LESSON 2

Change Management

Quick Write

What were some of the changes that affected the military during General Holm's career?

Learn About

- what causes change in organizations
- two metaphors for the change process
- handling resistance to change

THE AIR FORCE and the rest of the US military have not always reflected the makeup of the American population. For decades after the Civil War, African-Americans were not allowed to hold officer positions, and women were not allowed to serve at all. The attitudes of many political and military leaders began to change during World War II when both African-Americans and women showed they could serve as effectively as Caucasian men. In a first step, President Harry S. Truman ordered the military to racially integrate in 1948.

Meanwhile women were still restricted in their ability to serve. But the trail for their full participation would be blazed by pioneers like Major General Jeanne M. Holm, the Air Force's first female officer of flag rank.

Jeanne Marjorie Holm was born in 1921 and enlisted in the Army as soon as Congress established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) in 1942. She attended Officer Candidate School in 1943 and received a commission as "third officer," the WAAC equivalent of second lieutenant. She commanded the Women's Army Corps (WAC) Training Center at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and then a WAC Hospital Company in West Virginia. She left active duty in 1946 to attend Lewis and Clark College in Oregon.

She was recalled to active duty during the Berlin Crisis of 1948. The following year she transferred to the Air Force, where she served as assistant director of plans and operations. Later she was a war plans officer during the Berlin Airlift and the beginning of the Korean War.

In 1952, she became the first woman to attend the Air Command and Staff School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. She then held a series of personnel positions at Headquarters US Air Force and at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) headquarters in Naples, Italy.

By 1965, fewer than 8,000 women were serving in the Air Force. Women were not allowed to serve in many of the positions they had excelled in during World War II. The Air Force was depriving itself of the talent of tens of thousands of qualified, eligible, and skilled women officers, warrant officers, and enlisted Airmen.

To help remedy this situation, the Air Force turned to then-Colonel Holm in November 1965. She was appointed Director, Women in the Air Force and extended in that position twice. During her tenure, policies regarding women were updated, and the number of women in the Air Force more than doubled. Many new roles were opened up to women, and their uniforms were modernized. She pushed Air Force ROTC to accept women and helped open the doors of the Air Force Academy to women. She made the Air Force the first service in which a woman commanded a mixed male and female unit. Women were soon allowed to serve in almost all but combat positions—a rule that would change in the 1990s. At the end of 2017, 21 percent of officers and 19.6 percent of enlisted Airmen were women.

Vocabulary

- disruption
- change agents
- consultant
- calm-waters metaphor
- white-water rapids metaphor
- incentives

Background photo credit: Staff Sgt. Benjamin Rojek/Courtesy US Air Force

Major General Jeanne M. Holm, the Air Force's first woman general

Courtesy US Air Force

Colonel Holm was promoted to brigadier general in 1971, the first woman appointed to this rank in the Air Force. In 1973, she was promoted to major general, becoming the first woman appointed to that rank in all the US armed forces. During her career she was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

After her retirement, General Holm became a special assistant for women's issues under President Gerald Ford. She also served in the Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan administrations.

The Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accessions and Citizen Development, of which Air Force JROTC Headquarters is a part, was named after her in 2008. General Holm passed away in 2010.

What Causes Change in Organizations

It's a dynamic world. Change is constant. The weather changes, the economy changes, and people's health changes. The same is true for organizations—their environment changes, the market changes, jobs change, and employees and managers change.

For many people, however, change is difficult. They react to it negatively regardless of whether it is "good" or "bad." Humans like to feel comfortable in their situation and surroundings, and when those change, their comfort level drops. Employees and subordinates going through change can express the entire range of negative emotions—including fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration.

As a manager, you are not immune from these emotions. Yet you must understand the changes affecting your organization and help lead your subordinates through them. Your job, as well as your organization's ability to survive and prosper, depends on how well you can do this. It can be one of a manager's biggest challenges.

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Both outside and inside forces cause organizations to change. A successful manager must be familiar with where these forces originate and how they affect the organization.

Forces Outside the Organization

For businesses, and even for many nonprofit organizations, the market they operate in is a significant source of change. People's tastes change, they move from one state to another, and their financial well-being improves or declines. The products they buy and the services they use change, too. New competitors spring up with new products and new ways of doing things that can make an established company's products and services obsolete overnight.

This hints at the significant role that technology plays in change. The development of the Internet and e-commerce has sent tidal waves of change crashing through the economy. This is often called disruption—*an upending of the existing economic order.* The results have positively affected some organizations, but negatively affected others.

