TRIGGERS THAT INFLUENCE MIDDLE MANAGER ACTIONS DURING MAJOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

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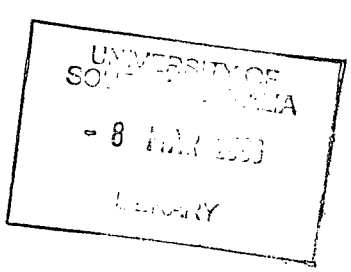

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GLOSSARY

The following terms are used throughout the thesis:

Action Moderators — *Action Moderators* are aspects related only to an individual participating in a major change program that influence the specific actions performed. They are only important once the decision to act *alternatively* has been made (as influenced by action triggers).

Action Triggers — *Action Triggers* are aspects related to a major change program that influence a middle manager enough to choose to perform an alternative action, either hindering or promotional. The actual actions performed are influenced by the action moderators.

Alternative Actions — Alternative actions are those that do not directly comply with what is requested. During major change, employees are expected to comply with what is requested of them as dictated by the plan designers and senior managers. However, the employees may not view the major change program in the same way that the change designers and senior managers do, and decide not to comply, but act alternatively. These alternative actions may be either promotional, or hindering.

Change Plan — The change plan is created during the Development Phase. The plan describes what will be done, by whom, and when. It does not include the actual "doing" of the change. A change plan will contain the information and methods for relaying the plan to employees, directions and tasks for employees, expected outcomes, methods and timing of the evaluation process, and alternative strategies in case the original plan needs adjustment.

Change Program — The major change program includes *all* aspects of major organisational change, the evaluation of the organisation's position, the designing of the change plan, implementation of the plan, and evaluation of the plan. The change program thus includes not only the plan, but the actions taken to implement and evaluate the plan as well.

Compliant Actions

Compliant actions are those do not differ from the actions requested by the plan designers. They are performed pretty much to the "T." They include nothing more or nothing less than what is asked.

Hindering Actions

Hindering actions are alternative actions taken during the major change program that do not support the success of the change. Hindering actions may vary in level and type, and may include the traditional resistant actions often discussed, or they may be as harmless as trying to convince others to speak up about some aspect they don't agree with. These actions won't necessarily be enough to make the change fail, but will show that the individual does *not* want the change as currently designed to succeed.

There may be a good reason for employees to exhibit hindering actions. There may be a certain aspect of the change plan that is unfair or unworkable. In these instances, hindering the implementation of that aspect may have a positive affect (fairness, etc) but the initial action taken to achieve that is still considered hindering (for this thesis the change program is viewed from the point of the designers and senior managers).

Major (Organisational) Change

Major change is sometimes referred to as revolutionary, radical, transformational, frame breaking or large scale. Major organisational change refers to change that alters the structure, basic operations, or functions of an organisation. It affects most people in the organisation and takes a great deal of time, effort, and financial resources to implement. Major change rarely happens as one single event, rather it usually involves numerous small change events. However, employees are aware that these small events are all related components of a greater overall change. The fact that participants know more change is yet to come is the most defining aspect of major change

Manager Levels

Many organisations no longer label their managerial levels with the terms frontline, middle, and senior. However, in many organisations, even though they have different labels, they still operate at these different levels. For this thesis these labels are used with the following definitions.

Frontline – managers who have direct control over the frontline employees

Middle – oversee other managers, but can't make organisation wide decisions

Senior – managers who make decisions that affect the entire organisation

Of course only larger organisations are going to have middle managers. Middle managers have no direct control over the physical day-to-day operations, nor control over anything that affects the entire organisation.

Promotional Actions

Promotional actions are alternative actions that individuals take to encourage success of the change. Promotional actions vary in level and type. They include everything from publicly agreeing that the change is a good idea, to working harder to incorporate the changes. These actions go beyond the actions required for the program. Individuals may be required to work harder as part of the change, but if they also express that they believe in the change, this latter part is the promotional action.

Stability State

Stability does not mean complacency. An organisation in the Stable State is not attempting major organisational change. It is only trying to ingrain the processes adopted in the last major change. Small adjustments are allowed during this state, but nothing major will occur.

Small changes do not shake the foundation of the organisation. They will affect only a small group of people at a time and only alter current processes and methods of working. No radical changes will be attempted while in the Stability State, only refinement of current practices.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on an exploration of the aspects of major organisational change that influence middle manager actions. The first part of this work explains the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model, which was developed for this research to conceptualise and clarify the existing organisational change literature. This model showed how the actions of middle managers relate to a major change program. The second part of this work comprises three complementary studies that explore the aspects (*action triggers)* of influence in middle managers' decisions to act.

Action triggers are aspects of a major change program that cause (trigger) middle managers to act. *Action triggers* determine whether middle mangers will comply or act *alternatively. Alternative actions* are *hindering* or *promotional.* Promotional actions are 'above and beyond' those requested or while hindering actions are meant to interrupt or damage the change.

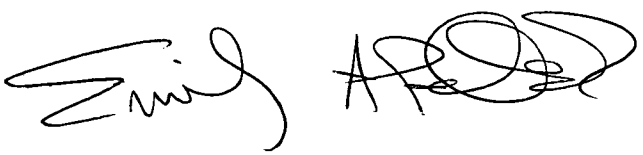
Three complementary studies were conducted to explore the research question: *What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?* The first study included a content analysis of literature, the second study involved interviews with middle managers while the third study included both questionnaires for middle managers and several further interviews. These three studies were complementary as each expanded upon the results of the previous one. Together, in using several different approaches, these studies provide a very holistic view of action triggers.

This work identified 16 action triggers, categorised as: *tangible job aspects*, *intangible job aspects*, *change plan* and *peer influence*. The *tangible job aspects* category included four action triggers: work processes, knowledge and skills, workload and responsibilities, and working conditions. The *intangible job aspects* category included aspects such as authority and power, respect and status, and comfort and security. It also contained the action triggers of career opportunities, individual goals, and alliances and relationships. The *change plan* category included the need for change, goals of change and the design of the plan, as well as the leaders of change and senior support. The final category, *peer influence*, contained only the peer influence action trigger.

The findings of this work contributed to academic knowledge by providing new insight and interpretation of influences on middle managers' decisions to act alternatively. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model showed how middle manager actions relate to major change programs and subsequently led to the three exploratory studies of action triggers. The 16 action triggers identified in this work are more comprehensive than previous compilations. The triggers also relate both types of *alternative actions* (promotional and hindering). The work also found that the action triggers are situation specific. Besides contributing to academic knowledge, this work also provided useful information for practitioners and presented many opportunities for future research.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.



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RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Conference Papers

Pollack EA 2003, 'Stability's Role in a Model of Change', presented at the 17th Annual ANZAM Conference, Freemantle, WA, December, 2003.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the need for the following research, the focus of the work, the assumptions and parameters of the research, and finally an outline of the thesis. The first section explains how major organisational change is becoming more prevalent as is failure of these initiatives. Many of these failures are attributed to the actions of middle managers. The present research first identified how the actions of middle managers were related to a major change program, through the development of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model. Three complementary studies were then conducted to identify and explore the aspects of major change that trigger actions to be performed by middle managers.

1.2 Overview of the Need for Research

Organisations are increasingly attempting to implement major change (Vakola & Nikolaou 2005), altering the structure, basic operations or functions of the organisation. Major change affects most employees in the organisation and takes a great deal of time, effort and financial resources to implement. It usually consists of many small change events often initiated by the senior levels of an organisation before being passed onto the lower levels (Ashford 1988; Balogun & Johnson 2004; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Scandura, Doerr & Tejeda 2000; Taplin 2001; Waddell & Sohal 1999). Middle managers are often responsible for ensuring that the change is implemented in the way senior managers have designed it (Balogun & Johnson 2004; Strebel 1998). Unfortunately, many major change attempts fail to achieve the desired results (Beer & Nohria 2000; Ghoshal & Bartlett 2000). One of the most common explanations offered for failure is that the employees (especially middle managers) are responsible (Balogun 2003; Bashein & Markus 1994; Currie 1999; Fenton-O'Creevy 1996, 1998, 2001; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992). This widespread belief in the power of employee actions has resulted in a substantial concentration

in the literature on the hindering actions performed by employees during major organisational change (Piderit 2000). Hindering actions may include resistance, as well as any action that is performed that does not comply with what is requested to implement the change. However, previous literature has focused on *how* employees (with particular attention to middle managers) have reacted to a change, not necessarily *why* middle managers act that way. The limited focus on *why* presents many opportunities for further research such as in the present study.

1.3 Focus of Research

The current research investigated the aspects (action triggers) that influenced middle managers' decisions to act during major change implementations. In particular, this research focused on the action triggers that lead to *alternative actions* being performed (Figure 1-1).

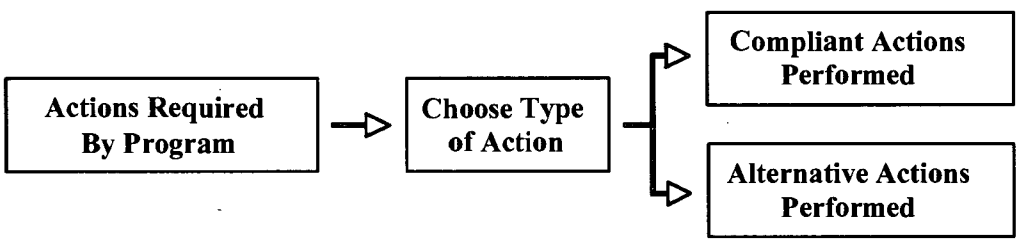


Figure 1-1. The types of actions middle managers may choose to perform during major organisational change.

Compliant actions are the most common type of actions performed and are those expected by the plan's designers. Hindering and promotional actions are *alternative* as they differ from those expected/requested. Middle managers will *comply* with what is requested of them *unless* they strongly disagree with a portion of the change and perform an action to hinder the change; or they strongly agree with a portion of the change and perform an action to promote the change. (Promotional actions are 'above and beyond the call of duty' actions performed to help ensure the success of the change.)

This research identified all aspects of major organisational change that influence a middle manager's decision to act *alternatively* during a change program. As middle managers are those most often blamed for the failure of change, they were chosen

as the focus of the current research. Senior managers and frontline managers were not included. Only middle managers participated in the three complementary studies as it was their decision making processes that were of interest. Specifically the decision making process regarding the aspects (action triggers) that influenced their decisions to act alternatively during major change.

1.3.1 Focus on Middle Managers

Middle managers are instrumental in the implementation of major change (Floyd & Wooldridge 1997; Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003, Watad 2003). However, there is little literature that focuses on middle managers in particular (Young 2000). Most of the literature concerning major organisational change has focused on frontline employees (Ashforth & Mael 1998; Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003) or senior managers (Balogun & Johnson 2004; Fenton-O'Creevy 2001; Piderit 2000).

Previous literature on middle managers has focused on the impact of downsizing and restructuring (Balogun 2003; Newell & Dopson 1996), middle managers' perceptions and levels of resistance (Waddell & Sohal 1999; Young 2000) and the roles of middle managers during major change (Balogun 2003; Harrington 2004; Jackson & Humble 1994; McConville & Holden 1999; Staehle & Schirmer 1992).

While the focus on the middle management level has been increasing (Davis & Fisher 2002), more research is needed to determine how middle managers respond to change (Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003). Middle managers often have key roles in major changes and as a result are often blamed when the change fails to produce the expected results (Balogun 2003; Bashein & Markus 1994; Currie 1999; Fenton-O'Creevy 1996, 1998, 2001; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992). However, research on what influences middle managers' decisions to act during major change is limited (Ashford 1988; Scandura et al. 2000).

1.3.2 Focus on Alternative Actions

Hindering actions, resistance specifically, have long been blamed for the failure of many major change programs. However, there has been little encompassing research into *what* or *why* employees decide to resist (Young 2000). Of the literature that does exist regarding *what* or *why*, it is lacking comprehensiveness, is

often limited in focus, examines only single particular themes (Armenakis & Bedeian 1999) or is situational, focusing only on the current operating environment (Oreg 2003).

Additionally, much of the focus in existing literature is on hindering actions performed, often ignoring promotional actions (Piderit 2000). Some evidence has begun to appear that shows middle managers may not be as resistant as portrayed in the literature (Balogun 2003; Davis & Fisher 2002; Fenton-O'Creevy 2001; Woodward & Hendry 2004), but there is still a conspicuous lack of work examining the specific aspects that cause middle managers to choose between promotional actions, compliance and hindering actions (Bamford & Forrester 2003; Miller, Johnson & Grau 1994). Limited literature relates resistance and acceptance of change; rather, they are viewed as two separate entities (Coetsee 1999). The assumptions and parameters related to *alternative actions*, major organisational change and other aspects of the current research are discussed in the next section.

1.4 Research Assumptions and Parameters

The present research was performed using the assumption that middle managers' can choose to perform one of a range of *related* actions; hindering, compliant or promotional (Coetsee 1999). It was assumed that there is a single set of *action triggers* that dictate middle manager actions. Strong agreement with the action triggers results in promotional actions while strong disagreement with the action triggers results in hindering actions. Little or no (dis)agreement will result in compliant actions being performed. This idea of related behaviours leads to the assumption of discrete forms of behaviour. This research was performed under that assumption that middle manager choose to either comply with the change or act *alternatively* (promote or hinder the change), Figure 1-1.

This research was also performed using the assumption that *action triggers* are aspects related to major organisational change that trigger (cause) actions. Middle managers will choose the type of action to perform (compliant, promotional, or hindering) based on the action triggers. The actual actions performed are dictated by *action moderators*. Action triggers were assumed to be aspects associated with

the change itself, whereas action moderators were assumed to be associated with an individual personally. These assumptions are further explained where relevant.

There were several parameters that this research was performed within as well. Due to their unique position in the organisation and being regularly *blamed* for failures, only middle managers were asked to participate. These middle managers were either currently experiencing major change, or had recently completed a major change implementation. All of the middle manager participants were located in the Adelaide area of South Australia. Finally, this research focused only on *alternative actions*. Compliant actions are the expected, *default* actions, and middle managers must choose to act *alternatively*.

1.5 Outline of Thesis

This section describes the contents of the chapters in this thesis.

2. Literature Review. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model was developed to conceptualise and clarify the literature related to organisational change. The entire organisational change process is discussed; stability, change pursuance, evaluation, development and implementation. As part of the implementation review, it was found that there was a lack of comprehensive literature regarding how middle managers make decisions to act. This lack of literature led to the research question: *What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?* This question then led to the research design discussed in the next chapter.

3. Research Design and Method. This research explored the action triggers in depth, using several different approaches. Three complementary studies were conducted to provide a 'holistic' insight into middle manager's action triggers during major organisational change (Miles & Huberman 1994). The method used to obtain and analyse the data for each of the studies in this research is briefly summarised in this chapter. An overview of the results is also given to show how the next study was designed to complement the results of the previous study.

4. Study One: Content Analysis. This first exploratory study began with an analysis of existing literature. Content analysis was performed on this literature to identify and extract the action triggers and organise them into categories. 16 action triggers were identified in four categories. This study used only existing concepts that were related to all levels of employees. However, middle managers are a type of employee and the action triggers were quite broad in coverage. Study Two was designed to confirm the comprehensiveness and applicability of the action triggers for middle managers.

5. Study Two: Interviews. Ten middle managers in a single organisation were interviewed about their experiences with the current major change program. The middle managers were asked to identify the aspects regarding the change that were important to them. While the results were quite complementary to Study One, only 11 of the action triggers were discussed during the course of the interviews. None of the middle managers admitted to acting *alternatively*, either by promoting or hindering the change. However, during the course of the interview three examples of hindering (or near hindering) actions were provided. As the results of this study were quite supportive of Study One, further research along the same lines was pursued. All of the middle managers interviewed were experiencing the same change and it was possible that the action triggers of importance varied with the type of change being experienced. Study Three was designed to further explore the topic by determining if the action triggers thus far identified were the only ones of influence, or if they were situation dependent. This third approach again complemented the previous studies by exposing the triggers to a more diverse group of middle managers.

6. Study Three: Questionnaires. Twenty-seven middle managers enrolled in postgraduate courses from both the public and private sectors completed questionnaires regarding their actions during the most recent major change at their organisations. All participants provided data about promotional actions they had performed while only three described hindering actions they had performed. The results of the promotional questions showed that all 16 action triggers were indeed influential. However, these skewed promotional action response contradicted the results of Study Two (which identified hindering actions only) and the sentiment of

major organisational change literature which portrays *most* middle managers as very resistant to any change and prepared to hinder it when an opportunity arises (Balogun 2003; Jackson & Humble 1994; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Watad & Will 2003). This contradiction meant that clarification of the questionnaire results was needed. Three middle managers were interviewed about their experiences with the questionnaire. These middle managers were asked to evaluate the instrument and provide ideas as to why other middle managers might have responded as they did. The three participants provided several reasons for the limited number of hindering actions being reported.

7. Discussion. The results of the three complementary studies are discussed, providing a 'holistic' picture of the 16 action triggers. While the sample of 37 middle managers might seem small, it was enough to provide considerable insight into the influence of the action triggers on middle manager decisions during major organisational change. The support for each action trigger is shown, as is the compilation's comprehensiveness, and relationship between the type of change and action triggers of influence. Finally, middle managers' focus on positive aspects is discussed.

