



ASSESSING READINESS FOR CHANGE IN WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTERS: A CHANGE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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Abstract

Smooth readiness for change in organizations is essential for effective change management to ensure the successful implementation of new processes and technologies. Good readiness for the implementation of changes can mitigate potential risks, avoid resistance and operational disruptions, and ensure that employees are properly prepared for change. Inadequate readiness for change costs the organization more time, financial, human, and other resources. How to ensure that significant changes in organizations are properly readied, implemented properly, and managed effectively is a difficult problem for every organization to solve. The research goal formulated to solve the problem is to create a Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change and verify it in a waste management center. A tool was created using theoretical scientific literature analysis and practical research methods - a Cyclical Model of readiness for change, designed to prepare employees for significant changes. A quantitative study (60 respondents) was conducted using a questionnaire. The research used the created tool for change readiness - a six-step a Cyclical Model of readiness for change. The selected steps are arranged in a logical sequence to ensure smooth problem identification, introduction to the change program, determination of readiness for change, monitoring of the process progress, communication, motivation and elimination of discrepancies at each step according to the change readiness report. The change readiness report is necessary and necessary throughout the process to compare the actual implementation stages, deadlines and resource utilization with the initial change program. The conclusions obtained provide key recommendations for changing the problematic situation in the organization. By analyzing previous experience and applying the acquired new knowledge and skills, managers can accurately identify areas for improvement in the organization, improve processes, avoid employee resistance, promote best practices and foster a culture of continuous improvement. The success of the ongoing changes in this organization will depend not only on the proper identification of problems in the readiness for change, employee encouragement and timely introduction to the program of changes planned in the organization, but also on monitoring and adjusting the progress of the readiness for change. By following this research practice, it is possible to improve the readiness for change phase to the required selected level and increase the likelihood of successful and well-implemented changes in the organization. Therefore, the readiness for change phase is essential for the successful implementation of changes, as it helps to reduce operational risks, employee resistance to change, ensure appropriate employee development, and improve communication at the individual and team levels. A properly the readiness for change phase creates better conditions for faster, smoother, and more successful implementation of significant changes. By following the practice of applying the developed model, it is possible to improve the readiness for change phase and increase the likelihood of successful and well-implemented changes in the organization.

Keywords: change management, readiness for change, the cyclical model of readiness for change.

JEL classification: M12, Q28, Q53.

Introduction

Change is an integral part of various organizations, as successful change initiatives benefit organizations (Karasvirta and Teerikangas, 2022). Change is an opportunity that needs to be anticipated, prepared for, and managed. Organizations that ignore change and the importance of managing it may not only lose their competitive positions in the market, but also fail (Bubliauskaitė, 2017). With increasing competition and a rapidly changing environment, organizations that strengthen their adaptive capabilities have the opportunity to achieve significant competitive advantages (Farida and Setiawan, 2022). In addition, customers are setting ever higher standards and are less forgiving of company mistakes (Von Leipzig et al., 2017). Various changes cause uncertainty and organizational faltering (Constantino et al., 2021). Whether planned or spontaneous, change takes many forms, each requiring different actions. Research shows that change problems are most often associated with change management processes (Rafferty et al., 2013; Sonenshein, 2010). One of the main factors why some changes are successful and others are unsuccessful is readiness for change (Wang et al., (2020). Successful implementation of change depends

primarily on the readiness of all members of the organization for change (Albrecht et al. (2022); Alolabi et al., 2021; Faulks, 2021; Burnes, 2020; Stouten et al., 2018). Invernizzi and Romenti (2012) argue that sometimes changes are necessary and occur against the will of organizational members, and sometimes they are welcomed and willingly pursued. Resistance to change is considered a major reason why change attempts fail (Erwin and Garman, 2010). Employees resist change initiatives, resist uncertainty and possible outcomes if they do not recognize the need for change or do not want to deviate from the status quo because they perceive change as uncertain or risky (Bierwolf, 2019; Oreg and Berson, 2019; Stouten et al., 2018). Resistance to change cannot be avoided, it is worth understanding how to reduce its impact. And the decreasing loyalty to the organization due to frequent changes makes employees reconsider that staying in this organization is not beneficial (Reiss et al., 2019). However, if there is no change, goals will not be achieved, and companies may become economically weakened in the long run (Stark, 2022). Organizations can strengthen beliefs by readiness their employees for change and solving problems related to resistance to change (Banjongprasert, 2017). Spreparadness of employees for changes, related to implementation of ISO 9001:2015 standards is achieved

by involving all employees of the company (from the top management to production employee level) (

Roberto and Bliese (2015) argue that it is necessary to be readiness for change. It is important for all employees of the organization to understand the essence of the planned changes in theoretical and practical aspects, to accumulate knowledge and improve skills before selling significant (having a noticeable impact and importance) changes. In practice, there is no one best way to successfully achieve organizational changes. Therefore, how to ensure that readiness for change in organizations are properly prepared, implemented properly and managed effectively is a difficult problem to solve in every organization.

Object – READINESS FOR CHANGE

Purpose – to create a Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change and verify it in a waste management center.

Theoretical background

Classical organizational change management primarily involves human resource management (Stark, 2022). Change management is a process that helps a person, group or organization to change (Rothwell et al. (2019). The main goal of change management is to successfully adapt to a constantly changing business environment, reduce resistance to change and maximize the effectiveness of the organization in achieving its goals

during competitive market dynamics (Okolie and Memeh, 2022). In order to manage organizational change, managerial skills are very important (Jokubauskienė, 2016), affecting the perceived effectiveness of the planned action (Vaishnavi et al., 2019). The main focus must be on the added value when products are offered to customers to meet their high expectations (Lanzerstorfer, 2022). Although the term “change” itself is easy to define as replacing the old with something new, it is extremely difficult to achieve it successfully (Singh et al., 2012). In the management literature, the word “change” is used quite widely – to describe external changes – social and political factors, changes in technologies, consumers, competitors, environmental structures, etc. (Vaičekauskytė, 2010). Change is a complex phenomenon that affects the behavior of many people, there are many obstacles to change - these can be organizational obstacles, such as status, authority, lack of support and commitments or resources, various personal motives (Gigliotti et al., 2019, Vaičekauskytė, 2010). Therefore, a significant (having a noticeable impact and importance) change is perceived when it is necessary to disrupt the existing state, introduce a new one and stabilize it to achieve final results. This process includes three states (Fig. 1): CURRENT STATE; TRANSITION STATE; FUTURE STATE.

