

Map the forces for and against change before you push.

Background

Kurt Lewin · Field Theory in Social Science · 1951

Every change has forces pushing for it and forces pushing against it. Lewin's insight was that pushing harder on driving forces often strengthens the resistance. The more effective path is to reduce or remove restraining forces.

How to Run This

- 1 State the change precisely: from [current state] to [desired state].
- 2 List Driving Forces – what's pushing for this change?
- 3 List Restraining Forces – what's pushing against it? Rate each by Strength and Leverage.
- 4 Identify your Intervention Targets – highest Strength × Leverage score.
- 5 Design a specific intervention for each target.

Facilitator Tips

Common mistake

Treating restraining forces as problems to overcome rather than interests to understand.

What good looks like

A restraining force that was never named before this exercise.

When to move on

When you've identified your highest-leverage intervention and committed to a specific first move this week.

About Wade Institute

Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship is Australia's leading centre for entrepreneurial education, based at the University of Melbourne. The Studio is Wade's free, AI-powered innovation workshop platform – making 24 structured frameworks available to anyone, each one facilitated by Pete, an AI coach trained in Wade's methodology.

Try this interactively in The Studio

Pete will help you map both sides of the field – asking the questions that surface the forces people usually won't name. You'll leave with a prioritised intervention plan and a session report.

studio.wadeinstitute.org.au →

1 FROM (CURRENT STATE)

Where are you now? What are you changing?

2 TO (DESIRED STATE)

Where do you want to be? What does success look like?

3 DRIVING FORCES

What is pushing toward the change? List and rate strength (1-5).

4 RESTRAINING FORCES

What is resisting the change? List and rate strength (1-5).

5 INTERVENTION TARGETS

Which restraining forces have the highest leverage?

6 INTERVENTION PLAN

What specific action will you take for each target?

7 FIRST MOVE

What will you do this week to start?