8. Conclusion. This chapter summarises the research design and resulting key findings. It also explains the contribution of the present work to academic knowledge and practitioners and suggests ideas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Organisations are increasingly attempting major change initiatives for a variety of reasons. Unfortunately, many major change initiatives fail to accomplish what was intended. There are many reasons for these failures including faulty change plans (Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; Fletcher & Taplin 2002) and actions performed by employees, especially middle managers, (Balogun 2003; Bashein & Markus 1994; Currie 1999; Fenton-O'Creevy 1996, 1998, 2001; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992). This chapter used the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model (developed specifically for this research) to demonstrate how all of the major change components are related. As part of this review, it was found that more work regarding the actions performed by middle managers during major change was needed.

The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model was developed for this research as a framework to conceptualise and clarify the enormous quantities of empirical and theoretical organisational change literature. There has been a abundant amount of research on organisational change since the 1950s (Bamford & Forrester 2003). In 1995, Van De Ven identified over one million articles from a variety of disciplines with the keywords 'change' and 'development' (Van De Ven & Poole 1995). Since then, interest in the area has remained high, and thousands of new articles are published each year. However, much of the literature is not as 'useful' for practitioners as it may first appear. Most of the literature has focused on only minor components of the change process. While an academic immersed in the study of change might understand how these are related, a casual user, such as a Human Resources (HR) Manager, might not. The relationships between the different components are important because any one aspect may be crucial to the success of the change program, but not if used in isolation.

One way to make this information more accessible to a casual user (HR manager) is to show how it is related through a model of organisational change (Johnson 2004). A comprehensive model of organisational change needs to include everything from developing the plan to its implementation and evaluation (Victor & Franckeiss 2002). A simple model of the change process may be seen in Figure 2-1. Previous models have been limited in their coverage of the entire organisational change program. Few covered the entire process in any detail. For example, the seminal and still prevalent work of Lewin (1947, 1952) reduced the change process to three components: unfreezing, moving and freezing. The moving component encompassed all of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the change. Kotter's eight phases of change (Kotter 1995, 1996; Kotter & Cohen 2002) did not refer to the evaluation necessary during organisational change. Nor did it discuss how an organisation determined the type of change to pursue, nor how it learned from the change to use that knowledge for future iterations of change.

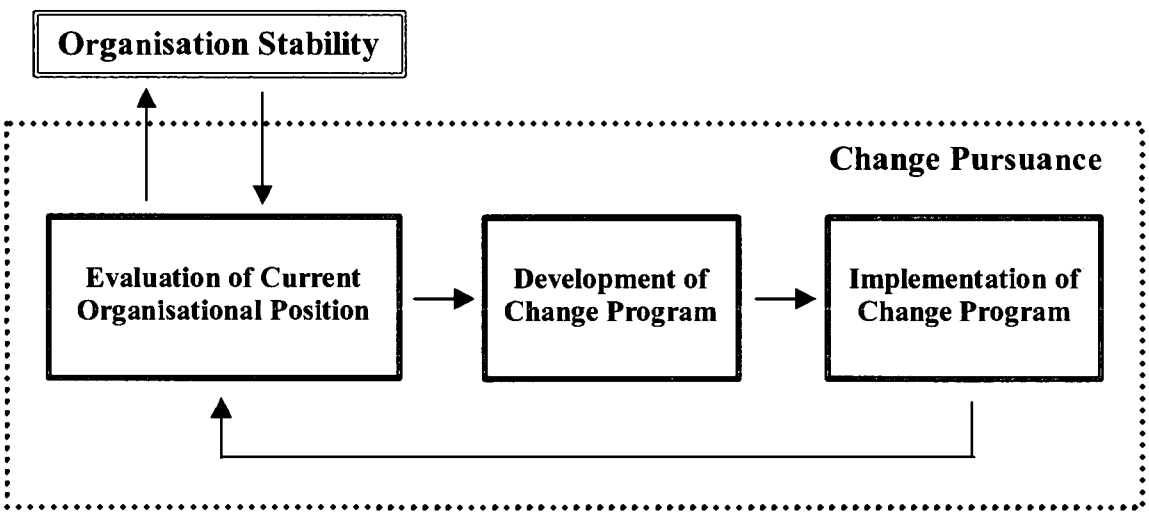


Figure 2-1. Simplified model of organisational change process.

The next part of this chapter explains the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model and its different phases in detail. This description of organisational change through the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model serves to clarify the relationships between the many components of major organisational change. In particular, the actions of employees during the Implementation Phase are identified and explained. This is an area only recently being included in major change discussions as previous theory has largely

ignored the needs and differences of employees (Elsey & Sirichoti 2001). The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model identifies the importance of employee actions (middle managers in particular) and their impact on the implementation of the change plan. The lack of lack of work regarding middle managers and the aspects that influence the actions they perform during major organisational change is then shown. The chapter then concludes with a description of how the research in the remainder of this thesis addressed this issue.

During the course of this chapter, the language used to discuss and explain the model may appear instructive, however, this was not the intention. The goal of the following description was to show how the different components of major change fit together as described in the existing literature. Thus paraphrasing of the literature was used to better explain the model as necessary.

2.2 Organisational Change

The type of change discussed in this research is quite specific. It refers only to major change, changes with organisation-wide impact and influence (further defined below). There is an array of initiatives that may be used to alter an organisation, however, this research considers only those used in major changes. Additionally, this research focused solely on middle managers.

2.2.1 Array of Initiatives

Organisations are always changing (Dawson 1996) and there are many different types of change. The following changes are categorised by magnitude. While all changes may affect employees in some fashion, many changes have little influence on the entire organisation as they are limited to a specific area (Stace & Dunphy 2001). These minor changes include updating the appearance of the workplace, hiring new staff, and implementing promotions. These minor changes are also referred to as fine-tuning or incremental adaptations (Senior 2000). The next level of change is mid-range in size and often directed by project managers. It usually concentrates on a single division or area of the organisation, not the entire organisation (Nadler & Tushman 1989; Reger, Mullane, Gustafoson & DeMarie 1994). These mid-range and small sized changes are relatively common in organisations. However, they are not the types of change relevant to this research.

Major changes were the focus of the current work. This type of change is also known as *fundamental* (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder 1993; Rumelt 1995), *revolutionary* (Stace & Dunphy 2001), radical (Romanelli & Tushman 1994) or *transformational* (Johnson 2004) changes, and have organisation-wide impact and influence. Major change generally only occurs every five to ten years and is necessary because the organisation's existence may be at stake (Larkin & Larkin 1996; Stace & Dunphy 2001). The goal of major change is to modify business operations (Kotter 1995) to realise substantial improvement (Rumelt 1995). From experiences in the 1990s, it is often thought that major organisational change automatically means redundancy or downsizing (Sparrow & Cooper 1998; Worrall, Parkes & Cooper 2004). However, downsizing is often an aspect of a major change, rarely the sole component.

Major change rarely happens as one single event, rather it usually involves numerous smaller change events. What differentiates it from minor and mid-range changes is the fact that the many small changes comprising major change are known to be only part of the 'whole', with more change expected in the future. Major change often involves adjustments to the organisation's structure (i.e. removing management levels, forming teams) (Nortier 1995; Oxtoby, McGuiness & Morgan 2002; Romanelli & Tushman 1994; Sparrow & Cooper 1998), altering systems and processes (i.e. implementing mechanisation, changing knowledge management) (Oxtoby et al. 2002; Romanelli & Tushman 1994) and reforming strategy (i.e. changing mission and values of organisation, cultural adjustments) (Romanelli & Tushman 1994; Sparrow & Cooper 1998; Stace & Dunphy 2001). While major change programs often use several smaller changes to achieve the desired goal, the combination often shakes the very foundation of the organisation, affecting all employees in many ways (Woodward & Hendry 2004). Additionally, the investment of time, often years (Kotter 1995; Nadler & Tushman 1989), money and employee resources in major change is usually substantial (Armenakis, Harris & Feild 1999).

As all of the different magnitudes of change affect organisations differently it was necessary to choose only one type to study. The current research specifically

focused on major change. While organisations do not frequently experience major change, it is inevitable that they will at some point during their lifetime. The next section discusses several reasons organisations might attempt to implement major organisational changes.

2.2.2 Inevitability

Organisational change alters the way an organisation responds to the needs of the marketplace, its customers and its employees (Moran & Brightman 2000). Organisations have always had to adjust but it has become more important and common in recent times (Piderit 2000). There are many reasons for organisations to develop and implement change programs (Moran & Brightman 2000) but they should not frivolously attempt major organisational change just because it is the 'in' fad (Fenton-O'Creevy 1996; Fletcher & Taplin 2002). Organisations most often react to external forces (Nadler & Tushman 1989) while they should be anticipating the need for change and taking a proactive approach (Sauser & Sauser 2002).

The following are the most prevalent reasons organisations undertake major change initiatives. The first two apply only to private organisations, while the last four apply to both private and public organisations:

- new and improved competitors (globalisation)
- changes to market share
- rising material or overhead costs
- changing regulations or laws
- mergers or acquisitions
- technological advancement.

New and improved competitors will often cause private organisations to consider implementing a major change program (Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby 2000; Oxtoby at al. 2002). Organisations may encounter increasing competition more frequently than ever before as globalisation becomes more common (Armenakis et al. 1999; Elsey & Sirichoti 2001; Huy 2002; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Victor & Franckeiss 2002; Worrall et al. 2004). Global competitors can dramatically change the way an organisation operates (Marks & De Meuse 2005; Mezias, Grinyer &

Guth 2001; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Taplin 2001) and private organisations often must change the way they do business to successfully compete (Dawson 1996; Reger et al. 1994; Stace & Dunphy 2001; Tan & Tiong 2005). Competition is rarely a concern for public organisations.

Private organisations may also attempt major changes when they perceive movement in market share (Dawson 1996; Day 1999; Reger et al. 1994; Taplin 2001). An organisation that has lost market share may desire to regain it (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Kabanoff et al. 1995). Others may see opportunities to expand and encourage growth of its share (Huy 2002; Spiker & Lesser 1995; Stace & Dunphy 2001). These situations may present the organisation with an opportunity to improve its position through major change. Market share is not often a concern of public organisations.

Rising material or overhead costs are issues that may encourage both private and public organisations to consider change (Dawson 1996; Reger et al. 1994). Both sectors may recognise situations where a new approach for the management of production and operating costs is needed (Stace & Dunphy 2001; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). As operating and production procedures are often quite rigid, major change may be necessary to try and alter them.

Alterations to regulations or laws occasionally force both private and public organisations to undergo major change as well (Buchanan, Claydon & Doyle 1999; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Sauser & Sauser 2002). New restrictions and deregulation can both affect how an organisation operates (Huy 2002).

Mergers and acquisitions also result in major organisational change (Marks & De Meuse 2005; Scandura et al. 2000; Stace & Dunphy 2001) for both public and private organisations. In public organisations there are often changes to the structure of different organisational areas (merging departments for example) often correlated to governmental party changes. Private organisations often experience major change through the merging with or acquisition of other organisations (Marks & De Meuse 2005; Maurer 1997; Nortier 1995; Scandura et al. 2000).

Technological advancements may also force private and public organisations to attempt major change (Elsey & Sirichoti 2001; Huy 2002; Nortier 1995; Oxtoby at al. 2002). Technological advancements are still adhering to Moore's law, computer technology doubles in capacity and halves in price every eighteen months (Stace & Dunphy 2001). The rapid rate of this development forces organisations to contemplate upgrading more frequently than ever (Beer & Eisenstat 2000; Buchanan et al. 1999; Longenecker & Fink 2001; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Mezias et al. 2001; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Taplin 2001; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). These waves of technological advancement stress even the most sophisticated employees (Sauser & Sauser 2002) but are often expected by customers (Harrington & Williams 2004).

The prevalence of these instigators for major change (in addition to those specific to individual organisations) make it inevitable for most organisations to attempt major change initiatives sooner rather than later. Organisations often instigate major change only after observing the need for it, because major change requires a great deal of time, effort and participation from all hierarchical levels.

2.2.3 Roles in Design and Implementation

Each hierarchical level in an organisation plays a different role in the development and implementation of major change (Kabanoff et al. 1995). While the 'frontline', 'middle' and 'senior' managerial labels are not always used, the levels still exist in most organisations and this research used these terms. Senior managers are those who have power to make decisions that impact the entire organisation. Frontline managers have direct control over the frontline employees (Staehle & Schirmer 1992). Middle managers are basically the rest; they oversee frontline managers but don't have any organisation wide power.

Major organisational change programs are often conceived by senior managers and then passed along to the lower level managers for actual implementation (Ashford 1988; Balogun & Johnson 2004; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Scandura et al. 2000; Taplin 2001; Waddell & Sohal 1999). Senior managers often believe their role is only to design a logical and appropriate plan (Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; King, Fowler & Zeithaml 2001). Middle managers often have only a small amount of

influence in the plan's design (McConville & Holden 1999). Rather their main role is to convince frontline managers and workers to comply (Balogun & Johnson 2004; Strebel 1998). For these reasons the same change is viewed differently by each level of management (Coghlan 1993; Strebel 1998; Trader-Leigh 2002).

Senior Managers

Senior managers are rarely involved with specific day-to-day operations (King et al. 2001). Instead they have a holistic view of change (Beer & Eisenstat 2000; McConville & Holden 1999; Stensaker, Faulkenberg, Meyer & Haueng 2002), with an overall view of how the organisation operates. Senior managers often regard change as an opportunity to improve the organisation's position, especially in relation to similar organisations (Doyle, Claydon & Buchanan 2000; Reichers, Wanous & Austin 1997; Strebel 1998).

Senior managers usually formulate strategic goals (Taplin 2001) and oversee the development of the change plan (Tan & Tiong 2005; Waddell & Sohal 1999) since they were the ones to initiate the program (Nadler & Tushman 1989). Senior managers also often have influence over change instigated by lower level employees (Beer & Eisenstat 1990). Change begun in lower levels requires the support of the senior level to move into all areas of the organisation. Even if a development group or consultants are employed, senior managers are kept well informed and often have a great deal of knowledge, if not input, concerning the development of the organisational change plan (Schilit 1987).

While senior managers are regularly involved in the change plan development process, they *rarely* play an active role in its implementation (Band 1995; Bashein & Markus 1994). Some senior managers mistakenly believe their job is to think 'great thoughts' and then tell others what they are (Kraines 2001, p. 29). This belief means that the responsibility of getting other employees to accept change is usually given to middle managers (Floyd & Wooldridge 1994). Senior managers often believe the change plan is appropriate and adequately detailed (Doyle et al. 2000), and that others in the organisation should be able to implement it as dictated with little help or guidance. This often limited participation by senior managers is why middle managers generally oversee the implementation of major change.

Middle Managers

Middle managers usually have at least two hierarchical levels under them (Staehle & Schirmer 1992), and are subject to direction from above while managing those below (Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003). However, in some organisations researchers and other specialists are considered middle managers even though they do not directly manage others (Della Rocca 1992). For this study the term *middle manager* will refer to managers who oversee other managers but can't make organisation wide decisions.

Middle managers have multiple roles during normal operating times (Pappas & Wooldridge 2002). Their main role is no longer just that of human management, but now also includes coordination of resources for efficient production (Della Rocca 1992). Middle managers are often the ones who really know how the organisation operates (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, Hayes & Wierba 1997; Wai-Kwong, Priem & Cycyota 2001) and they are closer to the operation side of the organisation which means they are better able to understand the needs of customers and day to day operations (Bamford & Forrester 2003; Dutton et al. 1997; Floyd & Wooldridge 1997; Pappas, Flaherty & Wooldridge 2004; Wai-Kwong et al. 2001). The understanding of operations and customers means middle managers are in a good position to relay relevant information to senior managers as appropriate (Currie 1999; Floyd & Wooldridge 1994, 1997). The role of choosing when, where, and what issues to bring to senior management's attention is extremely important especially when it relates to organisational strategy (Bamford & Forrester 2003; Dutton et al. 1997; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992, 1994, 1997; Pappas et al. 2004). However, middle managers do not only represent the operational side of the organisation, for lower level workers, middle managers represent the views and policies of senior managers (McConville & Holden 1999).

During times of major organisational change, the number of roles performed by middle managers increases (Fenton-O'Creevy 1996). In addition to their regular roles, middle managers are expected to undertake personal change, help managers and staff below them through change, and alter the appropriate processes and functions in their departments (Balogun 2003). In many change programs middle

managers are extremely important players (Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003; Watad 2003) as they are the ones who must make the change work (Holden & Roberts 2004; Senior 2000).

In many cases senior managers develop a change plan and give middle managers the responsibility of implementing it (Floyd & Wooldridge 1997). All too often this is their first involvement with the change process (Axtell, Wall, Stride, Pepper, Clegg, Gardner & Bolden 2002; Balogun & Johnson 2004). The plans provided by senior management are often general strategies that must be converted into more detailed concrete plans to determine what is really required and how it can be achieved (Balogun 2003; Jackson & Humble 1994). This conversion process is difficult because the plans will affect not only others but also the middle managers themselves (Balogun 2003; Fenton-O'Creevy 1998, 2001), possibly to the detriment of their positions (Edwards & Sohal 2003; Holden & Roberts 2004; Staehle & Schirmer 1992).

One of the best ways for middle management to promote the change is by acting as role models for others (Jackson & Humble 1994). Middle managers' behaviour is often just as influential, if not more so, than their words (Burdett 1999; Stensaker et al. 2002; Waclawski 2002). Unfortunately, senior managers often underestimate the effort required to come to terms with change (Strebel 1998). Middle managers suddenly find themselves trying to motivate (Jackson & Humble 1994) and counsel lower level managers and employees (Staehle & Schirmer 1992) while working through their own personal transitions (Balogun 2003). A commonly held falsehood is that leaders manage change better than subordinates (Moran & Brightman 2000). However, in reality, middle managers must first come to terms with the change themselves before being able to help others (Balogun 2003; Huy 2002; Wiesenfeld, Brockner & Thibault 2000). Thus, middle managers usually have little time to personally adjust to the changes before being responsible for implementing them across the organisation (Stensaker et al. 2002).

