

A SURVEY- FEEDBACK APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF  
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

by

SHELAGH GOODWIN

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SUPERVISOR: PROF ML WATKINS

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**SUMMARY****A SURVEY-FEEDBACK APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF  
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**SUPERVISOR:      PROF ML WATKINS**  
**DEGREE:           MA**  
**SUBJECT:          INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

The aim of this study was to explore the role of feedback in managing resistance to organisational change. A general systems theoretical model of individual resistance to change was developed. It describes the origin, function and outcomes of individual resistance to planned organisational change. The role of feedback within this process was identified as a central one and feedback was therefore identified as an important point of leverage in managing resistance to change. The survey feedback approach was adopted in a retail organisation undergoing significant change. Staff were asked to respond to a survey on their experience of the change. Results were analysed and then fed back to them during group discussions. The process was repeated. It was concluded that the survey feedback approach significantly contributed to a reduction in resistance to change and that both survey feedback approach and the model of individual resistance to change merit further investigation.

Title of dissertation:

A SURVEY-FEEDBACK APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF RESISTANCE  
TO CHANGE

Key terms:

Resistance to change; Survey-feedback; Organisational change; Social cognitive theory;  
Antecedents of resistance; Change Resistance Scale; General Systems theory.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Industrial psychology is an applied discipline of psychology which focuses on individuals, groups and contextual factors in the workplace. The emergence of organisational psychology, within the broader field of industrial psychology, is relatively recent. While still concerned with the study of intrapersonal processes, as is psychology in general, organisational psychology embraces interpersonal and group processes, functioning and interaction within the context of organisational structures (Robbins, 1989). In organisational psychology, the study of the impact that individuals, groups and structure have on behaviour within organisations is directed at improving organisational effectiveness (Robbins, 1989).

Many organisational theorists view organisational effectiveness as the degree of congruence between the internal organisational systems and the environment (Beer & Walton, 1987). Thus more effective organisations would be identified by the way in which they analyse their environments and the extent to which internal systems and structures are aligned with environmental demands. In order for an organisation to be effective, it must appropriately and timeously respond to the demands of a changing environment.

The need for organisations to manage change effectively is nowhere more pressing than in South Africa today. While change has always been a feature of the environment to some extent, the recent political changes in South Africa have been particularly far-reaching. In addition to this, the return of South Africa to the international economic community after decades of isolation has increased pressure on businesses to achieve global competitiveness and keep up with rapid advances in productivity and technology (Forson, 1993).

Bennis, Benne and Chin (1984) suggest that the dominant question: "Should we seek

to plan change?", in social science in the early twentieth century has shifted towards: "How do we plan particular changes in particular settings?". The organisational psychologist would, as an observer-change agent, therefore have a particular role to fill. Recognition that the observer is part of the process has important implications for the way in which research is conducted and organisational development interventions planned and implemented.

While a sizeable body of international research regarding the use of organisation development interventions for the implementation of planned change exists, the recent focus has been largely on the content of intervention strategies and their effectiveness, as measured by an assessment of organisational outcomes (Beer & Walton, 1987, Covin, 1982, White & Mitchell, 1976). In a survey of intervention strategies for large-scale organisational change, Covin (1992, p.32) concluded that "change process success appears to depend much more on complex interactions among individual, organisational and change process variables than on intervention strategy content alone". This implies a dire need for more comprehensive theories of organisational change.

## 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that there exists a need to investigate the more dynamic aspects of change management and to develop a coherent and dynamic process model. This implies the inclusion of individual, organisational and change process variables as elements of organisational systems, rather than considering them "confounding variables" which hamper the identification of cause-and-effect in planned interventions for organisational change. Not only are they legitimate elements, they are crucial to any meaningful understanding of change. Organisational change cannot take place without a corresponding change taking place within the individual members of the organisation (Westley, 1990).

Individual reactions to change cover a broad spectrum, ranging from extremely positive through indifferent to extremely negative (Bennis, in Coghlan, 1993, Judson, 1991). In

planning and implementing organisational change, the ideal is to achieve enthusiastic support and acceptance of worthwhile changes. As Katz (1994, p.37) points out, a common perception among managers regarding the failure of change efforts is that "most change fails because employees resist it". For all this, there has been little systematic research on the effects of, for example, defensive behaviour and resistance to change on organisational functioning (Ashforth and Lee, 1990). Bearing in mind the potential outcomes of resistance to organisational change in both the short- and long term (eg. increased interpersonal and intergroup tension, delays or preclusion of decisions and tasks, rigidity and stagnation, "red tape", insularity, politicisation of the organisation, distrust and low morale (Judson, 1991) ), resistance to change is clearly a topic worthy of further investigation.

A model which clarifies the functioning of the resistance mechanism within organisations, supported by empirical findings which indicate ways in which resistance may be managed more effectively, would in no small measure contribute to the success of organisational change efforts.

Preliminary empirical work regarding employee perceptions of change and potential strategies for the announcement of organisation-wide change has been conducted by Smeltzer (1991). This points to the importance of open communication between those who initiate the change and other organisation members to avoid negative feelings and morale problems. Coghlan (1993) followed a person-centred approach to dealing with resistance to change and added that resistance needs to be seen as legitimate and healthy - a manifestation to be regarded seriously and worked through by those involved. Both Coghlan (1993) and Smeltzer (1991) promote a sensitive and non-coercive approach which involves listening and responding to individuals as strategies for dealing with resistance. It seems then that should a technique for managing resistance be proposed, it is imperative that open communication and discussion with organisation members at all levels be included.

The use of survey feedback is a popular intervention within organisational psychology

which involves administering a survey to organisation members, processing the responses, and then providing feedback informed by the survey. It has the advantages of being relatively inexpensive to construct and administer and can also be used with large groups of people simultaneously. It can serve as a communication medium and where anonymity is preserved, be used to stimulate discussion and debate where people might otherwise be reluctant to voice their opinions. Covin (1992) reports that survey feedback, when used to raise morale and productivity, is able to stimulate participation in change processes among organisation members at all levels. Research has shown that interventions of this nature tend to be rated by participants as being moderately to very successful (Covin, 1982). Despite the popularity of survey feedback as a technique and the extensive research which has been conducted in the field of organisational change and resistance to change, there does not appear (insofar as the author could ascertain) to have been any attempt as yet by researchers to use survey feedback as a means of managing the change process and deal with resistance which arises during the change process. This study therefore seeks to explore the effect of survey feedback (concerning individual experiences of a change process) on resistance to planned organisational change.

## 1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The general aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of survey feedback in reducing resistance to organisational change. The theoretical aims are: (a) to develop and describe a model of individual resistance to planned organisational change; (b) to identify potential sources, functions and manifestations of resistance to planned organisational change; and (c) to propose a strategy for managing planned organisational change, with particular reference to dealing with resistance to change. A general systems theoretical perspective will be adopted. In this endeavour, the application of survey feedback within the field of change management will be considered.

The empirical aims of the study are: (a) to identify the sources and strength of resistant

behaviour regarding a specific attempt at organisational change; (b) to conduct a preliminary investigation, in an exploratory study, of the effect of survey feedback on the levels and nature of resistance to the change; and (c) to establish whether the use of survey feedback aimed at managing resistance to change merits future research.

### 1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework serves as a frame of reference for observation and data collection and may exist as a typology, model or theory (Mouton & Marais, 1991). Bearing in mind the interdisciplinary nature of organisational psychology and the aims of the study, the conceptual framework is provided by the functionalist (that is general systems theory) paradigm. Philosophical beliefs which are associated with general systems theories include that "the world is intelligibly ordered as a whole", "scientific theories and paradigms can be unified", "holism", "organicism", and that "problem-solving in the real world requires generalists not specialists" (Sirgy, 1988).

Concepts form the most basic units of meaning in social sciences research. Concepts become constructs when they emerge from a specific paradigm and where their meanings are determined by theory at the outset (Mouton & Marais, 1991). Within the broader systems concept, three constructs are studied.

*Systems* are defined as open sets of components. They have boundaries at which the flow of inputs (energy, materials, information) is controlled. Inputs are transformed by systems in an ordered manner through their own internal processes, into outputs which flow back into the environment. Systems thus continually influence and are influenced by those systems with which they interact. The process of a system receiving environmental information as a consequence of its own outputs is referred to as feedback (Bowler, 1981).

*Planned organisational change* is defined here as any change in organisational processes, systems or structures which is planned, initiated and implemented for the

purpose of enhancing organisational effectiveness, either directly or indirectly.

For the purposes of this study, planned organisational change is operationalised as the merging of two organisations with different cultures.

*Resistance to change* is defined as any conduct or force which serves to maintain stability in personality or social systems, in the face of pressure to alter the *status quo* (Coghlan, 1993).

*Survey feedback* is the interpretation and communication of survey data to the participants in the survey.

#### 1.4 METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Methodological assumptions about research define both the focus of the study and the way in which the results are interpreted. The aim of this study is to explore the possibility of a link between the use of survey feedback and levels of resistance to a specific change, as well as to explore the processes taking place in the individual's experience of change. The study is exploratory in nature.

In order to explore the questions posed by this study as comprehensively as possible, both qualitative and quantitative data are gathered, analysed and interpreted. Mouton and Marais (1991) describe the quantitative approach as one which is characterised by a relatively high degree of formalisation, the existence of explicit controls, and a clearly defined range, which is fairly close to the physical sciences. They define the qualitative approach, on the other hand, as one in which the procedures are not as strictly formalised and where the scope is less clearly defined. Ferreira (in Mouton & Marais, 1991) points out that, in the qualitative paradigm, research is a process of discovery where the researcher accepts the meanings constructed and realities experienced by the research participants. It is thus far more open-ended than quantitative research. Comments by research participants and a description of the feedback sessions are

included to allow for more in-depth discussion and interpretation of the findings.

## **1.5 RESEARCH PROCESS**

In order to achieve the theoretical and empirical aims of the study, the following steps are taken:

### **1.5.1 Literature review**

In the literature review an overview of the current state of research on individual and organisational change, change management and resistance to change are presented within the framework of general systems theory. These threads are woven into an integrated model for the understanding of individual resistance to organisational change. Research on the use of survey feedback as a technique in change management is also presented (see Chapter 2).

### **1.5.2 Method**

The research design is set out as a quasi-experimental survey-based study. Statistical and other techniques used to analyse and interpret the data are described (see Chapter 3).

### **1.5.3 Results**

The results of the study are analysed statistically and presented (see Chapter 4).

### **1.5.4 Discussion**

The results of the study are discussed in terms of the theory presented in Chapter 2. Conclusions about the findings are drawn. Recommendations for the practical applications of the findings and for future directions for research are made (see

Chapter 5).

### **1.5.5 Summary**

A summary of both theoretical and empirical aspects of the study (see Chapter 6).

### **1.6 Integration**

In this chapter, the background to the study of organisational change and resistance to change are outlined and the problem of managing resistance to change are stated. It is indicated that general systems theory forms both the paradigm and the conceptual framework within which the problem is investigated. The methodological assumptions underpinning the research, and the way in which these have informed the design of the research process, are also presented.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Coghlan (1993), theorists and practitioners have become "seduced" by the systems viewpoint and lost sight of the importance of the individual. The holistic, dynamic understanding of individuals, groups and their interactions with each other and the environment which is offered by the systemic paradigm, is nevertheless an extremely valuable one. General systems theories differ from conventional theories in that they have greater unifying power because the interactions between variables within total systems are explained (Sirgy, 1988). The importance of the individual is not devalued, but it must be recognised that individuals do not exist or act in isolation. The systemic paradigm forms the point of departure to describing resistance to change and survey feedback within a systems perspective. In this chapter, the general systems approach to the study of organisations will be explained, followed by a discussion of the nature of change resistant behaviour and a systemic approach to survey feedback as a mechanism for managing resistance.

#### 2.1 GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY

A system is a set of subsystems (interacting with each other) enclosed by a boundary which selects both the kind and rate of flow of inputs and outputs to and from the system. Systems in the real world are necessarily open systems - open to interaction with other systems in order to achieve identity through relatedness, without losing their own structure and specific identity. If the subsystems are to discharge their specialised functions, they must retain an element of autonomy and uniqueness. At the same time, they are part of a larger (super-) system - or environment which is constantly changing and to which they must adapt (Bowler, 1981). Systems could be said to be both co-operating and competing with their environments. The interdependent nature of the relationship demands that systems draw energy from and emit energy to their environment, without losing their own unique identity (Bowler, 1981).

Goldstein (1988) suggests that a living system endures over time and tends to resist any change which threatens the system's autonomous identity. The organisation itself is the fundamental variable that is maintained as a constant. Thus, a living system can equilibrate change in the environment as well as curtail any change threatening to disrupt the specific way it is organised. This principle, termed "autopoiesis", has its roots in cybernetic concepts concerning homeostatic, equilibrium seeking mechanisms. Essentially, autopoiesis ensures that living systems survive through resistance to change (Goldstein, 1988).

The notion that organisational systems tend to act in ways which will ensure their own survival and organisational integrity is borne out by research on organisational culture. In these studies it was found that survival is the primary strategy of organisations (Gagliardi, 1986). Organisational culture may therefore encourage organisation members to "screen out" environmental cues which do not accord with assumptions, values, norms or beliefs within the organisation (Lorsch, 1986).

## 2.2 ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

In studies of organisational behaviour and change, the literature reveals three major approaches to understanding change and ways in which organisations change and develop. These can be classified as implementation, change process (Porras, 1987) and *ad hoc* (Watkins & Barnard, 1989) approaches. However, a fourth approach, rooted in the systemic paradigm, appears to be emerging.

Implementation theory focuses on change agent activities. Covin's (1992) survey of common intervention strategies for large-scale organisational change suggests that this approach is a flourishing one, particularly as it is seen as having immediate practical relevance for organisations which are faced by the need to change. Research contributing towards implementation theory relates to the relative effectiveness of different interventions (or change agent activities) and combinations of interventions. Covin found that strategic planning, skill-building, restructuring, job design, job

enrichment, survey feedback, team building, quality circles, culture awareness, culture change workshops, off-site problem-solving sessions and process consultation are the most popular interventions which can be classified as implementation strategies for change. Typical objectives of these interventions are to decrease costs, increase productivity, increase participation, improve morale, increase customer- responsiveness, become more adaptive and develop strategies. The objectives of these interventions are multi-dimensional in nature and it was found that the number of interventions which is utilised is positively related to change programme success.

In a meta-analysis of research on intervention methodologies, Beer and Walton (1987) concluded that there had been no breakthrough in intervention methodologies. They therefore regard this aspect of organisational theory as being somewhat limited. They propose a more dynamic approach to the study and management of change which Porras (1987) refers to as a change process approach. In change process theory, the focus is on the dynamic aspects of organisational change through which organisational processes tend to change. Within this broad approach theorists have, for example, explored the role of leadership (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) and particularly transformational leadership (Howell & Avolio, 1993, Tichy & Ulrich, 1984) and the role of the leader in creating a "learning organisation" (Senge, 1990). These authors support the notion that the transformational leader (the person who is able to transform an organisation by mobilising organisation members around a new common vision and institutionalising the changes) is more likely to develop an adaptive organisation.

The study of organisational culture has in no small measure also contributed to change process theory. Edgar Schein's work on organisational culture has been described as the most important done yet in the field (Gagliardi, 1986). In Schein's work, organisational culture is defined as "what a group learns over a period of time as that group solves its problems of survival in an external environment and its problems of internal integration" (Gagliardi, 1986, p.111). The role of organisational culture in change, and particularly the need to be sensitive to and manage culture when undertaking strategic change has been emphasised in Gagliardi (1986) and Lorsch's (1986) work. These researchers,

together with Calori and Sarnin (1991), have found relationships between organisational culture and economic performance. Calori and Sarnin (1991) in their study on selected French companies, found that particular cultural characteristics (values like "personal fulfilment", "listening to others", "team spirit", "responsibility", "openness to the environment", "adaptation", "anticipation", "entrepreneurship", "quality" and "consistency") and corresponding management practices seem to be related to positive economic performance.

Although popular, these traditional approaches to change theory have been sharply criticised. McKerrow (1987, p.125), for example, postulates that researchers often make the "...unwarranted assumption that the change agent is inextricably tied to the idea of change", rather than exploring the nature of the relationship and interactions between the change agent and the organisational system. She suggests that change agents themselves, rather than being objective and neutral initiators of change, are a politically-motivated element of the change process. This may well generate resistance to change.

