# Coping with Change

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## Recommended Citation

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## Abstract

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# Coping With Change

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WE ARE INVOLVED in changing technology, changing market demands, the need for new ways to manage effort, the need for more flexibility, and a growing need to have greater involvement on the parts of all people. Society today is demanding more than ever before for all people to be involved in their own destiny, whether it be on the job, in the schools, etc.

## Planning for Organizational Change

Change does not have to be haphazard, but it is difficult to identify it while it is going on. Without appropriate attention being paid to it, however, it occurs in essentially an uncontrolled way.

Organizational change can be usefully examined by focusing with a technique developed by Kurt Lewin. It essentially helps to direct attention to those forces which are driving the organization in a new direction and those which are restraining movement. When these forces get out of balance the pattern gets unfrozen and often in reaching a new equilibrium point, more tension results.

A goal of organizational change is to reduce some of the restraining forces to change, to increase the driving forces and, in essence, to combine both.

Any change in an organization is often followed by a reaction toward the old pattern, a kind of backsliding. Thus, any change in one part of the system needs supporting changes from other parts.

*Editor's Note:* Although Dr. Trier spoke from notes and did not have a complete text for reproduction, he furnished this digest of major points made in his presentation before the 1968 annual AAACE meeting.

## *Some Principles of Organizational Change*

1. To change a subsystem, or any part thereof, relevant aspects of the environment must also be changed.

2. To change behavior in one level, there must also be change at levels above and below.

3. The place to begin change is at points in the system where some stress and strain exists. Stress gives over to dissatisfaction and becomes a motivating force for change in the system.

4. It is best to start change with the policy making body, but if you can't get them, you ought to move ahead nevertheless.

5. You must deal with both the formal and the informal organization.

6. The effectiveness of planned change is directly related to the degree to which members at all levels take part in it, from the fact finding through program implementation.

7. Expect the following reaction to occur to change: hostility, apathy, and dependency. Plan to meet them, to confront them, and to work them through.

Discussion groups like those organized at the 1968 AAACE annual meeting can follow general principles of change for more effective results. Decisions can be made by using consensus as a guideline, thereby involving more individuals in group action. Individually, group members can invest themselves by being open, hy taking personal risks, by getting some trust from one another, and by confronting each other on ideas or issues that matter.