Additionally, middle managers are intermediaries of change (Balogun 2003; Holden & Roberts 2004) and must communicate with and understand both senior and frontline managers (Campi 1992). There is pressure to promote the interests of both

sides (King et al. 2001; McConville & Holden 1999). Since senior management is more powerful, more energy is often spent relaying senior management's policies and requests to lower levels (Staehle & Schirmer 1992).

Unfortunately, middle managers rarely have enough time to adjust (Balogun 2003) as they often believe the change process is rushed (Holden & Roberts 2004). In many organisations middle managers are expected to implement the current changes in addition to their regular roles of maintaining efficient operations (Taplin 2001). Middle managers need to encourage others to keep productivity up while implementing the changes, which means extra work for everyone (Campi 1992).

With all of these contradictory roles it is inevitable that there will be role conflict during the change process (Holden & Roberts 2004; McConville & Holden 1999). Middle managers bear the brunt of change, and by trying to find a balance amongst their multiple roles they may inhibit the progress of change from the senior management's point of view (Balogun 2003; McConville & Holden 1999).

Frontline Managers

Frontline managers are rarely asked to help design a change program even though they possess important information about how the organisation operates (Larkin & Larkin 1996). Frontline managers generally communicate regularly with the frontline workers and have a solid understanding about what is necessary for getting the actual work done. However, frontline managers have very little influence organisation wide. Even if they recognised an area where improvements could be made, they must gain support higher in the organisation to distribute their ideas. The limited power of their positions means that frontline managers rarely have input into any of the changes they are expected to help implement.

The style and skill of the frontline managers greatly influence the way the frontline workers perceive and work to implement the change (Thornhill, Saunders & Stead 1997). Frontline managers will often have to alter their own behaviour in accordance with the change, and the frontline employees will use that as a model for their own behaviour (Larkin & Larkin 1996). Since subordinates rely so heavily

on the frontline managers' attitudes and actions, it is no surprise that they, in turn, rely on their middle managers to guide them (Wiesenfeld et al. 2000).

Frontline Workers

Frontline workers are the employees in the organisation who perform the actual 'work' that results in the goods or services that the organisation provides to its customers. Frontline workers rarely have input into the design of a change program even though they are often quite affected by the change. Frontline workers will also look to their managers for guidance and information regarding the change (Wiesenfeld et al. 2000).

Each level in the organisation is needed to implement a major change successfully, however, it is the middle managers that most often link the different levels. Middle managers, as their title suggests, are in the middle of the hierarchy and their position links the planning of the senior levels with the lower levels where the plans are actually implemented. Middle managers are integral in ensuring the success of major organisational change initiatives. However, this integral role also means that middle managers are in a position where they can be blamed for the failure of change when a program is not implemented as desired.

2.3 Failed Change Attempts

Estimates of the failure rate of major change range from 50%, meaning one prominent failure for every success (Ghoshal & Bartlett 2000), to as high as 70% (Beer & Nohria 2000). Even 50% means a massive number of major change programs are disrupting organisations without the expected benefits. These failures leave all levels of employees frustrated with the change process (Reichers et al. 1997), and often the organisation is worse off than before (Stace & Dunphy 2001).

There is no simple explanation for why these programs fail. Quite often the failure is attributed to the actions of the middle managers (Balogun 2003; Bashein & Markus 1994; Currie 1999; Fenton-O'Creevy 1996, 1998, 2001; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992) who are blamed when plans are not implemented or even when found to be incapable of implementation (Staehle & Schirmer 1992). Middle managers are also blamed when others (generally lower level employees) refuse to

cooperate and implement the changes necessary (McConville & Holden 1999). Middle managers are most often viewed as an impediment to the change (Watad & Will 2003) as the 'frozen middle' or 'concrete layer' (Jackson & Humble 1994).

While middle managers are often made responsible for the implementation of the program, the failures may not always be their fault. Three reasons for the failure of change have been identified in the literature:

- Faulty Plan Design
- Capabilities of Leaders
- Action Choices.

These reasons are examined further, with a focus on middle management.

2.3.1 Faulty Plan Design

Major organisational change is a very complex and lengthy process. Fortunately, most organisations develop a plan to guide them through the process; unfortunately, these plans are not always properly designed (Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; Fletcher & Taplin 2002). Some plans are not based on valid reasoning (Schein 2000) but most are not based on the actual needs of the organisation (Stace & Dunphy 2001). Some organisations aim for a 'quick fix' (Elsey & Sirichoti 2001) while many only attempt to emulate what others have already done, often by strictly adhering to advice in print (Beer & Nohria 2000). However, these 'flavour-of-the-month' (Allen-Meyer 2001; Atkinson 2005) or 'one-size-fits-all' plans rarely succeed (Beer & Eisenstat 1990).

Organisations must develop a customised plan to have any hope of success (Stace & Dunphy 2001; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005). The plan should be unique to the organisation but also include aspects that other successful organisations have employed (Day 1999). However, even this approach does not guarantee success. Change plans often produce unexpected outcomes (Miles, Coleman Jr. & Creed 1995; Woodward & Hendry 2004) which can cause senior management to abandon the change before it is fully implemented (Dawson 1996). One of the most common unexpected consequences is the inaccurate estimate of resources (Fletcher & Taplin

2002; Shields 1999), especially time (Atkinson 2005; Mezias et al. 2001; Miles et al. 1995) as many senior managers do not allow enough time for the organisation to realise the plan's success (Armenakis et al. 1999; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Galpin 1996; Moran & Brightman 2000). In these instances the organisation is often quick to develop and attempt to implement a different plan, which only makes the entire situation worse (Beer & Eisenstat 1990). It is becoming evident that many organisations are beginning to view change attempts as excessive (Stensaker et al. 2002).

It is obvious how the plan is crucial to the success of the change. However, in most instances of change failure due to poor planning, middle managers are held responsible for a plan they had little input into (McConville & Holden 1999). A faulty plan design is not the only reason that major change fails. Middle managers may also be blamed for their inabilities to properly lead a change implementation.

2.3.2 Capabilities of Leaders

It is important that the middle managers are effective leaders of major change (Buchanan et al. 1999; Woodward & Hendry 2004). Middle managers are a familiar and credible source (Larkin & Larkin 1996) as they have spent more time interacting with lower level employees and are more in tune with their needs (Huy 2002) and emotions (Piasecka 2001). Thus, middle managers tend to get more accepting responses from frontline managers and workers, as their words and actions are more influential than those of senior managers (Harrington & Williams 2004). Actions alone are not enough to create a good leader of change.

Leading major organisational change is one of the most complex and difficult jobs any manager will encounter in their career (Van De Ven & Poole 1995). Middle managers especially need the skills required to cope with the demands of leading major change (Staehle & Schirmer 1992). Unfortunately, middle managers are often ill informed (Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Reichers et al. 1997) and confused about priorities during organisational change (Balogun 2003). Their roles are often ambiguous and contradictory, causing many to feel inadequate (Holden & Roberts 2004; McConville & Holden 1999). When middle managers lack the skills of an effective change manager and the change fails, they are often blamed (Wanous,

Reichers & Austin 2000).

There is no substitute for good leadership (Burdett 1999) and expertise is necessary for all managers to eventually help implement the change (Doyle et al. 2000). However, for middle managers in particular, training, development and support can be provided to increase their abilities to cope (McConville & Holden 1999; Senior 2000). Those responsible for the plan design must ensure that those responsible for leading the implementation are properly prepared. Unfortunately, even well developed leadership capabilities may not be enough. All employees, including middle managers, choose the actions they perform during major change.

2.3.3 Action Choices

Employees who resist can cripple the organisation's progress towards change (Atkinson 2005; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Petrini & Hultman 1995; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005). Middle managers in particular are often blamed for the failure of a change due to their resistant actions (Davis & Fisher 2002; Huy 2002; Reger et al. 1994; Scandura et al. 2000). Every employee (including middle managers) must decide individually how to act during the change. (Miller et al. 1994) They may choose to comply or act *alternatively* (hinder or promote) (see Figure 1-1). Unfortunately, compliance isn't always chosen, but rather *alternative actions* may be. Most of the literature refers to the hindering (resistant) actions performed during a change. However, it must be noted that middle managers occasionally choose to actively promote the change as well. In these instances they go 'above and beyond' the call of duty to help the change succeed.

Hindering actions performed by middle managers are particularly detrimental as the managers are not only performing the actions, but are influencing the actions of others (lower level employees and peers) as well (Balogun 2003; Reis & Pena 2001). The impact of hindering actions is widely recorded in the literature, with promotional actions being rarely discussed. However, there is no satisfactory examination of *what* or *why* middle manager might choose hindering actions (Tsoukas 2005; Young 2000) or promotional actions. While no work has provided a comprehensive compilation of reasons to act *alternatively*, some has focused on individual reasons. The following are examples of these limited studies:

- organisational fairness or justice (Brockner 1992; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis 2002)
- psychological contract violations (Newell & Dopson 1996; Pate, Martin & McGoldrick 2003; Sparrow & Cooper 1998; Strebel 1998)
- the role of communication (Proctor & Doukakis 2003)
- employees' argumentativeness (Infante 1981; Levine & Badger 1993)
- empowerment (Morris 1995)
- participation (Weber & Weber 2001)
- job satisfaction (Hodson 1991; Sachau & Houlhan 1999)
- locus of control (Kets De Vries 1999)
- organisational culture and climate (Eby et al. 2000; Toulson & Smith 1994)
- past history with change (Band 1995; Eby et al. 2000; Kanter 1985; Mabin, Forgeson & Green 2001; Maurer 1997).

While middle managers are accountable for their own actions, in some cases they are held accountable for lower level employee hindering actions as well (McConville & Holden 1999). While hindering actions are often blamed for the failure of change, it is actually rare for resistance to be widespread, quite often consisting of the actions of only a few managers (Kotter 1996). It is recommended that plan designers ensure that the change plan addresses the values and attitudes of relevant employees (middle managers), not just processes (Edwards & Sohal 2003; Harrington & Williams 2004) and does not allow for the actions of a small group to impede a change's success. The failure of major change due to the actions middle managers choose to perform is the one of focus for the remainder of this research.

A better explanation of how action choices may be of importance during organisational change is provided in a later section (2.4.7) regarding implementation. It isn't just enough to *know* that middle manager actions may impact on the success of a change. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model is presented to help explain *how* the actions of middle managers are relevant to a major change implementation. The next part of this review focuses on the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model and its explanation of major organisational change.

2.4 Stability ↔ Pursuance Model

While no single model has adequately represented the entire organisational change process, many have covered portions of the process. Combining these different models led to the development of the Stability ↔ Pursuance model. Twelve models (listed in Appendix I) were examined to determine where similarities existed and how the differences could be combined to form a more comprehensive model (Waclawski 2002). This process of combining different model components produced the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model.

The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model was developed for this work to show how the different topics in the major organisational change literature are related. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model does not outline a single method of change, but rather presents the different options available.

2.4.1 Overview

As the title indicates, there are two states in this model, stability and change (Figure 2-2). Stability is the state the organisation operates in until it determines that it is necessary to change. The organisation then moves to the Change Pursuance State, the main part of the model, consisting of 3 cyclical stages: Evaluation, Plan Development and Implementation (Figure 2-3). In the Change Pursuance State, the organisation determines what changes are needed, how they will be implemented and how they will be evaluated.

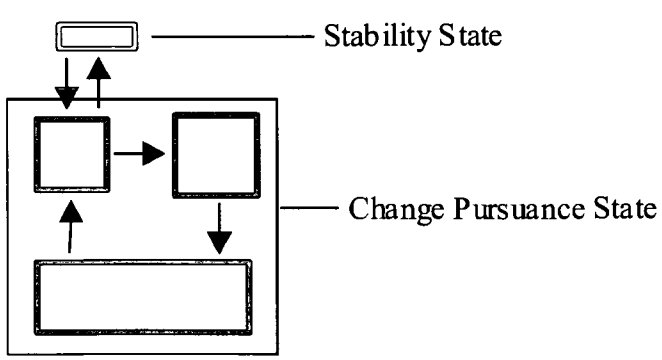


Figure 2-2. The two states of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model.

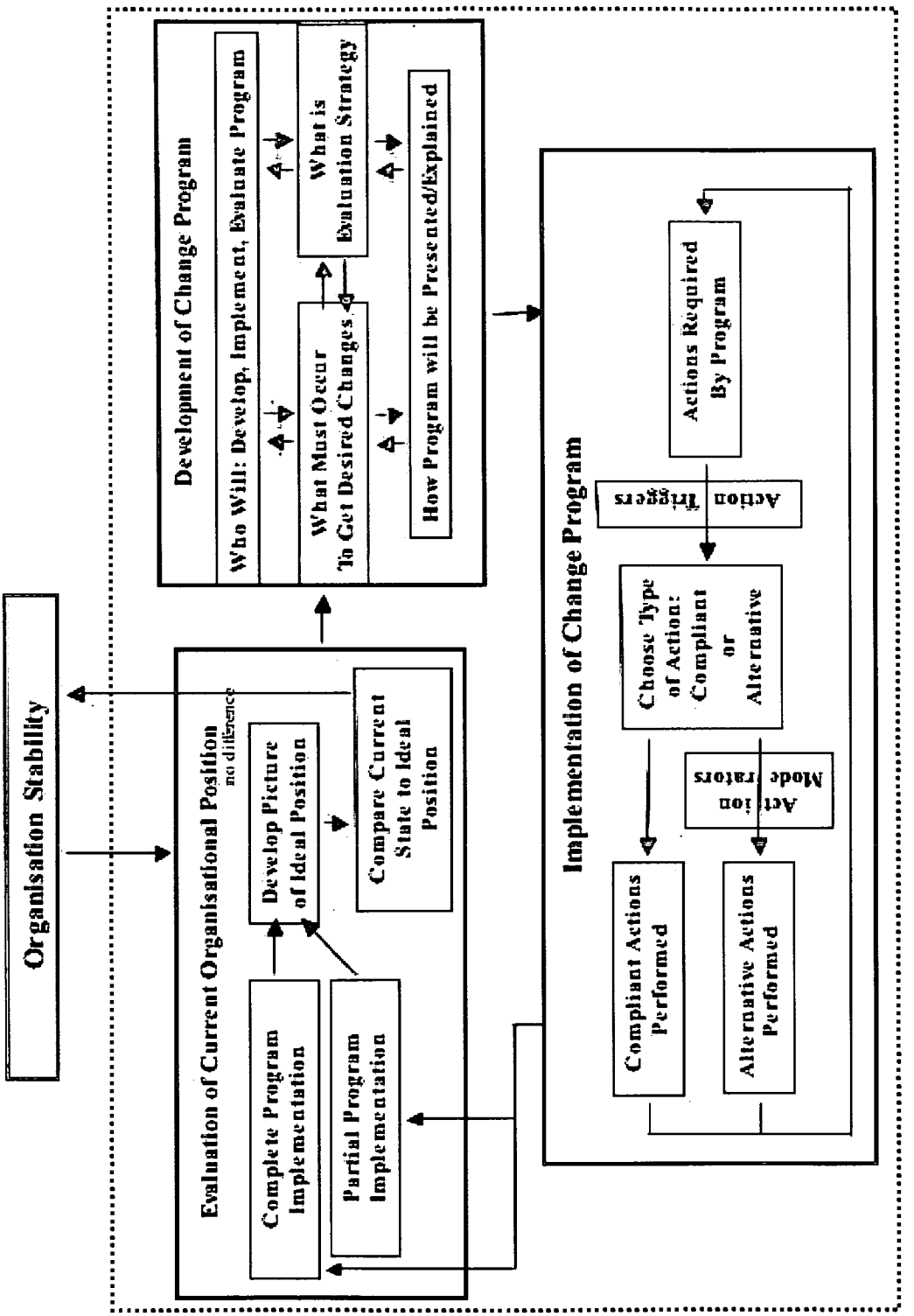


Figure 2-3. Complete Stability ↔ Pursuance Model

Many unexpected things can happen during implementation, requiring repeated evaluation, resulting in change being a very cyclical process (Moran & Brightman 2000). An organisation will cycle through the different phases numerous times during the program. Delays, reversals and oscillations during change are expected (Amis, Slack & Hinings 2004). Evaluation and plan alternations will continue until the organisation reaches an acceptable position. The organisation will then move back to the Stability State until another event requires further change.

2.4.2 Application of Model

Senior managers most often initiate major organisational change. However, frontline employees or middle managers may also drive change, usually with a higher success rate (Beer & Eisenstat 1990). The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model is designed to assist any level of initiators. Each group driving change must go through the same phases regardless of their level in the organisation. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model does not dictate the best method, but emphasises the fundamentals needed for developing a change program.

The following explanation of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model is from the point of view of a single change. Using a single change is necessary to provide a thorough description of each aspect of the model, but results in a very static representation. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model is actually freer flowing than it appears.

The explanation of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model begins in the Stable State and moves to the Change Pursuance State. In the Change Pursuance State each phase is discussed in the order that it would initially be encountered in the change process. First the Evaluation Phase is described, then the Development Phase and finally the Implementation Phase. In practice these phases would be cycled through repeatedly.

Each state and phase contains the following explanatory sections:

Previous Model Support – how other models contributed to the development of the state or phase of the model.