Watkins and Barnard (1989) show that traditional models of organisational change have generally been fragmented and implemented on an *ad hoc* basis. They therefore propose a more holistic approach to the study of organisational change, which recognises the systemic nature of organisations and organisational change. This approach integrates the focus on interventions and processes, within a general systems framework. With such an approach, no element of the environment or the organisational system could be viewed as independent entities. Organisational activities and attitudes, as well as an organisational culture of shared norms, values and assumptions, emerge from the way in which organisational subsystems interact, and particularly from the personal interactions between members of the organisation. Watkins and Barnard (1989) argue that it is through these processes that organisational systems transform energy and information from the environment into organisational outputs. It is therefore only from this holistic perspective that a unifying and coherent theory of organisational change may be developed.

The systemic paradigm promises exciting directions for the study of organisational change. It provides an holistic framework for understanding why organisations change and why change may be resisted. It has already been argued that organisational systems tend to resist change in order to maintain organisational integrity and identity. Goldstein (1988) poses the question, "How, then, does any change occur at all?" The answer to this question, he responds, lies in the different states in which systems exist, namely "equilibrium" and "far-from-equilibrium". A system in equilibrium, he suggests, will always strive to dampen or reduce fluctuations, thereby resisting change. Such a system, it is proposed, will exist in a state of relatively low energy (synonymous with information about how the parts of the system are ordered). The autopoietic system is "information tight" - its boundaries are impermeable. On the other hand, a system in a "far-from-equilibrium" state may amplify a fluctuation to the extent that the fluctuation "invades" and reorganises the entire system. This "far-from-equilibrium" state may be brought about through an energy/information exchange between the system and the environment. The flow of information across the boundaries of the organisational system is therefore central to the process of organisational change. The difference between the equilibrium and far-from-equilibrium states may be illustrated through the following analogy: When a jelly is made, it is in hot, liquid state. The particles within the jelly possess high energy. At this stage, it may be poured into a variety of moulds. This is the far-from equilibrium state. As the jelly cools and sets, it loses energy and becomes more solid. At this stage, it can no longer be poured into different moulds. The position of the particles within the jelly is set. This is the equilibrium state. Only through the introduction of energy from the environment (melting the jelly through the application of heat) can it be returned to the far-from-equilibrium state.

This theory of organisational change echoes Kurt Lewin's ground-breaking earlier work on organisational development. Lewin (1951), in his field theory, refers to organisations starting in a "frozen" state, needing to "unfreeze" in order to change and then to "refreeze" once the necessary change has been effected. Goldstein (1988) describes the conditions under which a far-from equilibrium state may be brought about as the

existence of close contact between the organisation and the environment and sensitivity to changes in the environment. The role of the change agent in this context is therefore to facilitate the flow of information between the organisational system and the environment (Goldstein, 1988).

This last approach holds much promise for the study and management of organisational change. However, the focus thus far seems to have been on organisational change without a corresponding emphasis on the importance of the individual in the change process. As organisational change cannot take place without affecting and being affected by the individuals which belong to the organisation, the individual's experience of change cannot be ignored.

### 2.3 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

According to Judson (1991), change in the workplace affects people on three levels namely, operational (the physical task which they perform, which may be altered as a result of the change), psychological (the way they feel about and perceive themselves in relation to the change) and social (the way in which interpersonal and intergroup relationships are affected by the change). Organisational change can thus have far-reaching effects on individuals in many aspects of their lives.

While a substantial body of literature exists on human learning and how change or learning takes place, a central aspect of the individual's experience of change - that of resistance - has been largely either ignored, or treated as an annoying confounding variable. Matejka and Julian (1993) take an approach to resistance which seems to be common to many change agents: resistance is a problem. Therefore, it must be avoided possible and resolved speedily where it does occur. Malinconico (1983) points out that resistance is a legitimate part of change which must be viewed not as an ancillary problem or a distraction from the real problem at hand. Rather, it is an intrinsic part of the process of change. If the individual's experience of change is to be fully understood, then resistance to change cannot be ignored.

### 2.3.1 Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory provides a coherent and well-supported theoretical framework which can be applied to understanding the willingness of individuals to accept and act upon cues suggesting a need for change (Porras, 1987). Social cognitive theory was developed by Albert Bandura in his research on human motivation and learning. In answering the question "What motivates people to behave in specific ways?", Bandura (1991) identified three classes of motivators, namely physiological motivators (hunger and thirst), social motivators (including the need to be accepted and like by others) and cognitive motivators. He argues that, although physiological and social factors may motivate behaviour in certain instances, there are many cases where human responses cannot be understood solely in terms of physiologically or socially driven behaviour. Self-sacrificing behaviour, for example, may seem quite irrational when viewed as a response to the physiological or social needs of the individual. However, humans are characterised by their ability to process stimuli cognitively before responding. It is the cognitive processing of information about the environment and the self which may have a significant effect on behaviour. Bandura (1986, p.19) argues that "...human functioning is explained in terms of triadic reciprocity in which behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other".

Three lines of research were built upon and developed in the development of social cognitive theory, namely attribution theory, expectancy-value theory and goal theory (Bandura, 1991). Attribution theory states that retrospective judgements of the causes of one's performance impacts on motivation. It could happen that, where a person achieves success in a particular task, they afterwards attribute the success to their own skill. In such a case their belief in their own efficacy would be enhanced and they would be encouraged to attempt similar or more challenging tasks in the future. Should they attribute their success to chance or other factors beyond their control, they would not be likely to attempt similar or more challenging tasks in the future (Bandura, 1991).

information about an intended change are: (a) gathering information about the change itself and his/her own position in relation to the change process, and then (b) using personal value-laden criteria (expectancy, valence and perceptions of self-efficacy) applied to this information in order to make the decisions upon which action will be based. In terms of social cognitive theory, the mechanism by which motivation is determined involves action (the setting of a goal and performance in pursuit of the goal), the development of discrepancy (where the goal is not achieved completely), reaction (attribution of the discrepancy to particular causes, either within or beyond the individual's control and a corresponding change in behaviour) and reduction in discrepancy (progress towards the goal or the revised goal). Discrepancy reduction facilitated by feedback thus lies at the heart of social cognitive theory. These principles have been extensively supported in empirical work done by Bandura (1986, 1991).

### **2.3.2 The nature of resistance to change**

The study of resistance to change has its roots within the psycho-analytic movement, which was introduced by Freud. Within this context, resistance was labelled as "everything in the words and actions of the analysand that obstructs his gaining access to his unconscious" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p.394). Resistance was viewed by Freud as being central to unveiling the secret of neurosis, and evaluating resistance was therefore seen as a key part of the psychoanalytic technique. Freud's psychoanalytic theory defines resistance as a defence mechanism or a strategy of the ego to defend itself against the conflict between forbidden drives and moral codes which causes neurotic and moral anxiety. Unacceptable drives, wishes and memories are transferred to the unconscious through repression. However, these drives, wishes and memories retain their energy and constantly try to return to the surface (consciousness). This creates anxiety. Resistance therefore becomes operative in order to keep the drives, wishes and memories in the unconscious.

The term resistance later passed into more general use, referring no longer to purely intrapsychic forces, but also to forces within social systems. Watson (in Coghlan, 1993,

p.10) defines resistance as "all forces which contribute to stability in personality or in social systems". Resistance is defined here as any reaction to real or potential change in the *status quo* which serves as an attempt to maintain the said *status quo*.

Resistance may be manifested in a number of forms, varying in nature and intensity. O'Connor (1993) describes resistance as being either overt or covert. More subtle forms of resistance (covert resistance) might involve such behaviours as apathy (loss of interest in the job), working to rule (doing only what is ordered), regressive behaviour, nonlearning, doing as little as possible, slowing down and personal withdrawal (increasing time off the job and away from work) (Judson, 1991). Judson (1991) identified more overt forms of resistance such as protests, committing "errors", spoilage and deliberate sabotage. Although all of these forms of resistance are relevant to the individual, resistance can also take place on a group level. Judson (1991) suggests that people may resort to collective action, resisting an undesired change as a group - to increase their control over the situation.

### **2.3.3 The function of resistance**

In terms of systems theory, resistance is the manifestation of energy generated by a system which is directed at restoring internal equilibrium and maintaining the integrity of the system (Goldstein, 1988). Individuals as members of organisational systems and systems in themselves, may utilise resistance to maintain systemic integrity or equilibrium in a variety of domains. Resistance may be used to reduce the potential for cognitive dissonance arising from change. It may be used to prevent the blocking or perceived blocking of need satisfaction arising from change (Mealiea, 1978); to avoid undesirable emotional states such as anxiety and fear (Diamond, 1986); or to prevent the disruption of existing social relationships (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993). Neculau (1994) found that resistance to change in the psycho-social establishment in Romania was motivated by desires to maintain the *status quo*, cling to already acquired professional competence, avoid the unknown and conform to socially accepted norms.

## 2.4 DEALING WITH RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Common approaches to dealing with resistance to change are typically informed by the ways in which resistance is defined and the sources of resistance identified. Kotter *et al.* (1979) identify some of the most common approaches to the management of resistance as (a) education / communication, (b) participation, (c) facilitation and support, (d) negotiation, (e) co-optation, (f) manipulation and (g) coercion.

*Education / communication* is one of the most common and rational strategies aimed at helping people to understand the logic of the change by providing accurate information. Kotter, Schlesinger and Sathé (1979) suggest that this can be useful when the source of the resistance is to be found in misunderstandings, misconceptions and/or a lack of relevant information. The success of this approach may, however, be affected by the quality of the relationship between initiators and those who are being expected to change. The importance of communication in the management of change is stressed by Smeltzer (1991) who found that, where management did not provide sufficient timely information, attitudes towards management and the change tended to become negative. A lack of information, he found, was also associated with an increased number of rumours about the change process.

*Participation* implies that those who are expected to change be involved in the planning and implementation of the change. Research supporting this approach has been conducted since the earliest days of organisational psychology. Coch and French (1948), reported that the learning of new tasks in a factory environment was directly related to the amount of participation in the design of those tasks. Kotter *et al.* (1979) point out that, to be effective, participation should be carefully managed. A more recent study by Sagie, Elizur and Koslowsky (1990) provides qualified support for the importance of participation in decision-making about change. They report that acceptance of change was higher for subjects who participated in operational decision making than for those who did not participate in the making of operational decisions. However, acceptance of change was lower for subjects who participated in strategic decision making than for

those who did not.

*Facilitation and support* involve responding to the emotional needs of people experiencing change. This might include techniques such as counselling and training, or even leave or time off after a demanding period. This approach accords with those followed by researchers such as Coghlan (1993) and Malinconico (1983), who advocate a person-centred approach to dealing with resistance. Coghlan (1993) points out that this approach implies a non-directive technique to which Carl Rogers dedicated much of his life and writing. The notion that the person-centred approach is "a way of being", which requires that the facilitator be genuine and authentic in responding to the client's experience of change. Genuine facilitation is not a technique which can be used to achieve particular organisational ends.

*Negotiation* as an approach to resistance involves bargaining with active or potential resisters. Kotter *et al.* (1979) see it as appropriate when somebody is going to lose something of value to them as a result of the change. In South Africa, negotiation and particularly collective bargaining are firmly entrenched and widely accepted as a way of regulating the relationship between management and workers (Horwitz, 1991). A potential problem with this approach is that it is often associated with adversarial relationships between the negotiating parties. However, within the context of the current labour legislation and the power dynamics which exist in the labour market, negotiation remains a frequently used alternative.

*Co-optation* typically involves giving a potentially powerful resister or group a desirable role in the design and/or implementation of the change. Kotter *et al.* (1979) suggest that it can be a relatively easy way of pre-empting resistance, but warn that it may be viewed negatively and seen as manipulation. The distinction between participation and co-optation may be quite blurred in many cases.

*Manipulation* refers to covert attempts to influence people. The nature of manipulation does leave it open to potential abuse and, should people feel that they are being

manipulated or not told the truth, they would be likely to react negatively (Kotter *et al.*, 1979).

*Coercion* involves forcing people to accept a change by either explicitly or implicitly threatening them with serious consequences for non-compliance (loss of jobs, etc.). This is a rapid way of implementing change but does pose a strong danger in that people tend to resent being forced to comply (Kotter *et al.*, 1979).

Kotter *et al.* (1979) argue that each approach has merits and drawbacks and that certain approaches (or combinations of approaches) would be appropriate to specific situations. Criteria which they would use to determine the most appropriate way of dealing with resistance are: (a) the amount and type of resistance that is anticipated; (b) the position of the change agents *vis-a-vis* the resisters (nature of the relationship - power dynamics, trust, history); (c) the locus of relevant data for designing the change, and of energy needed for implementing it (i.e. who would need to be involved in designing and implementing the change) and (d) the stakes involved (e.g. the presence or absence of a crisis, consequences of resistance and lack of change).

A problem common to most of these approaches is that they tend to seek to neutralise resistance without recognising the legitimacy of resistance as part of the human experience of change. This tends to lead to a symptomatic rather than systemic approach to implementing change. This implies striving to eliminate the resistance without first identifying it and establishing its origin and function in the system (Malinconico, 1983). Coch and French (1948), in the earliest days of industrial psychology, observed that attempts at managing resistance to change by a combination of negotiation, coercion, co-optation and manipulation proved to be unsuccessful. In attempting to overcome worker resistance to learning new tasks, management had tried the use of special monetary allowances for transfers, enlisting the co-operation and aid of the union and making necessary lay-offs on the basis of efficiency. Each approach failed. However, the involvement of workers in planning changes which were to affect them brought about a significant reduction in resistance. Malinconico (1983) suggests that by "hearing

the resistance" through the identification of the nature and sources or antecedents of resistance, imbalances within the system can be identified and constructively addressed. In order to work with resistance constructively, it is firstly necessary to develop a deeper understanding of the way in which resistance functions, its purpose and the mechanism by which it operates (Malinconico, 1983).

## 2.5 THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY TO RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Resistance to change has received some indirect attention from Bandura (1991) in his research on anxiety arousal and avoidance behaviour in risky situations. He shows that social cognitive theory provides a useful explanation for the reactions of people to dangerous or anxiety-provoking situations. He argues against a simplistic approach which views risky and anxiety-provoking situations as being sufficiently aversive in themselves for people to avoid them. The suggestion that people will resist change merely because it involves risk is rejected. He cites many of his own studies as having shown that perceived self-efficacy operates as a cognitive mediator of anxiety arousal and avoidance behaviour in risky situations. For example, an adventure seeker may indulge in highly risky activities (such as bungi - jumping), despite high levels of anxiety.

Social cognitive theory is used here as a basis for a systemic model of individual resistance to change. It is suggested that resistant behaviour results from a dynamic process involving the interaction of intrapersonal processes (particularly valence, self-efficacy and expectancy), social dynamics and the influence of contextual variables in the wider organisational system. The nature of the change process and the impact which this has on the individual's experience of the change is viewed as being of particular importance. The interaction between the elements of the model, and particularly the feedback loops which exist, provide the key to developing a systemic understanding of the function and mechanism of resistance to change.

## 2.6 A MODEL OF INDIVIDUAL RESISTANCE TO CHANGE WITHIN THE ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

A model describing individual resistance to change is presented in Figure 2.1. The elements of the model, namely antecedents of resistance to change, the operation of the resistance mechanism and the manifestations or outcomes of resistance will be discussed.

