

The Change Curve Model

Duck's (2002) Change Curve model emphasizes basic assumptions for change in an organization (Box 14.1). In addition, it emphasizes the stages of organizational change with potential areas for failure.

Stage I: Stagnation

The first stage of organizational change in the Change Curve model is *stagnation*. The causes of stagnation are typically a lack of effective leadership, failed initiatives, and too few resources. The emotional climate in the stage of stagnation is one in which individuals feel comfortable, there is no sense of threat, depression occurs, and/or hyperactivity exists and individuals become stressed and exhausted. Stagnation ends when action is finally taken.

Stage II: Preparation

The second stage of the Change Curve model is *preparation*. In this stage, the emotional climate of the organization is one of anxiety, hopefulness, and/or reduced productivity. Buy-in from individuals is essential at this stage in which people must ask themselves what they are willing to do. The opportunity that exists at this stage is getting people excited about the vision. The danger at this stage of change is the length of preparation: the project may fail if it is too short or too long.

Box 14.1

Basic Assumptions for Change in an Organization

- ◆ Changing an organization is a highly emotional process.
- ◆ Group change requires individual change.
- ◆ No fundamental change takes place without strong leadership.
- ◆ The leader must be willing to change before others are expected to change.
- ◆ The larger and more drastic the change, the more difficult the change.
- ◆ The greater the number of individuals involved, the tougher the change will be to effect.

From Duck, J. D. (2002). *The change monster. The human forces that fuel or foil corporate transformation and change*. New York: Crown Business.

Stage III: Implementation

The third stage of the Change Curve model is *implementation*. In this stage, it is essential to assess individuals' readiness for the change as well as to increase their confidence in their ability to help make the change happen.

In the implementation stage, Duck (2002) emphasizes that individuals must see "what is in it for them" if they are going to commit to making a change. In addition, she asserts that when emotion is attached to the reason, individuals are more likely to change.

Stage IV: Determination

The fourth stage of the Change Curve model is *determination*. If results are not being experienced by now, individuals begin to experience fatigue change. The opportunity in this stage of organizational change is to create small successes along the way to change. The danger is that this is the stage in which the initiative has the highest chance of failure.

Stage V: Fruition

The fifth and final stage in the Change Curve model is *fruition*. In this stage, the efforts are coming to fruition, and positive outcomes can be seen. The opportunity in this stage is to celebrate and reward individuals for their efforts as well as to seek new ways to change and grow. This stage is in danger when individuals revert back to a level of complacency and begin to stagnate again.

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 I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed.
 —Booker T. Washington