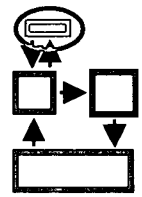
Movement into – when an organisation would move into the state or phase.

Goals – what should be achieved in the state or phase.

Events – the events that will take place during the state or phase.

Movement out of – why the organisation would leave the state or phase and enter the next.

2.4.3 Stable State



An organisation in the Stable State does not attempt to implement any change, rather is it attempting to develop the processes adopted in the last major change into new habits. Minor adjustments, or 'tinkering and kludgering' (Abrahamson 2000) may be done during this time, but no substantial changes will be attempted.

There has been a recent trend towards continuous change becoming the norm for organisations (Leana & Barry 2000; Sauser & Sauser 2002; Stace & Dunphy 2001; White 2000) based on the view that the only way to succeed in today's rapidly changing world is to continuously change (Oxtoby at al. 2002; Sauser & Sauser 2002). The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model provides an alternative view, by discouraging continuous *major* change, as organisations need time to achieve success with the programs they do attempt (Abrahamson 2000). Rather, the punctuated equilibrium model of change (Romanelli & Tushman 1994) with periods of stability interspersed with periods of major change is used. Of course, the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model could be used for continuous change.

While continuous change is the norm in some organisations, it results in cynicism as well as 'burnt out' and unsupportive managers (Abrahamson 2000; Buchanan et al. 1999; Doyle et al. 2000; Stensaker et al. 2002). Research has found managers that suffered initiative fatigue automatically responded to new ideas with cynicism (Buchanan et al. 1999). The pace of change has made many managers 'tired' of change (Doyle et al. 2000). Change overload can be experienced quite quickly (Armenakis et al. 1999), especially when several overlapping initiatives are run at one time (Doyle et al. 2000). Additionally, change designers need to understand that employees in lower level positions experience change as excessive before higher level managers do (Stensaker et al. 2002).

Periods of stability are necessary for a number of reasons. Firstly, in order to

combat the possibility of change being experienced as excessive, there should be at least brief periods of stability between major change attempts (Moran & Brightman 2000; Waddell & Sohal 1998). Secondly, many employees are more comfortable with continuity (Burchell 2003; Doyle et al. 2000) as they are better able to manage relationships in predictable, stable environments (Leana & Barry 2000). Another more important reason for stability involves institutionalisation (Armenakis et al. 1999). New processes need to become anchored, becoming 'the way we do things around here' (Brockner 1992; Kotter 1995). Finally, all living systems tend to move towards equilibrium (Schein 2002). Employees understand more change may be needed in the future, but they do expect a period of stability between major change programs (Doyle et al. 2000). Unfortunately the importance of stability is frequently ignored or downplayed (Burchell 2003).

Previous Model Support

While the word *stability* is rarely used, many models have identified a similar term at the end of the change process. Examples include *freezing* (Lewin 1947, 1952), *institutionalisation* (Armenakis et al. 1999; Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Senior 2000) *anchoring* (Kotter 1995, 1996; Kotter & Cohen 2002), *embedding* (Mento, Jones & Dirndorfer 2002) and *equilibrium* (Nortier 1995). All of these models emphasised the importance of 'setting' the change so it became a permanent method of operating. The implication is that no further major changes should be attempted until the current change is 'set'.

Similarly, several of the aforementioned models address the issue of leaving the Stability State when change is needed. This movement is referred to as unfreezing (Lewin 1947, 1952), dissolution (Tessler 1989), readiness for change (Armenakis et al. 1999) or separation (Nortier 1995). These models assumed that an organisation does not constantly change and needs to prepare itself before attempting to change.

Movement into

An organisation moves into the Stability State from the Change Pursuance State (the Evaluation Phase in particular) when the evaluation of the organisation shows there is no need for more change. The current operating position (at the time of the evaluation) is acceptable as long as employees do not revert back to previous ways

of performing. Movement into the Stability State means employees should be informed that the change program is complete, but continued monitoring will ensure that the new ways of working are maintained (Armenakis et al 1999; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Galpin 1996).

Goals

The goal of the Stability State is to ensure employees continue operating under the methods recently adopted and altered roles become the new standard (Feldman 2003; Macri, Tagliaventi & Bertolotti 2002; Waddell & Sohal 1998). All employees are given time to recover from the stress and shock of the change and adjust to the new methods both personally and professionally.

Events

While in the Stability State nothing radically new or different will be required of employees. The organisation does not attempt to pursue any major change Employees will convert the new methods of operating into habit, thereby increasing productivity (Macri et al. 2002; Waddell & Sohal 1998).

While in the Stability State, organisations may implement some minor changes. These minor changes are necessary to keep the organisation on track, but do not substantially alter how it operates (Abrahamson 2000; Stace & Dunphy 2001). Even though they are not as 'earth shattering' as major change, such minor changes should be kept to a minimum.

Even though the organisation is not pursuing major change at this time, stability does not mean complacency. The organisation must scan for events, internal or external, that warrant evaluation of the current organisational position, a task often performed by middle managers (Currie 2000; Floyd & Wooldridge 1994; Pappas, Flaherty & Wooldridge 2003, 2004). A tolerance level should be set to determine what size shifts require a full evaluation of the organisation's position (Reger et al. 1994). Minor shifts may be dealt with by slightly adjusting processes or methods slightly. However, major shifts in the environment (internal or external) should trigger the organisation to move into the Change Pursuance State to evaluate the situation more closely.

Movement out of

An organisation moves out of the Stability State into the Change Pursuance State (the Evaluation Phase in particular) when major events have been identified. These events are obvious changes to the internal or external environment and require the organisation to review its beliefs and position regarding the organisation's operating environment. It may be that the current incremental (minor change) approach of the Stability State is no longer adequate (Reger et al. 1994).

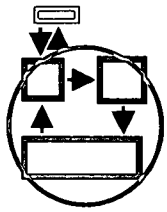
Internal events are those that affect the organisation directly and solely. For example, key employees leaving an organisation take their knowledge, experience and influence with them (Huy 2002). While the departure of a key employee alone may not alter the organisation's overall performance, it may affect vital processes or methods in the organisation. The appointment of a new CEO will often trigger a movement to the Evaluation Phase (Beugelsdijk & Slangen 2001; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Romanelli & Tushman 1994). Another internal event is the relapse of employees who revert back to previous processes (Moran & Brightman 2000).

External events include everything from increasing material costs to global economic changes. While some of these events may seem quite straightforward, they are not always easy to detect. Sometimes an organisation must experience a crisis in order to recognise that change is needed (Barnett & Pratt 2000). Often in these cases, it is not a single event that requires action, but a combination of several events. However, a proactive approach is always more effective than a reactive one (Victor & Franckeiss 2002). An organisation would be best served by periodically evaluating its position even if no environmental changes force the issue. Periodic evaluations allow those in charge to identify concerns for the future and possibly introduce major change in a more productive way than by waiting for a crisis situation (Barnett & Pratt 2000).

Some organisations build the movement from the Stability State to the Evaluation Phase into their change plan (Waddell & Sohal 1998). This period of stability allows the gains of the change to be fully realised before performing a full

evaluation (Doyle et al. 2000) and allows the organisation to learn from it (Burchell 2003; Doyle et al. 2000).

2.4.4 Change Pursuance State



The three phases in the Change Pursuance State make up the change program: Evaluation of Current Organisational Position, Development of Change Plan and Implementation of Change Plan (see Figure 2-3). The organisation will cycle through these phases until the desired position is obtained. However, the entire organisation does not need to be in the same phase at one time. Since major organisational change affects so many areas of an organisation, the plan is often broken into manageable parts, and the organisation may be implementing one part while planning for another part to implement in the future. It is even possible that different divisions or groups are on slightly different change schedules. No matter how the program is devised, every phase will be cycled through several times, as appropriate.

Previous Model Support

The Change Pursuance State incorporates three cyclical phases of change. Several of the previously existing models refer to the cyclical process relating the different phases; measuring, reinforcing, and refining (Galpin 1996). These models recommend that an organisation use the gains of the changes made thus far to encourage more change (Kotter 1995, 1996; Kotter & Cohen 2002) by monitoring and adjusting the plan in response to the changes already attempted (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). Using the knowledge from previous attempts (either in the current program or previous programs) to design a better plan for the future is the basic premise of the Change Pursuance State.

Movement into

The Change Pursuance State is entered from the Stability State when a change in the internal or external environment has been observed, or a set time has passed.

Goals

The goal of the organisation in the Change Pursuance State is to move from its current operating position to one better equipped for the environment. This new position will allow the organisation to better function in the future.

Events

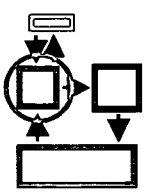
The Change Pursuance State events include everything related to the current major change. The plan will be developed, implemented and evaluated. All decisions and events related to change will happen in this state. The organisation will cycle through the three change phases until it reaches its desired position.

The organisation will review its strategy in the Evaluation Phase to determine if it is appropriate for the future. If there are flaws with the strategy, or the environment precludes its usefulness, a new strategy will be developed. In developing this strategy, specific targets or areas for change will be identified. These will be addressed by the plan created in the Development Phase. Until this point the organisation has not experienced any changes; it has been only a planning process. The actual changes are attempted in the Implementation Phase. The changes will then continue until it is time to evaluate them. The Evaluation Phase identifies whether the organisation has responded to the change as expected and identifies areas requiring further adjustment or refinement (Galpin 1996). The appropriate modifications are made in the Development Phase and the Implementation Phase entered again. The cycling through phases continues until no further change in the organisation is required.

Movement out of

The organisation will remain in the Change Pursuance State, cycling through the three phases until it achieves a satisfactory position. An organisation does not always reach the *exact* desired position, but rather a position considered *good enough* for the current environment. Once this position has been obtained, the organisation will move to the Stability State where it will continue to operate until another need for change is detected.

2.4.5 Evaluation of Current Organisational Position (Evaluation Phase)



The Evaluation of Current Organisational Position (Evaluation Phase) is the first and last phase in the Change Pursuance State (Figure 2-3). The organisation examines the environment, its competitors and its own operating position. This examination determines whether the organisation needs to make adjustments or if it should move to the Stable State.

Previous Model Support

Only a few models identified the need to evaluate the organisation's current position *before* attempting major organisational change. Identifying the problem is an extremely important part of the entire organisational change process (Waddell, Cummings & Worley 2000). It includes diagnosing the current situation (Galpin 1996; Senior 2000) by gathering data to make a preliminary diagnosis (Waddell et al. 2000). It is necessary to evaluate the organisation's current climate (Mento et al. 2002) to develop a joint diagnosis of the problem (Waddell et al. 2000).

These models also mentioned the importance of evaluation *after* implementation. By gathering data after the action (Waddell et al. 2000) for assessment (Senior 2000) the organisation may measure the change's impact (Mento et al. 2002). The assessment results may then be used to promote further changes (Kotter 1995, 1996; Kotter & Cohen 2002) by altering the plan (Victor & Franckeiss 2002).

Movement into

The initial movement into the Evaluation Phase is from the Stability State. The Evaluation Phase is also entered after the Implementation Phase, and entry may occur several times during the change program, or only once at the end.

Goals

There are two goals in the Evaluation phase. The first is to determine how far away the current operating position is from the ideal operating position (Galpin 1996; Reger et al. 1994). The second goal is to determine which aspects of the change plan have thus far been successful. The Evaluation Phase is where the organisation determines if the changes implemented have produced the desired results (Galpin 1996; Moran & Brightman 2000). Identifying successful and unsuccessful strategies will help the organisation improve its ability to adapt in the future.

Events

There are two major events of action in the Evaluation Phase (Figure 2-4). The first is the comparison of the current organisational position to the ideal position. The second is the evaluation of the changes thus far attempted. Both of these events need to be quantified to aid in the development or alteration of the change plan.

The initial events in this Evaluation Phase will usually be performed by a small group of employees, usually senior managers, who identified environmental events that warrant evaluation. It may also be a group that recognised the need for change and instigated the evaluation process. However, for lower level employees to gain access to some of the information required for evaluation, they will need to gain the support of at least one key senior employee (Mezias et al. 2001). Regardless of who is in the evaluating group, the evaluation should be performed in a specific thorough manner (Galpin 1996).

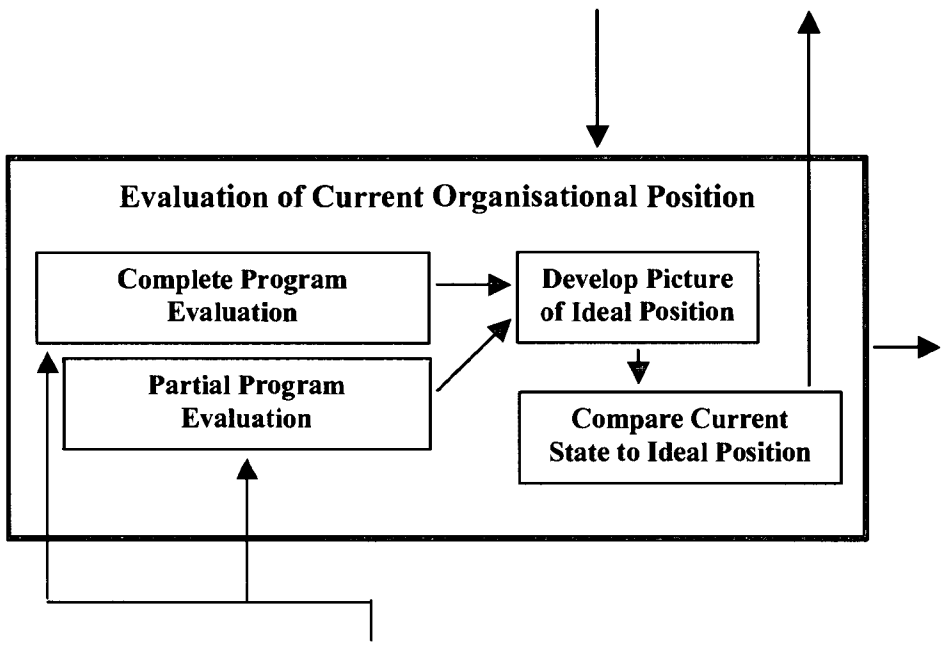


Figure 2-4. The Evaluation Phase.

Identify Ideal Position and Compare to Current Position

Before an organisation attempts a major change initiative, it must determine if major change is even necessary (Stace & Dunphy 2001). This determination is made by comparing the current operating position to the desired operating position (Armenakis et al. 1993; Johnson 2004; Nadler & Tushman 1989; Senior 2000). An organisation may want to increase sales or profit, but such goals are meaningless without a starting point for comparison. Many organisations decide to change after determining only the desired operating position, when the decision should be based

on the difference between the current operating position and the desired operating position (Armenakis et al. 1993; Ragsdell 2000).

Before the current and desired operating positions can be compared, they must first be identified. Identifying these positions requires gathering information about the environment, competitors (if any) and how the organisation operates in relation (Nadler & Tushman 1989; Senior 2000). While this appears to be a simple enough process, it is really quite complex. Many organisations underestimate the importance of a detailed quality analysis (Ragsdell 2000). A great deal of effort is required to identify all of the information necessary for this analysis.

It is important to include economic or 'hard' measures as well as those based on organisational capacity, or 'soft' measures. These measures may result in different approaches to change, but both may be implemented in the same program if addressed appropriately (Beer & Eisenstat 1990). All measures need to be as specific and accurate as possible (Galpin 1996). The more detailed the analysis the easier the comparison will be.

Organisations need to tolerate minor differences. Attempting to convince employees to participate in a change that moves the organisation from the current position to a very similar ideal position is extremely difficult (Reger et al. 1994). Employees will only cooperate with the change only when they are shown that there is a valid need (Armenakis et al. 1993; Atkinson 2005; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Schein 2000). A valid need is required regardless of who is trying to implement the change.

Once this comparison has been completed the organisation moves out of the Evaluation Phase. If change is necessary, the specific differences identified will be very important in helping to develop the change plan (Oxtoby 1994). This comparison will be performed every time the organisation cycles through the Evaluation Phase. Successive comparisons will take less time to perform than the initial comparison as much of the necessary information has already been collected. Examining the current and desired operating positions is important to identify if the

organisation is on the right track. Only changes to the environment or the organisation need to be recognised.

The next section describes the Evaluation Phase portion entered from the Implementation Phase, rather than the Stability State.

Program Evaluation, Periodic and Final

Often an organisation will evaluate a major change even if the entire plan has not been implemented. This periodic evaluation will determine if progress is being made towards the desired operating position (Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Galpin 1996; Savery & Luks 2000). The timing and measures for these periodic evaluations are dictated in the change plan (Oxtoby 1994; Savery & Luks 2000; Stensaker et al. 2002). Set measures are used to determine if the organisation is responding as expected. If the changes are not producing the desired results, the organisation must be able to modify the change plan as necessary (Amis et al. 2004; Senior 2000).

The items being evaluated must remain relatively stable. It is necessary that the correct aspects are measured, which is quite difficult if changes are still being implemented. The length of time that changes should be halted may be fairly short; a day or week may be long enough, but a month may be necessary. It depends on the type of measures used. This brief break makes the evaluation more accurate and provides employees with feedback about how the change is progressing (Stensaker et al. 2002).

The periodic comparison between the current and desired operating positions is quite important. Even though the change is intended only to be affecting a certain area, an organisation usually experiences unexpected consequences (Doyle et al. 2000; Kanter 1985). The evaluation process is only useful if all results are analysed in a meaningful way (Oxtoby 1994).