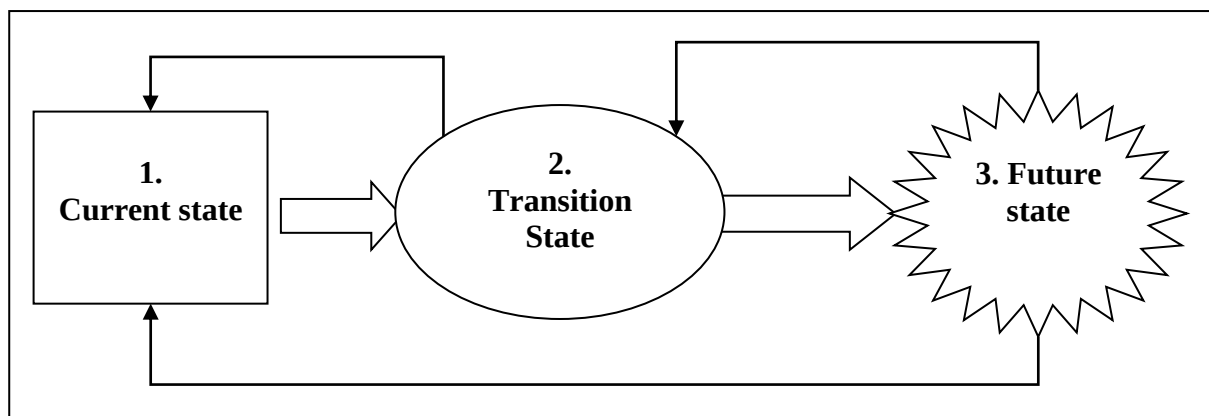


Fig. 1. Limits of the Company's

All three main states need to be understood in order to understand changes in the organization properly.

In the first state - CURRENT STATE - this is the current state of processes, systems and culture: description and diagnosis of the situation, understanding of events, setting goals for change and planning. Planned organizational changes mean conscious activities aimed at moving the organization from the current state to the desired state (Stouten et al., 2018). The created program (plans) are introduced to managers and, at the same time, employees. Even if employees know (are informed) about the upcoming changes, they may not get involved unless they see personal and/or organizational benefits. Active support from managers increases employee commitment and loyalty to the prosperity of the organization.

In the second state - TRANSITION STATE - managers must help themselves and employees change their ways of working and thinking. The purpose of these

changes is to search for a new configuration of organizational components so that the organization meets the future state: generating opportunities for change, choosing the most appropriate tactics, considering what could be done. And this often leads to different behavior or doing different things. It is important that employees agree with organizational transformation (Quines and Saycon, 2023). Otherwise, uncertainty and fear can be caused among employees - who are being influenced. This process is not linear. The process is iterative, multi-stage and very dynamic.

In the third state - FUTURE STATE - in the future state, employees and managers of the organization foresee improvements in one or more areas of the organization's activities due to the introduction of changes - discussing the results of the implementation of programs (plans). This is the co-creation of the desired state. During a period of change, the future is often

uncertain and risky. Therefore, readiness for change is essential.

Having properly analyzed all three states, the organization's leaders can explain to employees the expected significant changes and their benefits. But if employees do not believe that the proposed changes have benefits, it is unlikely that they will positively assess their readiness for change.

In order to successfully carry out the activities of the organization, there is no blind pursuit of the latest trends and an attempt to adapt to them by any means, but the ability to correctly and successfully complete all steps related to the implemented changes that will lead to the required result (Ševelinskaitė, 2015). But the market is changing so quickly that long-term plans become only theoretical things that are necessary in order not to deviate from the general company policy (Ševelinskaitė, 2015). The pace of change depends on the context, nature of the organization and external events (Lozano and Barreiro-Gen, 2021; Išoraitė, 2012). Organizations with high formality are more suited to routine tasks and stable conditions, and due to their high dynamics, they cannot respond effectively to environmental changes (Jardine et al., 2022; Katsikeas et al., 2011). Fabio and Duradoni (2020) draw attention to the meaning of change: change means that more work will be required in the short term (i.e., learning and adaptation are required to adapt to new tasks). As much as possible, organizations prefer slow changes, because otherwise they would be in constant confusion (Laumenskaitė, Vasiliauskas, 2006). Slow changes are usually less resisted, because they are implemented gradually and people are more likely to accept them. However, organizations do not always "have time" for slow changes. Rapid changes, which are usually the result of a strategic initiative, cause considerable resistance even in cases where they are implemented in a rather targeted manner (Išoraitė, 2012). They are related to the implementation of a new strategy and, in particular, change the established and usual order of the organization (M. Išoraitė, 2012). Bah, Sun, Hange, and Edjoukou (2024) identified three main problems arising from organizational change: power, control, and resistance. The most common and noticeable problem that can arise when implementing change is resistance to change (Robbins & Coulter, 2021; Walk & Handy, 2018). The fact that many employees resist change makes it difficult for companies to overcome doubts arising from the fear of losing their jobs, additional tasks and responsibilities, uncertainty about how the change will affect them, and adaptation to innovations (Singh et al., 2012). When employees who will be affected do not view the change initiative favorably, they are likely to demonstrate resistance to that change (Burke, 2011). Resistance can arise from a variety of factors, including fear of uncertainty, a sense of loss of control, or concerns about negative impacts on individual responsibilities or well-being (Damawan & Azizah, 2020). K. Lewin (1951) introduced resistance as a systemic concept, suggesting that instead of trying to understand the situation by focusing on the three elements separately, we should consider them as a whole (Burnes, 2020; Cummings et al. 2016; Burnes, Cooke, 2012). Changes usually occur much earlier than they are officially announced, because

most often everything starts with identifying the problem, analyzing the situation, and choosing a possible direction, and at this stage, employees are not yet involved in this process (Lee, Krayner, 2005). Resistance to change is easier to manage when the cycle is still "young" and there are many opportunities, than later, when resistance is already firmly entrenched, which is related to the maturity of groups and individuals (Lozano, 2013). Resistance to change can lead to different reactions and consequences (Lozano, 2009), including: confusion; denial; maladaptive obedience; sabotage; easy agreement; shifting from responsibilities; blaming others; silence; criticism (direct or indirect); delay; poor responsiveness to requests; unavailability; arguments about priorities in limited times and resources; making "mistakes" and doing what is ordered. All of these are the main manifestations of employee anxiety that provoke employee resistance. Resistance to change makes it difficult for companies to dispel public doubts, which arise mainly from the fear of losing their jobs (Singh et al., 2012). In addressing these issues, readiness for change reduces knowledge lag and disruption, as well as negative attitudes or passive resistance.

