHL Green, a mandate to promote this type of awareness across all our organizations. Over the course of the last five years, we've done everything from a food recovery initiative, which was taking all the unused food that we prepare in our arenas and donating it to local food banks ... to a water restoration program. All of that culminated in the release of a sustainability report in 2014, which was the first of its kind from any U.S. pro sports league. It's important to us."

The NHL players are also interested. One individual is recently retired player Andrew Ference, who introduced green initiatives such as the NHL Players Association Carbon Neutral Challenge. While he was a player with the Stanley Cup champion Boston Bruins, he knew that he wanted a career after retirement from the NHL and decided to attend the Harvard Business School, where he earned a certificate in Corporate Sustainability and Innovation. Because he really prioritized

sustainability in his life, it was a natural progression to a second career after his retirement. Ference says, “I’ve had a lifelong passion for the environment and sustainability issues. But before leaving the NHL, I wanted to back that up with some formal education. When I signed up for that first class, I knew in my gut it was a big moment.”

Commissioner Gary Bettman says that the next stage regarding sustainability is to “...engage more players around this issue because when we put out stuff on our social media platforms, 12 million followers on social media, that definitely gets messaging out to fans. But when you get an Andrew Ference, that's when you get a lot more engagement. We need to educate our athletes on this issue because they grew up on frozen ponds, they get the connection between learning to play outside and environmental issues. They get it.”



1. What types of changes that Kim Davis is addressing for the National Hockey League, such as demographics, “hockey culture,” and climate change, relate to the concepts in this chapter?
2. How are the roles of Kim Davis, Gary Bettman, and the players regarding change defined in the concepts of this chapter?

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Common Change Models

In this section, we will share four common approaches to OD and organizational change. Lewin’s model and Kotter’s model are common planned change processes that usually rely on the mechanisms of formal organization (Lewin, 2012). The other two models, Cooperrider’s appreciative inquiry model and the Olson and Eoyang complex adaptive systems model, are designed to promote informal organizing and emergent change (Cooperrider, 2008; Olson & Eoyang, 2001).

Lewin's Change Model

Psychologist Kurt Lewin proposed one of the first models of change. **Lewin's change model** shows organizational change occurring in three phases (see Exhibit 9.8).

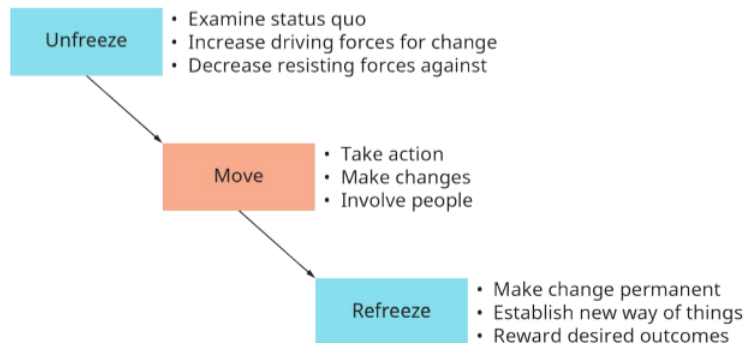


Exhibit 9.8 Summary of Kurt Lewin's Change Model (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

First, an organization must be "unfrozen" in that existing norms, routines, and practices must be disrupted. This can be done in several ways. For example, structural changes that cause a disruption in the system can be introduced to the organization. Similarly, the introduction of a new technology or policy can cause an organization to "unfreeze." Whatever the cause, unfreezing sets the stage for change.

Next, changes are introduced in the organization to shift the system to a new state or reality. Typically, people react to moments of disorder by creating a new form of order. As changes are introduced, managers might provide a number of interventions that help people adjust to the new norms of reality they are facing. For example, they might require employees to go through a training program, or they might hold discussion sessions or town-hall meetings with people talk about the changes and troubleshoot. The intent of this phase is to help people adjust to the expected change.

The final phase is to "refreeze" the organization. That is, leaders of the organization reinforce the new norms or practices that should accompany the change. They might adjust the resources, policies, and routines to fit the new expected norms.