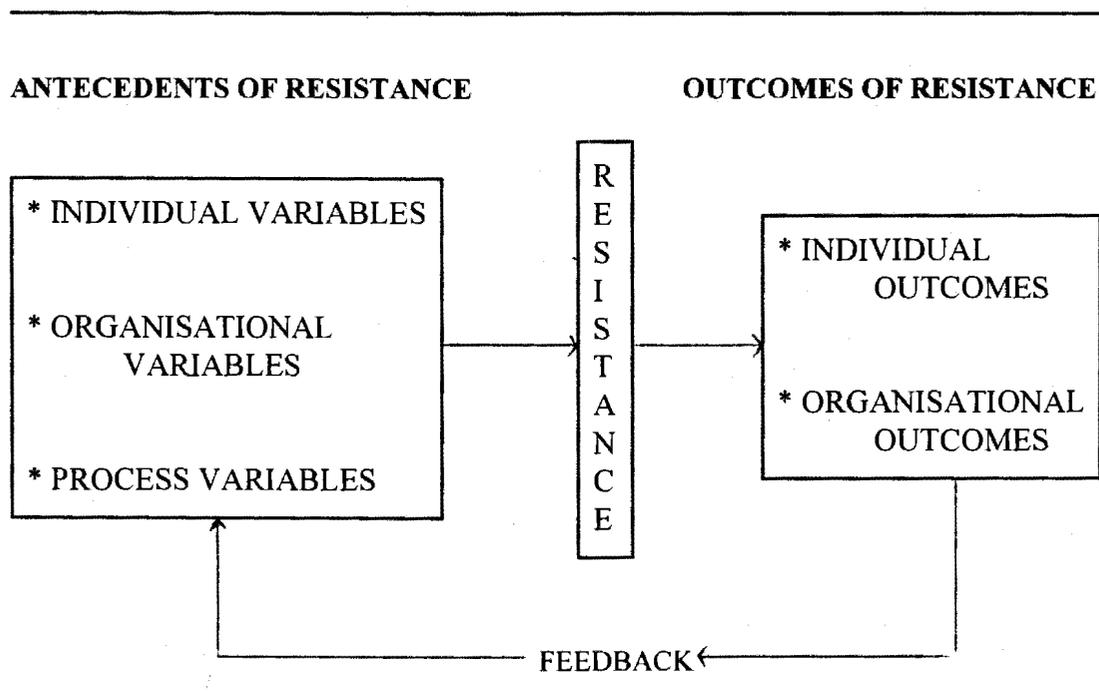


Figure 2.1 Model of individual resistance to change

### 2.6.1 Antecedents of resistance to change

The following review of literature in the field of resistance to change yields a number of potential antecedents of resistance to change. Although many researchers and managers tend to focus exclusively on the individual or human factors which give rise to resistance (*i.e.* the perception that "most change fails... because employees resist it"), McKerrow (1987) stresses the potential role of change agents and organisational factors in the development of resistance to change.

### 2.6.1.1 Individual antecedents of resistance to change

A variety of individual antecedents to resistance to change has been identified in the literature. Bandura (1986) argues that the causal effects of behaviour, cognitive, personal and environmental factors will not all be equally strong, nor will there necessarily be simultaneity of influence. However, thought and action will be determined by some combination of the above factors. This should, however, be seen in the context of the individual's expectations relating to change, values attached to possible outcomes, and personal beliefs about ability to affect those outcomes.

#### \* **Expectancy**

Judson (1991) suggests that apprehensions or other expectations regarding the change (whether realistic or not) may give rise to resistance. The importance of expectations regarding outcomes of change in determining individual and group reactions cannot be overstated and can be summarised in the truism "perception is reality". People do not react based upon an objective reality, but upon perceived reality. This includes their expectations as to the outcomes of particular changes.

Expectations relating to change are formed through the interaction of a number of complex factors. Literature (*cf.* Conner, 1993, Judson, 1991) suggests that the most important among these are fundamental and generalised predisposition towards change, and historical experience of the particular organisation and its management.

Judson (1991) suggests that individuals tend to hold certain generalised fundamental feelings about change and that any individual may have a more negative than positive attitude to change in general. This will then find expression in reactions to specific change. Diamond (1986) developed this idea further to suggest that two contradictory behavioural tendencies are inherent in individuals, namely the tendency towards learning and change and the tendency to protect one's self against the risk of change as a result of learning. Mealiea (1978) proposes a conceptual model which shows that,

particularly in the organisational context, individuals who have experienced change as blocking their dominant need structures, will learn to associate negative tension states (anxiety, frustration, fear), with the introduction of change. It follows that individuals who have experienced the blocking of dominant needs (physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs and self-actualisation needs) as a result of change in the past, would learn to see the risk involved in change as being greater than the benefit derived from learning and growth. It could be hypothesised that such people would tend to resist change as a matter of principle.

Conner (1993) suggests that people who adapt best to change have a higher level of personal resilience than others and found that, although they face no less a challenge when confronting a crisis than others, they tend to regain their equilibrium faster, maintain a higher level of quality and productivity in their work, preserve their physical and emotional health, and achieve more of their goals.

This is not to say that resistance to change is purely a function of personality. On the contrary, organisational researchers have realised the wide spectrum of consequences that mood and emotion have on organisational behaviour variables (George & Brief, 1992). Fine (1986) argues that resistance has a strong affective component. Ashforth and Lee (1990) show that emotional exhaustion, as part of the experience of burnout, can give rise to avoidant behaviour in the work situation. They cite cases in which telephone crisis counsellors refused to answer the telephone, hung up on clients and refused to speak to the families of runaways due to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Threat, ambiguity, work overload and powerlessness are organisational stressors which may serve to reduce the individual's control over the work environment and thereby increase anxiety. These elements have been shown to be antecedents of defensive, avoidant or resistant behaviour in numerous studies (Ashforth & Lee, 1990).

Judson (1991) suggests that events in the organisation's history such as its past policies, practices and customs, the actions of its past and present management, the extent to which the management have proved themselves trustworthy and the nature and effects

of previous changes will influence individual attitudes towards and expectations about change.

\* **Valence**

Valence, as defined earlier, refers to the value which is attached to change outcomes. This would relate mainly to beliefs about the need for change. These are identified by O'Connor (1993), Lorsch (1986) and Kotter *et al.* (1979) as being powerful cognitive determinants of resistance to or acceptance of change. These authors view lack of belief in the need for change or differing assessments of the urgency of the situation to be the most important antecedents of resistance to change. The question posed by the individual here is, "Is the change going to produce a desirable outcome which is preferable to the *status quo*?"

O'Connor (1993) argues that a lack of agreement about the goals for change may also contribute to resistance. Beliefs about the change will also play a role in forming resistance where the individual fears the implications of accepting a change. Kotter *et al.* (1979) suggest that sometimes the acceptance of change may imply a loss of face - an acknowledgement that past beliefs, decisions or behaviour were wrong. Naturally, this would imply that the change would hold negative consequences for those affected and that valence would consequently be negative. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory places strong emphasis on the motivating value of valence. Thus, a belief about change which holds that change will have undesirable consequences for the individual is likely to increase the probability of resistance to change.

\* **Self-efficacy**

The third element of individual antecedents of resistance to change is beliefs about self-efficacy, both individual and collective. Beliefs about self-efficacy are beliefs relating to the individuals' confidence in their own ability to negotiate the rapids of change successfully (Bandura, 1986). Beliefs about collective efficacy are beliefs about the social system's ability to bring about successful change (Armenakis *et al.*, 1993).

Bandura and Cervone (1986) found that beliefs about self-efficacy partly determine what challenges people choose to undertake, how much effort they choose to expend in the endeavour and how long they tend to persevere in the face of difficulty. O'Connor (1993) suggests that lack of belief that the goal is attainable, acts as an antecedent of resistance to change. Ashforth and Lee (1990) and Watson (in Coghlan, 1993) argue that fear of not being able to cope with the demands of a new situation may lead individuals to resist changes. The primacy effect (the way in which individuals had coped successfully initially, and to which pattern they tend to return) and selective perception and retention (responding to environmental cues in terms of an already established perceptual framework) are identified by Watson (in Coghlan, 1993) as further patterns which can give rise to or strengthen resistance to change. These relate to individuals' understanding of their own abilities and their beliefs about their competence to deal with the new demands posed.

#### 2.6.1.2 Organisational antecedents of resistance to change

According to Jacobs (1974) individuals who are interacting with others in social systems focus their attention on a variety of things, namely (a) the responses which they themselves are emitting, (b) the responses of others in the system, (c) verbal and nonverbal responses of other members within the system. The purpose of this is to determine the evaluative responses of others to the messages and stimuli which have been emitted. The information flow constitutes the intragroup feedback which, according to Jaques (1948), has the potential of facilitating social change. Armenakis *et al.* (1993) summarise the effect of interpersonal or social factors on resistance to change as follows: "...through the dynamics of social information processing, an organisation's collective readiness (to change) is constantly being influenced by the readiness of individuals comprising it. System members look to one another for clues regarding the meaning of events and circumstances facing the organisation" (p.686).

Group processes can have both positive and negative effects on the willingness and ability of group members to deal with change (Cartwright, 1983). Facilitated group

discussions around specific issues or problems with which the group is faced can act as an effective forum for social learning. This enables individuals and groups to learn adaptive responses to problems and changes (Jaques, 1948, Fine, 1986). The influence of interpersonal relationships and group dynamics on willingness and ability of individuals to change is dependent on certain conditions.

The group should be cohesive. Change agents and those who are to change should identify themselves as belonging to the same group. Group membership should be attractive to them and the more relevant the values, attitudes or behaviours to be changed to the reasons for attraction to the group, the greater will be the group influence on them. Group members who enjoy high prestige within the group will be able to exert greater influence on members. Finally, any attempt to bring about change which conflicts with the existing beliefs, values or behaviours of the group is likely to encounter strong resistance. A cohesive group therefore has the potential to exert considerable influence on its members (Cartwright, 1983).

Interpersonal relationships have been shown to be a potential influence on resistance to change in a number of ways. Lawrence (in Malinconico, 1983, p.111) defines the social or interpersonal aspect of change as "the way those affected by it think it will alter their established relationships in the organisation" and that "what people resist is usually not technical change but social change - the change in their human relationships that generally accompanies change". Judson (1991) suggests that the nature of the relationships within the organisation, and particularly levels of trust and loyalty, have a significant impact on the extent to which staff are willing to co-operate in the change process. This is linked to organisational commitment, which Ashforth and Lee (1990) found to increase levels of resistance when it takes the form of alienative commitment or work alienation.

The fact that people often belong to more than one group (formal or informal) in the work context (such as the employing organisation and a particular department, occupational subgroup, trade union or special interest group) may significantly influence

the organisational antecedents of resistance to change. Individual members are more likely to influence and be influenced by others within cohesive groups (Wismer, 1979) and it may thus be that, if members identify strongly with a cohesive trade union, and less strongly with the employing organisation, that trade union pressure to resist change announced by management would outweigh management pressure to accept the change.

As already suggested in the previous chapter, the maintenance of identity in the face of a changing environment (i.e. survival) is a function of organisational systems. This is achieved primarily through the continuity established by sets of assumptions, values and attitudes which are shared by organisation members - the organisational culture (Gagliardi, 1986). Lorsch (1986) suggests that organisational culture can create a set of "blinkers", creating tunnel vision when members fail to accept or understand feedback (information from the environment) which does not accord with the existing cultural assumptions and beliefs. Lorsch (1986) therefore views a strong cultural identity (i.e. a system which is relatively impermeable to information from the environment) as a primary barrier to change.

A number of researchers (Ashforth & Lee, 1990, Diamond, 1986) propose that the organisational system responds much like individuals in the face of change, striving to defend against "anxiety" and maintain the *status quo*. Just as individuals may use resistance as a defence mechanism where change is perceived as a threat, so may organisations defend against change. It has been suggested that the bureaucratic organisation, with its fixed systems, structures and procedures, is both a response to the uncertainty and threat in the internal and external environments and the source of much organisational defensiveness (Ashforth & Lee, 1990).

According to Ashforth and Lee (1990), the logic of bureaucratic rationality means that, "while the subdivision of tasks makes one more clearly responsible for a specific task, it makes one less responsible for the overall task and consequently for the needs of the client" (p.633). Diffusion of responsibility, they argue, may therefore increase the tendency to avoid action. The vertical specialisation which characterises the

bureaucracy, discourages thinking at lower organisational levels and may thus also stimulate willingness to avoid action ("I don't make the rules, I just follow them"). High levels of formalisation ("everything by the rulebook") provides further justification for avoiding action not specifically demanded by the rules. The organisational accountability and reward systems may also contribute to inertia within the bureaucratic organisation, as errors are punished and innovation not rewarded. Diamond (1986) sees this phenomenon as evidence of organisational defences against anxiety at work.

A related phenomenon is that of organisational culture, which may be supportive of change and innovation to a greater or lesser degree (Calori & Sarnin, 1991). However, even the organisation which has a culture which is strongly supportive of change, may find that the culture acts as "strategic blinkers", restricting ability to read environmental cues which do not fit into the existing framework of beliefs and norms (Lorsch, 1986). A refusal to accept change which counteracts existing organisational norms, beliefs and values may reflect anxiety at the denial of such deep-rooted elements of the organisation's identity (Gagliardi, 1986).

#### 2.6.1.3 Antecedents of resistance within the change process

Certain factors relating directly to the nature of the change and the way in which the change process is managed, have shown to increase the likelihood of resistance. The manner in which change is introduced and implemented influences the reactions of those involved (Judson, 1991). Change must be motivated and readiness for change created, typically through staff participation in the planning of change and thorough communication of the change and its implications. A vision for a desired future state must then be created and shared. After that, political support for the change must be built, primarily through communication with those affected. Finally the transition must be managed and momentum sustained. Communication throughout the change process is of key importance (Gilbert & Kleiner, 1993). Smeltzer (1991) found that effective communication is vital in the announcement of organisation-wide change and that the timing and content of information regarding change is of particular importance. He

found that rumours tend to spread and a strong negative attitude towards management tends to form, where employees are not given sufficient information soon enough. He also found that overly optimistic descriptions of change and the use of euphemism to describe the effects of change, often gave rise to mistrust between management and staff.

The extent to which those affected are enabled to participate in the planning and implementation of change is also a well-supported factor in determining acceptability of changes. Coch and French, in their classic 1948 study, demonstrated that commitment to change was higher for staff who had participated in its planning, while resistance was higher for those who had not. The notions of participation and empowerment are particularly attractive to many on ideological grounds. It is therefore noteworthy here these findings have not been undisputed. Sagie, Elizur and Koslowsky (1990), in a laboratory experiment, found that the acceptance of change among subjects was higher for those who participated in the "operational decision-making condition" than for those who did not participate, but lower for subjects who participated in the "strategic decision-making decision" than for those who did not participate. This seems to suggest that the participants were willing to accept strategic decisions (broad policy issues) being made for them - even preferring this state of affairs - but were not willing to accept operational decisions being made for them about tasks which they had to accomplish. One could thus conclude that, whilst certain principles should be observed during the implementation of change, it is difficult to present a clear-cut formula for the change process. The expectations of individuals will tend to differ and this necessitates dealing with organisational change in a way which is sensitive to the demands of the individuals in their specific situation.

### **2.6.2 The resistance mechanism**

Resistance is used as a primary survival mechanism by systems (Goldstein, 1988) and thus, where individuals perceive change as a threat to them or their interests, they will tend to resist. However, the operation of the resistance mechanism and the

manifestations of resistance will generally differ from person to person and situation to situation. This is because of the key role played by individual cognitive processes in determining responses to change or anticipated change. In terms of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) the decisions made by the individual are determined by their subjective assessment of the situation. The individual response to change may seem completely irrational to observers (Goldstein, 1988), but be quite logical to the individual (Bandura, 1986).

Depending on how the change is viewed by the individual (expectancies regarding the change, valence attached to change outcomes and perceptions of the change process and the organisational environment within which the change is being implemented) as well as the individual's perceptions of his/her own ability to deal with the change (perceptions of self-efficacy), he/she may choose to resist or support the change. The extent to which change is resisted or supported is also a function of the interaction between the potential antecedents of resistance to change. It may be that some elements present in the situation are viewed positively by the individual affected, while others are viewed negatively. For example, the outcomes of the change may be seen as valued, but the individual may doubt management's ability to implement the change successfully. In such a case, the individual would have to decide whether to support or resist the change and to what extent to do so. Although perceptual and cognitive processes are key to the functioning of the resistance mechanism, this should not be taken to imply that all resistance is conscious. O'Connor (1993) points out that resistant behaviour may be unconscious in many cases.

### **2.6.3 Outcomes of resistance**

Individuals form specific responses to change, which may include resisting change, through the process described above. These responses are manifested in specific behaviour. O'Connor (1993) classifies resistant behaviour as either intentional or unintentional, overt or covert. She presents a matrix (Figure 2) for the identification of the manifestations of resistance at the individual level and goes on to describe the

behaviours associated with each manifestation of resistance.