Therefore, these presented risks should not be seen as a necessary cause of problems, but rather as types of problems that management can largely avoid or control. Top management can help these employees to promote change, i.e., communicate them and explain their impact to employees through training or various resources (Bertsch et al., 2009). When management understands the challenges associated with the current situation, it is ready to familiarize itself with the concepts that will be used to transform the organization from the current state to the future vision. By familiarizing the management team with the key concepts of change, they can understand the challenges they will encounter during the change process and the challenges associated with the future state. Therefore, change planning allows managers to communicate the necessity of change to employees. During the planned change process, employees can understand in advance the reasons for the change and anticipate the benefits of such planned changes, which will lead to a positive attitude towards organizational change and supportive behavior (Nery et al., 2019).

In organizations, change tends to focus on achieving one of three types of outcomes: individual change, group change, or system change (Sandelands, 2010). Choi and Ruona (2011) argue that a more constructive approach is to think about an individual's readiness for change rather than their tendency to resist change. This increases employee engagement and positively impacts their perceptions of change (Faupel and Süß, 2019). Evidence suggests that the use of attribution (behavioral explanation) can influence organizational performance, decision-making, economic decisions, and learning, and can therefore be a valuable factor during organizational change (Ten Have et al., 2019). Choi (2011) notes that change will be successful and sustainable only when individuals change their work behaviors to support the change. He argues that employees must be at the center of organizational change. By providing opportunities for employee engagement, organizations can increase employee engagement and motivation, increase job

satisfaction, and strengthen management-employee relationships, thereby creating a more inclusive, collaborative, and productive work environment (Susanto et al., 2023; Caballero and Guhao, 2020). Managers need to ensure that employees perceive their fair behavior when comparing themselves to their colleagues (Ten Have et al., 2019). However, it also argues that change efforts often fail because those leading the process do not pay enough attention to the support of those who can influence the results of the change. All this means that the effectiveness of change is usually related to the participation of all employees at all levels of the organization in assessing and diagnosing the necessary changes and formulating its goals and objectives.

There are opinions that in order to overcome the reluctance to change, it is necessary to include in the management of change such developable competencies and abilities as leadership and open communication among employees. Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, guide and inspire others to achieve specific goals (Cahyono et al., 2023). Strong leadership can create a clear vision and gain broad support from all members of the organization, turning resistance into a strong commitment to the transformation process (Steinmann et al., 2018). And proactive and visionary leadership can help organizations take the necessary actions to adapt to market changes, accelerate innovation and improve overall performance (García-Morales et al., 2012). Change management involves communicating with all members of the organization, involving employees in the change process in order to ensure their support and involvement (Errida and Lotfi, 2021). Organizations that are able to create effective communication strategies are able to clearly and convincingly convey the vision, goals, and change plans to all members of the organization (Jankelová & Joniaková, 2021). Good communication is not only an essential element but also the basis for the success of implementing change in organizations (Bucăța & Răzescu, 2017), which includes not only transmitting accurate messages, but also ensuring good understanding by the recipients of the messages (Arjang et al., 2023). By creating a more encouraging and collaborative work atmosphere, teamwork helps to reduce the harmful psychological effects of organizational change (Ellis, Tran, Pomare, Long, Churruca, Saba, & Braithwaite, 2023). And Martono et al. (2020) pointed out that employee collaboration is very important, in which teamwork is an approach that helps the organization perform better. Also, Ellis et al. (2023) illustrated the importance of teamwork for effective organizational change, as it can improve communication, promote readiness for change, and reduce fatigue by creating a collaborative and supportive work environment. Quines and Piñero (2022) argued that teamwork fosters a sense of community, which often leads to greater positive work values, such as a sense of responsibility and ownership of the work. Therefore, each team member must be motivated and engaged. Team members will feel comfortable and autonomous when they can make decisions and disagree without external intervention. Disagreement is expected and allowed as long as the team

processes it according to the norms established by the group.

Change includes anticipation, assessment, readiness to accept or initiate change, and the organization's ability to manage the impact of various changes, their positive and negative consequences (Videikienė, Šimaškienė (2013, p. 342). This means that organizational change must be more than just changes in technology or management systems, because they also require changes in culture (Lozano, 2013), in system elements (Lozano, 2020).

Often, the failure of a change intervention is due to the incompatibility between the value system of the change intervention and the members affected by the change (Burnes and Jackson, 2011). Material resources (land, budget, time, technical means, personnel, etc.) and intangible resources (management attention, brand, internal environment, employee motivation, etc.) need to be combined at each stage of change. These resources are the basis for the survival and development of an organization in creating a competitive advantage (Sadiq and Nosheen, 2020; Buckley and Graves, 2016). According to According to Edler et al. (2014), Jones (2013), Choi (2011) and Ruonos (2010), the main key to change lies in human resources.

Organizational structures are modified for change in such a way that employees can improve their job performance, for example, moving decision-making down the organization. There is no universal organizational structure that fits every organization. Even if two organizations operate in the same business and market, and are the same size, their organizational structure may differ due to obvious differences in business goals and strategies. Rothwell (2010) indicated that the beginning of any change is when the organizational development specialist must “enter the organization, create a platform for change work with the client, and establish agreements on work, methods, relationships, and exchanges” (Rothwell, 2010). Even if the change strategy is strong, it will practically fail if people do not have the skills to prepare for the implementation of the changes. It is necessary to create conditions for preparing for a faster, smoother and more successful implementation of the changes, to unite management and employees around a common vision.