Lewin's Model explains a very basic process that accompanies most organizational changes. That is, many people prefer a stable, predictable organization, and they become accustomed to the routines that exist in their organizational environment. For this reason, common routines and behaviors must be disrupted. When past routines and behaviors are no longer available, people naturally adjust. As they react to a new reality, they establish new routines and patterns of behavior.

However, Lewin's Model is most understandable when we assume that an organization is generally stable unless otherwise acted upon. That is, this model seems to fit in organizations in which any change is likely to last for a long period of time. Such a stable organizational context is increasingly rare in contemporary society.

Still, Lewin's Model really describes a basic pattern of change that plays out in all organizational systems: stability gives way to instability, something shifts in the system, and stability emerges once again. An understanding of this pattern can be viewed through either deficit-based or abundance-based lenses, and it applies in either top-down or bottom-up approaches.

For a visual and audio review of Lewin's Change Management Model, view the embedded video below.



Kotter's Change Model

Kotter's change model is one of the most widely used in organizations today. Generally, it aligns with mechanistic view of structure and thus may be especially useful in organizations where there is a strong, hierarchical structure. This is an eight-step model, shown in Exhibit 9.9, that relies on a centralized, top-down process for creating planned change.



Exhibit 9.9 Summary of John Kotter's Change Model (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

In the first step, managers *establish a sense of urgency*. They do this by creating a narrative about why the change is necessary. Top managers often use diagnostic tools to gather data that supports the case for change. They strive to convince key organizational leaders and employees that the change is absolutely necessary. A common metaphor is to “create a burning platform” or to make it clear that the organization cannot survive if it continues doing what it has done.

In the second step, *form a powerful guiding coalition*, managers assemble a group of influential people to help shape the planned change. Ideally, the guiding coalition should represent the areas of an organization that will be affected by the change. The guiding coalition should become ambassadors for the change as it unfolds.

In the third phase, *create a vision of change*, the manager and guiding coalition together create a vision of the expected change. They outline the scope of the change, the reason for the change, and what will be better or different as a result of the change.

The fourth step is to *communicate the vision*—reach out to all members of the organization and communicate the vision for change. Ideally, they connect with all the key areas of the organization that will be affected. They clearly explain why the change is needed and how the change should unfold. If needed, they answer questions and clarify problems.

The fifth step is to *remove any obstacles*. This step is intended to reduce the resistance to change and/or to provide the necessary resources to make the change successful. The success of this step helps to smooth the way for successful implementation.

The sixth step is to *create small wins*. A very powerful way to encourage people to support changes to help them see the path to success. Short wins signal to the organization that a change is possible and that tangible benefits will come once the change is fully implemented.

The seventh step is to *consolidate improvements*. Small changes build up over time and become big changes. As the organization successfully moves toward implementation, it is important to consolidate and solidify successes. Managers should reinforce and celebrate small wins and milestones. The unfolding success of the change helps to convince all members of the organization that the change is real and will produce its intended benefits.

The last step is to *anchor the changes*. In this step, the new norms and practices that accompany the change are standardized and refined. The mode of change moves from transformational to incremental. Refinements are implemented to fine-tune the change and to capture all the intended benefits.

Kotter's model is especially useful in situations where the desired change is reasonably predictable and where leaders are empowered to drive the change down through an organization. One challenge is that many employees may resist change if they have had no hand in shaping the plans. This is especially true if they do not fully comprehend the urgency of the change or the vision for the change. In this regard, it tends to be used when leaders hold a deficit-based view and are generally inclined to take a top-down approach from a conventional perspective. Still, where leaders must clearly define and implement a large-scale change, Kotter's model may work very effectively.

A comparison and contrast of Lewin's and Kotter's models is illustrated in Exhibit 9.10.