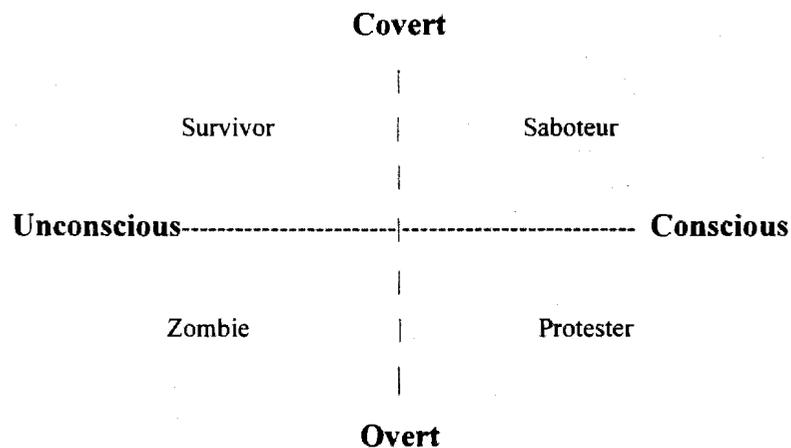


Figure 2. 2 Manifestations of resistance to change (O'Connor, 1993)

\* **Covert and conscious (the saboteur)**

O'Connor (1993) describes the "saboteur" as undermining the change while appearing to support it. This may be done passively, by those who feel that if they support the change verbally but do nothing, it may "go away". It may also be done actively, by those who intend to sabotage the plans or change for the purpose of achieving their own agenda.

\* **Covert and unconscious (the "survivor")**

O'Connor describes the survivors' failure to understand the implications of their behaviour. They may feel that they are doing what is required and be disheartened when their lack of adaptation to the change is discovered.

\* **Overt and unconscious (the "zombie")**

O'Connor describes the "zombies" as being so entrenched in their old behavioural patterns that they seem unable to change. While recognising that these are not the required new behaviour patterns, they do not seem to regard their behaviour as being resistant.

\* **Overt and conscious (the protester)**

Protesters register their objections to the change loudly, often believing that their refusal to change is making a positive contribution to the company. O'Connor agrees that the performance of this "devil's advocate" function is important to organisations as it may protect the organisation from rash or ill-considered change. It may, however, be disruptive in cases where the change is a necessary and useful one.

Judson (1991) points out that resistance to change is manifested not only at the level of the individual, but also at the group level. Groups may also resist change consciously or unconsciously, overtly or covertly, actively or passively.

Social cognitive theory may be useful in giving an indication of the form of resistance most likely to be adopted. It could be argued that individuals weigh up the expected outcomes of their resistant behaviour, the value attached to the outcomes and their belief in their own ability to carry out the resistant action successfully, prior to deciding how best to express resistance. Manifestations of resistance will have specific outcomes for the individual, the change process itself and the organisation. Where, for example, the active saboteur of change resists the change successfully, the outcome of the resistance for the individual will be the satisfaction of their personal needs and goals. They may also learn that sabotage is an effective and rewarding way of dealing with change and thus attempt to apply similar strategies when faced with change in the future. Outcomes for the change process would be the derailing of planned change and the frustration of the needs and objectives of the change agents. Organisational outcomes might include

the loss of the potential benefits of the planned change and the creation of a history of unsuccessful change efforts. This, in turn, might contribute to a change-resistant organisational culture in the long term. The outcomes of resistant behaviour thus feed back into the organisational systems in a way which may influence future change efforts significantly. However, social cognitive theory does not adequately explain the link between intention to respond in a particular way and the actual behaviour. It seems that further empirical research is needed in this area.

#### **2.6.4 Feedback loops**

##### **2.6.4.1 The operation of the feedback mechanism**

The resistance mechanism, as described in Figure 1, is a process in which momentum is sustained through the existence of feedback loops. The antecedents of resistance interact with one another to produce resistant responses, which then have certain outcomes. A discrepancy between desired and perceived outcome creates new information or energy (Goldstein, 1988). As in all systems (Bowler, 1981) any discrepancy between the desired and actual outcome (as assessed by the individual through feedback received) is a strong director and motivator of behaviour (Bandura, 1991, Nadler, 1977). Matsui, Okada and Inoshita (1983) report over 15 studies confirming that the presence of specific goals led to improved task performance when feedback was provided. Positive feedback will signal the individual to strengthen the behaviour, negative feedback, the reverse (Nadler, 1977).

According to Nadler (1977), feedback affects behaviour by performing two sets of functions. Firstly, feedback creates or generates energy, thereby performing a motivating function. Secondly, feedback has a directing function where the energy or motivation already exists. Feedback may motivate behaviour in three ways. It may motivate by disconfirmation (that is, it may provide information which is inconsistent with already held beliefs and perceptions, thereby creating anxiety and a drive to resolve the inconsistency). In order for feedback to motivate through disconfirmation, Nadler

(1977) argues that it is necessary that feedback be perceived as valid and accurate, and that a climate of psychological safety exists. The nature of feedback given has been shown to affect reactions to it. Where feedback describes positive characteristics, recipients typically react with feelings of well-being and energy. Where feedback identifies deficiencies or negative characteristics, anxiety and depression are often aroused (Jacobs, 1974). Recipients of feedback rated positive feedback as more believable than negative feedback (Jacobs, 1974).

Feedback may motivate behaviour through the creation of internal-reward expectancies. Where an individual anticipates that the outcome of an action will increase self-esteem, for example, he/she will be motivated to take that course of action. It also provides standards against which goals can be set and measured. Nadler (1977) states that, in order for feedback to motivate behaviour through the creation of internal-reward expectancies, the standards of performance to be achieved must be realistically attainable, desirable and measurable. Bandura's (1991) findings show that, in order to fulfil the motivating function, goals should also be specific, challenging and proximal (reasonably close in space and time).

External-reward expectancies are the third way in which Nadler (1977) suggests that feedback can motivate behaviour. Here, feedback can set up expectations that behaviour will lead to feedback, which in its turn will lead to the attainment of valued extrinsic rewards. Once again, here the goals must be attainable if this feedback is to be motivating. Feedback must be instrumental in procuring rewards and these rewards must be valued ones.

According to Nadler (1977), feedback may direct behaviour in two ways, by cueing and by learning. In cueing, feedback draws attention to errors which can be corrected through known and established routines of behaviour. In order for the feedback to be effective, it must be specific, and correction routines must be clearly understood. In learning, feedback draws attention to errors which cannot be corrected through established patterns of behaviour and for which new solutions must therefore be

discovered. In order for learning to take place, Nadler (1977) argues that feedback must be on both process and outcome variables and include models of effective behaviour. Thompson and De Harpport (1994), however, in an experiment based on a negotiation exercise, found evidence that outcome feedback was generally not effective in improving the accuracy and performance of subjects. Process feedback, however, served as an important corrective mechanisms for individual judgements. Cognitive feedback is an influential component of process feedback (Balzer, Hammer, Sumner, Birchenough, Parham Martens & Raymark, 1994). Kluger, Lewinsohn and Aiello (1994) found that feedback is cognitively evaluated for its harm/benefit potential and for the need to take action. Prior to responding, cognitive comparisons of the deviations of feedback messages from several internal standards (*ie.* performance relative to others and relative to expectations) are made by the individual.

In sum, individuals may be motivated to learn functional approaches to organisational change through the use of feedback, provided that certain conditions in the use of feedback are met.

#### 2.6.4.2 The feedback mechanism in groups

As can be seen in the organisational antecedents of resistance to change, the impact of group processes on individuals experiencing change can be significant. Innami (1994) found that group processes, as manifested in verbal behaviour and interpersonal feedback, are a central determinant of the quality of group decisions. It follows that group processes and interpersonal feedback will also have an important influence on the responses of individual group members.

The flow of interpersonal feedback within a group has been widely shown to facilitate change and learning in group members, provided that certain therapeutic factors are present (Yalom, 1985). Yalom (1985) lists eleven primary factors as being integral to the therapeutic experience: instillation of hope, universality, imparting of information, altruism, the corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, development of

socialising techniques, imitative behaviour, interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, catharsis and existential factors.

According to Yalom (1985), instillation of hope is required to keep the patient in therapy so that other therapeutic factors may take effect, and faith in the treatment mode itself can be therapeutically effective. Group members can represent hope to each other, especially where some provide real-life examples of improvement and better coping. The existence and importance of hope as a factor in group learning and change is echoed in the work of Fine (1986). She found that, where individuals are placed in small groups to work through issues relating to change and their feelings about change, they are able to encourage and support one another. This is in itself a valuable outcome of group work. Thus, group feedback may provide affirmation and hope to group members experiencing change. This hope could be offered in support of the change process, but could as easily be offered in resistance to change. This is often reflected in responses such as "It will never succeed. Don't worry about it" or "We all think it's a terrible idea. Let's act together to resist it".

Yalom (1985) suggests that universality is a realisation combatting the lonely sense of uniqueness experienced by many people entering groups. This feeling tends to isolate and frighten people who may believe that they are the only ones who feel as they do, or the only ones experiencing a particular problem. Fine (1986) argues that a group in which resistance is an accepted theme for discussion, legitimises expression of resistance and allows the expression of shared feelings. By allowing resistance to be heard, resisters are "released from fear of their own resistance" and empowered to become "a positive force in the organisation, with the freedom to think and act with reason" (p.47).

Imparting information by the facilitator and other group members is an important function which occurs within the forum of a group. Here, not only the group leader or facilitator, but also the other group members are able to educate each other and impart information to them from which they may learn. Feedback in the form of information

from group members or colleagues is often seen as highly credible by those experiencing the uncertainty of change (Yalom, 1985).

Yalom (1985) sees the corrective recapitulation of the family group as an important function of the therapy group. He states that all members of therapy groups have had unsatisfactory experiences in their primary family groups. In such a case, the group becomes the forum in which members can "re-experience" their relationships with significant people in their lives and also learn from their own styles of interaction. In the context of the workplace, one cannot make the assumption that all group members will have dysfunctional family backgrounds and this factor in the therapeutic nature of groups may thus be of less importance here. However, this does not negate the possibility that people may well recapitulate experiences with significant people in their lives within the context of the group, and learn more adaptive patterns of interaction from this.

The development of socialising techniques can occur, particularly in groups which encourage open feedback. Group members can learn basic social skills from one another and can also gain considerable information about their own "maladaptive" behaviours. In some cases, group members can also learn facilitation skills themselves and the ability to be more helpful to others (Yalom, 1985).

Imitative behaviour takes place when group members model themselves on the group leader or other group members. Bandura (1986) has shown this vicarious learning process to be an important component of the learning process. People do not only learn only through direct experience, but also through observing the behaviour of others and the consequences thereof.

Yalom (1985) argues that interpersonal learning is one of the most important therapeutic factors which exist within the context of the group. Interpersonal learning is able to take place when the group acts as a social microcosm in which individuals interact with others in ways which mirror their behaviour in society. The group may

become a forum in which members are made aware of aspects of their own behaviour (through self-observation and the feedback of others) and then experiment with other ways of behaving and expressing themselves. When the group offers a psychologically safe climate, members are likely to be able to learn more adaptive behaviour. However, when this climate does not exist, members are more likely to adopt defensive strategies. This in turn generates feedback and self-observation, which may initiate a new learning cycle. As the individuals become more comfortable with what they have learnt, they begin transferring this learning to situations outside the group and an adaptive spiral is set in motion.

Yalom (1985) reports that group cohesiveness tends to increase the therapeutic success of a group, as members value the acceptance which this offers to them.

Altruism, or helping others, can become an extremely helpful feature of groups. Particularly when group members may be suffering from low self-esteem or feel that they have little of value to offer, the opportunity to give advice, support and help to fellow-group members can restore their faith in their own abilities to contribute. It can also help people to break out of obsessive introspection or self-absorption, providing a new perspective on their situation (Yalom, 1985).

Existential factors such as recognising and accepting that life is at times unfair, that all people will experience some pain, and that people need to take responsibility for their own lives can be understood by group members through honest engagement with one another and these issues (Yalom, 1985).

Catharsis, as a critical incident in learning how to express feelings, was also rated by Yalom's (1985) patients as significant to their growth. It tends to be more helpful in cohesive groups, and also increases the cohesiveness of these groups.

## 2.7 MANAGING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The model of individual resistance to change which has been presented has a number of important implications for the management thereof. In the management of resistance to change, it is crucial to identify potential antecedents of resistance to change. This should preferably be done during the planning stages, and before the change is implemented. However, even if not identified during planning, the potential antecedents of resistance should be identified and monitored while change is being implemented. At the same time, any manifestations of resistant behaviour should be identified and monitored, not as problems to be combatted, but as symptoms of unresolved issues being experienced by those who are being expected to change.

The identification of antecedents and outcomes of resistance to change constitutes the "homework" to be done by the change agent. However, any attempt to manage resistance based purely on the knowledge of what these factors are, without taking into account the role which they and the resistance mechanism is playing in the survival of the organisational system, is unlikely to meet with success. In fact, such a non-systemic approach may inadvertently worsen the situation. According to Goldstein (1988, p.17):

... employee response to change often appears to be a willful opposition to anything new. However, this "negative" model of resistance typically leads to the counterresponse of *pushing back against the resistance that much harder!*

Thus the push for change is followed by employees' pushing back and then a greater push for change by adding more authority, force, or persuasiveness to the change effort.... Of course, strengthening the intention to change may work, at least in the short run. But how much resentment, ill will, or distrust is created at the same time?

"Leverage" is an important concept in systems thinking. This requires identifying the point at which action taken will have a significant impact on the system (Senge, 1990). The area of leverage within the model of individual resistance to change is feedback. Feedback which is used to introduce new information motivating change is an important point of leverage. The principles of human behaviour, as described by Bandura (1986, 1991), Goldstein (1988), Nadler (1977) and Yalom (1985) in a variety of contexts, suggest that change is introduced through making individuals aware, through feedback,

of discrepancies between their own behaviour, assumptions, values, norms or beliefs and some referential standard. It is suggested that by facilitating this information flow, the ideal conditions for dealing with resistance to change are created.

In terms of the process of dealing with resistance to change, a few implications should be highlighted here. Firstly, the emphasis shifts from that of a change agent "managing resistance" to that of a co-operative process in which all involved in the change process become co-responsible for working through change- and resistance-related issues. Within the systemic framework, it is not possible for one person to take the responsibility for other people's experience of change.

Secondly, dealing with resistance to change becomes a process, rather than a once-off intervention. In terms of the model it is no longer appropriate to make a few changes in the way in which change is implemented and to ignore the individual experience of change subsequently. The feedback loops in operation ensure that the individual's experience of change is dynamic and likely to change over time.

Group dynamics may play an important role in influencing the responses of individuals and the organisation as a whole to change. In terms of the implications of the model of individual resistance to change outlined above, certain criteria for a technique for dealing with resistance to change emerge. An appropriate technique would ideally enable the identification of potential antecedents and manifestations of resistance to change over time. It should provide the opportunity to introduce feedback to the individuals experiencing change and cater for the importance of interpersonal relationships and group dynamics in the change process. Survey feedback is a technique which meets these criteria.

## 2.8 SURVEY FEEDBACK

Survey feedback entails the use of a survey instrument which is administered to the individuals whose views are of interest. This is often a representative sample from an

organisation. The survey instrument is typically a structured and systematically constructed questionnaire, but sometimes also a personal interview which may be structured to a lesser extent. Responses are then statistically analysed and interpreted. The type of analysis is determined by the nature of the data - primarily quantitative or primarily qualitative. The interpreted results are then presented to the organisation members as feedback for discussion and action.