In order to ensure the smooth implementation of change in the organization and reduce employee resistance, one of the most important stages is the CHANGE READINESS STAGE. The term “readiness” refers to an orientation to the future. Herold et al. (2019) found in their study that change orientation is positively related to successful organizational change initiatives. This stage lays the foundation for success and trust.

Scholars have interpreted change readiness in various ways. Some view readiness as a combination of the psychological and behavioral readiness of organizational members to implement organizational change initiatives (Weiner et al., 2008). Change readiness is one of many factors that determine the success or failure of change initiatives. Change aspirations initiated on this basis naturally emerge in agreements and therefore encounter less resistance. Change readiness is an important driver of successful change implementation (Armenakis et al., 2007). Identifying and implementing strategies to

increase employees' readiness for change in the workplace is crucial to preparing people to embrace change in business (Peng et al., 2020; Armenakis et al., 1993). An important aspect of readiness is the ability of senior management to lead and implement change (Stouten et al., 2018). Readiness for change reflects employees' beliefs and attitudes toward change in an organization (Shea et al., 2014). As a psychological variable, readiness for change encompasses more than belief in and understanding of change; it encompasses a set of thoughts and intentions related to a specific change effort (Bernerth, 2004). This understanding is related to change and management themes such as mission, leadership, organizational culture, vision for change, and resistance to change (Ten Have et al., 2019). Employees who demonstrate higher levels of readiness tend to exhibit collaborative behaviors and efforts that facilitate effective change implementation (Alolabi et al., 2021). But employees can feel neglected or undervalued, especially if changes are expected without proper readiness.

Readiness is considered a fundamental prerequisite for implementing and managing productive change (Bateh et al., 2013). Definitions describe change readiness as a psychological rather than a structural construct (Weiner et al., 2020). Shea et al. (2014) describe change readiness as a commitment to change and the success of change, both of which are expressed in the desire or power to change, as well as a shared belief in the organization's ability to implement this change. Readiness for change is understood as a core competency that helps to cope with constantly changing external and internal conditions (Vakola, 2013, p. 103). Readiness for change is more related to a state than a personality trait (Choi, 2011) and depends on the influence of content (specific change initiative), context (environment, organizational capacity), process (change implementation), and participants (organizational members) (Holt et al., 2007). Wang et al. (2020) argue that insufficient readiness leads to unsuccessful organizational changes. The perception and application of change itself, as an ongoing process, requires that organizations explain to employees the meaning of change and its management.

An organization's readiness for change is usually also related to sustainable organizational performance (Faulks, 2021). Deteriorating performance raises questions that need to be assessed.

Assessing an organization's readiness for change is a stage-diagnostic exercise (Stouten et al., 2018). According to researchers, readiness for change emphasizes acceptance, commitment, and support for change (Soenen et al., 2017). When preparedness is properly created, it can reflect the collective determination of organizational members to commit to implementing change (Weiner, 2009). Thus, when employees are readiness, committed, and supportive of change, implementation tends to be smooth and effective (Alolabi et al., 2021). The achievement of planned changes depends on the participation of individuals at different organizational levels (Woiceshyn et al., 2020). Readiness is equally important for different types of change (Weiner et al., 2020). Therefore, planning

changes during the readiness phase, involving different levels of the organization and their perspectives, could help companies better overcome resistance to change and integrate their efforts more holistically, including technological, managerial, governance, and human change.

Employee learning helps to identify policies and strategies that can facilitate the successful implementation of change (Rupcic, 2019). Most employees exhibit behaviors that are the result of learning, consciously or unconsciously, through the influence of others. In organizations, employees copy the behavior of others (e.g., their managers, colleagues, and others). Change planners can unconsciously influence organizational members to behave in a certain way by subtly praising the desired behavior or by demonstrating it themselves. This identifies change-supportive behavior as one of the key outcomes likely to emerge from individual employees' readiness for change (Kim, Hornung, & Rousseau, 2011), which they perform to actively participate in, facilitate, and contribute to planned organizationally initiated changes" (2011: 1665). As an organization experiences a period of equilibrium, interdependence between job roles, departments, processes, technologies, customers, and suppliers increases, ideologies that dictate the best way to operate become increasingly accepted, and the fear of losing the benefits associated with the status quo strengthens resistance to change.

Companies around the world, with experienced and trained employees, are looking to AI to solve many of their problems (Liu et al., 2020). AI allows for the automation of some communication, but requires explicit algorithms and monitoring (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). AI further improves reasoning skills, the ability to understand context, improves communication and self-organization, and develops individuals' creative thinking skills (Eriksson et al., 2020).

The increased speed of digital innovation has prompted companies to start changing their organizational structure to be more flexible and innovative in order to respond quickly to market changes (Vial, 2019). For employees, digital tools provide access to information and allow them to develop knowledge-based approaches to manage various uncertainties and contingencies (Spraggon & Bodolica, 2018). Digital technologies can change people's values, expectations and needs, which in turn drives greater digital diffusion (Matt et al., 2019). As a result, digitally transformed companies that adopt flexible working arrangements and implement team and network structures can deliver positive employee outcomes (Meske and Junglas, 2020). Technology helps people understand the impact of change, the level of commitment to take, the required actions and ensure that the right technologies are deployed (Matthysen and Harris, 2018). As the capabilities of organizations do not keep pace with the rapid development of technology, it has become a challenge for organizations to promote both technological and non-technological aspects of digitalisation (Yeow et al., 2018). Information technology not only facilitates the exchange of information, but is also the key to innovation and transformation in various aspects of human life in

this digital age (Harahap, Ausat et al., 2023), using it to collect, store, process, transmit and analyze data and information (Wahyoedi et al., 2023), used for business and personal purposes, and communication networks such as the Internet, which connect devices and people around the world (Prastyaningtyas et al., 2023). It allows for the rapid storage and access of large amounts of data, real-time communication with individuals in different locations, and the automation of various business processes and administrative tasks (Sutrisno, Kuraesin et al., 2023). Therefore, Information Technology needs to be integrated into the entire process of readiness for change.

