



Enablers and Barriers to Successful Change EAWOP 2013

Kate Horton, P. Saskia Bayerl & Gabriele Jacobs
(RSM, Erasmus University, the Netherlands)

Introduction & background



- Change can be highly detrimental to individuals and organizations, provoking resistance and dissatisfaction (e.g., Fedor et al, 2006; Oreg, 2003; Oreg et al, 2008)
- Change is threatening because it challenges accepted values, norms and expectations
- Research highlights a number of drivers of effective change (e.g., leaders manage/ minimize change threats by acting as a role model, change agent)
- But do these drivers of change apply across contexts? (e.g., expected that if norms, values and expectations vary according to cultural context, so too will the drivers of effective change).

Research questions

- 2 research questions:
 1. What are the primary barriers and facilitators to perceptions of change effectiveness?
 2. Are there cross-country differences in these change determinants?
- Context police forces in Europe
- Police are experiencing volatile environments and economic challenges

Methods & analysis

- 151 interviews in 10 COMPOSITE countries
- Semi-structured interview format
- Descriptions of successful and unsuccessful projects (predefined categories and narratives)
- Also evaluation criteria and underlying drivers
- 300 projects discussed in total
(149 successful & 151 unsuccessful change projects)
- Fine-grained coding of the narrative data to identify underlying themes

Sample

Countries	Strategic rank	Supervisory rank	Operational rank	Total number
Belgium	5	5	6	16
Czech Rep	5	5	5	15
France	2	4	9	15
Germany	5	5	5	15
Italy	5	3	6	14
Macedonia	5	5	6	16
Netherlands	3	7	5	15
Romania	3	3	9	15
Spain	6	3	6	15
UK	6	4	5	15
Totals	45	44	62	151

Findings....

Primary facilitators & barriers

Facilitators	Percentages (of mentions)
1. Communication and information	88.5
2. Management and leadership	57.7
3. Staff involvement	47.7
4. Resources (sufficient & appropriate)	36.9
5. Clear / predictable targets and goals	28.5
6. Training for staff / implementers	19.2
Barriers	Percentages (of mentions)
1. (Lack of) staff involvement	53.3
2. (Lack of) communication /information	46.7
3. Resources (insufficient)	22.5
4. Top-down communication style	20.8
5. (Lack of) clear targets and goals	20.0

Cross-country leadership

Countries	Numbers		Descriptions of good leadership
	Success	Failure	
Belgium	11	9	Employee participation - seeking consensus / compromise
Czech Rep	10	5	<u>Knowledgeable</u> – Serious, honest & professional
France	1	1	Unimportant, manipulate staff to follow orders
Germany	10	10	Dedicated, skillful in participation& involvement
Italy	3	4	Often no leader identified, institutional perspective
Macedonia	11	7	<u>Professionalism</u> - experienced, organizers & trusted
Netherlands	9	7	<u>Knowledgeable</u> - clear vision & approachable
Romania	8	5	Only half described leaders – project management
Spain	13	9	<u>LC</u> - participatory, involved & <u>decisive</u>
UK	10	8	<u>LC</u> - Inspiring mentors, <u>charismatic</u> , direct, fair & determined, good communicators

Cross-country communication

Countries	Numbers	Descriptions of effective communication / information
Belgium	22	Across levels, targeted, open, frequent updates, <u>mouth to mouth communication</u>
Czech Rep	17	Concise & targeted
France	25	Top-down , clear point of contact
Germany	20	Frequent, <u>variety of sources</u> , targeting whole organization
Italy	14	Personal, informal communication
Macedonia	22	Timely & frequent communication
Netherlands	18	Sufficient & clear communication
Romania	22	Top-down , sufficient and timely
Spain	25	Transparent, <u>using a variety of information sources</u>
UK	26	Clear & targeted information, <u>variety of sources</u>

Cross-country staff participation & involvement

Countries	Success	Failure
France	12	11
Belgium	4	7
Czech Rep	4	5
Macedonia	6	5
Germany	12	12
Netherlands	5	4
Romania	6	4
Spain	3	8
UK	7	8
Italy	2	0

No staff participation - irrespective of success / failure of the project

Staff participation is critical for successful projects

Lack of staff participation is a major factor in project failure

(Lack of) Staff participation primarily mentioned as a barrier

Staff participation rarely mentioned as an important factor

Conclusions

- Key barriers and facilitators of change appear to apply across countries and contexts

However

- The importance of these determinants is context specific (e.g., the importance of leadership)
- The nature / specific preferences regarding these determinants is context specific (e.g., different expectations regarding involvement)

Theoretical Implications

- Implies that theoretical models **cannot be universally applied**
 - => e.g., traditional change models are centered around one leader / change agent. This research suggests that “substitute leadership” processes should also be considered
- The effects of **cultural and organizational context** should be more explicitly investigated and considered in organizational change models
 - => context free research (Griffin, 2007; Johns, 2006)

Practical implications

- Identify **key determinants of change acceptance**
=> important in order to better manage police organizational change
- Facilitators & barriers are **contextually dependent**.
=> tailored strategies are therefore critical to align change policies with the norms & values of the organizational / national context

Limitations & next steps

- Qualitative analysis is important to identify underlying themes
- Focused on subjective perceptions (rather than objective characteristics) based on a small sample
- Next step is a core survey focusing on cross-country determinants of change in a large sample across the 10 countries
- Longitudinal analysis also conducted to investigate the relative importance of different factors at different stages of a change process

Thank you & discussion



Thank you for your attention.....

....Open symposium discussion