### **2.8.1 Research on the use of survey feedback in organisation development**

In a survey of common intervention strategies for large-scale organisational change, Covin (1992) found that survey feedback is the single most popular strategy adopted by organisations. The primary goals of the survey feedback programmes were to increase productivity and employee morale. The intervention was rated moderately to very successful. The programmes were highly inclusive (affecting 85% of all organisation members) and ranged from being short-term (six months) to long-term (indefinite continuation of the process). A number of factors justify the further investigation of the survey feedback technique, namely:

- its enduring popularity (Covin, 1992),
- the potential ease of use within an organisational setting (particularly with the aid of the vast array of computer packages and other electronic resources on the market) (Dunnington, 1993), and
- its high face validity

A number of researchers, particularly organisational psychologists, have reported on the use of survey feedback. Baumgartel (1971) found intensive group discussion around survey feedback to be an effective organisation development technique. He hypothesised that this was a result of the fact that the survey feedback procedure deals with the system of human relationships as a whole. In order to be effective, survey feedback should be about the organisation itself (rather than about comparable organisations). It should be quantitative, objective and specific. It should also provide

new directions or positive alternatives to a present, unsatisfactory state of affairs (Baumgartel, 1971).

Gavin (1985), launched a long-term, survey-guided feedback process with a mining company. He claimed that organisation-wide survey feedback was instrumental in reducing staff turnover from 117.6 percent in 1974 to 18 percent in 1981. The intervention was also able to increase productivity and improve safety.

Adams and Sherwood (1979) reported on the use of survey feedback as an intervention to improve work efficiency, job satisfaction and working relationships within the United States Army. While they remain convinced of the potential usefulness of survey feedback, they experienced difficulties with the first-line supervisors. Commitment was lacking and these men, accustomed as they were to the hierarchical nature of the military, appeared to feel threatened by the level of participation expected during the programme. These findings point to the importance of taking a holistic and systemic view when using survey feedback. It appears that the consultants were "swimming against the tide" by attempting to use a participative approach within a strongly authoritarian context. These findings point to the fact that sound planning is essential if survey feedback is to be used successfully.

Edwards and Thomas (1993) state that the survey process can be complex, time-consuming and expensive and that careful planning is thus essential. They present the following five-phase plan for the survey feedback process:

- (a) Objectives must be clarified, and the question whether a survey is the best method for gathering data, answered.
- (b) The survey is constructed. This involves gathering information, writing and pretesting items and developing the final survey.
- (c) During the administration phase respondents are selected, the surveys are prepared and distributed and the researcher follows up to ensure the return of the surveys.
- (d) Survey data are captured and analysed.

(e) Interpreted data are fed back to the organisation members in a suitable form. While these steps may seem somewhat mechanical, it is the decisions to be made at each stage which require sensitivity to the organisational dynamics and an understanding of the relationships within the organisational system.

Although survey feedback as an instrument for organisational change is being applied widely, it does not seem to have been used widely as an intervention for the specific reduction of resistance to change. Fine(1986) showed that attending "resistance workshops" enhanced the potential for growth and change among participants. This occurred through participants being given the opportunity to air their own fears and concerns about change, as well as learning to listen to the concerns of others. This suggests that survey feedback which presents similarly relevant information to organisation members for group discussion should also serve to reduce resistance. This notion will be tested in the empirical part of this study.

In this chapter, a survey of the literature on organisational change and particularly the experience of change by the individual has been presented. Theoretical and empirical work which has already been conducted supports the notion that the individual's experience of change, and particularly resistance, can be explained in terms of a model which draws on social cognitive theory and information theory. Such a model has been developed and presented here. A central component of the model, feedback, has been identified as an area of high potential leverage in managing resistance. The use of feedback in managing organisational change is not new. In the form of survey feedback, it is a technique which has been found to be both popular and effective in organisation development interventions (Gavin, 1985). However, it has not typically been used in the specific management of resistance to change. In the empirical part of this study, the survey feedback approach to the management of resistance to change will be applied. This will allow the model of individual resistance to change which has been developed to be tested, by assessing the effectiveness of the survey feedback approach in managing resistance to change.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

The empirical aim of the study was to conduct a preliminary investigation as to whether survey feedback could be used to manage resistance to change and if so, to describe the process by which this occurred. As the central concept of feedback has meaning only within the context of general systems theory, a systems theoretical paradigm determined the method used.

#### 3.1 METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The nature of general systems theory, focusing as it does on the dynamics of systems and a holistic approach, led to a dual, qualitative and quantitative, approach being followed. Quantitative research is closer to research done in the physical sciences and is more formalised and carefully controlled than qualitative research (Mouton & Marais, 1990). An ideal in quantitative research is to control all extraneous or confounding variables so that specific effects may be demonstrated and conclusions drawn. This conforms to a linear conception of reality, characterised by cause-and-effect explanations. It also typically downplays any impact which the researcher may have on the subjects and their reactions. This approach is useful in the conclusions which may be drawn from it, but inadequate in terms of the requirements of general systems theory. Seaburn (1989, p.53) points out that "...systems theory posits a circular rather than linear conception of reality". This implies an interactional explanation of reality. The interactions which occur include those between the participants in the research process, who are usually defined in quantitative research as subject and observer/researcher. Keeney (1983) states that "...the observer constantly alters what he observes by the obtrusive act of observation".

Within the general systems paradigm, it is therefore inadequate to isolate the cause and

effect of certain behaviours in quantitative terms without exploring the processes through which behaviour is shaped. It is also advisable to recognise the nature and impact of the interaction between researcher and research participants. A qualitative approach allows the freedom to describe dynamic processes. It lends itself well to the description of patterns of interaction and feedback processes which are integral to systems theory.

Neither the qualitative nor the quantitative paradigms in themselves can provide sufficient data to measure sources and levels of resistance to change objectively, as well as to explore the processes relating to the participants' experiences of change during the study. The approaches are thus used in a complementary fashion.

This chapter sets out to describe the method used to achieve the empirical aims of the study, within the framework of general systems theory and the functionalist paradigm.

### 3.2 ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

This study was undertaken in an organisation undergoing planned change which had a significant impact on the lives of the organisation members. The organisation concerned consisted of an organisation unit of 13 employees distributed among 7 branches of a medium-sized retail company which had been purchased and integrated into the structure and operations of one of its competitors.

The acquisition of the organisation and the resultant changes in strategy, policy, structure, systems and conditions of employment for organisation members were defined as the planned organisational change to which the research participants (the organisation members) were exposed. The operational definition of planned organisational change was thus the acquisition of the organisation. The change manifested itself in the lives of the organisation members as having a new employer with new organisational values, conditions of employment, reporting structures, styles of management and policies imposed on them.

A number of potential antecedents of resistance to change existed within this situation. The theoretical antecedents of resistance to change which could be expected are the following:

- (a) A change in the interpersonal relationship system (identified by Malinconico (1983) as a likely antecedent of resistance) in that relationship ties with colleagues and directors in their former holding company were severed.
- (b) A low level of trust and loyalty towards the organisation (*cf.* Judson, 1991) combined with an expected uncertain level of organisational commitment (*cf.* Ashforth & Lee, 1990) created a likely climate for resistance to change. The division had been sold by the holding company without the knowledge of the employees, to a new organisation which was unknown to them and in which they had not had the opportunity to develop trust.
- (c) Expected lack of change-readiness. No communication about or participation in the planning of the change had been offered to staff (*cf.* Gilbert & Kleiner, 1993, Judson, 1991, and Smeltzer, 1991). Staff were only informed about the sale of their division after it had taken place.

In the presence of the above factors it seemed reasonable to anticipate resistance to the acquisition of the division and the organisational change which accompanied this change of ownership.

### 3.3 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the study were members of the above organisation. All 44 members of the organisation were given the initial questionnaire. However, only 30 percent of these participants also completed the second questionnaire. The sample size was thus reduced to 13. It could be speculated that the reasons for the high mortality rate included the length of the questionnaire and a corresponding reluctance to complete it more than

once. Nine of these were female and the remaining four male. Eight were English-speakers, two Zulu, two seSotho and one seTswana. They ranged in age from 24 to 53, with a mean age 34.4. The descriptive statistics for this sample can be found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Descriptive statistics for the sample: Subject ages  $n = 13$

Age	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 +
n	1	7	2	3

Table 3.2 Descriptive statistics for the sample: Education  $n = 13$

Education	Std 8	Std 10	M +1	M + 2	M + 3
n	4	5	1	2	1

Table 3.3 Descriptive statistics for the sample: Years in current job  $n = 13$

Years	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 +
n	9	3	1	0

### 3.4 INTERVENTION

The aims of the study dictated that the intervention and research design should meet the following criteria:

- (a) they should provide a means for identifying sources and levels of resistance to change;
- (b) they should involve a process for working through issues related to change, and particularly resistance; and
- (c) they should allow for the measurement of change in resistance levels as well as providing a qualitative indication of the participants' experience of change over time.

The intervention consisted of a survey feedback process, in which a questionnaire measuring the presence and value of antecedents of resistance to change was administered to the participants. Their responses were then aggregated, summarised per branch and communicated to the different organisation units. This was done in order to allow the researcher and the group to focus on issues rather than individuals. The feedback sessions took the form of small group discussions, with the researcher presenting the feedback to the small group (drawn from one branch of the company at a time). Groups ranged from 2 to 8 members and discussions lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours. They were also requested to comment and suggest interpretations of the data and share their feelings towards the change process with the researcher and each other. At the end of each group discussion the same questionnaire was administered and the process repeated.

### 3.5 MEASURE

The Change Resistance Scale (CRS) (ODR, 1991) (see Appendix A) was used to assess resistance to change and as a basis for the feedback which followed. The CRS is a 25-item questionnaire which sets out to identify potential sources and strength of resistance to a specific organisational change process. In order to do so, participants are asked to identify the extent to which they felt that specific antecedents of resistance to organisational change are present in their situation. Participants respond on a 10-point, Likert - type scale, with a high score indicating high potential for resistance and a low score, low potential.

The instrument was selected for its usefulness in gathering data which would form the basis of meaningful feedback to participants. A resistance to change score is based on the extent to which antecedents of resistance to change are present. It is relatively easy to identify areas within the organisation or the change process which are of concern to the participants, and then to work through these areas in group feedback and discussion. The questionnaire also comprehensively covers the organisational and change-process antecedents of resistance found in the literature (see Chapter 2.6). Individual

predispositions towards change are not addressed directly. However, the questionnaire does address respondents' expectations relating to the change and the outcomes of the change.

In this research the CRS was found to have a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's co-efficient alpha = 0.925 ).

The questionnaire was only available in English, which may have had some impact on the extent to which those participants whose home language was not English understood the questions and responded accurately. However, English was the language of the organisation unit. It was therefore decided to administer the questionnaire in English, but give participants the opportunity to ask questions about any items which they found confusing.

### 3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

Because of the self-reflective nature of the empirical part of the study, the research design parallels the design of the intervention very closely. Essentially the research was conducted according to a quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test design. The questionnaire was administered (the pre-test, but also the first part of the intervention), feedback from the questionnaires was given to the respondents (the second part of the intervention), and after a one month time lapse the questionnaire was administered again (the post-test). In order to complete the process, feedback was once again given to the respondents and the changes in aggregate responses were discussed. The independent variable was the feedback given to the respondents in the form of a group discussion. The dependent variable was the level of resistance expressed through the questionnaire. The level of resistance, when used as the basis for the next round of feedback, thus influenced the independent variable (the feedback) during the second stage of the process.

Because of the sensitive nature of the change process, it was felt that all organisation

members affected by the change should be given the opportunity to participate in the study and that all participants were entitled to receive the feedback arising from the study. This together with the high subject mortality rate and the uniqueness of the situation made the use of a control group impractical. Change over time was thus measured within the single group of participants.

Attempts to measure change through self-report data within a pre-test, post-test within-subject design implies particular problems regarding potential threats to validity and reliability. According to Terborg, Howard and Maxwell (1980, p.110) The most serious of these is that three conceptually different types of change, namely alpha, beta and gamma change, can occur with self-report data :

With regard to self-report data, alpha change represents an unbiased measure of variation between Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2), where the participant's report of change is taken on a constantly calibrated instrument. Beta change refers to an observed variation in some state where the apparent change is due to an instrument that has been recalibrated by the participant between assessments. This threat to internal validity has been called instrumentation bias by Campbell and Stanley (1963). Given beta change, comparisons of Pre- and Post-intervention measures will present a biased measure of the intervention. That is, observed differences between Pre- and Post-intervention measures reflect an unknown amount of true change and an unknown amount of change due to instrumentation. Gamma change refers to a redefinition or reconceptualization by the participant of the phenomenon that is measured. To the extent that gamma change has occurred, it may be misleading to compare differences in Pre- and Post- intervention self-report data.

Gottman and Rushe (1993) raise a second problem which may reflect on the adequacy of the pre- post-test design where measurement takes place at two points only. They argue that measurement at two points will allow one to estimate change, but not to study the form of change. Having only two points of measurement implies that the change function is viewed as a linear process, which may not be the case in practice. Stoolmiller, Duncan, Bank and Patterson (1993) agree that, in order to assess the nature of the change accurately, the variables should be measured at at least three points in

time.

The author recognises that having only two points of measurement could be considered a weakness in this study. It restricts the ability to analyse the resistance function in detail. A third point of measurement would have been useful, but was not seen as a practical step in view of the difficulty in motivating participants to complete the same questionnaire accurately for a third time in as many months. The high participant drop-out rate, dropping from 33 respondents on the first administration of the questionnaire to 13 on the second, suggested that administering the questionnaire for a third time may well have proved fruitless. The responses from participants during group discussions did allow for the study of the dynamics of resistance during the change process. This compensated in some measure for the lack of a third point of measurement. Furthermore, as an exploratory study, the aim was to establish whether survey-feedback could be useful in the management of resistance to change. An indication that levels of resistance were affected by the intervention can be regarded as sufficient justification for researching this approach further.

The following participant effects are also recognised as potential threats to the generalisability of findings within the research design.

- (a) *Maturation* is the possibility that maturational processes occurring within the participants affected their responses to the questionnaire on the second administration, thereby acting as a confounding variable.
- (b) *History* is the possibility that events independent of the intervention occurred within the environment and affected responses to the questionnaire on the second administration. During a change process such as the one to which the participants were exposed, the likelihood of such events influencing responses to the questionnaire cannot be dismissed.
- (c) *Participant drop-out*, the loss of participants during the course of the study, did

occur to a large extent and it is likely that this process introduced an element of bias into the sample.

The possibility of the presence of these factors must therefore be borne in mind in the interpretation of the results.

### 3.7 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Basic descriptive statistics (means) were used initially to analyse responses to the CRS and generate feedback for the participants. For responses to the CRS nonparametric statistics were used to assess change in resistance scores between the first and second administrations of the questionnaire. The Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was used to test the hypothesis that the distribution of difference scores (i.e. the difference between scores at time 1 and time 2 for the same individual) in the population is symmetrical about zero (Howell, 1989). These data were analysed by means of the Psychostats statistical package.

The method adopted in the study and described above reflected a practical approach to working with a group of people involved in a change process. At the same time, the research design met the criteria set by the general aims of the study. It provided:

- a means of identifying sources and strength of resistance to change,
- a process for working through the issues,
- a measurement of change in resistance levels, and
- a qualitative indication of participants' experience of change over time.

This involved an intervention based upon the simple pre- and post test design: survey - feedback - survey - feedback. Quantitative analysis of the change in scores on the CRS during the study was conducted. The qualitative data, which were gathered during the group discussions around the feedback presented, were combined with the survey data findings. A holistic picture of the individual's experience of the change process could thus be formed.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The results are presented here as a description of the processes observed and issues raised within the group throughout the intervention period (i.e. from the announcement of the change until the second feedback workshop), followed by the empirical findings of the study. Comments by participants and examples of participant behaviour are included by way of illumination. In order to facilitate the integration of quantitative and qualitative results, the qualitative results are presented under the same stage headings as the quantitative findings.

#### 4.1 STAGE 1

Shortly after the announcement of the change of ownership of their organisation, staff at each of the seven branches were invited to staff meetings. There they were given information about their new company and working conditions. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions or raise issues of concern. The author represented the purchasing company and thus took on the role of change agent.

These initial meetings were intended to be information-sharing sessions and also forums for the identification of possible areas of concern which needed to be addressed. The initial meetings differed in both content and process from the later feedback meetings, as the purposes of these meetings differed. The initial meetings were intended to establish rapport with the participants and where possible, to answer practical questions which they had. They also presented the opportunity to elicit areas of concern spontaneously from the participants, prior to administering the CRS questionnaire. This was important from the point of view of qualitative research, as it meant that the areas of concern and themes which were identified at this stage could not be influenced by the structure or content of the CRS. It must be emphasised that no attempt was made in the

initial meetings to "work through" areas of resistance, as was done in later meetings. When the CRS was administered for the first time (at the end of the initial meetings) no intervention, as defined in this study, had yet taken place.

