

Force Field Tool

Based on Kurt Lewin's Force Field Analysis

The force field tool is a way to help groups think about forces affecting our movement. It's an easy tool to use and helps to identify major themes and issues that are impacting us. It's a way to get at "the big picture" of what's going on, that doesn't require hours and hours of boring discussion. The force field analysis can help us tease out differences of perspectives within our group and thus produce a rich analysis of potential places of growth for the campaign.

The concept is simple enough: what are the forces (psychological, economic, environmental, historical trends, etc) that are supporting you to succeed. What are those that are against your success. Key is this concept: society is constantly in a state of flux. So understanding "where we are now" means seeing these two sets of forces as pushing on each other – we're not all in one direction or all in the other – we're in a state of tension. Our actions can help shift that tension to be win our long-term goals.

Basic Tool

Steps:

1. Clearly identify the problem/campaign vision.
2. Identify forces contributing to the success and forces against success.

(put up the following chart where everyone can see; sometimes we put it on the wall and have individuals write up the forces on cards and put them up with tape)

<u>Forces for Success (+)</u>	<u>Forces Against Success (--)</u>

3. Rate the impact/strength of each force
(+10 to +1 or -10 to -1 as relative impact of force on movement; again, discussion is an opportunity for sharing insights with each other)
4. Think collectively about how to maximize the forces for success and how to minimize the forces against success. What are tactics (currently being used and especially those not being used) that can maximize our success.

Force Field as Tug Of War

First approach too boring? Here's another way of leading that's even less heady. We've found this tool works with all kinds of groups – and it uses the body!

The basic format is a tug of war, with rope which has multiple ends knotted in middle. Small teams are created, half of which identify a negative force in your group's environment and half identify a positive force. These can be negative and positive forces acting right now and likely to act in the near future. As each team identifies a force, it takes its place on positive or negative side of tug of war.

(See the visual.)

Then, action!

After one side wins, teams huddle; negative force teams ask selves how their power could be under-mined; positive force teams ask selves how their power could be enhanced.

Each team writes its conclusions.

All teams report to the whole the two most important ways (of enhancing or undermining).

Enjoy using in your own group/organization/coalition!