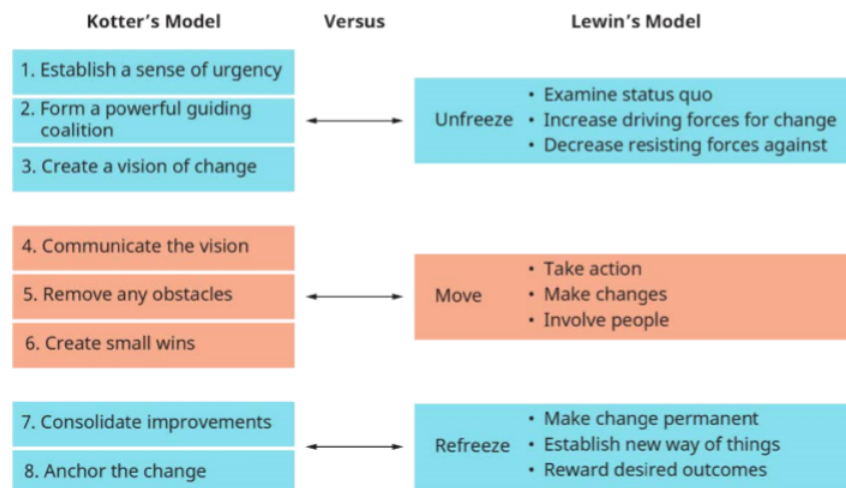
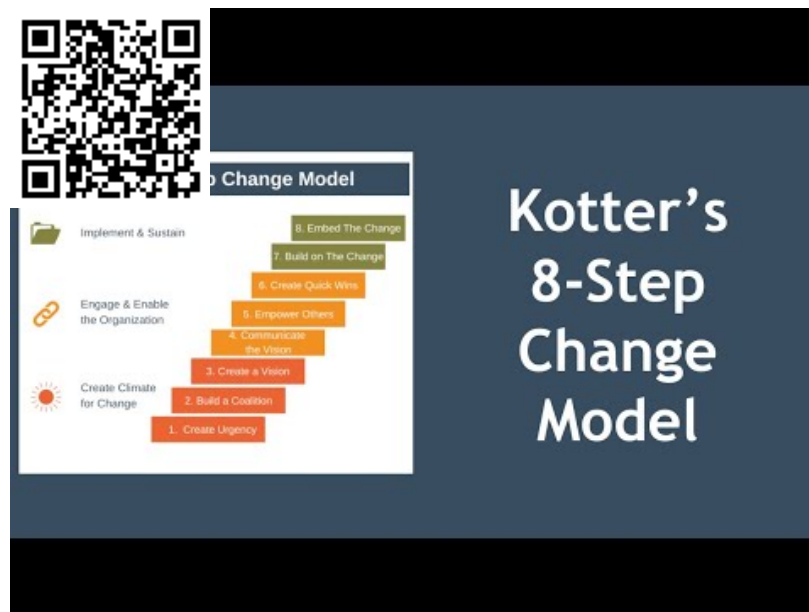


Exhibit 9.10 Kotter's Model versus Lewin's Model (Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC-BY 4.0 license)

For a visual and audio review of Kotter's Model, view the embedded video below.



Appreciative Inquiry

The **appreciative inquiry (AI) model** (not to be confused with Artificial Intelligence) is a model specifically designed as an abundance-based, bottom-up, positive approach. An Appreciative Inquiry, broadly defined, can be any question-focused, participatory approach to change that creates an appreciative effect on people and organizations (Bright, 2009). That is, the process of asking and discussing questions (inquiry) causes people to appreciate the people around them, the strengths of their organization, and the opportunities before them. Simultaneously, the process of having conversations expands the social capital of the organization, or the ability of people to work effectively together.

Developed in the 1980s by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University, AI relies on the assumption that people continuously create their organizations through an emergent process that occurs in the common conversations of organizational life. These conversations are shaped by “narratives” about the reality of the organization in which people find themselves. For example, a dominant narrative might be that an organization’s leaders are corrupt and intent on exploiting employees, or in contrast, that an organization’s leaders are compassionate, forward-thinking, and innovative. Whatever the narrative, employees tend to justify actions that align with their views. Over time, a narrative can become a self-reinforcing reality. Based on this understanding of organizations as a socially constructed system, the key to creating change is to change the dominant narratives of an organization.