The theme of identity emerged quite strongly during these meetings. Staff members had many questions about their new company. The change agent was challenged quite openly and directly on issues such as organisational culture, values and ideology, management style, conditions of service and benefits. A common theme at this point was that individuals had chosen to work for a specific company based on their perceptions of that company, and had now involuntarily become members of a different organisation. This was viewed by many as "pulling the carpet out from under our feet". Some acknowledged the feeling that their previous company had "sold them out".

In terms of ideological and cultural differences, specific issues that were raised included the political affiliations and value systems of the purchasing organisation. The new owner was viewed as being politically more conservative than the former owner. Remarks included: "Will I have to cut my hair?", from a long-haired male shop assistant, and "Will they dictate to me which books we may stock?" from a bookseller. This reflected both the already existing image of the new owner in the minds of staff and their uncertainty about the impact which the values of the organisation would have on their daily work. A concern with the role of the organisation in society was also reflected by the question "What does the company do in terms of social responsibility?"

Managerial style was a further specific issue raised by some staff members. Here, they questioned the nature of the style of their new managers, but also offered information about their own history. While seeking a clearer picture of the identity of their new owners, they were also stating some quite clear expectations of management. The management style of their former managers was described as being autocratic and unsympathetic ("If you don't like it, there's the door") and the new managers, it was suggested, should realise that this was not acceptable management behaviour.

A similar pattern emerged with regard to benefits and conditions of service. Many questions related to remuneration policies and benefits and specific reference was made to the perceived unfairness of the policies of the former management.

The issue of identity was two-sided. On one hand, staff wanted to know about the new organisation and framed their questions and comments in terms of their experience of their organisation as it had been. While seeking information on the one hand, they were thus giving information in the form of their own history on the other.

A second issue which featured strongly during these initial meetings was the reaction to the process by which change had occurred - specifically that there had been neither consultation with nor prior warning to staff. Feelings of anger at this point were directed at former management, as well as feelings of anxiety and suspicion towards the new management team.

Not all staff were equally forthcoming during these initial meetings. Typically one or two would take the lead in asking questions and making comments, others would speak occasionally and some not at all. However, a strong need to be included in the process was apparent in that no staff were absent from the meeting, and those staff members at branches where meetings had not yet been held, sent messages demanding that meetings be held with them as well. This was interpreted as a strong indicator that staff realised the inevitability of the change and felt that the best way to cope with it was to gain as much information about their changed circumstances as possible.

The behaviour of the staff during these initial meetings could be described as shocked and anxious. They had, they stated, experienced a period of high uncertainty in the months preceding the acquisition (rumours had abounded) and had now had their fears confirmed. Many also acknowledged that work had been suffering and productivity had been low during this period, and that this was unlikely to improve until staff had regained a sense of security and trust in management.

The CRS questionnaires were administered at the end of these meetings. Responses to the questionnaire were then analysed and the mean responses to each item were presented to staff in the first group feedback sessions. According to the authors of the CRS, an item score of 1 - 3.5 suggests low potential for resistance, an item score of 3.6 - 6.5 suggests moderate potential for resistance and an item score of 6.6 - 10 suggests high potential for resistance. The responses of all participants at this stage were included for use in the initial feedback session. However, for the purpose of statistical analysis, it was deemed necessary here to focus on the responses of those 13 participants who remained throughout the duration of the study. The group means and standard deviations for each item for this group of 13, at both the first and second administration of the CRS, can be found in Table 4.1.

The group average for the initial administration of the CRS of 103.08 indicated that the target population was moderately resistant to the change (ODR, 1991). A resistance factor score in this range is high enough to be considered significant in predicting the success of the change process.

Items which reflected a high potential for resistance to change were items:

- 3 (involvement in the planning for the change),
- 4 (clarity of communication regarding the change), and
- 12 (length of time between the announcement of the change and its implementation).

Moderate potential for resistance to change emerged in the following item scores:

- 1 (understanding of the purpose of the change),
- 5 (significance of the costs of the change to the individual),
- 6 (belief in the adequacy of rewards for accomplishing the change),
- 8 (belief in presence of strong political support for the change),
- 10 (confidence in the availability of organisational resources necessary for the change),
- 20 (levels of respect and trust for the change agent), and

- 24 (difficulty of reversing the effects of the change if not fully implemented).

The items which seemed to indicate low potential for resistance on the first administration of the questionnaire were the following:

- 2 (belief in the need for change),
- 7 (compatibility of the change with existing organisational values),
- 9 (belief that existing personal relationships within the organisation would be affected by the change),
- 11 (perceived impact of the change on the operating budget),
- 13 (belief that individual daily work patterns were taken into account with the planning of the change),
- 14 (belief that the change would impact negatively on key aspects of the job),
- 15 (belief in the meaningfulness of the change - respondents saw the change as being meaningful),
- 16 (fear of being punished inappropriately for making errors while implementing the change - respondents did not exhibit this fear to any great extent),
- 17 (feeling of security about the way in which work would be done after the change - respondents reported feeling relatively secure),
- 18 (confidence in having the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the change),
- 19 (level of respect and trust for the sponsors of the change process),
- 21 (current levels of work stress - respondents did not report experiencing excessive work-related stress),
- 22 (perceived threat to personal interests posed by the change),
- 23 (compatibility of the objectives of the change with personal goals - these were reported to be relatively compatible), and
- 25 (beliefs about the way in which the change would reflect on past performance - respondents generally felt that this would not reflect negatively on past performance).

Those areas which suggested a particularly high potential for resistance were highlighted and presented to the groups for comment.

During these feedback sessions, the author took on a dual role - in part taking responsibility for addressing certain group concerns directly (for example, finalising letters of appointment and salaries for staff - sources of great insecurity for staff), and in part facilitating the groups' working through of specific change-related issues (for example, the change having taken place in a manner which many were angry about, the staff needed to decide how they were going to deal with the experience). This was a fine line to tread in many cases, particularly as it became clear during the feedback sessions that many perceived the fact that they had completed a questionnaire about change-related concerns to mean that these issues would be resolved for them by the change agent.

The issues which arose during these group feedback sessions were similar for each of the groups of staff. These issues are therefore presented here without specific reference to a particular group. Process-related issues featured quite strongly in the initial feedback session. As far as the process of change was concerned, lack of involvement in the decision to sell the company *per se* did not appear to be experienced as a serious problem. However, the way in which the decision had been communicated and the timing of the announcement was viewed extremely negatively by all. The open expression of feelings of betrayal and anger within the group context had a cathartic function for group members, who were able to unburden themselves of their resentment to some extent. A number of staff also commented that they had been through three changes of ownership in as many years, a history which clearly had an impact on the way in which they experienced this latest change, although not the same impact in every case. Some staff members exhibited signs of intense distress, while others appeared to accept the change immediately, saying that they might as well "make the best of it".

**Table 4.1** Item means and standard deviations at T1 and T2 (n = 13)

Item	T1	SD1	T2	SD2
	mean		mean	
1	4.15	2.93	2.84	2.31
2	3.23	2.04	3.07	2.09
3	9.3	1.72	6.46	3.17
4	7	3.16	4.76	3.14
5	4.07	2.01	3.69	1.89
6	5.07	3.26	4.3	2.69
7	3.23	1.96	3.3	1.77
8	4.23	2.63	3.23	2.35
9	3.38	2.3	3.38	2.02
10	3.53	2.34	3.07	2.23
11	3.07	2.05	2.76	1.57
12	7.84	2.31	5.76	2.96
13	5.84	3.05	4.07	2.97
14	3.46	2.64	2.84	2.14
15	2.76	2.18	3.38	2.27
16	2.92	2.55	2.69	1.97
17	2.76	2.32	2.76	2.18
18	3.38	2.49	3.53	2.7
19	3.15	2.09	3.15	2.41
20	4.69	1.95	2.84	1.87
21	2.61	3.09	3.38	1.94
22	3.15	1.94	2.92	2.26
23	3	1.88	3.07	2.09
24	4.15	2.44	4.15	2.17
25	2.76	2	3	2.07
<b>Total</b>	103.08	42.51	88.53	43.52

The author's primary role at this point was a facilitative one, listening and reflecting observations back to the group. However, direct questions were also answered and possible reasons suggested for the manner in which the change had been implemented. There was thus a certain amount of direction present, despite the generally non-directive approach. Staff generally welcomed this new information as it aided them in making sense of the change and their position.

Much of the discussion content during the first feedback session centred around the costs and benefits of the change to staff. Salaries and guarantees of job security were of particular concern. At this point there was still much uncertainty about what these would be, which tended to heighten fears and insecurity. Strong pressure from staff to present these details to them "on paper" seemed to arise from a general distrust of management.

#### 4.2 STAGE 2

After the initial results had been presented to the participants in the form of feedback workshops, the questionnaire was again administered. The Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed-Ranks Test (a nonparametric test for the assessment of differences between matched samples) was used as a means of determining whether second stage results differed significantly from initial results. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 4.2.

The total CRS scores for the group dropped to 88.53 in the second stage. This can be interpreted as representing low to moderate potential for resistance to change. While some caution should be exercised, the ODR (1991) suggest that a score in this region bodes well for the successful implementation of change.

As can be seen from Table 4.2, the items for which a significant change could be measured were 1,3,4,8,10,12,13 and 15. In the case of item 15, which related to the perceived meaningfulness of the change, the shift in score occurred in the opposite direction to that of the other significant shifts. This implies that by the time of the

second administration, participants were inclined to treat the change as less meaningful to them. According to the authors of the questionnaire, this would imply an increased potential for resistance (ODR, 1991). This interpretation will be discussed further in the following chapter.

In all other cases where significant change occurred, the shift was in the predicted direction. That is, a reduction in scores took place, which suggests diminished potential for resistance to change. The items indicating reduced potential for resistance related to:

- understanding of the purpose of change (item 1),
- involvement in the planning for the change (item 3),
- clarity of communication about the change (item 4),
- belief in political support for the change (item 8),
- confidence in the availability of organisational resources for the change (item 10),
- belief that the right amount of time had elapsed between the announcement of the change and its implementation (item 12), and
- belief that daily work patterns were considered in the planning of the change (item 13).

The questionnaire results from both the first and second administrations were superimposed on a chart, in order to indicate both responses and changes in response patterns. The responses, and particularly the differences, were then presented to the groups as feedback for discussion. The relationship between the way responses had changed over the intervening month and the questionnaire-feedback intervention was accorded special emphasis during these discussions.

Understanding of the purpose of the change had increased significantly according to the second set of responses. This the staff attributed to the discussion which had been held about the purpose of the change during the previous feedback session, where they had been given some further information about the change and, judging by the responses on the second administration of the questionnaire, accepted and internalised these

reasons to some extent.

Involvement in the planning for the change as a point for discussion delivered some interesting observations. Although the change had been implemented without any prior consultation with staff, staff appeared to have felt increasingly involved in the planning of the change over time. Their responses in discussion indicated that they considered their participation in the feedback sessions and the way in which their own input and suggestions were welcomed, as a form of participation in the planning for the change. This observation could be linked with the evident expectation of staff that if a point of concern or dissatisfaction had been raised during the group discussions, it should be dealt with accordingly. An example of this was the need expressed by staff at the initial feedback session to be given letters of appointment which would state their conditions of service and benefits "in writing". When these had still not been received by the time of the second feedback session, anger and disappointment were expressed.

This suggests that staff viewed the feedback sessions as a forum in which they could state their needs and have these met - a forum through which they could influence the change process. This perception of the questionnaire-feedback intervention could explain why the feeling of involvement in the planning of the change had increased with time.

Participants indicated that they felt a need for clear communication about the change more strongly than a need for involvement in the planning of the change. The expression of fears and concerns by participants led to certain changes on the part of the organisation in order to meet specific needs. Greater openness and improved communication on matters of concern to staff and a visit to the staff by the senior management team, were steps taken by the organisation as a direct result of this.

**Table 4.2** Comparison of item scores at T1 and T2 using Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed-Ranks Test

Item	n	T
1	9	5*
2	8	17.5
3	8	0**
4	10	6.5*
5	11	26.5
6	9	15.5
7	5	7
8	8	3*
9	10	20.5
10	7	3.5*
11	6	5
12	10	4.5**
13	8	0**
14	5	9
15	8	3.5*
16	6	7
17	8	16.5
18	7	12
19	5	5
20	7	12
21	8	8
22	8	13
23	8	17
24	8	18
25	9	16.5
<b>Total</b>	13	9.5**

\*  $p < .05$       \*\*  $p < .01$  (one-tailed)

*Note:* Where a subject's item scores at T1 and T2 are equal, their scores for that item are not included in the calculation of the T value. Sample sizes therefore vary accordingly.

Clarity of communication about the change was seen generally to have been enhanced through the questionnaire-feedback intervention. An exception to this general feeling was apparent in one branch where the management structure at branch level was being changed completely. Here staff experienced much uncertainty about what would happen to them and to their managers. The purpose of the change in their branch management structure was particularly difficult for many to understand and accept, as their managers had been well liked.

A strong concern for many in the introductory meeting and the first feedback session had been the extent to which their job content and standards might change as a result of the policies of the new owners. Reassurances were given during each feedback session that any changes in job requirements would be done in consultation with them and in line with market needs, rather than arbitrary policies. This concern seemed to have diminished by the second feedback session and, linking this trend to the questionnaire responses, it seems that since their own jobs were not being significantly affected by the change, staff began to regard the change as less significant for them.

As far as relationship to the new company and particularly, relationship to the change agent, were concerned, staff were visibly more forthcoming as the feedback sessions progressed and generally more prepared to speak openly. It was suggested by one of the staff that responses to the first administration of the CRS may have understated potential resistance to change, as a result of mistrust - staff may have been afraid to respond openly and thus concealed some of their more negative reactions. This does seem to support the contention that, prior to feedback having been given to participants and discussion around areas of concern and resistance being facilitated by the author, no working through of resistance had taken place.

An important aspect of the feedback sessions was felt to be the opportunity which they provided for relationship-building and the creation of new communication channels and

support structures in the minds of the staff. Company structures, procedures and philosophies were explained to staff and they were shown ways in which their concerns would be addressed.

The results presented in this chapter show that the potential resistance to change score declined within the sample during the study. The decrease was particularly noteworthy for items which related to change process antecedents of resistance. A decrease was also found for certain individual and organisational antecedents of resistance. Comments made by participants during the feedback sessions confirmed the influence which certain antecedents of resistance identified in theory had on their experiences of the change process. Their remarks also indicated that the survey - feedback technique had been useful to them and had helped them to deal with particularly their uncertainties regarding the change process.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

From the results presented in Chapter 4 it is clear that the survey-feedback intervention played a role in managing resistance to change. However, this role can clearly not be presented as a simple one where intervention results directly in reduced resistance to change. The complex dynamics of the change process and specifically of resistance to change will be discussed in the light of the theory presented in Chapter 2. The implications for the management of resistance to change and for future research will then be presented.

#### 5.1 SUPPORT FOR THE MODEL OF INDIVIDUAL RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The repeated measures- and- feedback procedure provided an effective illustration of and support for the model of resistance to change presented in Figure 2.1.

##### 5.1.1 Individual antecedents of resistance

Those items which suggested moderate potential for resistance to change were largely individual variables relating to valence, self-efficacy and expectancy. Expected costs and benefits implied by the change were reflected in the questionnaire as a potential source of resistance. They were also a frequent focus of attention during the group discussions. Tangible benefits and job security emerged during discussions with the staff to be particularly important to them - that is, to be highly valued outcomes.

An initially low level of understanding of the purpose of the change made it difficult for staff to attach a high value to the outcomes of the change. A lack of information concerning the objectives of the change and the projected outcomes of the change

seemed to heighten uncertainty and a tendency to view the change negatively. Certain staff, who placed a high value on their autonomy and the values which they expressed through their work (particularly the books which were stocked), were particularly concerned that this autonomy would be threatened under new management. Thus anxiety about the change arose from two groups. Firstly, those who did not know what to expect. Secondly, those who, although they had little information, feared the worst.