It is essential that the measurements being used correlate to the changes being implemented (Currie 1999). Measures should concentrate on the organisation's progress towards its goals (Eitel 2004). There is little incentive for middle managers

to alter their actions when inaccurate measures are being used to evaluate their performance (Fenton-O'Creevy 1996). Financial measures are usually not the most appropriate (Fenton-O'Creevy 1996; Fletcher & Taplin 2002). Additionally continuously changing measures is as equally discouraging for employees (Holden & Roberts 2004).

During this phase, not only is the impact of the change evaluated, but the actions and behaviours of all employees as well. Actions are examined to determine which are beneficial to the change and which are detrimental. This examination allows the rest of the change plan to be redesigned for the best result (Atkinson 2005; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Piderit 2000; Waddell & Sohal 1998). The organisation should learn from its mistakes and successes to alter the plan to encourage more success (Doyle et al. 2000). Besides improving the current plan design, this information obtained can be retained for future change programs (Porras & Hoffer 1986).

The final program evaluation is very similar to the periodic program evaluations. The same process is followed, however, the final evaluation means that the changes have been fully implemented according to plan across the entire organisation. However, it is important to note that the final operating position may not be exactly the same as the desired position (Nortier 1995) however, as in the initial evaluation, too little difference between the positions will not be enough to encourage employees to support the change (Reger et al. 1994).

Organisations are advised to undertake periodic evaluations during the change program (as discussed before). However, many organisations do not heed this advice and only evaluate the change after it is fully implemented (Stensaker et al. 2002). Some organisations even plan to move to the Stability State for an extended period of time before evaluating the final impact of the change. This movement to the Stability State ensures that all effects of the plan are made visible before evaluating it (Waddell & Sohal 1998).

A final program evaluation may also be performed by organisations that have performed periodic evaluations. Instead of adjusting the plan for a continuation of the current change, the information gained from the final evaluation should be

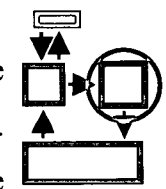
stored for future change programs. However, the most important aspect of the final evaluation is that it signifies an end to the cyclical change process. If there is no clearly defined end, the change may appear endless and confusing to employees (Eitel 2004; Moran & Brightman 2000).

Movement out of

The results of the Evaluation Phase will determine if an organisation moves to the Development Phase or the Stability State. The movement to the Development Phase occurs when change (or more change) is deemed necessary because the current organisational position differs too much from the desired position. The knowledge gained in evaluating the organisation (as well as that from previous change programs) is used to develop the change plan. The movement to the Development Phase is the most common departure from the Evaluation Phase as organisations should evaluate the changes that have been implemented regularly.

The second route out of the Evaluation Phase is out of the Change Pursuance State completely, returning to the Stability State. Movement to the Stability State occurs when the organisation's desired and actual positions are 'close enough'. Quite often an organisation will not reach its *exact* desired position, but the cost of more change is greater than the returns of obtaining the exact position desired. In such cases the major changes are halted and the organisation returns to the Stable State where minor changes may be implemented to fine tune the organisation's position (Beugelsdijk & Slangen 2001).

2.4.6 Development of Change Plan (Development Phase)



The Development Phase is entered only when change is necessary. In this phase the plan to move the organisation into the correct position is developed (Figure 2-5). The Development Phase uses the information identified in the Evaluation Phase regarding the organisation's areas requiring change.

The first time the organisation is in this phase, it takes a great amount of time and effort to create a plan answering all of the necessary questions (which are listed below). Subsequent visits to this phase should be shorter, as only slight alterations to the plan should be necessary. Ideally, during the initial development phase,

alternate plans will also be devised in the event that the desired actions are not achieved during the implementation attempt.

Previous Model Support

Not all previous models have promoted the development of a change plan, but a few dedicated several steps to the process. The first step is to articulate the direction and purpose of the change (Mento et al. 2002; Victor & Franckeiss 2002) by developing a sensible vision (Kotter 1995, 1996; Kotter & Cohen 2002; Senior 2000). The vision and purpose then need to be described (Galpin 1996; Victor & Franckeiss 2002) and a plan of action created (Galpin 1996; Senior 2000; Victor & Franckeiss 2002; Waddell et al. 2000) with specific goals and details (Galpin 1996; Mento et al. 2002) that align structures, systems and incentives (Day 1999). If this is not the initial time in the phase, the lessons from the previous implementation and evaluation need to be integrated into the plan (Mento et al. 2002).

Movement into

After identifying the need for change in the Evaluation Phase, the organisation moves into the Development Phase. The organisation will cycle through this phase as many times as necessary until it reaches its final position. Even if the organisation performs periodic evaluations, and finds the plan working as expected, the Development Phase will be cycled through again to ensure that the rest of the plan will be just as successful.

Goals

There is only one goal in the Development Phase, to develop a successful change plan, one that is well designed and includes all of the relevant aspects. The development of a suitable change plan is crucial (Vakola & Nikolaou 2005) for avoiding faulty plan design failures (as discussed before in 2.3.1). The Development Phase is where the organisation creates a detailed and complete plan for leading a successful change (Ghoshal & Bartlett 2000; Tan & Tiong 2005)). The plan will include details regarding the roles employees will have during the implementation, how the changes will be evaluated, possible alternatives to the original plan if not initially successful, the timeline for the change and how the plan will be presented and explained to the employees.

Events

Advice for developing major change plans abounds, (Senior 2000), but there is little consensus regarding the process (Bamford & Forrester 2003). The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model provides four questions that must be answered to ensure the appropriate detail is in place for the plan:

- Who will develop, implement and evaluate the program?
- What must occur (and when) to get the desired changes?
- When and how will evaluation take place?
- How will the program be presented/explained to other employees?

The most difficult part of developing the plan lies in the fact that the answers for each question also depend on the answers to the other questions. This inter-dependency of answers creates a cyclical process. Cyclical here refers only to the revisiting of each question repeatedly in order to answer all four. It is impossible to answer any one question by itself. Cycling through the questions allows the answers to be jointly developed during the process, Figure 2-5:

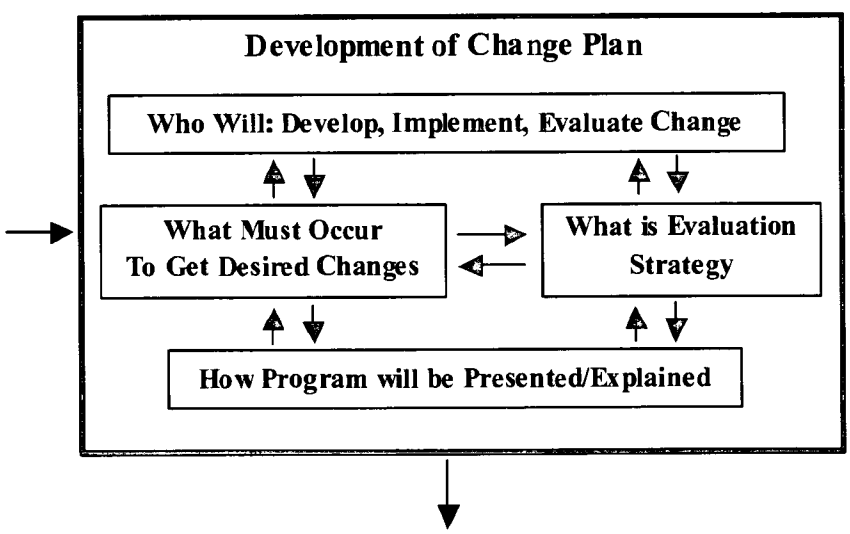


Figure 2-5. The Development Phase.

Regardless of whether the change is being pushed by senior managers from the top or by lower level employees from the bottom, all four questions need to be addressed in every change plan. The plan must be thorough and detailed enough so

that employees understand their role in the design, implementation and evaluation of the program and when they will be expected to act (Oxtoby 1994; Victor & Franckeiss 2002).

As every organisation is unique, there is no single method of change. Each organisation must decide what is right for it at the current time. To answer the questions, it is necessary to gather all relevant internal and external information. It is important to determine what is relevant internal information, because managers often wrongly believe they know all they should (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). The external information is necessary because it is difficult for organisation members to identify areas for adjustment when they are part of that organisation (Miles et al. 1995). However, it is easy to get caught up in all of the advice and recommendations available; so external information needs to be evaluated carefully for relevance (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Buchanan et al. 1999).

The implementation and evaluation phases are only as good as the plan (Fletcher & Taplin 2002). Even well designed plans often generate unintended consequences (Doyle et al. 2000). The possibility of unintended consequences is why information from a partial plan evaluation is extremely useful for altering the plan for further implementation (Amis et al. 2004; Senior 2000). However, knowing there will be opportunities to correct problems should not mean the process is rushed, and full care not taken in the initial planning phase (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). The questions are each discussed below, highlighting some of the more important considerations for each of the four questions.

Who Will Develop, Implement and Evaluate Change?

The final answer to this question will depend on answers from the other questions. Even so, the main group for developing the program needs to be identified early in the process. Regardless of who initiated the change, a design group must be organised (Galpin 1996). If the group leading the process to this point is from lower levels of the organisation, this is the time for them to enlist more senior members. Even though they have recognised the need for change, this group will be unable to plan and/or implement the change without senior manager support (Mezias et al. 2001).

The design group may consist of individuals who performed the initial evaluation or it may be a different group entirely. The design group may include consultants possessing organisational change knowledge and expertise (Lundberg & Young 2001; Reger et al. 1994), local experts in the organisation (Hartley, Benington & Binns 1997; Oxtoby 1994) including veteran executives, who are often the most successful change leaders (Huy 2002), or any combination. Some employees automatically reject ideas generated by external consultants (Day 1999; Proctor & Doukakis 2003). Others believe external consultants more because they provide an independent point of view (Galpin 1996) and can generate novel solutions (Maurer 1996). External consultants are often used to emphasise just how much the organisation needs to change (Armenakis et al. 1999; Schein 2002). In cases involving reduction in staff, or other potentially unpleasant news, external experts may be used to alleviate the guilt of senior managers (Beer & Nohria 2000; Kotter 1995). Additionally, external 'area experts' may be able to provide organisational members with the skills and knowledge necessary to produce an appropriate change plan (Armenakis et al. 1993). Leaders who are equipped to lead and implement change will help to overcome the second reason previously discussed for many failed change attempts (2.3.2), the inabilities of leaders.

The design group may form the core of the plan, but others should be accessed for their advice, ideas and support (Brockner 1992; Harrington & Williams 2004; Maurer 1996; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Proctor & Doukakis 2003; Reichers et al. 1997; Schein 2002; Stace & Dunphy 2001; Tan & Tiong 2005). If those with applicable knowledge (especially middle managers) are involved this encourages participation, support and ultimate success (Davis & Fisher 2002; King et al. 2001; Meyerson 2001; Miller et al. 1994; Moran & Brightman 2000; Spiker & Lesser 1995; Wooldridge & Floyd 1990). Even if the comments of others are not incorporated into the final plan, middle managers (and other employees) tend to be more supportive when given the opportunity to share their opinions (Larkin & Larkin 1996; Thornhill et al. 1997; Wooldridge & Floyd 1990).

Many of the employees targeted for assistance in the plan development process will also be important in the Implementation Phase. In order to promote successful

change, change leaders should come from within the organisation whenever possible (Armenakis et al. 1993) and ideally be devoted to the change process full time (Bashein & Markus 1994), though this rarely happens (Buchanan et al 1999; Molinsky 1999). It is important that appropriate and credible leaders in all relevant areas are identified regardless of whether the change is being pushed from the top or the bottom (Armenakis et al. 1999; Day 1999; Oxtoby 1994). These leaders represent the designers and the change plan for the rest of the organisation. The change leaders will be responsible for relaying relevant information and expectations to others, and then ensuring cooperation. These leaders also relay information back to the plan designers about what is working and being received well and what is not. By using numerous change leaders in lower managerial levels relevant information is passed through the organisation to all employees (Mezias et al. 2001). Besides being an efficient means of communication it is also an effective method as employees are most influenced by their immediate managers (Clampitt 2000; Larkin & Larkin 1996), especially the actions of their immediate manager (Victor & Franckeiss 2002).

After the Implementation Phase comes the evaluation. Once the evaluation details are determined, it is necessary to choose a group best able to perform the evaluation (Galpin 1996). If external change experts design the plan, the evaluation may be lesd by an internal group, especially if the evaluation involves financial and statistical measures. As a successful and thorough evaluation is crucial to the cycling of the change process, those involved in the evaluation should be prepared for the task well ahead of time (Galpin 1996; Oxtoby 1994; Savery & Luks 2000).

All of the answers to this question depend heavily on the answers to the other questions. The questions should be cycled through and answers changed depending on the progress of all questions being fully answered. Some of the key issues to be considered in the other questions are discussed below, beginning with *what* and *when* things must occur for the change to succeed.

What Must Occur (and When) to Get Desired Changes?

The answer to this question should include detailed information about the specific changes to be attempted (Brockner 1992; Marks & De Meuse 2005), their order

(Amis et al. 2004), expected timetables (Armenakis & Bedeian 1999; Galpin 1996), resources that will be needed (Galpin 1996) and alternative strategies in case the first attempt is not successful. This *what* and *when* question obviously requires information about who will be leading the implementation and the evaluation process.

The *what* and *when* question is the most complicated in the Development Phase. The Evaluation Phase identified what areas needed change, but not necessarily how they should change. The plan designers need to do a great deal of research to understand how the organisation operates and what changes could be made to improve its functioning. General ideas are not good enough (Galpin 1996). The design team must break down the goals into manageable aspects to implement (Brockner 1992). Most employees will need to alter their way of working to help the organisation succeed in changing. Although plan designers have access to advice about the process, it is often not coherent.

Plan designers need to sift through the available advice to determine what is best for their current situation. Specific changes not only have to be identified, but also matched to a timeline. While the timeline may be flexible, it should serve as a guide to when things will be happening. Major organisational change is a long and involved process (Kotter 1995). Employees who have more information about the entire process, are going to respond better than those lacking information (Ashford 1988; Holden & Roberts 2004; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005).

This question, *'What must occur and when to get desired changes?'* also refers to the types of support that are put in place for the employees. Major change is a very stressful event (Ashford 1988) and employees may need resources to help them cope personally and professionally.

Again the answers to this question will depend on the answers to the other three questions. Issues relating directly to evaluation are addressed in a specific question as evaluation does not related directly to the implementation answers needed for this question, *'What must occur and when to get desired changes?*. However, the

answers to the evaluation question will influence the timeline and actions of the implementation.

When and How Will Evaluation Take Place?

The '*When and How Will Evaluation Take Place?*' is an important question as measures to be used in the Evaluation Phase need to be determined well in advance of employing them (Galpin 1996; Oxtoby 1994; Savery & Luks 2000). Evaluation drives the entire change process. The Evaluation Phase describes how the organisation *wants* to operate in comparison to how it is *currently* operating. Through this analysis, several areas for improvement and change should have been identified and used to guide the initial plan development. Future evaluations will provide information about the plan relative to the results. These evaluation results will allow the plan to be altered before further implementation is attempted (Armenakis et al. 1999; Galpin 1996; Savery & Luks 2000).

Unfortunately, evaluation of the change's progress is often overlooked in many change programs (Buchanan et al. 1999). Organisations often fail to measure the results of the change (Currie 1999; Doyle et al. 2000; Eitel 2004). Organisations have regularly used old performance indicators which completely ignore the change's impact (Fenton-O'Creevy 1996; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Taplin 2001). The use of indicators show why it is important to identify aspects of the organisation that will be impacted by the change (Johnson 2004) so that appropriate benchmarks for progress may be designed (Day 1999; Galpin 1996). Identifying the indicators requires answers from the other questions. In particular, information about the types and times of implementation will influence the evaluation measures chosen.

The design group is responsible for determining which measures are best for this particular change as there are many to chose from (Galpin 1996). Such decisions will only be possible once all of the different aspects change will affect have been identified (Oxtoby 1994). It is important that the evaluation plan is as specific and detailed as possible (Galpin 1996; Moran & Brightman 2000). Identifying the appropriate measures may mean internal experts or possible even external experts should be consulted (Marks & De Meuse 2005). It is important that in addition to

the 'harder' economic and organisational measures there is consideration of the internal or 'softer' types of variables such as performance ratings, absenteeism or attitudes and perceptions (Bamford & Forrester 2003; Mossholder, Settoon, Armenakis & Harris 2000). Softer measures could identify issues of anxiety and perceptions of justice (Paterson & Hartel 2000) but are much more difficult to obtain and are less precise (Senior 2000). However, both types of measures should be incorporated into the evaluation.

Once the measures are determined, it is necessary to decide when the evaluation(s) will take place (Galpin 1996; Oxtoby 1994; Savery & Luks 2000; Stensaker et al. 2002). Evaluation(s) could be performed after a set amount of time or a set portion of the plan has been implemented (Floyd & Wooldridge 1992). It is important to remember that ongoing evaluations ensure that progress is being made towards the goal position (Day 1999; Galpin 1996; Moran & Brightman 2000).

The last question in this phase may not be as obviously important as is identifying the leaders and details of the implementation and evaluation. The last question in this section is not necessarily last in importance. However, it does require numerous answers from the other questions to complete it. The importance of presenting the program to all employees (including those partially involved in the development phase) is discussed in the next section.

How Will Change Program be Presented and Explained to Other Employees?

'How Will Change Program be Presented and Explained to Other Employees?' is a key question as the way information is communicated will greatly affect how employees react to the plan (Armenakis & Harris 2002; Di Pofi 2002, Tan & Tiong 2005). The method of discovery (Hay & Hartel 2000), message source and content (Galpin 1996; Miller et al. 1994) affect how employees perceive the change and change leaders (Galpin 1996).