In AI, group dialogue is the primary mechanism for helping people create new narratives (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). Specifically, **appreciative conversations** are intense, positively framed discussions that help people develop common ground as they work together to co-create a positive vision of an ideal future for their organization. When leaders use appreciative inquiry, they intentionally invite dialogue that generates a narrative for a positive organizational reality. This shift in narrative will inspire a shift in the actions that employees initiate in their daily work. While this approach may sound somewhat ambitious and abstract, in reality, it is simply an opportunity for employees to envision the future changes they would like to see and then work together to design how they will make these changes a reality.

OD consultants have developed many different variations of AI practices that address different organizational contexts. However, most of them rely on some version of a 5-D cycle: define, discover, dream, design, destiny.

The first phase, *define*, in which the objective for change and inquiry is established. In this phase, the leaders will create a guiding group, often called a steering committee. This group should include a cross-section of perspectives that represent the different parts of the organization where change is desired. Together, they will decide on a compelling way of describing an objective that invites people to think about ideal possibilities for the organization. In this process, they might turn a problem upside down to inspire a new narrative. For example, British Airlines turned a baggage-claim problem into an exploration of excellent customer service, and Avon turned a problem with sexual harassment into an opportunity to explore what it would take to create exceptional employee engagement. By adjusting the perspective for the inquiry, each company was able to design an OD process that not only solved the original problem but also established a clear vision of what they most wanted as the positive alternative.

The second phase, *discover*, focuses on questions that explore ideal, existing examples of the desired future. The question “Who are we when we are at our best?” is commonly used to encourage this exploration through dialogue among employees. For example, British Airways asked its employees to describe examples of exceptional customer service anywhere in its organization. By sharing stories of exceptional customer service, they found examples of exemplary service, even though the dominant narrative was that they had challenges in this area. Finding existing examples of the desired future—no matter how small—causes people to see that a positive alternative is possible. Such examples also provide the data for documenting the strengths of an organization and the factors that make success possible.

The third phase, *dream*, is an exploration of ideal future possibilities for the organization. The strengths and factors revealed in the discovery phase provide a foundation for this discussion. Employees are invited to think creatively about what the organization might do if it were to build on its strengths. “What could be?” is a commonly used question to encourage this exploration. Many organizations have used creative techniques to encourage employees to innovate about the future. They might have employees work in groups to design prototypes of a process or write a mock newspaper article about a future successful project. The idea of the dream phase is to encourage employees to think as expansively as possible about the possibilities for change, usually in a fun and inviting way.

The fourth phase, *design*, starts with a process of prioritizing the ideas that have been developed in the dream phase. Employees might work together to brainstorm a list of all the possible areas for action that might help them accomplish the objective. Then they use a collective process to identify the ideas that have the most promise. Usually, senior leaders will add their voices to endorse the ideas that they want to encourage as actual action initiatives. Employees might be invited to join project teams that will carry out specific actions to develop and implement key actions.

The final phase, *destiny*, occurs as employees implement the plans they have developed. Project groups will continue to work on the agreed-upon action steps for a period of time. Typically, they will meet with other employee-based groups to check in, report on progress, and adjust their plans. Some organizations will also create celebratory events to commemorate key successes.

The appreciative inquiry cycle can become an intrinsic part of an organization’s culture. Some companies will go through the AI process on an annual basis as an integral part of strategic planning. Other organizations use it only as needed when major transformational changes are desired. Though the examples in this section illustrate appreciative inquiry as used to change organizations as a whole, the model can also be applied at any level of organization—for example, in work with individuals and teams.

Complex Adaptive Systems

The final model we will review builds on the assumption that all organizations are **complex adaptive systems (CAS)** (Burnes, 2005). That is, an organization is constantly developing and adapting to its environment, much like a living organism. A CAS approach emphasizes the bottom-up, emergent approach to the design of change, relying on the ability of people to self-manage and adapt to their local circumstances. Before reviewing the CAS model in more depth, perhaps it would be helpful to examine a change process that is grounded in the CAS model.

