

# WEEKEND

## extra

**FASHION:**  
Designers love the  
new fashionable  
Kenyan man  
**Page 29**

**WORLD CUP:**  
Brazil targets sixth  
global trophy  
**Page 31**

**MANAGEMENT** A change leader must try to enhance the power of staff who desire change while minimising the influence of status quo seekers



A manager at work. In every entity forces exist that push for change juxtaposed against those who strongly desire to maintain the status quo. FILE

## How to initiate and manage change in your organisation



BUSINESS TALK  
**SCOTT BELLOWS**

Irakoze relocated to Kenya from Burundi to work at a child-focused NGO. He felt great pride by working in the regional headquarters for so many exciting NGOs: Nairobi. Irakoze started off as a programme officer in the education division of the organisation.

He enjoyed the work, but sometimes experienced frustration with the Nairobi office's politics. Sometimes he waited days before a vehicle became available to take him and his team into the field.

Irakoze noticed that two types of employees worked in the office: those that wanted to improve the organisation and those that wanted to keep it the same.

Following two years of diligent work, Irakoze received a promotion to a programme manager position. Commensurate with his new post, the head office in Paris requested him to investigate ways to bring about

change in the Nairobi office with special attention to speeding up processes. Irakoze inquired from several friends who recommended that he implements a model for planned organisational change.

Upon further discussion, he settled on famed researcher Kurt Lewin's model of planned change. Back in the 1950s, Lewin pioneered approaches for changing firms towards greater performance.

Lewin recognised that in every entity, forces existed that pushed for change juxtaposed against those who strongly desired to maintain the status quo.

Then, a change leader must try to enhance the power of employees who desire change while also simultaneously minimising the influence of status quo seekers. Such power realignment helps to unfreeze the quasi-stationary equilibrium that an organisation operates in.

Once unfrozen, the change agent may move around structures, people, processes, and policies within the firm before finally refreezing the changes into a new organisational reality. So, the first task for Irakoze entailed listing to every employee in the office. Then, he rated them based on

which side of the equation they fell: desire to change or stay the same. Once Irakoze separated the staff into two different categories, he needed to strategise about the group that desired change.

How should he set forth a vision for the future that these change agitators could get behind and support? In order to ascertain what type of vision would come across as palatable by the change-oriented employees, Irakoze turned to J.C. Carlson's book *Work Like a Spy: Business Tips from a Former CIA Officer*. Carlson argues that every employee holds deep seated reasons for working in the entity.

Inasmuch, Carlson encourages every leader and change manager to understand the motivations behind every staffer.

So, Irakoze set off to understand the change agitators' motivations. He revealed that the chief financial officer's reason for working in the NGO revolved around her desire to boost her CV.

So, any new change initiatives that she rolled out would look good on her resume. The monitoring and evaluation manager, on the other hand, pushed for change because he came from a difficult upbringing in an orphanage, so he wanted the organisation to function as efficiently as possible so that more underprivileged and at-risk children could be served.

### Best practices

Irakoze continued in the above fashion through the entire list of those who desired change. He then came up with a moving initiative termed "help more children by being the NGO which implements the most innovation and best practices". The change initiative could capture the imagination of all the change seekers.

Next, Irakoze took the list of staff who wanted to maintain the status quo. Why would those employees want to keep things the same? What motivations did they hold? Irakoze delved deeply and cautiously into their backgrounds.

Upon quiet investigation, Irakoze uncovered that the NGO country director worked with the organisation because he liked the perks of employment: free house, free car, free driver, and school fees for his children.

Therefore, he got wary any of change initiative that might rock his role because

of prospective impacts on his benefits package. The chief accountant desired the status quo because she benefited from subtle kickbacks. She secured jobs for her cousins at the NGO. Several staff members also came from her village. She chaired the tendering

committee and bought a new car immediately after the last major tender.

So, how should Irakoze maximise the power of the CFO but lessen that of the country director? Perhaps he could convince the Paris headquarters to create a new regional initiative and put the CFO in charge.

The added clout could raise the CFO's prominence and enable her to more fully serve as a change agent in lieu

of the country director.

Irakoze then might try to get the monitoring and evaluation manager to give interviews to some local publications and go on a motivational speaking tour to raise his prominence.

Meanwhile, he could direct internal auditors to publicly investigate the chief accountant to raise suspicions, fix bad practices, and minimise her influence.

All of Irakoze's actions thus far in his programme manager position revolve around the first step in Lewin's model of planned change: unfreezing. Next, Irakoze needs to look at ways to move organisational pieces to support his end goal.

Remember that the NGO suffered from inefficiency. So, in the movement phase of Lewin's planned change model, Irakoze would introduce streamlined procedures, automated tracking, and reassign or terminate inefficient staff.

Once Irakoze completes his organisational movement, then he should refreeze the situation by cementing the new realities into the minds of the staff and leadership.

He should institute training, team building, new manuals, and workplace rewards to solidify all the changes.

Who are the change agents in your office? On the other side, who are the proverbial sticks in the mud who benefit from the way things exist already? Share your experiences at #KenyaEconomics on Twitter.

**Prof Scott** serves as director of the New Economy Venture Accelerator (NEVA) at USIU's Chandaria School of Business and Colorado State University, [info@scottprofessor.com](mailto:info@scottprofessor.com)  
Twitter: @ScottProfessor