Employees often know that change is imminent, whether through the grapevine or due to the appearance of consultants. Once the planning phase has begun, the communication issue should be addressed (Galpin 1996; Kotter & Schlesinger 1979), if for no other reason than to define the beginning of the change (Moran &

Brightman 2000). Information about the initial Evaluation Phase; how the organisation needs to change to match the changing environment, the goals of the change and how the evaluation will be handled should be announced (Clampitt 2000; Stensaker et al. 2002; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). The information provided will guide employees' expectations about the outcomes of the change (Miller et al. 1994). Full details do not need to be provided at this time; rather, employees should be assured that as more details become available, they will be passed on. Employees who are gradually introduced to the change and allowed time to warm up to the idea are more likely to receive the announcement positively (Doyle et al. 2000; Paterson & Hartel 2000; Marks & De Meuse 2005). Employees who are surprised or shocked with the initial announcement of change are more apt to react negatively (Wanous et al 2000), by attempting to hinder the change (Kanter 1985). Surprises may even possibly result in a loss of trust in the middle managers responsible for the change implementation (Eitel 2004).

Relaying information about the change program is really an attempt to 'sell' the change. It requires thoughtful and deliberate choices about what is shared, by whom and when (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill & Lawrence 2001; Floyd & Wooldridge 1997). It is up to the plan designers as to how they will proceed. There are different levels of information sharing (Maurer 2000), and it will be difficult to determine when the different information should be shared with employees. Less information may be appropriate due to the organisation's specific circumstances (Floyd & Wooldridge 1992); however, too little information may make employees feel 'out of the loop' (Campi 1992; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Miller et al. 1994) and encourage the production of rumours to fill voids (Atkinson 2005; Brockner 1992; Larkin & Larkin 1996; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Reichers et al. 1997). On the other hand, sharing too much information may cause employees to become overwhelmed by the complexity (Burdett 1999).

It may be best to share details only as they become relevant (Stensaker et al. 2002). These strategic 'doses' allow employees to have an understanding of current changes without becoming overwhelmed (Miller et al. 1994). If this is the method chosen, it is important that updates about the change are provided often (Bashein & Markus 1994). Employees want information not only about upcoming change

implementations, but also progress reports of previous aspects (Reichers et al. 1997). It is also important employees have a full understanding of the relevance of individual aspects, and their actions in relevance to the 'big picture' (Brockner 1992; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Galpin 1996).

While *what* is being shared is important, so is *who* will be providing the information. The most popular method of information sharing is the cascading approach, where each employee hears about the change from their supervising manager (Galpin 1996). Employees' most important and credible source for information is their supervising manager (Clampitt 2000). The stronger the relationship between the bearer of news and the receiver, the better (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). Whether formally given the role or not, middle managers often find themselves responsible for communication about the change with their staff (Balogun 2003). Unfortunately these managers are not always in the best position to provide relevant information about the change (Clampitt 2000), and the quality and quantity of information is often corrupted as it travels through the hierarchical levels (Jackson & Humble 1994).

Change plans should be announced and explained organisation wide. Plan designers should attempt to over communicate (Brockner 1992; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Tsoukas 2005). By using numerous channels (newsletters, memos, formal meetings, casual conversations etc), the designers ensure everyone receives relevant information through their preferred medium (Reichers et al. 1997). Repeating the information in several ways greatly increases the odds that everyone will at least hear the core message (Clampitt 2000), which will in turn increase the possibility of a successful outcome (Gabel 2002).

Regardless of *who* relays the information, *how* they do it is more important. It is essential that the communication process is visibly open and honest (Band 1995; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Galpin 1996; Marks & De Meuse 2005). People know when they are being lied to (Burdett 1999; Conger, Kanungo & Menon 2000). Employees prefer 'I don't know' (Conger et al 2000) and unpleasant news rather than nothing or worse yet, lies (Thornhill et al. 1997). It is important to communicate only facts (Larkin & Larkin 1996) and change leaders should expect

employees to seek out information to verify these facts (Balogun 2003; Petrini & Hultman 1995). Change leaders may assume that they are providing all of the information employees need, but this is often not correct (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). Regardless of how well the plan is designed and communicated, employees are going to have questions. Having their questions answered helps to meet their informational needs (Paterson & Hartel 2000) which means they can spend less time worrying and more time trying to implement the change.

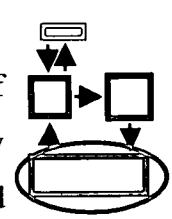
By the end of the communication process, employees should understand their individual roles in the change (Atkinson 2005; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). All employees should also understand how their roles relate to those of others and their importance in the overall change (Galpin 1996; Moran & Brightman 2000).

Once all of these questions have been cycled through and answered the plan should be quite complete. However, upon re-entry to this phase the questions will all need to be examined again to determine if a different approach is necessary. Re-entry to this phase when unexpected results are found is where the back-up plans are crucial.

Movement out

Once the change plan has been developed the organisation will move out of the Development Phase into the Implementation Phase. The complete change plan will contain detailed answers for each question. It outlines who will be responsible for what actions, when these need to be performed and how the changes will be evaluated. Additionally, alternative strategies are addressed in case a periodic evaluation shows that the original plan is not producing the expected results. Finally the plan contains details about how the above information will be presented and explained to the employees.

2.4.7 Implementation of Change Plan (Implementation Phase)



In this phase, employees are asked to change from their old methods and ways of working to new ones by implementing the plan developed (Galpin 1996). It is now that many change programs fail. Even though the planning process was detailed and thorough, that does not ensure that the plan will be implemented without difficulty. For this reason, regular evaluation and plan alterations are required. Additionally,

the actions of employees, middle managers in particular, may also cause the change to fail as discussed before (2.3.3).

Previous Model Support

The Implementation Phase has been identified in other models by many different names including *implementation* (Senior 2000), *moving* (Lewin 1947, 1952), *passage* (Tessler 1989), *adoption* (Armenakis et al. 1999), *delivering* (Victor & Franckeiss 2002), *rebirth* (Nortier 1995), even *rolling out* (Galpin 1996) and *taking action* (Waddell et al. 2000). Regardless of name, the change process must be sustained until the organisation has moved to an acceptable position (Day 1999).

Movement into

The organisation moves into The Implementation Phase once the plan has been completely developed. The *who, what, when* and *how* questions have all been answered, as well as several others, and now need to be implemented (Figure 2-6).

Goals

The goal of the Implementation Phase is for members of the organisation to implement the change plan as directed. The information necessary will be provided to all employees regarding their roles in the change. The employees will then all be required to perform the actions necessary to attempt to get the desired change. Since change is so complicated, compliance is expected, as small deviations from the plan may have unexpected consequences.

Events

Little of the literature cited in this section focuses solely on middle managers, rather on employees in general. Middle managers are a type of employee and the focus of this work, thus implementation events are described in terms of 'middle managers'.

The Implementation Phase contains yet another cyclical process, similar to the Affective Events Theory of Weiss & Cropanzano (1996). The cyclical process in this phase acknowledges that middle managers have the ability to evaluate the current situation at any time and adjustment their actions to suit (Mezias et al. 2001; Miller et al. 1994; Woodward & Hendry 2004). This cyclical decision making process is shown in Figure 2-6.

Actions Required by Change Program

Upon moving into the Implementation Phase middle managers need to be provided with information about their role as designated in the change plan. This information needs to be detailed enough for middle managers to understand the actions required of them and when they must be performed (Atkinson 2005; Oxtoby 1994; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). It is crucial that middle managers understand how their actions fit into the plan; otherwise they won't know what actions are required to help the change succeed (Brockner 1992; Galpin 1996; Folger & Skarlicki 1999).

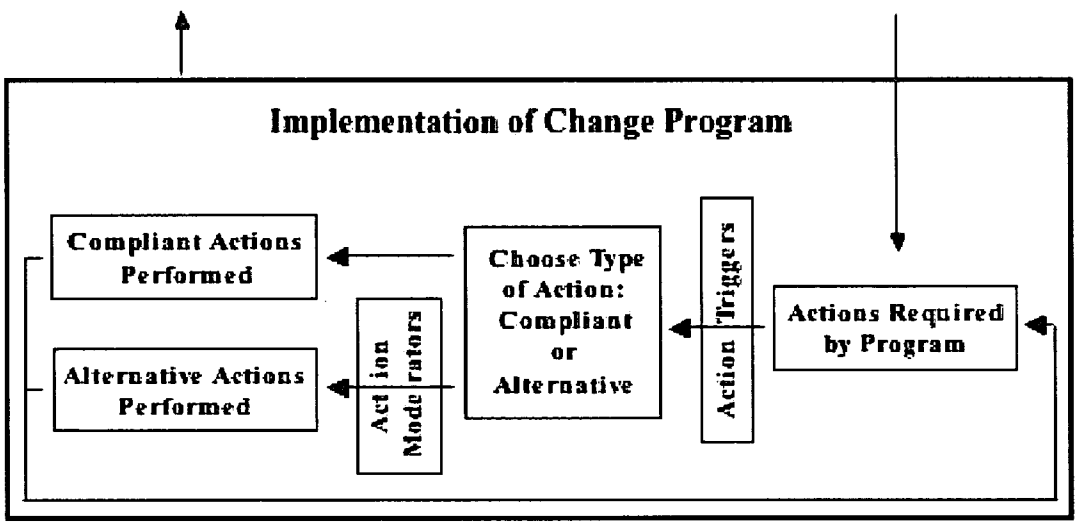


Figure 2-6. The Implementation Phase.

The cyclical process of this phase begins with learning about the actions required. These must be relayed before middle managers can make decide to comply with the requests or not. The process used to choose the *type* of action performed is explained in the next section.

Choosing the Actions to Perform

The following sections are presented in a simplified manner as compared to the complexities of the actual decision making process. However, choosing how to act is extremely complex and not the main focus of this thesis. Rather action triggers and their influence on middle managers are the focus. This section serves only to provide an overview of the role action triggers play in the decision to act.

The choices available to middle managers in the Implementation phase relate to the third reason of failure for many organisational change attempts (2.3.3). There are two main *types* of actions, compliant and *alternative* (promotional or hindering). The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model proposes a decision making process (Figure 2-6) that explains how middle managers decide which actions to perform during implementation.

A middle manager's decision making process first begins with an event, learning about their roles in the change (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). After learning about their roles, an evaluation of the impact of the change on middle managers (Woodward & Hendry 2004; Weiss & Cropanzano 1996), on the organisation and on others is made. This evaluation will result in emotions and potentially moods related to the change which may lead to actions being performed (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). This evaluation essentially means middle managers will decide whether they will comply, promote or hinder the change (Miller et al. 1994). Compliant actions will be performed as long as the impact of the change is within acceptable parameters (which are unknown at this time), see Figure 2-7. If the impact of the change goes beyond the acceptable 'limits', an *alternative action* (hindering or promotional) may be chosen. This decision making process will be repeatedly revisited as the change progresses and more information becomes available (Paterson & Hartel 2000).

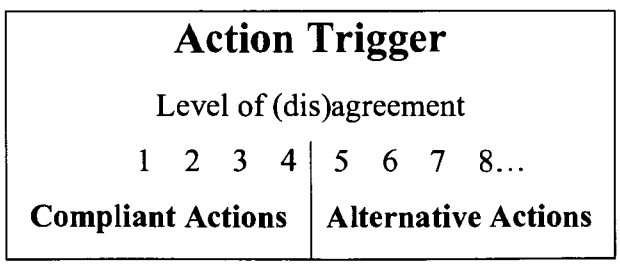


Figure 2-7. The relationship between action triggers and the type of actions chosen.

This decision making process is important as middle managers are not passive recipients but rather they actively decide how to act (Miller et al. 1994; Woodward & Hendry 2004), resulting in a range of actions being performed during major organisational change (Saunders et al. 2002). Ideally (from the plan designers' point of view), middle managers would always comply and perform the requested actions. However, it is common for middle managers to have different views of the change from those of the designers (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979; Merron 1993; Woodward & Hendry 2004). This discrepancy is usually due to a difference between the actual situation and middle managers' perceptions of the situation (Mezias & Starbuck 2003) leading to different interpretations (Saunders et al. 2002). It is important to note that middle managers act based on plan perceptions rather than the actual plan (Band 1995).

The decision making process in the Implementation Phase refers to actions. However, feelings are often associated with actions, but it is necessary to differentiate between the two. The literature commonly refers to the feelings employees cycle through during major change: anger, denial, frustration (Spiker & Lesser 1995), ambivalence, anxiety, panic (Piderit 2000); even resentment (Jorgeson, Boer & Gertsen 2003; Tessler 1989). While these feelings may indicate a middle manager's actions during the change implementation (Huy 2002; Lundberg & Young 2001; Piasecka 2001; Sachau & Houlhan 1999), it is actions that really matter, not feelings (Piderit 2000).

The next section discusses the action triggers and moderators relevant to the action decision making process. A very general example of the decision making process is also provided.

Action Triggers and Moderators

Action triggers will cause (trigger) *alternative actions* (hindering or promotional) to be performed, as they determine the *type* of action. The specific actions actually *performed* will be determined by action moderators. This idea of triggers and moderators has been proposed by other authors (Jorgeson et al. 2003; Morrison & Phelps 1999). Action triggers and moderators play an important, but differing role in the decision making process.

As shown in Figure 2-7, action triggers determine the type (compliant or *alternative*) of actions performed by middle managers. A middle manager will decide to perform compliant or *alternative* (promotional or hindering) actions based on the action triggers of importance. The actual actions performed are influenced by the action moderators. The following is an example of how action triggers and moderators work:

> A group of middle managers are quite pleased with Part D (general action trigger example) of the organisational change. They strongly agree with how Part D is to be implemented. The agreement level with the action trigger Part D is enough to make the middle managers want to promote the change. However, the middle managers still need to decide what type of promotional actions to perform: voiced support for the change, helping others with their roles or something else. Aspect E (action moderator) suddenly becomes a factor. Aspect E affects all of the middle managers differently and they each decide to perform a different type of promotional action.

In this example the agreement with the action trigger, Part D, is enough to cause the middle managers to decide to promote the change. However, Aspect E moderates the actual promotional actions performed by each. Thus, while all of the middle managers are performing promotional actions they are in differing forms. The reason that this example is so general (Part D and Aspect E) is because it is currently impossible to discuss these two aspects independently. The literature has provided no differentiation between moderators and triggers.

A great deal of literature has focused on the (mostly hindering) actions performed during major organisational change. Coch and French conducted one of the first studies of resistance in 1948. Since then numerous studies have focused on many varied aspects influencing actions. However, none of these have been classified specifically as action triggers or action moderators. Instead these aspects have only been examined as far as being influential during change:

- organisational fairness or justice (Brockner 1992; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Saunders et al. 2002),
- psychological contract violations (Newell & Dopson 1996; Pate et al. 2003;

Sparrow & Cooper 1998; Strebel 1998),

- the role of communication (Proctor & Doukakis 2003),
- employees' argumentativeness (Infante 1981; Levine & Badger 1993),
- empowerment (Morris 1995),
- participation (Weber & Weber 2001),
- job satisfaction (Hodson 1991; Sachau & Houlhan 1999),
- locus of control (Kets De Vries 1999) and
- organisational culture and climate (Eby et al. 2000; Toulson & Smith 1994).

While these aspects do have an impact on the actions of middle managers, it is unclear if they are action triggers or moderators. As it currently exists, the literature does not specifically identify triggers of *alternative actions*. While action moderators are not specifically identified either, they only come into play after the *type* of action has been chosen (using action triggers).

The above section has focused on the action triggers and moderators leading to the performance of different actions. The next few sections describe the different actions that may be performed during major organisational change programs.

Compliant Actions

Compliant middle managers act as requested. When presented with the actions required for the change, compliant middle managers will perform them. Usually it is loyal middle managers that follow orders (Stensaker et al. 2002); however, compliance does not always mean a middle manager is committed to the organisation (Newell & Dopson 1996; Thornhill et al. 1997). Compliance may indicate that middle managers are prepared to help see the change succeed, but not willing to actively promote it (Coetsee 1999; Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003). On the other hand, middle manager may comply because they are simply too apathetic to do otherwise (Coetsee 1999). Compliant actions present plan designers with the actions they were hoping for. *Alternative actions* (both promotional and hindering) often 'surprise' plan designers.

Alternative Actions

There are two types of *alternative actions*; promotional and hindering. A middle

manager will only choose *alternative actions* after a well thought out, deliberate decision making process (Morrison & Phelps 1999). A person is not going to choose *alternative actions* unless there is a valid reason. Dissatisfaction with the change or negative attitudes alone are not enough to trigger an *alternative* hindering action (Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Pate et al. 2003). Even highly cynical middle managers will often comply with what is requested of them (Reichers et al. 1997). Rather a *very strong* level of disagreement must exist for employees to hinder the change, and a *very strong* level of agreement to trigger promotional actions. It is only when this high level of (dis)agreement exists that an employee will choose to act *alternatively* (shown previously in Figure 2-7).