The combined data from questionnaires and group-discussion responses provide general support for the individual antecedents included in the model of individual resistance to change.

### **5.1.2 Organisational antecedents of resistance**

Organisational variables suggested by the CRS which appeared to feed into resistance to organisational change included the perceived weak presence of political support for the change and uncertainty about whether adequate organisational resources would be available for the change. During the group discussions trust in management (both former and present) emerged as a very strong variable influencing perceptions of the change process. The group experience of similar change (having been through three changes of ownership in as many years) was also cited by staff as a reason for viewing change in general negatively. This is congruent with Judson's (1991) suggestion that events in the organisation's history will influence individual attitudes towards and expectations about change. The importance of these organisational antecedents of resistance is confirmed, which provides support for the model.

### **5.1.3 Process antecedents of resistance**

Process variables featured strongly in the antecedents of resistance to change which emerged during the process. Involvement in the planning for the change, clarity of communication regarding the change and the length of time between the announcement and implementation of the change - the three items which suggested high potential for

resistance - can all be characterised as variables relating to the process of change. This supports the findings of Gilbert and Kleiner (1993) and Smeltzer (1991), who view properly-timed communication as being essential if resistance to change is to be minimised. It also provides support for other change-process antecedents of resistance to change, involvement in the change and timing of the change, presented in the model. The empirical evidence suggests that change process antecedents of resistance play a central role in the development of resistance. It also suggests that these antecedents are relatively open to management by change agents: involving participants in the change process in discussions about the change and listening to their concerns and fears proved to be effective in altering their perceptions of involvement in the planning of the change, communication about the change and the timing of the change, thereby lowering potential for resistance. The change process antecedents of resistance appear therefore to represent an important area of leverage in the management of change and perceptions of change.

#### **5.1.4 Interactions between antecedents of resistance**

The role played by the meaningfulness of the change to the individual is an interesting one. Meaningfulness of the change was the only item in the CRS for which a significantly higher potential for resistance score was reflected at Time 2 than at Time 1. As the total potential for resistance fell, the meaningfulness of the change to the participants decreased. This contradicts the assumption made by ODR (1991) that the more meaningful a change is seen to be, the lower resistance to the change will be.

Here it must be pointed out that all responses by the participants within the self-report format should be recognised as being at least moderated by individual variables, and particularly the valence attached to their needs within the change process. For instance, although involvement in the planning of the change had essentially been non-existent and had thus emerged through the questionnaire as a potential area of high risk for resistance to change, it emerged through discussions with the participants on this point that a far lower valence was attached to involvement in the planning of the change *per*

se, than to, for example, communication about the change. This suggests that the model should be adapted to demonstrate the moderating effects of individual variables on both process and organisational variables, as these variables only have meaning within the model to the extent to which they affect the individual experiencing the change. No firm conclusions about the existence or nature of these moderating effects can be drawn on the basis of the analyses conducted for this study, but it does seem that this would be a fruitful area for future research.

### **5.1.5 Resistant behaviour**

The verbal challenges made to the change agent during the discussions were interpreted as manifestations of overt, conscious resistance (in terms of O'Connor's (1993) typology). As more participants contributed to the discussion, it became possible to identify more instances of such active, conscious resistance. Since the identification of manifestations of resistance was not the focus of this study, it is difficult to identify instances of resistance which were covert or unconscious and which were not expressed verbally in group discussion.

### **5.1.6 Outcomes of resistance**

A number of the therapeutic factors for growth and learning in groups identified by Yalom (1985) were present during the feedback sessions. The participants were able to unburden themselves of their negative feelings in a cathartic way; to share their feelings with their colleagues in a way which taught them that they were not suffering in isolation; to build a relationship with the change agent and through this, with the larger organisation; and to gain information answering their questions and concerns.

The outcomes for individuals of expressing resistant feelings were thus overwhelmingly positive, stimulating growth and assisting them to deal with the trauma of change. This finding supports work done by Fine (1986) which suggests that encouraging the open expression of resistance allows workers to deal with their feelings in a constructive way.

In terms of the model, the individual outcomes of resistance to change fed back into the variables identified as antecedents of resistance, which changed in a way indicated by the results of the second administration of the questionnaire. The participants seemed to have moderated their expectations of the change process at this point: involvement in the planning of the change, the timing of the change, belief in the availability of organisational resources needed for the change and the consideration given to their daily work patterns prior to the change were elements which, objectively viewed, did not change during the process. However, each of these elements was viewed more favourably after the initial discussion and first feedback session than they had been before.

This change in the respondent's frame of reference is referred to by Terborg *et al.* (1980) as gamma change. This complicates the interpretation of the results somewhat as it is difficult to assess the shift in perceived appropriateness of the timing of the change, for example, when the respondent has changed their definition of appropriate timing. At the same time it could be argued though, that, as the timing of the change, objectively viewed, has remained the same, then any shift in response must reflect a shift in perception, which is the variable of interest.

As organisational variables were not directly measured or assessed at any point during the study, these are difficult to quantify. It can be inferred that, where staff productivity was low as a result of the process, the organisation suffered. Reports by staff of lower than normal work performance as a result of their experience of the change can be taken as an indication of definite work-related outcomes of resistance.

Antecedents of resistance which appear to have been influenced by organisational responses to staff needs or requests include understanding of the purpose of the change, clarity of communication about the change and meaningfulness of the change to the participants. It could also be argued that the fact that certain visible steps had been taken by the organisation as a result of comments and requests within the forum of the

feedback discussion helped participants to learn that the expression of their concerns and even of resistance would not be punished and could make a positive contribution to their own circumstances. A sense of self-efficacy was thus reinforced. The process of social learning was thus set in motion through the forum of the feedback discussion.

## 5.2 REFINEMENTS IN THE MODEL OF RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The results of this study provide clear support for the model of resistance to change presented in Figure 2.1. As the model implies, survey feedback was found to be useful in managing high levels of resistance. However, certain elements of the model require further research. It was noted that reduction in potential for resistance after the feedback workshops did not occur in all areas covered by the questionnaire. Rather than invalidating the model, this allows for its refinement and points to directions for future research.

### 5.2.1 Interaction of antecedents of resistance to change

As mentioned earlier, the possible moderating effects of the individual variables acting as antecedents of resistance to change on the organisational and process variables require further investigation if the dynamics of this process are to be fully explored.

### 5.2.2 Generalisability of the approach

The model appears to have most success in describing changes in areas of high potential resistance and particularly change-process antecedents of resistance. Those items for which no significant lowering of potential resistance was measured were in areas of moderate to low potential for resistance, predominantly areas in which potential for resistance was already low. In the areas of moderate potential for resistance the fact that potential for resistance did not decline significantly can be traced to the fact that the items related to very specific, practical issues which had not been addressed by the time the CRS was administered for the second time - namely costs and benefits. Responses

here seemed to indicate a lingering uncertainty as to what these would be, rather than a negative perception of costs and benefits as such.

Less feedback was given in the areas in which resistance was already low and these were discussed in much less detail than the higher risk areas. This may provide the explanation for the lack of significant change here. It is also possible that there exists a certain minimum threshold of potential resistance below which this type of feedback intervention is not effective. There is certainly a need for future research to determine the kinds of circumstances to which this model can best be applied and conversely, those for which it may be inappropriate.

### 5.3 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The nature of the method adopted in this study does limit the extent to which the findings may be freely generalised. As an exploratory study the objective was to uncover areas for future research rather than to apply strict experimental or statistical controls. Where future research is done in an attempt to establish clearer causal or descriptive links between variables, it will be necessary to assess the effectiveness of the intervention by means of a design using a control group and also to measure resistance to change at more than two points in time. This would give a better idea of the nature of the change-in-resistance function.

The relatively small initial sample combined with a high mortality rate to result in a final sample size of only 13. While it was still possible to draw conclusions based on a sample of this size, a larger sample would allow the use of more sophisticated statistical analysis, providing a better way of isolating the changes in resistance which resulted directly from the intervention.

## 5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

The implications for effective organisational change which can be established as a result of this study relate primarily to the management of resistance to change, but also to the broader change process. In the management of resistance to change, a number of points emerge as guidelines for the planning and implementation of organisational change.

### 5.4.1 Planning

Where possible, areas of potential resistance should be identified and addressed before the implementation of the change, the primary implication here being that broad consultation with all affected parties during the planning stages can do much to reduce the potential for resistance to change. Consultation has the added advantage of, when properly managed, enhancing the quality of the planning as more information becomes available for decision-making.

### 5.4.2 Communication

As Smeltzer (1991) found, effective communication strategies are crucial during a process of change. Open and appropriately-timed communication can do much to reduce levels of anxiety and resentment at "being left in the dark". The importance of two-way communication during the transition period has been strongly demonstrated in this study. Information passed from management to staff is certainly a necessary part of communication, but it is by no means sufficient in itself. If the change process is to be managed effectively, then those who are affected by the change must be listened to and their concerns addressed. A questionnaire such as the CRS used in combination with group discussions proved useful in this regard. It must be stressed, however, that the feedback component of the communication is vital. As the model of the individual's experience of resistance to change shows, it is the feedback process through which change is managed. Merely creating forums where staff can be "heard", without building

in a feedback and follow-up mechanism is likely to create expectations of a response which will not be met, leading to resentment and mistrust.

#### **5.4.3 Motivating change**

In terms of the experience of change, social cognitive theory indicates that individuals should feel that they are in a position to change successfully, value the outcome of the change and expect that they will be able to achieve this outcome in such a way that the costs of achieving the outcome are outweighed by the benefits (Bandura, 1986). The practical costs and benefits of change were found to be a major issue for many of the participants in the study and need thus to be recognised as important to the success of planned change.

#### **5.4.4 Impact of change on organisational identity**

In this study, the impact, at its most basic level, of planned organisational change was to initiate a change in the nature of an organisational system. Much of the work that took place during the introductory discussion and first feedback session was related to boundary issues for the participants in the change process. The culture and identity of an organisation is identified by Lorsch (1986) as being the hidden barrier to strategic change. Where external information is not permitted past the organisation's boundaries to change the way in which the organisation functions or is structured, the organisation becomes trapped in a mode which does not permit interaction with or reaction to external changes - it becomes fossilised.

The communication process which took place was thus used not only reactively, to manage existing resistance, but also pro-actively, to promote the flow of information across organisational boundaries (which functioned as inhibitors of change). Goldstein's (1988, p.23) argument that "the increase in information leads to the possibility of a new orderly structure appearing in the system" applies here and explains, from a systems

perspective, why it is that increasing the amount of information entering a system is able to stimulate change. The focus of the communication, it is important to note, should be on heightening awareness of discrepancies between the present and desired state of the system.

In terms of information theory, it should be clear that if change is to be planned and implemented effectively, it is not sufficient merely to plan and implement change and to manage resistance appropriately. The fact that system structures and organisational identity are inevitably required to change to some extent in order to accommodate and facilitate the planned change means that the flow of information at the boundaries of the affected systems must be stimulated and carefully monitored. Communication which takes place during the change process needs therefore to be driven by and evaluated against this need.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY

Organisational change is a challenging reality today. Where organisational effectiveness is defined as the level of fit between internal organisational systems and the external environment, the ability of organisations to adapt to a changing environment determines their effectiveness and ultimately, their success. The success of a change process depends on complex interactions among individual, organisational and change process variables (Covin, 1992). However, a dearth of research on these complex interactions (Beer & Walton, 1987) and particularly on individual resistance to change (Malinconico, 1983) exists.

#### 6.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Resistance to change may have a range of outcomes for organisational change efforts. Interpersonal and intergroup tension, delayed decision making or action, organisational rigidity and stagnation, the proliferation of "red tape", insularity, polarisation, distrust and low morale have all been associated with resistance to change (Ashforth & Lee, 1990, Judson, 1991). Resistance to change is clearly a topic worthy of further investigation. A model which clarified the functioning of resistance to organisational change would be a useful contribution to the management of resistance and therefore to the more effective management of the complex process of organisational change.

#### 6.2 AIMS

The general aim of the study was to develop and apply a model of individual resistance to organisational change. The theoretical aspect of the study comprised an introductory review of the literature on organisational change, followed by the development of a model of individual resistance to planned organisational change. In the course of developing the model, it was necessary to identify potential sources, functions and

manifestations of resistance to planned organisational change. Once these aims had been accomplished, a strategy for managing planned organisational change, with particular reference to dealing with resistance to change was proposed.

The empirical part of the study aimed to apply the proposed strategy for dealing with resistance to change, namely the survey feedback approach and

- (a) to identify the sources and strength of the resistant behaviour regarding a specific attempt at organisational change;
- (b) to explore the effect of survey feedback on the levels and nature of resistance to change; and
- (c) to establish whether the use of survey feedback aimed at managing resistance merited future research.

The study was rooted in the general systems paradigm, which played an important role in the design of the model of resistance to change, as well as the research design which was adopted.

### 6.3 GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY

General systems theory provides an holistic framework within which organisational behaviour may be studied. An important implication of general systems theory for the study of organisational change is that organisational systems survive through resistance to change (Goldstein, 1988). Work conducted on the function of organisational culture by Gagliardi (1986) and Lorsch (1991) supports the notion that resistance to change enables organisations to maintain their identity, despite a changing environment. Despite this tendency to maintain identity and resist change, change nevertheless does take place in organisations. A systemic explanation for this is that as the flow of information across the organisation boundaries takes place, a state of disequilibrium within the organisation arises. This happens because the addition of information to a system equates to an increase of energy within the system. Because of the higher level of energy, existing structures within the organisational system become more flexible.

The system thus becomes more susceptible to change (Goldstein, 1988).

#### 6.4 SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

Just as organisations can be described as systemic in their response to change, so can individuals. Furthermore, organisations cannot change without both requiring and implying change for the individual members of the organisation. Social cognitive theory provides a well-supported framework for understanding the individual response to change within the organisational system (Porrás, 1987). Social cognitive theory assumes that people make conscious choices about their behaviour. The information upon which these choices are based comes from the environment. Choices are a function of:

- valence (value attached to a particular outcome by the individual);
- expectancy (the expectations which the individual has about the probability of specific outcomes); and
- self-efficacy (the individual's perceptions of his/her own ability to achieve the desired outcomes) (Bandura, 1980).

The way in which an individual will react to organisational change is thus a function of the valence and expectancy attached to the anticipated outcomes of the change, as well as his/her perceptions of self-efficacy. The mechanism by which this behaviour is determined involves action (the setting of a goal and performance in pursuit of the goal), the development of discrepancy (where the goal is not achieved completely), reaction (attribution of the discrepancy to particular causes, either within or beyond the individual's control, accompanied by a corresponding change in behaviour) and reduction in discrepancy (progress towards the goal or the revised goal). Discrepancy reduction, facilitated by feedback, thus lies at the heart of social cognitive theory.

#### 6.5 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Resistance to change is a common response to organisational change. Resistance is defined as any force which contributes to stability in personality or social systems (Coghlan, 1993). It may be manifested in a variety of forms. Often attempts to deal with

resistance have been aimed at suppressing these manifestations. Such approaches include negotiation, co-optation, manipulation and coercion (Kotter *et al.*, 1979). However, such symptomatic solutions generally fail to address the underlying issues and are unlikely to be successful in achieving commitment to the change process in the long term (Goldstein, 1988). The nature and functioning of the resistance mechanism must be understood before any meaningful attempt can be made at managing resistance.

## 6.6 MODEL OF INDIVIDUAL RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The model of individual resistance to change which was developed identifies the antecedents of resistance, the functioning of the resistance mechanism, the outcomes of resistance and the role of feedback loops within the process.

The antecedents of resistance were identified from a review of the literature on resistance to change as being individual, organisational and change-process related in nature. These antecedents set the environment within which the resistance mechanism operates. Resistance is manifested in a variety of forms with outcomes for both individual and organisation. These in turn feed back into the system, affecting the antecedents of resistance.

### 6.6.1 Antecedents of resistance

Individual antecedents of resistance related to *expectancy* include the fundamental and generalised predisposition towards change held by individuals and their historical experience of the organisation and management (Judson, 1991). Emotional state at the time of change also plays a part in determining expectations of change. Emotional exhaustion in particular has been found to increase the likelihood of negative perceptions of change (Ashforth & Lee, 1990).

