

# Four Simple Steps For Using An Old Technique<sup>1</sup>

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(March 31, 2011)



Some old ideas never outlive their usefulness.

Back in the middle of the last century, Kurt Lewin, one of the granddaddies of social psychology and change management, came up with a technique that is as useful today as it was then. In fact, during these times of rapid global economic and technological change, it is more useful than ever. It is called *Force-Field Analysis*.



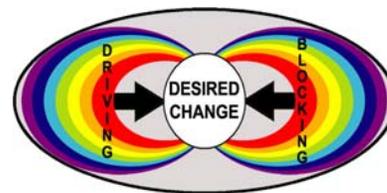
Many of you who are reading this are probably familiar with this technique. But, my guess is that most of you rarely make use of it. I urge you to reconsider. It is very useful for solving problems at both the individual and organizational level.

In this Timely Tip, I will describe a simple four-step procedure for getting the most out of a Force-Field Analysis and then illustrate it with an example.

## What Is A Force-Field Analysis Anyway?

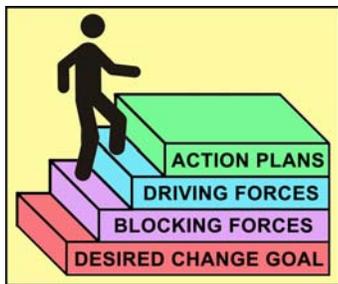
Force-Field Analysis is a very useful technique for looking at and dealing with the variables involved when planning and implementing a change. You may be experiencing a problem that you need to solve, such as salespeople failing to make their customer follow-up calls. Or you may wish to implement an entire new process in the office, such as using new software to make it paperless.

Lewin looked at such situations as a kind of “force-field,” in which “driving” and “blocking” forces influence the chances that the desired change may occur. Driving forces may be such things as managerial pressure to make a process more efficient. Or negative feedback from customers about the quality of products being produced. Blocking forces may be such things as untrained or unmotivated employees. Or poor processes that take too long.



## Four Steps

Overall, when considering a desired change, the trick is to look at each blocking force and come up with a corresponding driving force that will overcome that blocking force, and then convert each driving force into an action plan that will facilitate the desired change.



On the next page, I will describe four simple steps for conducting the Force Field Analysis and then illustrate it with an example from a retail client who I worked with a few years ago: a group of salespeople not making follow-up calls to customers and a dissatisfied Sales Manager

Follow these four steps as a template for any problem you wish to solve or any change you wish to implement, individually or as a group. You will find these steps easy to use and immensely useful, whether you are dealing with a personal issue or a problem in your workplace.

<sup>1</sup> From: [http://www.arniedahlke.com/110331\\_Four\\_Simple\\_Steps\\_For\\_Using\\_An\\_Old\\_Technique.pdf](http://www.arniedahlke.com/110331_Four_Simple_Steps_For_Using_An_Old_Technique.pdf) Take a moment and explore Arnie's other Timely Tips at: <http://www.arniedahlke.com/timelytips.htm>

## The Four Steps

There are four steps to conducting a Force Field Analysis:

1. Clearly state the desired change as a goal to be achieved. Be very specific so that the results of your efforts can be measured.
2. Identify the various forces that block or stand in the way of reaching the goal. Again, be very specific.
3. For each blocking force, suggest a driving force—an action that can be undertaken—to overcome that blocking force. Once more, be very specific.
4. Develop an Action Plan designed to overcome each blocking force.

## An Example Of The Four Steps

Following is an example of a Force Field Analysis conducted in an automobile dealership.

In reviewing the data from a customer satisfaction survey, the Sales Manager found that 65% of customers surveyed reported that not all salespeople were making follow-up calls to them. This was a very serious issue to the Sales Manager.

It was a serious issue because a large percentage of new customers came from referrals generated during follow-up calls. Customers, who appreciated the salesperson checking with them to make sure they were satisfied (and attempting to reverse a dissatisfaction when it occurred), often talked about their positive experiences with friends and relatives, many of whom became new customers.

The Sales Manager pulled his sales team together and asked them to address the problem. He systematically took them through the four steps of the Force Field Analysis, using Brainstorming to capture Blocking Forces, and then capture Driving Forces. The results were as follows:

 <b>Step 1. Goal: Improve The % Of Sales People Making Follow-Up Calls.</b> 	
 <b>Step 3. List Driving Forces</b>	 <b>Step 2. List Blocking Forces</b>
I will set up a reminder system and a daily call schedule to ensure I make my calls.	In my daily efforts to make sales, I get so involved with the current customers who look like they want to buy that I forget to make calls to previous customers.
I will seek help from my Sales Manager on how to ask for referrals in a positive, non-pushy manner.	I hesitate to call because I am afraid customers will see me as pushy when I ask for referrals.
I will learn how to handle complaints constructively and do what's needed to make the customer happy.	I don't take the time to call because I so often have not succeeded in getting referrals.
I need to recognize that over time, one referral out of many attempts will add up!	I don't want to take the time to call because I so often have not succeeded in getting referrals.
 <b>Step 4. Develop An Action Plan Designed To Overcome Each Blocking Force.</b>	
Each salesperson chooses a specific, daily-time block for making calls. He or she then keeps a record of all calls and submits them to the Sales Manager at the end of every day.	
The Sales Manager institutes a mandatory training program for all salespeople describing and demonstrating techniques for asking customers for referrals in a non-pushy manner.	
The Sales Manager institutes a mandatory training program for all salespeople on handling complaints constructively, and gives salespeople the latitude to take actions to resolve complaints.	
Tracking the percentage of referrals gained from calls, each salesperson seeks coaching on improving it from the Sales Manager.	

During the three months after the Action Plans were devised and implemented, the Sales Manager reviewed customer satisfaction scores collected from new customers one week after their purchase. To his great satisfaction, customer complaints dropped from 65% to 25% and referral percentages climbed by 20%. He continued training salespeople, coaching those who still had difficulty in implementing the action plans.

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TAKE THE TIME TO MAKE USE OF IT!**