Apple's iPod caused sales of Sony's CD player to plummet and rocked the music industry.
Ralph Gillen/Shutterstock

When Apple, Inc., introduced the iPod in 2001, sales of Sony Corporation's Walkman CD player began to plummet. The shift to digital music rocked the music industry as listeners began to buy single songs instead of entire albums. Apple's introduction of the iPhone a few years later—with its ability to access the Web as well as play music and video—rendered Nokia's and BlackBerry's popular mobile phones out of date. The changes wrought by the iPhone and other smartphones are still rippling across the planet.

Economic changes affect all types of organizations as well. The economy's health determines federal, state, and local governments' tax revenues. It affects business profits and donations to nonprofit organizations, both of which influence job creation and charitable services. The number of jobs the economy creates determines how much money people have to spend.

Political forces also have an impact. Organizations that fall into political disfavor can find themselves struggling to survive. Politicians can harm or benefit an organization's well-being by the taxes and fines they levy—or the tax relief they grant. New environmental or health laws can seriously hamper an existing business's operations.

The fates of the coal-mining and tobacco industries are good examples of this. Both once benefited from government support and now are struggling under new laws aimed at limiting their operations. Hundreds of thousands of employees have been affected. At the same time, public health has improved as people have stopped smoking and the move away from coal has led to cleaner air.

It's not hard to see how outside forces can affect your JROTC unit. Technology has changed how units operate and communicate with headquarters. Economic forces buffet host schools, increasing or diminishing their budgets. Congress may increase or cut the military budget, and with it the money for JROTC programs. Political and social changes, such as new antidiscrimination regulations, can affect everything the Defense Department, the military services, and JROTC do. The politics and personalities of your school board, administration, principal, and faculty are also outside influences on your unit.

Forces Inside the Organization

Businesses and organizations change as a result of forces inside the organization as well. Managers and employees come and go. Changes in senior leadership often result in policy changes. New equipment and processes can lead to a reorganization of the workplace, changes in job assignments, creation of new jobs, and loss of old ones.

For example, until word-processing computers began entering the workplace in the 1980s, companies and organizations employed large numbers of typists. These highly skilled workers, usually women, would type out documents written by others. Today there are few typewriters or typists. Almost everyone types his or her own documents on a desktop or laptop computer—or on a mobile device.

Your JROTC unit changes when you get a new SASI or ASI, when new leaders are appointed, and as students come and go from the program. Policy changes at headquarters may also affect how your unit operates.

Change Agents

In order for organizations to successfully navigate through changes, they must be managed by people who understand and support the changes. These individuals are called change agents—*people who assume responsibility for launching or managing change in an organization*. Without such careful and committed management, changes have little likelihood of success.

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Any manager can be a change agent, but a change agent doesn't have to be a manager. It can be any key person in an organization who is in a position to guide and influence others. Sometimes subordinates can be more effective than higher-ups at getting their peers to buy in to change.

A change agent might be a staff member whose job it is to consult with the managers and others who are implementing change. He or she might also be an outside consultant. A consultant is *an individual from outside the organization brought in by management to advise the organization in a specific area of expertise*. The advantage of consultants is they often bring new ideas and fresh thinking that depart from the way the organization has always done things. The disadvantage is consultants may not fully understand the organization's culture, procedures, and personnel. Longtime employees may resent their presence.

Two Metaphors for the Change Process

Change has become such a normal part of today's world that the manner in which researchers view the change process has itself changed. The model most experts used from the 1950s to the early 1970s was the calm-waters metaphor—*the view that change for most organizations is a mere distraction in an otherwise routine journey.* The more recent view is the white-water rapids metaphor—*the view that change is a continuing rough raft ride through turbulent waters.*

The Calm-Waters Metaphor

The calm-waters metaphor was based on the ideas of pioneering social psychologist Kurt Lewin, who lived from 1890 to 1947. In this metaphor, the organization is like a ship crossing the ocean. Everybody from the captain on down knows where the ship is going and what's in store. Change is simply some rough weather the ship must pass through on its routine trip.

Lewin held that change is a three-step process:

1. **The *unfreezing* stage**—The organization must realize that old practices no longer work and need replacing. In this stage, managers and change agents must help organization members understand the need for change and offer support and encouragement as they face the change process together.
2. **The *moving* stage**—The organization decides where it is going and implements the change. In this stage, managers and change agents develop the new vision for the organization and communicate it to members. The organization then takes steps to implement the vision. This may involve reorganization, new jobs and roles, and retraining members. Those leading the change also look to weaken or eliminate those forces that resist the needed change.
3. **The *refreezing* stage**—The organization strengthens policies, procedures, and incentives—*rewards or punishments*—that support and reinforce the change. This is to prevent sliding back to the old methods. Managers and change agents seek to reward members moving in the right direction.

