

Extension to Communities

# Force Field Analysis

Force Field Analysis is a method for listing, discussing, and evaluating the various forces for and against a proposed change. When a change is planned, Force Field Analysis helps you look at the big picture by analyzing all of the forces impacting the change and weighing the pros and cons. By knowing the pros and cons, you can develop strategies to reduce the impact of the opposing forces and strengthen the supporting forces.

Forces that help you achieve the change are called "driving forces." Forces that work against the change are called "restraining forces."

Force Field Analysis can be used to develop an action plan to implement a change. Specifically it can . . .

1. Determine if a proposed change can get needed support
2. Identify obstacles to successful solutions
3. Suggest actions to reduce the strength of the obstacles

## Types of forces to consider

Available Resources	Attitudes of people	Values
Traditions	Regulations	Desires
Vested interests	Personal or group needs	Costs
Organizational structures	Present or past practices	People
Relationships	Institutional policies or norms	Events
Social or organizational trends	Agencies	

## The Process

1. Start with a well-defined goal or change to be implemented.
2. Draw a force field diagram.
  - At the top of a large sheet of paper write the goal or change to be implemented.
  - Divide the paper into two columns by drawing a line down the middle. At the top of the left column, write "Driving Forces." Label the right column "Restraining Forces."
3. Brainstorm a list of driving and restraining forces and record them on the chart in the appropriate column.
4. Once the driving and restraining forces have been identified, ask the following questions:
  - Are they valid?
  - How do we know?
  - How significant are each of them?
  - What is their strength?
  - Which ones can be altered?
  - Which cannot?
  - Which forces can be altered quickly?
  - Which ones only slowly?
  - Which forces, if altered, would produce rapid change?
  - Which only slow change in the situation?
  - What skills and/or information is needed and available to alter the forces?
  - Can we get them?
5. Assign a score to each force, from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong).  
The score is based on (a) the strength of the force and (b) the degree to which it is possible to influence this force.
6. Calculate a total score for each of the two columns.

7. Decide if the goal or change is feasible. If so, devise a manageable course of action which:

- Strengthens positive forces
- Weakens negative forces
- Creates new positive forces

### Example Force Field Analysis Diagram

**Goal or proposed change:** To have no abandoned cars along city streets by May 1.

Driving Forces (the pro's)	Restraining Forces (the con's)
<p>Interest in the problem has recently been expressed by advocacy groups.</p> <p>The public service director supports the plan.</p> <p>The City Council supports the plan.</p> <p>Public climate favors cleaning up the city.</p> <p>Local auto salvage yards have agreed to take the cars at no cost.</p> <p>Health department cites old abandoned vehicles as potential health hazard.</p>	<p>The definition of "abandoned cars" is unclear to the public.</p> <p>Owners of older cars feel threatened.</p> <p>Difficult to locate abandoned cars.</p> <p>Where to put the abandoned cars once identified?</p> <p>Expense involved in locating and disposing of abandoned cars.</p> <p>Need a procedure to verify vehicles declared "abandoned" and notify owners.</p>

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