Antecedents related to *valence* are primarily to beliefs about the need for change and agreement on the goals for change. Kotter *et al.* (1977), Lorsch (1986) and O'Connor

(1993) report these factors as powerful cognitive determinants of resistance to change.

*Self efficacy* beliefs - essentially beliefs that the goals of change are attainable - are the third aspect of the individual antecedents of change. The fear of not being able to cope with a new situation may lead individuals to resist change (Coghlan, 1993).

*Organisational factors* which are likely to act as antecedents of resistance depend largely on the existence of intragroup feedback. When individuals interact as part of a social system, they evaluate their own responses and the responses of the other system members. This process constitutes the intragroup feedback (Jacobs, 1974) which has the potential of facilitating or hindering social change (Fine, 1986, Jaques, 1948, Yalom, 1985). Phenomena such as the bureaucratic rationality (where the diffusion of responsibility increases the tendency to avoid action) (Ashforth & Lee, 1990) and organisational culture which acts as "strategic blinkers", limiting sensitivity to the need to change (Lorsch, 1986) are examples of organisational antecedents of resistance to change.

The manner in which the change is planned and implemented - the *change process* itself - is an area which contains a number of potential antecedents of resistance to change. Participation in the planning of the change (Coch & French, 1948), the presence of political support for the change (Gilbert & Kleiner, 1993) and the way in which the change is communicated (Smeltzer, 1991) are elements which have been found to impact strongly on acceptance of change.

### **6.6.2 The resistance mechanism**

In terms of the model, resistance functions as a form of survival mechanism. The individual processes the information available in the environment in terms of personal perceptions and expectations cognitively. Based upon the cognitive assessment of the situation, the individual responds. Where the assessment is that resistant behaviour is the behaviour most likely to result in a desirable outcome (particularly where this

outcome is the maintenance of the *status quo*, rather than a change which may have unknown or harmful consequences) the resistance mechanism will be employed.

### **6.6.3 Outcomes of resistance**

The outcomes of resistance may be manifested at the level of individual and/or group. Resistant behaviour may be overt or covert. It may also be conscious or unconscious (O'Connor, 1993). The form of resistant behaviour is expected to reflect the most effective way (in the concerned individual's estimation) of ensuring that the *status quo* is maintained.

### **6.6.4 Feedback loops**

A discrepancy between a desired and a perceived outcome, identified through the flow of information, can both direct and motivate behaviour (Nadler, 1977). Thus, where the outcomes of resistance for the individual or the organisation differ from the desired outcomes, or where new information is generated which causes the desired outcomes to be redefined, a discrepancy is created. This discrepancy effectively alters the environment in which the individual makes choices about behaviour. Thus, the feedback loop connects outcomes of resistance with antecedents of resistance. This ensures that the individual's experience of change may change over time.

Feedback loops are identified as the key aspect of the model. By focusing interventions on the feedback loop, the change agent may achieve considerable leverage in managing resistance to change.

## **6.7 SURVEY FEEDBACK**

Survey feedback is an intervention which involves the gathering of organisational information (typically, but not always, through questionnaires). This information is interpreted and then communicated to the participants in the survey. In general, survey

feedback has been found to be a both popular and effective intervention (Gavin, 1985). The success of survey feedback has been found to be subject to the existence of certain conditions, notably that the process be carefully planned as well as suited to the circumstances (Edwards & Thomas, 1993).

Given the central role of feedback in the model of resistance to change and the empirical support for survey feedback as a technique, survey feedback was adopted as the strategy for dealing with resistance to change in the empirical part of the study.

## 6.8 METHOD

The organisation unit in which the empirical part of the study took place was one which had recently undergone a significant change, one of ownership. This change was associated with changes in conditions of service, reporting structures, management styles and policy.

The research design was essentially that of a pre-test, post-test. It involved the administration of a questionnaire, followed by questionnaire feedback, followed by a second administration of the questionnaire, followed by questionnaire feedback. The questionnaire which was used was the CRS (ODR, 1991). This is a 25 item questionnaire which sets out to identify the potential sources and strength of resistance. Responses are made on a 10-point Likert-type scale. The CRS was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.925. The feedback which was given was based on average group responses to the CRS and presented to the participants for discussion in small groups. The Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed-Ranks Test was used to analyse the change in resistance levels reflected in the two administrations of the surveys.

The method adopted was dictated to a certain extent by the unique circumstances of the change process. However, certain criteria arising from the aims of the study were also set, namely that the design needed to provide:

- a means of identifying sources and levels of resistance to change;

- a process for working through issues related to change; and
- opportunity for measurement of change in resistance levels as well as a qualitative indication of participants' experience of change over time.

The research design had both strengths and weaknesses. It was problematic in that no control group was used. This, together with the fact that only two points of measurement were used makes it difficult to describe the nature of the change-in-resistance function using quantitative data only. However, a strength of the design lies in the use of both quantitative data (the survey data) and qualitative data (responses from the participants during the feedback sessions). This allowed a deeper exploration of the dynamics of the resistance mechanism and the role played by survey feedback in the management of resistance than would have been possible using only quantitative or only qualitative data.

## 6.9 RESULTS

It was found that certain antecedents of resistance to change did reflect a high potential for resistance, namely:

- involvement in planning for the change,
- clarity of communication regarding the change and
- length of time between the announcement of change and its implementation.

Moderate potential for resistance to change emerged on a number of other items.

After the first feedback session, at the second administration of the CRS, the potential for resistance score had dropped from an average of 103.08 to an average of 88.53, a highly significant decrease. Scores dropped particularly for items which had initially reflected high potential resistance to change, but also for certain items which had initially reflected moderate potential for resistance to change.

During the group feedback sessions, feelings of betrayal, mistrust and anxiety at the change process were expressed. Issues of trust in management (apparently linked to

historical experiences of management) and group identity (particularly concern at the anticipated loss of an established identity and set of values) emerged strongly during the initial meetings and at the first feedback sessions. However, at the second feedback session, although still expressing some anxiety, participants indicated that the survey feedback process had been useful to them. The need for clear communication about the change stood out in these discussions as being crucial to the participants. It seemed that their participation in the feedback discussions, together with the opportunity to express their fears and concerns, played some part in addressing the need for communication.

## 6.10 DISCUSSION

The empirical part of the study was found to provide support for both the survey-feedback approach to managing change and the model of individual resistance to change. The impact of change process variables on resistance appeared to be particularly strong in this case. It does appear, however, that the impact of change process and other variables may be moderated by the expectancy and valence attached to the outcomes by individuals. Thus, for the participants to whom communication about the change was extremely important, a lack of communication became a serious issue. Participation in the planning of the change however, seemed to be of less importance to them. Thus, even though participation in the planning of the change had been low, this appeared to have relatively less impact on resistance than did communication. The possible moderating effects of perceptions of valence and expectancies, as well as self-efficacy, are worthy of further investigation.

The finding that incorporating survey feedback into the change process had a significant effect on lowering the potential for resistance from change process-related antecedents provides further support for the model of individual resistance. It also provides support for the identification of feedback as a crucial point of leverage within the model. Clearly, by incorporating feedback into the change process, significant change in resistance levels can be brought about. This has a number of important implications for the management of change. Firstly, the incorporation of feedback and regular, clear

communication about the change process should be included in the planning of any change. Feedback requires that change agents listen to those who are being expected to change, before a response can be made. By listening, the change agent is enabled to identify the issues which are of major concern to them. Consultation with the affected parties during the planning stages can do much to reduce the potential for resistance to change. Specific antecedents of resistance were identified by the participants in this study as being of concern to them, but it may well be that, under different circumstances, other antecedents may come to the fore.

Secondly, the creation of forums for regular communication, feedback and follow-up is indicated. As both the model and the empirical evidence have shown, it is the feedback process through which change is effected. Feedback is not only important when reacting to resistance to change. It is also essential when motivating change and introducing new information into the organisational system. Without this information which can draw attention to the discrepancy between the ideal and current states of the system, no new energy is created to drive the change.

## 6.11 CONCLUSION

A model for understanding individual resistance to change from a general systems perspective has been developed. It has been applied through the application of the survey-feedback approach to managing resistance to change and has been found to be a useful tool in this regard. As an exploratory study, it is subject to certain methodological limitations. Nevertheless, it has some useful implications for agents faced with the task of managing organisational change, as well as pointing to interesting directions for future research.

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## APPENDIX 1

### CHANGE RESISTANCE SCALE

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

The Change Resistance Scale (CRS) measures peoples' perceptions of specific change. It is composed of 25 items, corresponding to the 25 primary ways people respond to organizational change. Each item is measured on a scale of 1 to 10. Place a X mark above the number that best reflects your view of each of the following items.

As you read each item, consider how you feel about the acquisition of your company by the new owners. It is important to use the same perspective consistently as you answer each question.

In the items the term "sponsor" refers to your company's previous owners, who legitimised the change. The term "change agent" refers to the new owners involved in implementing the change.

Please complete the section below before continuing with the questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, space is provided for any other comments which you wish to make.

**NAME:****HOME LANGUAGE:**

**SEX:**            MALE            FEMALE

**AGE:**            18 - 24            25 - 34            35 - 44            45 +

**HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:****BRANCH:****JOB TITLE:****NUMBER OF YEARS IN PRESENT JOB:****NUMBER OF YEARS EMPLOYED BY THE COMPANY:**

## CHANGE RESISTANCE SCALE

- 1** DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHANGE? When people lack a full understanding of why a change is being implemented, anxiety and suspicion often fill the information vacuum.

The purpose of this change is clear.

The purpose of this change is unclear.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 2** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS CHANGE IS REALLY NEEDED? Even if people fully understand the organization's rationale for a change, they may have different perspectives than that of a change sponsor and may not agree that a change is truly necessary.

I believe that this change is needed.

I believe that there is no need for this change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 3** HOW INVOLVED HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE PLANNING FOR THIS CHANGE? It is human nature for people to support what they have helped to create. If people do not believe that they have a significant degree of input into the planning of a change, resistance usually increases.

I have been involved in planning this change.

I have not been involved in planning this change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**4 HOW CLEAR HAS COMMUNICATION BEEN ABOUT THIS CHANGE?**

Even if a change affects only one other person, communication can be easily distorted.

Communication regarding this change has been clear.

Communication regarding this change has not been clear.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**5 HOW SIGNIFICANT DO YOU BELIEVE THE TANGIBLE, INTELLECTUAL, OR EMOTIONAL COSTS OF THIS CHANGE ARE FOR YOU?** People resist changes that appear to be too costly relative to what they will gain.

I believe that this change has a relatively low cost to me.

I believe that this change has a relatively high cost to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**6 DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ADEQUATE REWARDS ARE BEING PROVIDED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS CHANGE?** For people to be motivated to change, a reward must be provided in the form of something they truly value.

I believe that there are adequate rewards for accomplishing this change.

I do not believe that there are adequate rewards for accomplishing this change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**7** HOW COMPATIBLE DO YOU BELIEVE THIS CHANGE IS WITH EXISTING ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES? People resist when they believe that a change introduces values that are not compatible with the existing organizational values.

I believe that this change represents a good fit with our organization's values.

I believe that this change represents certain values that are in direct conflict with our organization's values.



**8** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR BOSS OR OTHER POLITICALLY IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS ARE GENUINELY SUPPORTIVE OF THIS CHANGE? If people perceive that key individuals or groups are not genuinely supportive of a change, their acceptance is difficult to secure.

I believe that there is strong political support for this change.

I believe that there is weak political support for this change.



**9** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS CHANGE WILL IMPACT THE WAY YOU RELATE TO OTHERS IN THE ORGANIZATION WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU? If people view a change as adversely affecting the way they relate to others who are significant to them, acceptance is reduced.

I believe that relationships that are important to me will be improved or remain positive because of this change.

I believe that relationships that are important to me will be adversely affected or remain negative.



**10**

**HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR THIS CHANGE WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE?** If a change requires organizational resources that people believe are inaccessible (e.g., money, time, commitments by certain managers, new equipment and facilities, specialized training) they tend to become disenchanted with the idea and withdraw their support.

I am confident that the necessary organizational support will be provided.

I am confident that the necessary organizational support will not be provided.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**11**

**WHAT IMPACT DO YOU EXPECT THIS CHANGE WILL HAVE ON YOUR AREA'S EXISTING OPERATING BUDGET?** Existing operating budgets can be overburdened with the cost of planning, purchasing, and implementing the organizational change.

I expect this change to have a positive impact on my area's budget.

I expect this change to have a negative impact on my area's budget.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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12

**DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF TIME HAS BEEN ALLOWED BETWEEN THE TIME THIS CHANGE WAS ANNOUNCED AND THE TIME IT MUST BE IMPLEMENTED?** When planning how fast a change will be introduced, it is necessary to think in terms of optimal timing. The most appropriate speed to introduce change may not correspond to the fastest speed at which it could be "pushed through."

I believe an appropriate amount of time has been allowed between my first awareness of this change and its implementation.

I do not believe an appropriate amount of time has been allowed between my first awareness of this change and its implementation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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13

**DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR DAILY WORK PATTERNS WERE ADEQUATELY CONSIDERED WHEN THE PLANNING WAS DONE FOR THIS CHANGE?** Failing to acknowledge the impact a change may have on people's work patterns tends to promote distrust and alienation.

I believe that my work patterns were considered.

I do not believe that my work patterns were considered.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

**14** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS CHANGE WILL HAVE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ANY KEY ASPECTS OF YOUR JOB? People will be more resistant to a change if they perceive that it may have a negative impact on key aspects of their jobs (i.e., such as the position's autonomy, the challenge of the job, the type of feedback received, the job's importance to the organization).

I believe that key aspects of my job will be positively affected by this change.

I believe that key aspects of my job will be negatively affected by this change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**15** HOW MEANINGFUL TO YOU IS THIS CHANGE? People will be more resistant if they perceive that the organization is involved in another of its many poorly implemented changes.

I am treating this change as meaningful.

I am not treating this change as meaningful.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**16** DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL BE PUNISHED INAPPROPRIATELY FOR MAKING ERRORS WHILE LEARNING TO DO WHAT IS REQUIRED BY THIS CHANGE? Change involves learning, and learning usually involves mistakes. When people are not given the freedom to make mistakes while learning, they become afraid and are easily discouraged.

I will not be punished inappropriately for making errors while implementing this change.

I will be punished inappropriately for making errors while implementing this change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 20** **WHAT LEVEL OF RESPECT AND TRUST DO YOU HAVE FOR THE CHANGE AGENT(S)?** When people view a change agent as someone they dislike or mistrust, a lack of acceptance and enthusiasm for a change will often materialize.

I have high respect and trust for the change agent(s).

I have low respect and trust for the change agent(s).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 21** **HOW MUCH STRESS ARE YOU CURRENTLY FACING IN YOUR JOB?** When people are already busy and under stress, the additional pressure of a change may become too much for them to assimilate.

I am not overly stressed or burdened by my current work load.

I am overly stressed or burdened by my current work load.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 22** **DOES THIS CHANGE REPRESENT ANY THREAT TO YOUR PERSONAL INTERESTS?** A major source of resistance is when a change represents a threat to such interests as salary or prestige.

My personal interests are not threatened by this change.

My personal interests are threatened by this change.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 23** HOW COMPATIBLE ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS CHANGE WITH YOUR PERSONAL OR CAREER GOALS? Resistance is increased if people believe a change will block or significantly restrict the achievement of their own personal ambitions or the possibility for future promotion or success.

The objectives of this change are compatible with my personal goals.

The objectives of this change are not compatible with my personal goals.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 24** IF THIS CHANGE IS ABANDONED OR NOT FULLY IMPLEMENTED, HOW DIFFICULT DO YOU FEEL IT WILL BE TO REVERSE ITS EFFECTS? It is more likely that people will resist implementation if it is difficult to reverse a change or if there are many permanent consequences.

It will be easy to reverse any effects of this change if it is not fully implemented.

It will be difficult to reverse any effects of this change if it is not fully implemented.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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- 25** HOW DO YOU FEEL THIS CHANGE WILL REFLECT ON YOUR PAST PERFORMANCE? Resistance increases when people believe that a change would require them to acknowledge past failures or would generate doubts about their judgment in past decisions and actions.

I do not feel that this change will reflect negatively on my past performance.

I do feel that this change will reflect negatively on my past performance.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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