A simplified example of this kind of predictable and easily managed change might be a JROTC unit whose high school undergoes remodeling. The unit is moved from its normal location for a year or more, and must make do with a temporary arrangement. When the remodeling is completed, however, the unit moves into new rooms and things resume, but in a new "normal" manner—with changes implemented as the new facilities demand.

The White-Water Rapids Metaphor

Since the early 1970s, however, it's been hard to argue that businesses and organizations are simply embarked on routine ocean voyages with the occasional tempest. Experts have turned instead to the white-water rapids metaphor, which likens change to a ride down a turbulent river. In this metaphor, change is constant and unpredictable. There's no telling when the next change will come or how long it will last. Not only that, but the rules of the game are constantly changing, too. Managers find themselves dealing with constant disruption, in which success might consist of simply staying afloat.

Consider, for example, the challenges local department stores have faced in recent decades. Right through the 1960s, such stores occupied large, often multistory buildings in city centers. A customer might spend all day in the store on a shopping trip, even eating lunch at the store's tearoom.

But such stores have been obsolete for decades. First, people started moving out of the city to the suburbs. They didn't go downtown to shop anymore. Instead they went to shopping malls. The department stores had to follow their customers. They became the "anchor stores" of large suburban malls that also featured large numbers of specialty shops and food courts. Instead of spending a day in the department store, people might spend a day at the mall—shopping at several different stores. Department stores found it harder and harder to compete with the small specialty stores, which could change their inventory and pricing faster. The success of large discount chains selling cheaper goods also ate into the department stores' revenues.

When people moved out of the city to the suburbs, large department stores had to follow. They became anchor stores in suburban malls.
Sundry Photography/Shutterstock

This closed store in Phoenix, Arizona, shows the sad reality of what has become of many department stores that once thrived.
tishomir/Shutterstock

Local department stores found themselves saddled with real estate and leases that no longer made economic sense. More and more either went out of business or were bought by large, national companies. With the coming of the Internet came Amazon.com and other online retailers. Suddenly customers could shop at home without ever having to walk into a store. Fewer and fewer people are doing their shopping at the mall. Malls across the country have been losing money and closing. The surviving anchor department stores have sometimes found themselves among the few stores open in a failing mall.

At each step of the way, store managements and employees have struggled with the public's changing shopping habits. How the stores will respond to the new challenges, and which of them can stay in business, remain open questions.

If you think about it, the white-water rapids metaphor is a better description of the JROTC unit dealing with remodeling, too. Once the remodeling is complete, and the unit has moved into its new rooms, change has not ended. The school board may change the district boundaries for the high school. A new senior instructor may come on board. The changing ethnic, racial, and social makeup of the neighborhoods feeding into the school may shift, leading to a different student body makeup. Change never stops.

Handling Resistance to Change

So if change is tough for many people, what's a manager to do? Senior managers must guide their subordinate managers through change. Likewise, lower-level managers must guide the employees reporting to them. This is easier if you understand a little about how people react to change and how to help them cope with it.

How People React to Change

Again, change often replaces the known and familiar with the unknown and unfamiliar. This is unsettling to many people. When faced with change, people tend to go through a series of psychological reactions:

- shock and denial
- nostalgia for the way things used to be
- anger
- depression
- gradual acceptance

How long it takes people to pass through these stages depends on the situation, how radical the change is, and how well managers have prepared them for the change. How well the organization gets through the change often depends on how quickly change agents can help members move to the acceptance stage.

The Roots of Resistance

People resist change for several reasons. Among these are fear and uncertainty, worry that the change will negatively affect them, and a belief that the change is bad for the organization.

A person who's paying on a home mortgage and supporting a family is understandably concerned about change that could eliminate his or her job. The employee could be just as worried about his or her ability to perform new tasks the job includes. A JROTC cadet who's comfortable in one role may be worried about whether he or she can perform in a new one.

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People often regard their coworkers as a second family. They know their place in this group and are close to many workmates. Change in the organization affects more than just their pay. It can alter their authority, their position in the organization, their prestige, their relationships with others, and their personal convenience.