In summary, it can be stated that employees' readiness for change is determined by their personal beliefs: that changes are necessary, that they are capable of successfully implementing changes; that changes will have positive results for the work/role. Therefore, proper readiness for change in the preparatory stage can reduce or eliminate resistance to change in the organization. Videikienė and Šimaškieienė (2014) identified the reasons why readiness for change can be difficult: management inflexibility; lack of initiative and resources; weak leadership of the leader; hasty, inconsistent implementation of changes; obstacles of a socio-psychological nature (psychological microclimate of employees - emotional state, collective mood, satisfaction or opposition to the current situation, interpersonal relationships; fear of change; external socio-psychological atmosphere - unsuccessful examples of other organizations, political instability); technological

deficiency. And inertia can be an important obstacle to change.

Various studies have shown that how employees experience change depends on a multitude of factors, from employee-management relationships and personality traits to the level of participation in decision-making and perceptions of job security, among other factors (Amarantou et al., 2018). This means that for the change management process to be successful, employees must be informed, supported and empowered to accept and support the change. In the readiness phase, managers must focus on helping employees recognize and understand the need for change. Providing personal narratives and feedback to employees influences the extent to which they adjust their perspective-taking, which significantly reduces the level of egocentric bias they demonstrate (Damen et al., 2021). They raise awareness of the various challenges and/or problems they face and that cause dissatisfaction with the current situation. In many organizations, dissenters are marginalized, silenced or even fired, which deprives the organization of valuable, albeit unpopular, service. (Ten Have et al., 2019). Gaining support from employees who will help implement the changes can remove resistance.

The readiness for change phase is divided into separate steps with the aim of ensuring that employees better understand the information received about the planned changes and their application in practice, in order to ensure successful application at work after the readiness have been made (Fig. 2).

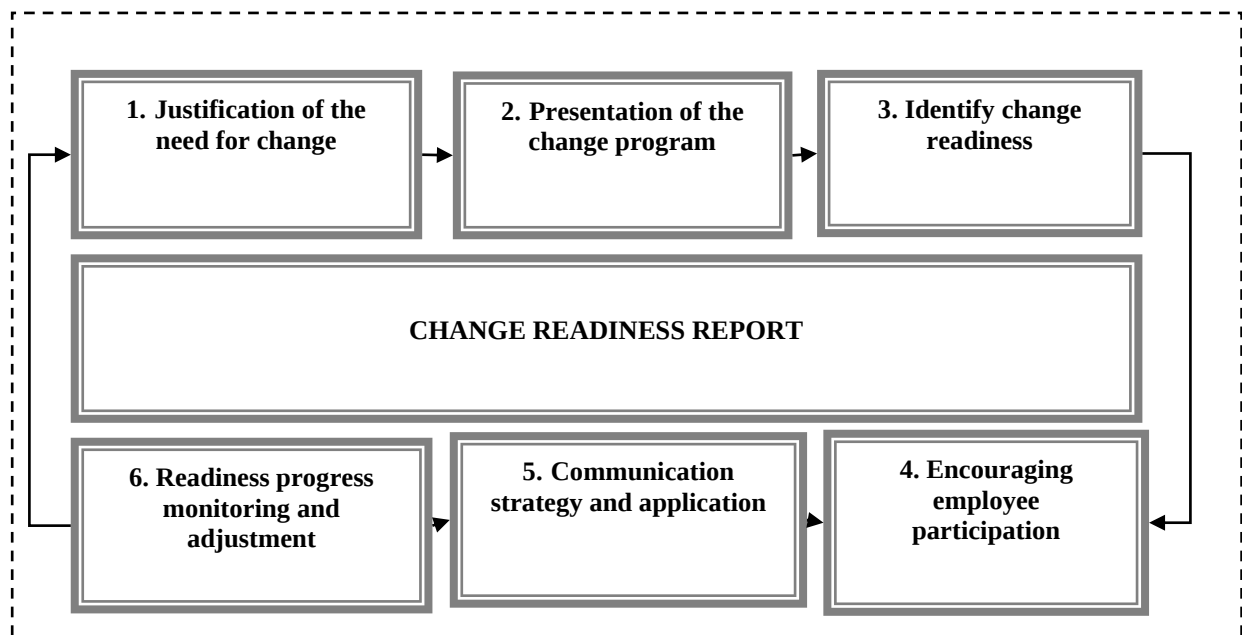


Fig. 2. Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change

The Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change includes six steps (Fig. 2), which are arranged in a logical sequence to ensure a smooth identification of problems at each step.

The first step readiness for change is **JUSTIFICATION OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE**. This focuses employees' attention on a meaningful perception of the changes and their understanding of the changes in

the context of the processes taking place in the company. This step creates the basis for change – the development of arguments. This diagnoses the current situation related to existing and/or future problems and seeks recognition of the need for change.

The second step, **PRESENTATION OF THE CHANGE PROGRAM**, presents the organization's situation and its vision for the future. This step should be

broader than the presentation and focus on making the change plan understandable and relevant to employees at all levels. Announcing a specific change program for the implementation of the organization's plans guarantees that members of the organization will adapt to the new changes (Kelly et al., 2017). Change programs are presented differently to different groups - managers, engineers, employees, etc. The main reason is to avoid confusion, skepticism and resistance. Management must provide the necessary HR needs for change activities.

In the third step, **IDENTIFY CHANGE READINESS**. Identify skill gaps or learning needs. To assess readiness, a combination of quantitative tools and qualitative insights is needed: conduct surveys, interviews and readiness checklists. Change is prioritized by factors such as skill shortages, new technologies, safety measures, etc. Special training is offered to improve skills related to organizational change and development. When learning in the organization, employees proactively develop and strengthen their abilities and existing knowledge resources and also use such knowledge to increase organizational progress and productivity (Tan and Olaore, 2021). Learning enables an organization to understand the dynamic nature of the business environment, interact with the market, and assess important changes occurring in the business (Beus et al., 2020). Resource allocation is not just a technical issue – it reflects the organization's commitment, priorities, and strategic readiness for change. The key challenge is to understand potential resistance points and the ability to change.