One common CAS-based approach is Open Space Technology, a technique in which dozens of people may be involved (Owen, 2008). To set the stage, let’s suppose that we want to create a series of innovations to improve the culture of innovation in an organization. The first task would be to invite as many interested stakeholders as possible to participate in a discussion on various topics related to the culture of innovation, perhaps over a two-day period. At the beginning of the first session, a leader in the organization might greet the participants and invite them to be part of an open-ended exploration of ideas and solutions. A facilitator would then distribute a single sheet of paper and a marker to each participant. She would ask each person to propose a topic or question for discussion, explaining that the purpose of this exercise is to attract other people to join a discussion.

Then she will go around the room, giving each person in turn up to 30 seconds to propose a topic or question and describe the significance and urgency of the idea. The go-around continues until a variety of topics are identified. Next, the facilitator works with participants to define a list of topics for discussion. The facilitator then designates times and locations for discussions on those topics. Finally, participants “vote with their feet” to choose groups that they want to join for discussion. Typically, each discussion in an Open Space meeting will include an exploration of key questions, actions related to those questions, and proposals for resolving key questions.

As shown by this example, this approach is similar to AI in that it focuses on creating the conditions for people to self-organize in ways that align with the overall objectives of an organizational system. However, one big difference is that it relies less on step-by-

step processes for creating change and more on principles that can be applied in many variations to shape the conditions for change in an organization.

The CAS approach provides a useful perspective on how organic organizational structures emerge and develop through the informal organization. An understanding of CAS, therefore, provides leaders with the key knowledge they need to influence the direction of the informal organization, even if they cannot directly control it.

To use the CAS approach, it is essential to understand a few key features of self-organizing among employees (Olson & Eoyang, 2001). To begin, the direction of any organization is emergent and requires involvement from many people. Yet, when people react to change, their exact behaviors may be unknowable, unpredictable, and uncontrollable. Most often, people react to change based on the perceptions of the people in their immediate circle of relationships within the organization. Every person in an organization is both influencing others and being influenced by others. This means that a key locus of change must involve the relationships that people have with one another. From the perspective of CAS, a change in the nature or patterns of interpersonal relationships in an organization will lead to changes in the outcomes of that organization. Leaders, in this regard, should think of themselves as facilitators of relationships and as supporters of employees who are constantly engaged in self-organizing to create needed changes.

So, how can a leader (as a facilitator) influence the way in which self-organizing occurs? For starters, a leader needs to pay attention to the key conditions that allow for informal self-organizing to occur. There are three basic questions to consider.

First, to what degree do people feel empowered to act as **change agents** in the system? Self-organizing originates in the people who comprise the organization. If they view themselves as agents who have discretion to act, they are more likely to take the initiative, engaging in non-directed activities that may benefit the organization. Do people feel empowered as agents of the organization? If not, interventions may be designed to help people understand their own capacities and competencies.

Second, *how connected are people to one another* in the organization? Relationships are the building blocks of all informal organizational activities. The more connected people feel to one another, the more likely they are to work with others in self-directed activity. Do people feel like they have high-quality relationships with coworkers? Are people regularly connecting with other individuals that they do not know very well? If the answers to these questions are negative, then interventions can be designed to strengthen the quality and configurations of connections within and across an organization.

Third, to what extent are *flows* of information and energy passing through the connections that exist between people? Both informal and formal feedback loops provide a mechanism whereby people receive information about what is working and or not in their activities. Do people quickly receive information about breakdowns or successes in the system? Is the emotional energy in the system generating a positive dynamic that encourages people to be engaged? Again, if the answers to these questions are negative, then processes or initiatives should be designed that will help people to communicate more effectively across their relationships.

Aside from examining these basic conditions for self-organizing, the CAS approach assumes that every organizational outcome is the product of an indeterminable number of variables. No one cause produces a single outcome. For instance, the accurate delivery of a product to a customer is caused by a whole system of interrelated factors, each influencing the other. Therefore, where broad changes in outcomes are desired, the whole system of interrelated factors needs to be engaged at once. The preferred method of doing this is to engage broad groups of stakeholders simultaneously, using dialogue and conversation to help people develop their sense of agency, their connections with others, and the processes that must be adjusted to create desired changes in outcomes. Appreciative inquiry is one method that works especially well to accomplish all these impacts.