Hindering Actions. Hindering actions are *alternative actions* that do not encourage the success of the change in its current form. Hindering actions come in different forms (Atkinson 2005; Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; O'Conner 1993) and levels (Maurer 2000; Trader-Leigh 2002) and are not limited to resistance or sabotage. One definition considers hindering actions to be an exertion of power against some other source of power (Ashforth & Mael 1998; Young 2000). Hindering actions slow or stop movement forward and may include a complete refusal to cooperate (Ashforth & Mael 1998; Coetsee 1999; Kanter 1985; Maurer 1996; Maurer 2000; O'Conner 1993; Tsoukas 2005). Hindering actions may also include superficial compliance with no follow through (Petrini & Hultman 1995) or secretly undermining the change (Ashforth & Mael 1998; Kanter 1985; Maurer 1998). Middle managers may make their intentionally destructive behaviours visible (Ambrose, Seabright & Schminke 2002; Ashforth & Mael 1998; Coetsee 1999) perhaps by withholding information from others (Petrini & Hultman 1995). One of the most extreme hindering behaviours a middle manager may exhibit is to leave the organisation (Kanter 1985; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Stensaker et al. 2002).

Of course, hindering actions are going to be viewed differently by the different levels of the hierarchy involved (Coghlan 1993; Fenton-O'Creevy 2001). Change leaders might view middle managers as hindering, while the middle managers consider themselves to be acting in their personal, or more often, in the organisation's interests (Maurer 1996, 2000). Middle managers only complain when things they care about are affected (Kegan & Lahey 2001). Some literature

emphasises the potentially positive aspects of resistance (Ashforth & Mael 1998; Atkinson 2005; Piderit 2002; Waddell & Sohal 1998, 1999); however, the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model only serves to address the issues that might contribute to *alternative actions* being performed. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model does not attempt to evaluate the usefulness of the actions. Rather the actions are studied in the Evaluation Phase and compared to the plan of the Development Phase. Therefore the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model classifies any action performed to derail the change from being implemented in its current form as a hindering action, regardless of the underlying reason (Armenakis et al. 1999). These actions will not necessarily be enough to make the change fail, but show that the individual does not want the change as currently designed to succeed (Ashforth & Mael 1998).

Understandably, change leaders often view hindering actions as detrimental to the success of the change (Atkinson 2005; Coetsee 1999; Waddell & Sohal 1998). In many cases, these hindering actions may be symptoms of problems with the change plan (Petrini & Hultman 1995). The evaluation of actions will identify the reasons for hindering actions that may indicate further plan development (Coetsee 1999; Waddell & Sohal 1998). While hindering actions are the most familiar, promotional actions are another form of *alternative actions*.

Promotional Actions. Promotional actions are *alternative actions* that encourage the success of the change program. These actions go beyond simple agreement with the change, to actively doing something to promote it (Coetsee 1999; Floyd & Wooldridge 1994; Morrison & Phelps 1999). While promotional actions are not as widely discussed in the literature, there are about as many ways to perform them as there are hindering actions.

A recently growing area of literature has focused on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) that refers to middle managers who go 'above and beyond' the call of duty (Bolino & Turnley 2003). However, OCB literature concentrates on actions performed during the Stability State only. Thus, the parallels between OCB and promotional actions performed during major organisational change are very limited. The remainder of this work will draw information regarding promotional actions from organisational change literature only.

One promotional action middle managers perform during organisational change is to use available information to allay the fears of their coworkers or subordinates. Providing this information allows the others to continue working towards the change rather than be occupied in searching for answers (Huy 2002). In some cases middle managers take the initiative to control the change from their level (Morrison & Phelps 1999). In these situations, it is obvious that the change leader is not capable of providing adequate leadership and the middle manager decides to take the responsibility on themselves (Stensaker et al. 2002). Some middle managers choose to operate 'under the radar'. In these instances middle managers aren't noticed as they continually try to make minor and steady progress. Operating 'under the radar' is a very successful approach, as it provides examples from which others can learn (Meyerson 2001). A middle manager who performs promotional actions may be referred to as a change champion (Jenssen & Jorgensen 2004).

These sections have described how middle managers choose the actions they perform during major organisational change. However, this decision making process does not only occur once during the implementation of major change, as explained in the next section.

Re-Evaluation of Actions – Repeatedly Choosing Which Actions to Perform

Even though the best predictor of future actions are previous actions (Ashforth & Mael 1998), middle managers do have the ability to choose *alternative actions* at any time during the change implementation (Piderit 2000). Middle managers may continuously evaluate the change as it is being implemented and alter the actions they perform (Miller et al. 1994; Tsoukas 2005; Woodward & Hendry 2004).

Middle managers may initially comply with the requested actions, but once they understand the actual time and effort required of them, they may later choose hindering actions (Maurer 1998). Likewise, middle managers may not cooperate at first, but once they are convinced that the change is likely to succeed, they will begin to comply or promote the change. This decision making process will continue until the organisation leaves the Implementation Phase.

Movement out of

The organisation may move out of the Implementation Phase to the next phase, Evaluation, at any time. Movement to the Evaluation Phase may occur at predetermined times to assess the progress of the change. The organisation may also decide to move to the Evaluation Phase when it becomes obvious that the plan is not being implemented as expected. Unfortunately, in some cases the organisation may choose to complete the entire implementation process before moving to the Evaluation Phase.

2.5 Summary

As shown in each section, previous models support the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model. However, there is not a single previous model that incorporates all of the states and phases of change as the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model does. The development of this model was necessary to explain how all of the varied and diverse components of organisational change are related.

An important aspect of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model is that, in contrast with previous models, it does not focus on one aspect of the change process more than others. The General Model of Planned Change, for example, consists of eight steps with one for planning, one for implementation, and the rest relating to evaluation (Waddell et al. 2000). The first and third phases of both the unfreezing, moving, freezing (Lewin 1947, 1952) and readiness, adoption, institutionalisation (Armenakis et al. 1999) models relate primarily to the Stability State. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model also offers a more thorough description of the change plan than most models. The majority of previous change models have only identified aspects that need to be present during the implementation of a successful change. An example[1] is Day's (1999) conditions that ensure change process success:

- Leadership commitment
- Need for change
- Shaping vision

[1] Many of these models' steps were listed at the beginning of the Development Phase section.

- Mobilizing commitment at all stages
- Aligning structures, systems and incentives
- Reinforcing change

In using the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model to organise the existing literature, it becomes clear that many areas have been widely studied. However, there are several areas where more work is needed. The evaluation of change is recognised as being limited in application. More work is needed to examine the different types of measures and how they may be employed during a change program. Little attention has been paid to the cyclical nature of change and how information from one phase may be best used in the next.

There are also two areas where work needs to be done to organise the existing literature. The first concerns the development of the change plan. A great deal of work has touched upon this issue by explaining the plans other organisations have. However, there is little work that explains the best way for an organisation to develop its own change plan independently of what others have done. The second area requiring further organisation of existing literature relates to the implementation phase.

As it currently exists, there are several limitations with the literature concerning to the actions middle managers perform during implementation:

1. Most of the relevant literature has focused on *what* actions were chosen rather than *why* they were chosen (Young 2000).
2. Most of the relevant literature has neglected to differentiate between action triggers and action moderators.
3. Most of the relevant literature examined only one influential aspect of the change program at a time (Armenakis & Bedeian 1999).
4. Most of the relevant literature has not considered compliance, hindering actions, and promotional actions to be related (Coetsee 1999).

The research discussed in the remainder of this thesis was designed to overcome these limitations. The focus of this work is explained in the next section.

2.6 Thesis Focus

The research in the remainder of this thesis concentrated on middle manager actions during organisational change. The number of major change implementations is increasing, but so is the failure rate. A number of these failures are attributed to the actions of middle managers. The decision making process that middle managers go through when choosing to perform an action was explained in the Implementation Phase section. However, several limitations associated with this decision making process were identified. In addition to concentrating solely on middle managers experienced with major organisational change, this research addressed the four limitations mentioned in the previous summary section:

1. Most of the relevant literature focuses on *what* actions were chosen rather than *why* they were chosen (Young 2000).

Many empirical studies overlook the question *why* (Miller et al. 1994). More work needs to concentrate on *why* employees make the decisions they do (Tsoukas 2005; Young 2000). The work that has examined behaviours has only looked at behaviours as a *result* of the change program (Porras & Hoffer 1986). As change participants have rarely been questioned about their actions, we only know *how* employees are acting, not *why* they are acting (Petrini & Hultman 1995).

The research in this work concentrated on *why* actions were performed, not what they were. The only way to improve the understanding and planning for major change is to understand *why* different actions are performed (Atkinson 2005).

2. Most of the relevant literature has neglected to differentiate between action triggers and action moderators.

This lack of differentiation was shown in the section discussing the role of action triggers and moderators. It is important to differentiate between action triggers and moderators in order to determine which aspects related to organisational change

trigger *alternative actions*. This differentiation will make the job of designing a major change plan a bit easier. Once the items that are most important to middle managers (action triggers) are identified, they can be specifically addressed in the change plan (Atkinson 2005).

The current research focused on identifying only the triggers of action. One of the assumptions of this research was that the action triggers are aspects associated with the organisational change while action moderators are related to an individual's personal characteristics. (The difference between action triggers and moderators is further explained in Chapter 4.)

> 3. Most of the relevant literature has examined only one influential aspect of the change program at a time (Armenakis & Bedeian 1999).

The current research attempted to identify a list of all action triggers. Little work has attempted to identify more than one or two influential aspects at a time. Compiling a comprehensive list would be of the most benefit to plan designers.

> 4. Most of the relevant literature has not considered compliance, hindering actions, and promotional actions to be related (Coetsee 1999).

Some studies have investigated motivations for actions but concentrated on only hindering or promotional actions, with a disproportionate focus on the hindering (Piderit 2000). These studies ignore the fact that all actions an employee may choose are related (Coetsee 1999).

Another assumption of this research was that all of the different action types are related. This assumption meant that the same group of action triggers will affect all of the different action types. Strong disagreement will result in hindering actions, which plan designers will want to understand to better design a plan to prevent hindering actions from being performed by others (Atkinson 2005). However, plan designers will also need to understand that strong agreement with these action triggers is likely to result in promotional actions. Plan designers will also want to alter the plan to encourage others to promote the change.

In addressing these limitations within the parameters of the study (middle managers, major change, etc.) the following research question was devised:

What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?

This research question led to the development of the exploratory research in this work consisting of three complementary studies. Study One used a content analysis of a sample of literature to identify the 16 action triggers. In Study Two these action triggers were exposed to 10 middle managers currently experiencing major organisational change. Finally, Study Three was developed to expose the action triggers to a wider group of middle managers. The contradictory results of Studies Two and Three were then explored through clarification interviews with three middle managers who had responded to the questionnaire. A brief overview of these studies and how they complement each other is in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

3.1 Introduction

The major organisational change review in Chapter 2 showed that the literature relating to middle manager actions during organisational change was lacking comprehensiveness. Most literature has focused on *what* actions were performed rather than *why* they were chosen. Due to this limited focus on *why*, there has rarely been a differentiation made between aspects that trigger actions and those that moderate them. Most work has been very specific in nature and focused on a single aspect's importance in influencing actions. The purpose of this exploratory research was to use the existing literature along with empirical work to gain insight into the action triggers influential in the decision making process described in the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model.

Three complementary studies were conducted to identify the action triggers that cause middle managers to act *alternatively* during a change implementation:

1 –Content analysis of literature
2 – Interviews with middle managers
3 – Questionnaires for middle managers (with follow up interviews)

These three studies were designed to answer the research question: *What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?* The third study also explored reasons why middle managers may not openly admit to performing hindering actions.

This chapter serves only to provide a brief overview of each study and its results. Further details are in the relevant chapter containing the entire study. This overview

was provided to show how the three studies are complementary and need to be viewed together. The results of each study were used to develop the next study to create a holistic picture of the topic.

Study One examined 50 texts regarding organisational change management. Content analysis was used to identify the action triggers that cause middle managers to perform *alternative actions* during a change implementation. The action triggers identified were then used to develop the questions for the semi-structured interviews with ten middle managers in Study Two. The action triggers were used to develop the questionnaire distributed to 241 postgraduate management students in Study Three. Analysis of the questionnaires produced results that did not align with the existing literature nor the results from the Study Two interviews. Thus the clarification interviews were conducted to further explore middle managers' responses to the questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three middle managers who had previously completed the questionnaire.

3.2 Study One

The literature regarding middle manager actions performed during organisational change is varied in focus, rarely differentiating between action triggers and action moderators. The intention of this exploratory study was to identify only the action triggers from the existing literature. Content analysis provided a rigorous, replicable method (Insch, Moore & Murphy 1997; Krippendorff 1980; Weber 1990) to identify, extract and organise only action triggers.

3.2.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a qualitative as well as quantitative method of analysing written and oral materials. It allows for the identification and grouping of concepts as well as measuring their frequency of occurrence (Insch et al. 1997). By recording the number of sources in which different themes appear, agreement of texts is shown (Abrahamson 2000; Lee, Mitchell & Sablynski 1999). Often pre-existing or pre-identified themes are used to analyse the texts. However, content analysis may also

be used to develop themes[2] through an exploratory method when there is no pre-existing theory (Insch et al. 1997). (The latter is the way content analysis was used in this research.)

Another attribute of content analysis is the rigorous step-by-step process often employed. This step-by-step process requires the development of rules and guidelines to ensure that the results are replicable if others attempt to repeat the analysis (Insch et al. 1997; Krippendorff 1980; Weber 1990). There have been several slightly different applications of the steps and procedures used when performing content analysis. Insch, Moore, and Murphy (1997) developed an eleven-step process that combined the procedures of Weber (1990), Krippendorff (1980) and Merritt (1970). Steps 5 through 10 are repeated until appropriate results are obtained.

1. Identify questions to be investigated and constructs involved
2. Identify texts to be examined
3. Specify the unit of analysis
4. Specify the categories
5. Generate sample coding scheme
6. Collect data (to pre-test coding scheme)
7. Purify the coding scheme
8. Collect data
9. Assess reliability
10. Assess construct validity
11. Analyse data

The current research used these eleven steps in conjunction with the interpretive content analysis method described by Ahuva (2001).

Many researchers have used content analysis to examine different aspects related to middle managers or organisational change. Harris (2001) used content analysis to

[2] The traditional terminology of content analysis uses 'theme', however, as this is an exploratory study with no predefined themes, and to reduce confusion with the thematic analysis of Study Two, 'concept' was used in the Study One chapter.

examine how courage of executives was portrayed in newspaper articles. Kabanoff, Waldersee and Cohen (1995) looked at the strength of nine values in Australian organisations to see if there was a relationship to how the organisations portrayed change. Waldersee and Cohen (1995) examined annual reports, company-wide internal magazines, mission statements and employee newsletters. D'Aveni and MacMillan (1990) compared the focus of managers in successful firms to the focus of managers in unsuccessful firms by examining letters sent to shareholders. Bergh and Fairbank (2002) performed a content analysis on 126 change studies to examine the methodologies employed by the researchers.

3.2.2 Strengths

There were several advantages in choosing content analysis over other approaches. Firstly, many different texts could be used, including theoretical and empirical journal articles and edited book chapters (Insch et al. 1997; Krippendorff 1980; Weber 1990). Secondly, the analysis of these texts was unobtrusive which eliminated interaction with human participants. Thirdly, by following a formalised replicable process, the potential for researcher bias was greatly reduced (Insch et al. 1997; Krippendorff 1980; Weber 1990).

3.2.3 Limitations

As with any analysis method, several limitations are associated with content analysis. The texts were manually examined which allowed for the possibility of overlooking or missing relevant pieces of information. On the other hand, a computer program may also have missed relevant data if the dictionaries were not complete or thorough enough (Krippendorff 1980; Weber 1990). As no work had developed a dictionary for this research, it was impossible to test. Finally, there was the possibility that the extraction of terms and ideas from the texts meant important contextual information was lost (Insch et al. 1997; Krippendorff 1980). This study used the surrounding sections of the text to determine the theme of the idea or concept of interest.

3.2.4 Study Design

The use of content analysis in this study was one of theory development rather than quantitative analysis. While the same guidelines and process was used as other

content analysis applications, the rules of classification regarding the texts were developed as part of the analysis. (Complete details of this study are in Chapter 4.) The content analysis was performed on a group of fifty texts. Most of these texts were theoretical explanations of general employees' actions as few studies have focused on middle managers directly. Each text was read with applicable items being identified and recorded. After filtering out extraneous and irrelevant items, the remaining items were organised into categories. The entire process was repeated to ensure that the rules of classification ensured that the development of the action trigger categories was replicable.

Upon completion of the content analysis, four categories of action triggers had been identified. However, few of the texts examined focused directly on middle managers and how they made decisions. More research was necessary to determine if these categories in fact influenced *middle manager* decisions to act. The influence of the action triggers had to be confirmed by middle managers experiencing organisational change. Study Two was designed as a complementary study to expose the action triggers identified in Study One to middle managers actually experiencing major change.

3.3 Study Two

This study was designed to gather information directly from middle managers, not through observation (Fontana & Frey 2000; Lee et al. 1999), but through direct interaction. The previous study identified action triggers from mostly theoretical literature relating to employees in general. Even though the action triggers had been identified, they might not be influential to middle managers in real organisational change situations. The influence of action triggers had to be verified by middle managers who were currently experiencing major organisational change. The only way to gather this information was to ask middle managers about their decision processes directly. Thus, semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow collection of this information (Fontana & Frey 2000; Lee et al. 1999).

Questionnaires were another way to directly ask middle managers about influential aspects, but were too static for this exploratory study, even if open-ended questions had been used (Lee et al. 1999; Fontana & Frey 2000). Printed questionnaires

would have allowed no alterations based on answers to other questions. While online programs would have allowed answers to dictate future questions, only a finite number of questions could have been developed beforehand. Neither type of questionnaire would have provided opportunity for elaboration or clarification if the respondents' initial answers were unclear. Similarly, structured interviews, like questionnaires, lacked the flexibility needed for this study (Fontana & Frey 2000).