In the fourth step, **ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION**, management must encourage employees to embrace change in the organization. Employee attitudes toward change need to be addressed. Positive employees believe that change will have a positive impact on them and the organization as a whole (Nordin, 2011). Failure in the attempt can be attributed to the organization's failure to create a positive culture of change, which is essential to prepare the organization's stakeholders for change (Douglas et al., 2017).

The fifth step, **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND APPLICATION**, is to develop and refine a communication strategy. It is necessary to create opportunities for mutual feedback and questions. Employees may not accept changes due to their perception of their impact on the work environment (Qiao et al., 2021). It is the responsibility of management to involve employees in the change process and inform them about various changes within and outside the organization (Roos and Nilsson, 2020). Formal and informal communication is used to reduce employee resistance.

The sixth step uses **READINESS PROGRESS MONITORING AND ADJUSTMENT**. This step assesses the results of employees (individuals and groups) readiness for change. People change refers to "changes in the attitudes, expectations, perceptions, and behaviors of an individual or group" (Robbins et al., 2018, p. 213). Groups that balance task and relationship aspects are more likely to complete their projects on time than groups that meet only for business and no relationships (Gorse & Emmitt, 2009). This step requires

greater consideration of the relationship between the ability to change and the success or failure of the change programs themselves.

The **CHANGE READINESS REPORT** provides data on each entity from which a structured summary of the organization's progress in preparing for change can be obtained, focusing on obtaining information about the readiness of employees, managers, systems and structures to implement the intended (planned) changes. The reports recommend changes to the initial readiness plan. The employee sentiment analysis provides their awareness, confidence, concerns, expectations, etc. The Change Readiness Report allows managers to make informed decisions about further actions, identify and manage risks before implementing changes. The report aims to ensure accountability and transparency for each participant throughout the change process.

These steps are specifically designed to prepare the human side of the organization, reduce their resistance, and ensure awareness, self-confidence, and commitment to the organization.

Ensure a smooth transition to the implementation phase To successfully move from one step to the next, organizations must focus on three key aspects of change: the structural, technological, and human resources sides of the organization. Completing each step with a tangible result increases employee commitment and understanding of the change management process, while ensuring stakeholder alignment.

While this model can be useful in helping organizational members demonstrate the desired behaviors required for change readiness, caution is warranted. For example, when assessing whether previously implemented change readiness led to desired behavioral changes in a team (or department), it is essential to accurately and impartially measure these employee behaviors in order to conduct a valid analysis. When organizational readiness is high, members are more likely to initiate change, exert more effort, demonstrate greater persistence, and cooperate more, which generally leads to more effective implementation of the proposed change (Weiner, Lewis, Linnan, 2009). Conversely, when organizational readiness is low, members are more likely to view change as undesirable and subsequently avoid or even resist planning efforts and participating in the change process. However, change planners may inadvertently direct employee behavior in a way that achieves desired outcomes, thereby impeding the validity of their analysis.

Methodology.

Considering the purpose of the study and the size of the organization, an exploratory quantitative study was chosen - a questionnaire survey.

Research instrument: questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared after a detailed literature review and divided into 6 blocks (6 steps) according to the Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change (Figure 2): justification of the need for change; presentation of the change program; *identification of readiness*; *promotion of employee participation*; *communication strategy and application*; *monitoring and adjustment of the readiness process*. These blocks contain 5 statements each so that the data obtained show the current state of the

organization's change readiness. The statements are short, simple and unambiguous. And the seventh block notes the demographic data of the respondents.

Research sample: non-probability sampling - targeted group formation, which allows you to select specific groups working in the area necessary for the study.

Respondents: 60 employees of the organization. All respondents work in four main departments: administration, collection, region, service provision. Small-scale scientific research usually has several (2-5) main tasks, each of which reflects the idea of the scientific work, reveals the research aspect (Kardelis, 2017).

A quantitative study (60 respondents) was conducted at one waste management center in Lithuania. The study period was March–July 2024. The study was anonymous.

The results obtained during the study were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-22). Descriptive statistics as an analytical process helps researchers illustrate and summarize the study.

Research Results.

According to the Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change (Figure 2), the first step JUSTIFICATION OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE helps to set realistic operational goals and define the desired results of the changes, directing time, budget and employees to where they are most needed for operational improvement. The research results obtained (Table 2) help to confirm whether the identified gaps reflect real daily challenges.

Table 1. JUSTIFICATION OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE.

Table 1. Justification of the need for change (N-60)

I. JUSTIFICATION OF THE NEED FOR CHANGE	Administration	Toll Department	Landfill Department	Service Department	Overall Average
1. Reasons for changes are identified	3.00	3.22	3.11	3.83	3.36
2. Technology deficiencies are revealed	3.57	3.44	2.67	3.5	3.3
3. Customer complaints are registered	2.71	3.33	3.22	3.83	3.35
4. Operational deficiencies are analyzed	2.86	2.78	2.78	3.25	2.95
5. Information about problems is analyzed	3.0	3.22	3.22	3.5	3.27

The worst situation is with the analysis of operational gaps - 2.95. These data reveal specific areas where current processes, technologies (tools) or behavior are not sufficiently effective. Based on the results of the gap analysis, a change readiness program is formed and readiness for these changes is identified.

In the second step, the PRESENTATION OF THE CHANGE PROGRAM. In order to successfully

implement changes, it is very important to understand the relevance of the change program and its compatibility with the desired results understandable to all change participants. Inconsistency of information can lead to conflicting priorities and reduce the credibility of the change. Table 2. PRESENTATION OF THE CHANGE PROGRAM.