In addition, leaders may also influence the structures that shape patterns of self-organizing. From a CAS perspective, a structure is anything that causes people to engage in a particular pattern of activity. Structures can be physical, such as the work environment, or they can be assumptions or beliefs that are broadly held, such as the ideas about bureaucracy we discussed earlier in this chapter. To create change, leaders can change the structures that are producing current patterns of organization.

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Third, to what extent are *flows* of information and energy passing through the connections that exist between people? Both informal and formal feedback loops provide a mechanism whereby people receive information about what is working and or not in their activities. Do people quickly receive information about breakdowns or successes in the system? Is the emotional energy in the system generating a positive dynamic that encourages people to be engaged? Again, if the answers to these questions are negative, then processes or initiatives should be designed that will help people to communicate more effectively across their relationships.

Aside from examining these basic conditions for self-organizing, the CAS approach assumes that every organizational outcome is the product of an indeterminable number of variables. No one cause produces a single outcome. For instance, the accurate delivery of a product to a customer is caused by a whole system of interrelated factors, each influencing the other. Therefore, where broad changes in outcomes are desired, the whole system of interrelated factors needs to be engaged at once. The preferred method of doing this is to engage broad groups of stakeholders simultaneously, using dialogue and conversation to help people develop their sense of agency, their connections with others, and the processes that must be adjusted to create desired changes in outcomes. Appreciative inquiry is one method that works especially well to accomplish all these impacts.

In addition, leaders may also influence the structures that shape patterns of self-organizing. From a CAS perspective, a structure is anything that causes people to engage in a particular pattern of activity. Structures can be physical, such as the work environment, or they can be assumptions or beliefs that are broadly held, such as the ideas about bureaucracy we discussed earlier in this chapter. To create change, leaders can change the structures that are producing current patterns of organization.

There are three ways in which self-organizing structures can be altered (Olson & Eoyang, 2001). First, a leader can influence the **boundary conditions** that establish the limits for emergent activity. Boundary conditions define the degree of discretion that is available to employees for self-directed action. Giving employees more responsibility, empowering them to make decisions at the local level, and providing them with more discretion in the work they do are some of the ways that the boundary conditions may be expanded. The more undefined the boundaries, the more self-organizing can be expected.

Second, self-organizing is altered through the introduction of **disturbances** to the system. Sometimes this can be as simple as helping employees learn about the tensions that exist within an organization around existing patterns of self-organizing activity. For example, there are nearly always significant differences in perspective among different subgroups in an organization. Helping employees to have conversations with others who have significantly different perspectives can introduce a positive disturbance that causes people to reorganize their activities to overcome hidden structures. In manufacturing organizations, for instance, it is common for engineering and production departments to be isolated from one another. Dialogue that includes and connects the employees from such groups can help them overcome and change the structural assumptions that may cause them to self-organize in ways that antagonize the other. The conversation itself can be a catalyst for change.

One final suggestion is a reminder to pay particular attention to the flows and connections that exist among employees across an organizational system. It is essential to healthy organizing to regularly create opportunities for transformational connections, in which employees can learn about the perspectives of other areas of an organization. As they develop and maintain healthy connections, they will empathize with and consider those perspectives as they engage in their own self-organizing activities.

The CAS approach, as indicated earlier, provides both a perspective and a set of principles that can be used in many ways. Many methodologies build on the assumptions of the CAS approach. These include appreciative inquiry and others such as open space technology, whole systems change, future search, and more. In this section, we have barely scratched the surface of the variety of practices that can be used to catalyze change.

Planning a Change Management Process

The perspectives we have reviewed in this section provide a very brief menu of the options that are available to leaders as they consider how to manage change. In reality, many of these can be used together, and they should not be considered mutually exclusive. For example, Kotter's model can be seen as an overall framework for designing a long-term change process. The Open Space or appreciative inquiry models can be used in certain parts of the Kotter process—for example, in the creation of a guiding coalition or creating a vision for the change.

Moreover, there are many, many practices and methodologies that may align in different ways with the framework of questions provided in this section. These can be used in different combinations to design change processes that meet the needs of a particular context.

? Concept Check

1. What are organizational development (OD) and change management?
2. What questions may be used to guide OD and change management?
3. What are the common models of OD and change management?

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