Force Field Analysis

WHAT & WHEN

The Force-Field Analysis is a process to analyze the 'probable level of resistance' in an organization against a desired 'change' or the introduction of new technology, organization, process etc… It lists, clarifies, discusses and deals with the hindering and facilitating factors for an intended 'intervention'.

The end result of a FFA meeting is a number of actions that will address those hindering factors that impact the 'expected results' of the change the most or actions that try to maximize the facilitating factors and support present in the organization.
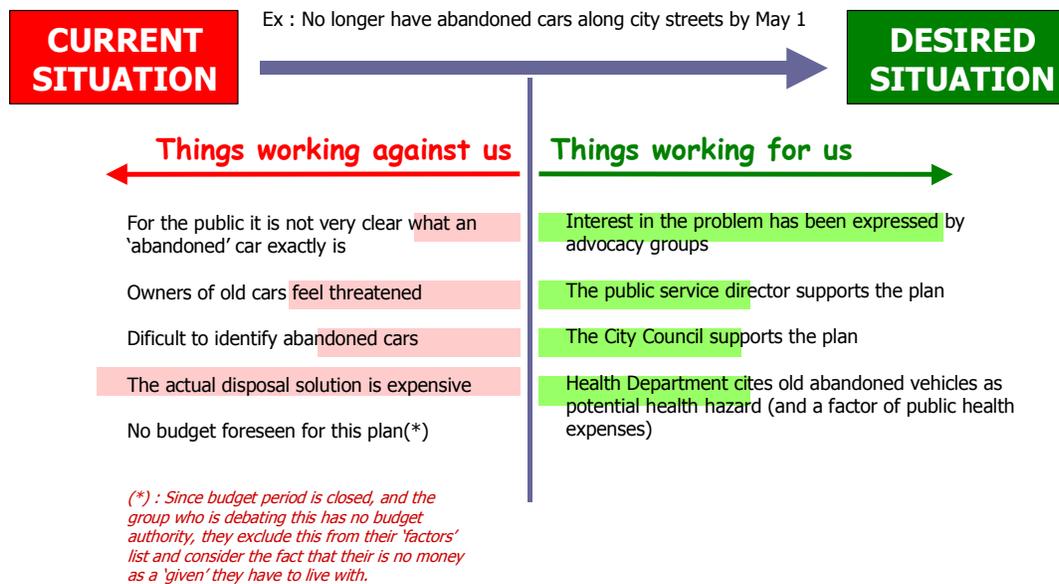
Situations you use it in :

- In the phase of problem analysis, development of solutions and action planning in a Project Management Context
- It can be used in a 'change management intervention' with 'focus groups' to create awareness in the organization for the necessity for action
- The result of it can be used in communication actions
- It can be used by consultants, as an analysis and data-feedback tool towards the customer.

WHY

- It clarifies the different 'obstacles' for change and allows creating an effective action plan to support the change.
- It creates awareness in the organization for the difficulties a certain 'change action' might imply or the levers already present in the organisation
- It creates ownership for the issues and for the solutions
- It focuses the action on the main 'issues' and allows to deal with them

EXAMPLE

| CURRENT SITUATION | Ex : No longer have abandoned cars along city streets by May 1 | DESIRED SITUATION |

Things working against us → ←   **Things working for us** →

Things working against us	Things working for us
For the public it is not very clear what an 'abandoned' car exactly is	Interest in the problem has been expressed by advocacy groups
Owners of old cars feel threatened	The public service director supports the plan
Dificult to identify abandoned cars	The City Council supports the plan
The actual disposal solution is expensive	Health Department cites old abandoned vehicles as potential health hazard (and a factor of public health expenses)
No budget foreseen for this plan(*)	

(*) : Since budget period is closed, and the group who is debating this has no budget authority, they exclude this from their 'factors' list and consider the fact that their is no money as a 'given' they have to live with.

Origianal Source : Lewin, Kurt. <u>Field Theory in Social Science</u>. Harper & Row, New York, 1951.

How

1. **Selection of Participants :** You need a considerable group of people (+/- 10) who have different kinds of relationships to the issue : managers, floor workers, internal customers, content experts, etc… The diversity of the group is important to guarantee that you take into account all aspects of the change you are considering. From an 'involvement' and 'ownership' standpoint it is also important that the main stakeholders are not excluded, because otherwise you might have problems implementing the action plan.

2. **Preparation and information for the Participants :** Explain before you start actually doing the FFA the following issues :

   - What is the problem you are working on ?

   - What do you expect from the participants, now in the FFA but also later in the context of the action plan

   - Explain the technique and the different steps

   - In case people are not used to discuss openly about what happens on the work-floor, the problems they see, etc… it might be useful to foresee an 'ice-breaker'

3. **Room Setting :** Make sure you have a big room (so people can stand up, go to the board, etc..) equipped with flip-charts and preferably a Meta Plan board (big pin-board), large quantity of carton cards and pins. You might want to create up front an 'empty FFA chart'.

4. **Scenario of a FFA Activity :**

   - Describe with the group the current situation, that constitutes the problem or the challenge. It is important to spent time on this, because you need to have some agreement on the urgency for change. In case the 'necessity to change' is not established in this group you might want to consider other interventions (interview, experiential activities, audit, etc..) before you start a FFA. Formulate it carefully and write it down on the empty FFA chart.

   - Describe the desired situation. Depending on the context you do the FFA in this desired situation can be a 'general description' of the new situation (Ex : no accidents any more) or if you are already in a 'solution development' stage then it could be also the solution you want to implement (Ex : the new material handling system in place and effectively working). Write it on the empty FFA chart.

   - Ask people to individually brainstorm on hindering and facilitating factors. A hindering factor is a reality or situation that we have today in the organization and that might make the achievement of our 'desired situation' difficult. (Ex : nobody has experience with this technology) A facilitating factor is a reality in our organization that might help us to get to the desired situation. (Ex : the new CEO sees it as an important priority for our business). Distribute carton cards (two different colors) and ask them to write one idea per card. Give them enough time to do that, because it will allow for the slow starters or the people that are not used to this kind of activities to bring in their ideas 'safely' (not having to discuss immediately).

   - Invite people to come with the first card. Pin it on the board, ask for clarification, make sure everybody understands it (rephrase if necessary). Ask the group then whether they have related issues. Bring those on the board too. In this way you cluster immediately a number of ideas. You could also let people put everything at once on the board, and from their cluster into issues.

   - Go over all the factors, and eliminate with the team all those who you as a team cannot influence. If you cannot do anything about them, you have to 'accept' them as 'context conditions' and work around them

   - Evaluate now the rest of the factors in terms of their impact on the change objectives. How hard will they hit you ? (hindering) or how powerful are they in getting you there ? (facilitating). You can visualize that impact in different ways (different length of arrows, color codes, order them in relation to the 'existing' or 'desired' situation, etc…).

   - Agree on the top 3 of the hindering and facilitating factors

   - Create a brainstorm to generate solutions and actions to take advantage of the facilitating factors and weaken the negative forces. *(action planning methodology)*