Table 2. Presentation of the change program (N-60)

II. PRESENTATION OF THE CHANGE PROGRAM	Administration	Toll Department	Landfill Department	Service Department	Overall Average
1. Every change has a plan	3.43	3.22	3.33	3.33	3.32
2. Change implementation objectives are documented	3.57	3.11	3.22	3.58	3.38
3. Change manager is known	3.14	3.44	3.0	3.67	3.35
4. An appropriate change period is planned	3.00	3.22	2.89	3.33	3.14
5. Change plan is aligned with the control system	2.57	3.67	2.9	3.83	3.32

According to the presented research data, Table 2 contains questions about the appropriateness of the change period (2.89). Time and budget need to be allocated according to the real progress of the changes and the expected results of the activities with the participation of employees - participants in the change process. Their participation increases the acceptance of

changes and reduces resistance, because employees see that their contribution is reflected in the plan. Employees who work directly in the change process often suggest simpler, faster or more economical methods. Managers need to adapt change plans to local realities, deadlines and employee performance capabilities. Another problem in the control system that is not aligned with the change

plan: (2.57 and 2.90). Therefore, the change plan must be measurable and the expected progress tracked at any stage of implementation - it must have an appropriate structure and accountability. The progress of the changes can be measured not only in numbers but also in communication models and from the perspective of

employees. In the third step, IDENTIFY CHANGE READINESS, it is necessary to learn about the readiness for change before starting any change initiative. This reveals specific areas where current processes, tools or behaviors are not effective enough.

Table 3. Identify change readiness (N-60)

III.IDENTIFY CHANGE READINESS	Administration	Toll Department	Landfill Department	Service Department	Overall Average
1. Methods of implementing the changes are planned	3.00	3.00	2.70	2.92	2.91
2. Qualification requirements for implementing the changes are presented	2.57	2.38	2.53	2.92	2.60
3. Learning (development) methods are determined	3.00	2.73	2.63	2.58	2.56
4. Changes in work processes are introduced	3.00	2.33	2.11	3.17	2.74
5. Changes in resource allocation are explained	3.00	2.38	2.60	2.58	2.64

The obtained research data revealed (Table 3) that the methods (methods) of implementing changes are not used sufficiently (2.70 and 2.92). It is necessary to ensure retraining and upgrading of qualifications of employees (2.38-2.92). Without proper training (2.56-2.73), it may be difficult for employees to use new tools (materials, tools, etc.) or comply with new requirements. The allocation of resources in the organization is not transparent and understandable (2.38-2.60). The consequences of these shortcomings in the organization can be serious - both short-term and long-term. Before starting organizational changes, it is necessary to select a variety of methods (methods) of implementing changes to

adapt them to practical decisions. It is necessary to review the qualification requirements for employees so that there are no difficulties in the process of implementing changes, since without learning new skills or behavior, employees may return to their old habits. It is extremely important to make the allocation of resources transparent and understandable in any organizational change process.

The fourth step, ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION, assesses the level of employee engagement. This is related to the human side of change – where most change initiatives either succeed or fail.

Table 4. Encouraging employee participation (N-60)

IV.ENCOURAGING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION	Administration	Toll Department	Landfill Department	Service Department	Overall Average
1. Involving employees in change planning	3.71	3.67	3.11	3.58	3.52
2. Ideas for change are encouraged	3.43	3.78	3.00	3.25	3.37
3. Monetary incentives are applied	3.14	2.78	3.00	2.75	2.92
4. Non-monetary incentives are applied	3.43	3.44	2.78	3.08	3.18
5. Motivation based on contribution to results	3.14	3,56	2.89	3.33	3.23

According to the data presented in Table 4, we see that the worst situation is due to the inappropriate application of motivational measures to implement the planned changes (2.75-3.0). Insufficient monetary incentives for the implementation of changes can cause significant organizational, psychological and performance-related problems, especially if employees expect tangible rewards for their efforts, adaptation or risk-taking. If employees do not see personal or financial

benefits, they may resist new behavior or procedures - even passively. Poor or inconsistent employee motivation during changes creates many risks, the elimination of which can cost a lot of resources, especially time. Therefore, it is necessary to link performance results to measurable indicators.

Motivation achieved by employees creates trust in the changes, which helps to get better feedback and avoid misunderstandings when implementing changes.

The fifth step is to check the COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND APPLICATION. This step builds employee trust and engagement in the changes being implemented.

Table 5. Communication strategy and application (N-60)

V.COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND APPLICATION	Administration	Toll Department	Landfill Department	Service Department	Overall Average
1. Inform about the content of the change process	3.00	3.78	2.89	3.50	3.29
2. Inform about the change process in detail	3.70	3.70	3.78	2.86	3.51
3. Indicate interim results of the change	3.33	3.78	2.78	2.75	3.16
4. Employees are invited to cooperate	3.11	3.78	3.00	2.71	3.15
5. Respond to the lack of information	3.00	4.00	3.11	3.67	3.45

According to the data presented (Table 5), minor shortcomings in the communication strategy are visible. It is necessary to combine strategic thinking with practical implementation. Also, use recognizable language in discussions – not only company terms but also technical jargon. The goal of this effective communication strategy is to transfer information from one person to another with as little distortion as possible. Therefore, there should be no manipulation, which

usually involves lies or tricks in order to agree with a certain point of view.

Step Six, MONITORING AND ADJUSTING THE PROGRESS OF READINESS, is one of the most important and relevant in this process. Monitoring the progress of employees in preparing for change – and adjusting their actions – is a structured and essential part of managing change readiness.

Table 6. Readiness progress monitoring and adjustment (N-60)

VI. READINESS PROGRESS MONITORING AND ADJUSTMENT	Administration	Toll Department	Landfill Department	Service Department	Overall Average
1. Activity change is recorded	3.14	2.78	2.44	3.25	2.90
2. Changes in abilities and skills are observed	2.71	2.78	2.90	3.25	2.91
3. Changes in perception are visible	3.14	2.56	2.33	2.92	2.73
4. Control system is in place	2.86	2.67	2.44	3.00	2.74
5. Program adjustment is being made	2.71	2.22	2.44	2.42	2.45

The research data (Table 6) show that this step has the most problematic questions that managers have and can answer. Managers are responsible for preparing for change and managing resistance. Preparing for change is not only technical but also emotional. Managers must organize all these activities, often in different teams (departments). Convincing employees to prepare for change aims to change their behavior, but it must be based on the weight of logic and facts, supported by trusting relationships between team members. Monitoring is most effective when there is a dialogue, and not just top-down reporting. Therefore, it is necessary to consider

the different concerns and roles of change participants. Often, adjusting the actions of one department affects other departments. But constant adjustments can be unnerving for employees if they are not well explained. Therefore, managers must ensure that the implementation of changes corresponds to reality and the intended goals.