For example, when an organization moves its office, people's commuting arrangements are often adversely affected. Someone who could take the subway to work might now have to drive 14 miles out to the suburbs. Likewise, if your high school moved, it might change some JROTC cadets' transportation arrangements and thus their ability to participate in after-school meetings or drills. Similarly, people who like their office arrangements can often be upset when they have to move to different desks.

Many workers and members who've been around an organization for a long time are very attached to its traditions and values. They're proud of the products they produce. They believe in the services they've always delivered. To be suddenly told that those products are no longer good enough or those services don't meet today's needs calls into question what they've committed their life to. In such circumstances, they may not easily see why the change is good, and may in fact believe it will harm the organization and its reputation.

management TIP

No change plan goes exactly as you expect. People don't always react the way you think they will. The outside environment can suddenly go in a different direction. Unforeseen roadblocks can pop up. Managers and change agents must carefully monitor the change process and alter their plans as needed.

Some other sources of resistance to change include timing and surprise. For many individuals, the problem is not how they're being asked to change, but when they're being asked to do it. For example, trying to implement changes in a JROTC unit in December is likely to be a lot more difficult than in January. December's different school schedule, the attention given to holiday-related activities, and cadets' preoccupation with outside seasonal activities could all increase resistance.

It's a normal human reaction to dislike unpleasant surprises. Subordinates caught off guard by sudden change will almost always react negatively.

How to Reduce Resistance

So understanding why people resist change is half the battle. But to succeed, managers must act to reduce resistance.

It helps to ask yourself several questions when addressing resistance. The answers to these questions will point you to what you must do to help your subordinates accept the change. Among the useful questions are these:

- Whom does the change directly affect?
- Which subordinates most influence their peers?
- Which subordinates are the most likely to react badly?
- Have I prepared my subordinates for the change by communicating with them along the way and asking them to help plan for it?

Communication is extremely important in getting through change. As you go along, you explain the change's advantages to everyone. You especially keep the influential supporters up to date on the progress of the change. This puts them in a better position to pass the information along to their peers. Subordinates who understand the vision behind the change are more likely to support it.

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Each individual will move through the stages of reaction to change at his or her own pace. How you as the manager behave throughout the process goes a long way in determining how your subordinates will react. The manager who is patient with subordinates' emotional reactions and is patient with them is more likely to succeed.

Researchers have identified several specific techniques to help managers and other change agents reduce resistance to change.

The first two were mentioned earlier. One is *education and communication*—this is most helpful when resistance is based on misunderstanding or misinformation. The other is *participation*—bringing the people that change will affect into the planning and implementation process. Remember that people who've had a hand in developing a plan are more likely to commit to it.

A third technique is *facilitating and supporting*. You use this technique with subordinates who are afraid and anxious about the change. Remember that just because you have no problem adapting to a new situation doesn't mean your subordinates can. People whose jobs are changing can become very upset if they fear they won't be able to perform. You can support them by offering training in the new skills the change will require. In large organizations, managers may also be able to arrange for counseling. Sometimes granting an anxious employee a leave of absence gives the employee time to come to grips with the changes.

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ethical compass

Manipulation and *coercion* can backfire if you're not careful. If you deceive or lie to subordinates about change in order to make it look more attractive, they'll never believe you again. Forcing or threatening subordinates to accept change can leave them embittered and uncooperative. In some cases, such manipulation and coercion may actually be illegal.

When the person opposing change is very influential, the fourth technique, *negotiation*, can help. In this technique, you literally bargain with the subordinate to give him or her something he or she desires in exchange for reducing resistance.

The last two techniques are *manipulation and co-opting* and *coercion*. Offering an influential opponent of change an important position in planning and implementation or a promotion would be an example of co-opting. Coercion is when you directly threaten a subordinate with loss of their position, deny them a raise, or withdraw a promotion offer. While there are times when managers must lay down the law, they must do so fairly and carefully, or they will lose subordinates' trust and cooperation.

CHECKPOINTS

Lesson 2 Review

Using complete sentences, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper.

1. How did Apple's introduction of the iPod in 2001 affect the Sony Walkman and the music industry?
2. Who can be a change agent?
3. What are the three stages of change in the calm-waters metaphor?
4. How does the white-water metaphor depict change?
5. What psychological reactions do people tend to go through when faced with change?
6. What are some ways managers can support subordinates in adapting to change?

APPLYING YOUR LEARNING

7. Think of a change you would like to see in your school or another organization you're familiar with. Who would most resist that change, and how would you go about reducing that resistance?