The cyclical model of preparing for change is completed by preparing a CHANGE READINESS REPORT. The report is structured - with variable indicators selected to confirm progress. The data obtained are synthesized in Table 8 which shows the discrepancies at each step (from 1 to 6) and by selected sections.

Table 7. Change readiness report (N-60)

No.	Steps according to the Model	Administration	Toll Department	Landfill Department	Service Department	Overall Average
1.	Justification of the need for change	3.03	3.20	3.00	3.58	3.20
2.	Presentation of the change program	3.14	3.33	3.07	3.55	3.27
3.	Identify change readiness	2.95	2.56	2.51	2.83	2.71
4.	Encouraging employee participation	3.37	3.45	2.96	3.20	3.25
5.	Communication strategy and application	3.22	3.81	3.11	3.10	3.31
6.	Readiness progress monitoring and adjustment	2.91	2.60	2.51	2.97	2.75

The data presented in the report (Table 7) shows that the most problems are in the second step - determining readiness for change (2.71) and in the sixth step - monitoring and adjusting the progress of readiness (2.75). If there are problems with employee readiness for change, this means that there is a lack of employee understanding, self-confidence, their motivation and involvement in the changes. Employees feel unprepared for change, frustrated or anxious. The organization does not define what success looks like at each stage of change. Problems related to MONITORING AND ADJUSTING THE PROGRESS OF CHANGE READINESS (2.51-2.91) often arise from an unclear management structure, insufficiently clear data or lack of management involvement. It is recommended to use simple reporting summaries or progress monitoring tools to get real-time updates. Do not forget to empower responsible managers to take responsibility for their departments, review employee roles, various systems and processes. All identified problems can be eliminated by starting the change readiness process again - from the first step until the situation reaches the desired level. Even after the change program ends, the CHANGE READINESS REPORT retains its informational value, as it becomes part of the institution's knowledge base.

Summarizing the results of this research, it can be stated that the Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change must be repeated until the situation changes and employees are ready to start implementing the changes. Each change process creates new roles and responsibilities that affect the way employees work (method). The success of the changes being implemented in this organization depends not only on the proper identification readiness for change, employee encouragement and timely information (communication strategy) about the changes planned in the organization, but also on the ability to monitor the progress of changes - changing performance achievements. Continuous employee development also requires continuous changes that need to be managed effectively. This creates a new paradigm for incorporating and coordinating organizational change.

Conclusions

Proper readiness for significant changes is intended to facilitate faster, smoother and more successful implementation of changes and to ensure that employees are properly trained and have the necessary skills to work with new knowledge, technologies and processes. Readiness for change is related to the prevailing perception of employees, their willingness to accept the proposed change efforts, taking into account their readiness to abandon old norms, qualification problems, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Good readiness for the implementation of changes can help mitigate potential risks, avoid operational disruptions and ensure that employees are adequately prepared for future changes. It helps to manage expectations, solve problems and inform everyone during the change process.

Readiness for change alone will not make the change successful if the organization does not have the capacity to make the change happen. The change manager must play a key role in all this activity. He or she (the manager) is responsible for the process of optimizing professional service (product) performance, thematic selection of employees and the overall communication strategy. To fully exploit this opportunity, management must have planned carefully enough in advance to clearly define the main outline of the proposals and to find answers to the main questions encountered during this preparatory phase. In addition, management must resolve any disagreements in advance so that they have a strong image when the announcement is made. In cases where there are many proposed changes, prioritize them according to their urgency, importance and relevance to strategic objectives. At the same time, consider the potential benefits, risks and dependencies associated with each change. This allows for efficient allocation of resources and ensures that critical changes are implemented promptly. Effective communication is essential for successful readiness for change. Employees need clear information about the reasons for the changes, the objectives of the change program, the expected actions and results, and the potential impact on the organization, individuals or departments. It is necessary to ensure that communication channels are open,

transparent and timely. It is essential to create a structured and well-documented change control process that defines the actions, roles, and responsibilities related to change management.

Based on the analysis of scientific literature and practical research, the Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change has been developed for preparing for significant changes. The Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change includes six steps: justification of the need for change; presentation of the change program; identification of change readiness; promotion of employee participation; communication strategy and application; monitoring and adjustment of the readiness process. All these steps are connected to a common data analysis system and a change readiness report, with the help of which the progress of change readiness is monitored and recorded. The selected steps are arranged in a logical sequence in order to smoothly identify and eliminate problems at each step to the required selected level. The change readiness report is necessary and necessary to compare the actual implementation stages, deadlines and resource use with the initial change program.

After verifying the created change readiness tool – the Cyclical Model of Readiness for Change – in a quantitative study, the research data obtained can provide key recommendations for changing the problematic situation in the organization. The goals of the change program must be justified and understandable to all employees. To identify employee readiness for change, feedback from stakeholders (participants) is analyzed and lessons learned from previous change initiatives (programs) are included. Employee motivation opportunities and a development culture in the organization should be improved - empowerment-related behavior should be reinforced with appropriate reward mechanisms. Apply a continuous improvement mindset to improve change management processes and increase their effectiveness over time. Based on the decisions and skills of managers, adjust the communication strategy, taking into account the nature of the changes and the needs of employees. Proper monitoring and documentation of activities can facilitate accountability, provide historical context, and help transfer new knowledge. It is very necessary to monitor the changes implemented under the program to assess their effectiveness and ensure the achievement of the desired results. It is essential to regularly review and analyze the results of the change process with the change participants to identify opportunities for improvement and make necessary adjustments. The change readiness report should serve as a reference for future change initiatives to avoid repeating mistakes. By analyzing past experiences and applying the new knowledge and skills acquired, managers can pinpoint areas for improvement, improve processes, avoid employee resistance, promote best practices, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

The change readiness phase is essential for the successful implementation of change, as it helps to reduce operational risks, employee resistance to change, ensure appropriate employee development, and improve communication at the individual and team levels. By following the practice of applying the developed model, it is possible to improve the change readiness phase and increase the likelihood of successful and well-implemented changes in the organization.

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