Since there was a specific goal for this study (to expose the action triggers on middle managers) some structure was necessary, meaning semi-structured interviews were chosen for gathering data. Group interviews are often used as a means to gather a great deal of information from a number of people at one time (Fontana & Frey 2000). However, due to the sensitivity of the topic, middle managers were expected to feel uncomfortable discussing it openly in front of their peers, making group interviews inappropriate. For this research, honesty and accuracy were considered more important than large quantities of data. Thus, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were used.

These interviews gathered a great deal of data; however, in its raw form the data obtained was not very valuable. It was necessary to reduce and organise the information into a functional form. A coding analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994) was chosen for this purpose. Content analysis had been used in the previous study for its ability to identify and *extract* relevant information reliably from a wide variety of texts. In this study, all of the data collected from the interviews was relevant to the topic, meaning the extraction ability of content analysis was not needed. However, the different topics still needed to be identified and grouped, and a coding/thematic analysis was able to do this (Miles & Huberman 1994).

3.3.1 One-on-One Semi-Structured Interviews

Researchers have frequently used interviews to gather rich, in-depth data about specific events or processes (Fontana & Frey 2000). Semi-structured interviews are especially suited to studies of an exploratory nature where the theory is not yet fully developed (Lee et al. 1999). The semi-structured interview approach used for this study included certain set questions but allowed for other questions to be tailored to the specific interview situation (Fontana & Frey 2000; Lee et al. 1999). The set

questions create a general structure, but the interviewer has freedom to skip questions if addressed by previous answers, or to ask for clarification of vague answers (Fontana & Frey 2000).

3.3.2 Strengths

The greatest strength of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews is the freedom the interviewer has to adapt the questions for each participant. In the one-on-one interaction the interviewer could detect nonverbal cues (Fontana & Frey 2000). These cues could help the interviewer tailor the questions to obtain a better understanding of the perceptions and underlying schemas that different individuals used to make decisions (Di Pofi 2002). Another useful aspect of semi-structured interviews is the variety of ways they may be analysed. Quantitative methods such as a traditional content analysis may be used, as may qualitative methods such as the coding/thematic analysis used in this study.

3.3.3 Limitations

The interview process is an interactive event with both parties influencing the other. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to build rapport with the interviewee. The less a researcher is trusted, the less useful the information obtained is likely to be. On the other hand, it has also been found that a researcher may give cues that lead an interviewee to answer in a specific way (Fontana & Frey 2000). For this study, every effort was made to ensure that the interviewer was trusted and did not lead the interviewee in any way.

3.3.4 Analysis

Coding is how the researcher differentiates and combines data in a meaningful way that allows relationships between the parts to remain intact (Miles & Huberman 1994). Codes are labels applied to sections or chunks of the data. These sections may vary in size from a couple of words to entire paragraphs (Miles & Huberman 1994). Codes are developed in two ways; determined prior to the analysis or more commonly, developed as the analysis progresses. This study used the latter method of code development.

Study One used codes that described the themes of the data (Miles & Huberman 1994). The codes used were simple terms that best described the theme identified (Patton 2002). Thematic coding does not try to assign patterns or other interpretations to the data, only to label it. It was also decided that the code would refer to an 'idea'. Using an 'idea' for the codes meant that the same paragraph could contain several different codes.

Upon completion of the coding process (labelling each section), the coded themes were grouped into categories. During the development of the themes, it was important to keep in mind the research question while remaining open minded when things that were not expected appeared (Miles & Huberman 1994).

3.3.5 Study Design

The middle managers interviewed (all from a single organisation) knew they would be discussing the organisational change they were currently experiencing. (Complete details of this study are in Chapter 5.) The middle managers were informed that the purpose of the interview was to obtain information about aspects of the change that influenced their decisions to act. All ten interviews began with the same general questions but were tailored for each participant as the interview progressed. The semi-structured design ensured that relevant questions were covered but allowed the interviewer freedom to skip questions addressed by previous answers, or to ask for clarification if needed. The questions were loosely based on the categories identified in Study One.

While gathering the data was an important part of the study, it was more important that the data was analysed and organised in an appropriate way. The coding/thematic analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994) grouped coded sections into categories, allowing the middle managers' answers to drive the analysis. While the categories from Study One were used in the design of the interview questions, the analysis of the interviews was done independently. The aim of this second study was to determine which action triggers influenced the middle managers. It was possible that the action triggers identified in the interviews differed from those identified in the literature. To ensure that preconceived perceptions did not drive the

analysis, a second person also performed the coding/thematic analysis on the interview data.

The analysis of the interviews resulted in all but five of the same action triggers being identified as in Study One, after accounting for the different methods of analysis. Further research was necessary to determine if these theoretical action triggers were influential in other change programs. It was possible that middle managers experiencing different major changes would be influenced by a different set of action triggers. In order to explore this possibility, Study Three used questionnaires to access data from a larger population of middle managers. This third study was not meant to be a definitive study, rather it was meant to complement the results of the previous two studies by using another approach to further explore the topic.

3.4 Study Three

The purpose of this study was to gather information about action triggers from a diverse group of participants. Study Two had focused on a select group of middle managers who identified many of the action triggers from Study One as important, but not all. Study Three was designed to access a large number of middle managers experiencing a variety of change implementations with numerous organisations. The aim was to determine if all action triggers had been identified and if they were influential across change implementations or situation specific.

During the interviews only two middle managers indicated that they had performed hindering actions. Several reasons for this were possible, but the most likely problem was with the interpersonal interaction. Even though the interviews were confidential and the middle managers discussed other sensitive issues, they may have felt it necessary to justify their position if they admitted to attempting to hinder the change. This could be why the three hindering actions were relayed, but not identified as being hindering actions. Thus it was decided that the one-on-one personal interaction would have to be removed. Questionnaires were the most appropriate tool for removing researcher contact. An additional benefit of questionnaires was that they could easily gather information from a large number of

middle managers in a short period of time (Czaja & Blair 1996; Remenyi, Williams, Money & Swartz 1998).

Self-completion (Remenyi et al. 1998) or self-administered (Czaja & Blair 1996) questionnaires are one of the best ways of easily gathering data from a large number of participants. Questionnaires given to participants in person or by telephone require a great deal of time on the part of the researcher and limit the data that can quickly be obtained. This study went one step further than self-administered questionnaires. It utilised populations that could be accessed in groups of about twenty at one time. Students were asked to fill out the questionnaires during postgraduate management class time.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are most often used to describe a population or to test a theory (Gill & Johnson 2002; Remenyi et al. 1998). Alternatively they may investigate attributes of a certain population, people's opinions and beliefs, activities or experiences people have had (Remenyi et al. 1998). In this study the purpose was to expose the action triggers from Study One to a wider group of middle managers than in the previous study. As two previous studies had already provided a great deal of support of the existence of the action triggers, questions with finite answers were used (Remenyi et al. 1998). Discrete responses greatly reduce the time needed to analyse the data (Gill & Johnson 2002).

3.4.2 Strengths

One of the strengths of questionnaires is their ability to collect information that cannot be otherwise easily observed (Remenyi et al. 1998). Questionnaires may investigate the beliefs, feelings and experiences a person has had. Secondly, questionnaires are well suited for reaching a large number of respondents within a short period of time. Once a self-administered questionnaire has been developed and tested, the costs of administering it to ten versus one hundred people are not very different (Czaja & Blair 1996; Remenyi et al. 1998). Finally, when structured properly, questionnaire responses may be analysed quickly (Gill & Johnson 2002).

3.4.3 Limitations

There is a small possibility that a questionnaire does not actually gather the desired data. The most common error in gathering data is in using questions that are interpreted differently than intended (Czaja & Blair 1996). For this reason, the questions used were reviewed by several people prior to the pilot study. Other limitations of questionnaires are their low contextual realism and precision of measurement (Scandura & Williams 2000). However, the main purpose of this study was to identify action triggers that had been used by middle managers during their decision making process. There was no attempt to measure anything more than the relative importance of the action triggers in the decision to act alternatively.

3.4.4 Study Design

Using questionnaires in Study Three provided a means to expose the action triggers to a greater diverse population of middle managers in a short time. (Complete details are in Chapter 6.) As this was the third study exploring this topic, the results form the previous studies concerning the action triggers meant closed-ended questions could be used with more confidence.

The questionnaire had two main questions. One asked about the action triggers influencing *promotional* actions and the other asked about the action triggers influencing *hindering* actions. The middle managers were asked to rate each action trigger's level of influence in a specific decision. Introductory and demographic questions were included as well. All questions were designed with clarity and ease of analysis in mind.

Averages were used to analyse the responses to the questionnaires (more complex statistics were inappropriate (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 2005; Thorne & Giesen 2004) as discussed in Chapter 6). The purpose of Study Three was to identify the action triggers influential to middle managers in different organisational change situations. Items with higher averages would be more influential across a variety of change situations than those with lower averages.

Of the 241 questionnaires distributed, 75 were returned, a response rate of 31%, including 27 middle managers (11%) of which only three described hindering

actions they had performed. These results (significantly more promotional actions being performed than hindering) differed from the general sentiment of organisational change literature (middle managers are much more likely to hinder than promote). These results also differed from the results of the interviews in Study Two. The middle managers interviewed had not performed *any* promotional actions, but discussed *several* hindering actions, the opposite of the questionnaire results. While the average ratings for the promotional actions (performed by all 27 respondents) described in the questionnaires showed that all of the action triggers were influential, more research was needed. It was necessary to determine just why more middle managers had not described performing hindering actions. The clarification interviews were designed to obtain a better understanding of middle manager actions performed.

3.4.5 Clarification

The purpose of the clarification interviews was to determine why more middle managers had not described performing hindering actions. Study Three had provided an anonymous method for describing hindering actions performed, yet few middle managers had. The clarification interviews were designed to investigate whether there were problems with the questionnaire instrument, or if there were other reasons middle managers did not describe hindering actions performed.

One-on-One Semi-Structured Interviews

It was possible that the questionnaire's design had been a major factor in why so few hindering actions had been reported. The best way to determine if this was the case was to ask middle managers that had completed the questionnaire. Additionally, these middle managers were asked to identify reasons why others may not have described performing hindering actions. As this topic was potentially more sensitive than previous studies, group interviews were again ruled out. Instead, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method.

Design

Middle managers who had responded to the questionnaire and included their e-mail address were invited to participate. The middle managers were asked first to evaluate the quality of the questionnaire. The middle managers were then asked to

speculate as to why others might not have been willing to complete the section on hindering actions. A coding/thematic analysis was again applied to the data.

3.5 Summary

The results of each study drove the design and method of the next study. This meant that all of the studies were complementary with each study exploring the topic using a slightly different approach. At the completion of the research the three studies were examined holistically. The studies were not evaluated individually, but the results of all three studies were combined to produce the final results. The research thus identified 16 situation specific action triggers. While this concluded this particular research project, it only served to present several opportunities for future research, as identified in the Conclusion chapter. Each study will now be examined more thoroughly in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR
STUDY ONE: CONTENT ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify action triggers from the existing literature. The use of content analysis in this study was one of theory development. It was employed as a rigorous method for developing the rules for identification, extraction and categorisation of the concepts from the selected texts. This theory (rules) development was necessary as the management literature relating to organisational change covers numerous aspects of change and focuses mostly on employees in general. By applying a rigorous rule based process, only action triggers would be identified, and the process would be replicable. This content analysis used 50 texts, 25 in Phases 1 and 2, and 25 in Phase 3.

The first part of the chapter describes the content analysis; the identification, extraction and recording of relevant concepts and the process used to group them into categories. The second part of the chapter defines the action triggers identified and explains how they might influence middle managers. Study Two used the action triggers identified in this chapter to develop the interview questions. Study two was designed to complement the results of Study One by exposing the action triggers to middle managers actually experiencing major organisational change.

4.2 Category Development

Content analysis was used on existing literature to answer the research question:

RQ: *What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?*

The 11 steps of Insch, Moore & Murphy (1997) in conjunction with the interpretive design of Ahuva (2001) formed the process used for this content analysis. This

content analysis was by no means an exhaustive analysis of the literature, but rather, an exploratory study to identify potential action triggers.

Content analysis is most frequently employed as a quantitative method for identifying the occurrence of concepts across documents. However, content analysis may also be used, as in this study, to develop categories through an exploratory method when there is no pre-existing theory (Insch et al. 1997). This is the approach used for this study. Content analysis was chosen for its formalised means of identifying, recording and grouping relevant concepts, even when no previous theory or rules exist. The formalised process of Insch, Moore and Murphy (1997) included step-by-step directions to ensure the credibility and stability of the results.

The categories of action triggers were initially developed in Phase 1. Similar concepts from 25 texts were grouped together into action triggers, and then into categories of related action triggers. The action triggers were then tested for their relatedness, and categories were examined for their independence. Phase 2 repeated the process used in Phase 1 to determine if the process was stable. Phase 3 used the remaining 25 texts to determine if other concepts could reliably be assigned to a single category.

4.2.1 Literature for Analysis

The majority of the texts used in this study had a management focus. They all concentrated on major organisational change and the behaviour of employees in general, senior managers, or frontline managers etc. The texts included were mostly theoretical in addition to a few empirical works (see Appendix II). Theoretical texts were included since much of this work was based on the authors' past experiences with change. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to identify all *possible* action triggers, not just those that had been previously studied. Studies Two and Three would determine which were *really* influential to middle managers. The texts examined included journal articles and edited book chapters published between January 1990 and September 2002. At this stage in the research only 50 texts meeting this criteria had been gathered. As this was an exploratory study to be further supported by two complementary studies, 50 texts was deemed enough. The

intent was to define the rules for identifying and grouping action triggers, not to exhaustively identify all of the texts discussing them. Had the other studies produced substantially differing results, more texts would have been included and the analysis performed again. A random selection of 25 of the 50 texts was taken from a box for the initial category development, Phases 1 and 2. The remaining 25 texts were used in the final analysis, Phase 3.

4.2.2 Coders

The traditional type of content analysis described by Insch, Moore and Murphy (1997) used several coders to analyse the data. They believed the greater the agreement between the coders, the greater the reliability of the results. Ahuva (2001) advocated several slight adaptations to the traditional approach, one of which was *interpretive*. This modified approach was developed for situations where a researcher might interpret texts differently than another person not as deeply involved in the research. Ahuva argued that instead of attempting to train another person to approach the texts with the same mindset, one coder would be sufficient. Instead of interrater reliability statistics (employed when multiple coders are used), the researcher simply justified the process by explaining how and why decisions were made. This was the approach used for the remainder of this analysis.

The purpose of this study was to develop the rules to use for identifying and extracting all relevant concepts from the selected texts. As this was exploratory research the coders (in this study rule developers) needed a solid understanding of the difference between action triggers and moderators (discussed in the Stability ↔ Pursuance model during the Literature Review). It would have been impossible to train another coder to have the appropriate level of understanding of this differentiation in the time allowed for the study. Therefore only a single coder was used. This was only the beginning of the research project, two further complementary studies would determine if the aspects identified were truly influential or not for middle managers.

4.2.3 Unit of Analysis

Insch, Moore and Murphy (1997) described five subject units to break apart a text: word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and document. Krippendorff (1980) also

described five units for analysis: physical, syntactical, referential, propositional and thematic. The last of these, thematic[3] units, was used for this study.

The purpose of this study was to identify aspects from the existing literature that might influence middle manager actions. A thematic unit would identify these aspects regardless of what form they were in (word, phrase, sentence or paragraph), whereas use of any of these other units of analysis could miss concepts in another form. The number of times an idea was mentioned in any one article was irrelevant. A single concept could be mentioned in several places such as the introduction, results and conclusion, thus every concept was counted only once per text. The types of concepts identified and restrictions regarding them are explained later, as the rules for identification were clarified.

4.2.4 Phase 1 - Category Development

The first step of the content analysis process was to develop the question to apply to the literature (Insch et al. 1997). The research question was not appropriate as it was extremely detailed, thus question CA1 was developed. CA1 was applied to each text to identify and extract the relevant concepts.

RQ: *What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?*

CA1: *Could this influence a middle manager's decision to act?*

The analysis of the texts started in early September 2002. Several portions of each text were not relevant to the study (introduction, methods, references etc.) and could be removed from the analysis. The relevant portions of each text were identified and combined into an abridged document. These abridged documents were developed to enhance the accuracy and speed of the analysis. Only sections that related to behaviour (actions) and organisational change were retained. Each of these abridged texts was assigned a number (Appendix II). The numbers simplified the process, as several texts had the same author. Two copies of the notes were

[3]The term "concept" was used throughout the content analysis chapter instead of "theme" so there was no confusion with the thematic analysis used in Study Two.

printed, one set for the initial grouping (Phase 1), and the second for the stability testing (Phase 2).

The question CA1 was then applied to the abridged documents and all potentially relevant concepts were identified. The vagueness of the CA1 question ensured that nothing was eliminated before it was proven to be irrelevant. Numerous concepts were identified. Sometimes this was a single word (injustice), sometimes several words (threatens current mastery). Each concept was highlighted and recorded along with the number of the text in a new document. Only the initial occurrence of each concept was recorded. Using this process, 110 concepts were identified (Appendix III).

Once the concepts had been identified the grouping and categorisation process began. Coding categories are usually defined before the analysis begins; but they may also be allowed to 'emerge' from the texts (Insch et al. 1997; Lee et al. 1999). As this was an exploratory study, there were no predefined categories. Rather concepts with similar traits were grouped together into action triggers. The action triggers were then grouped together with similar action triggers into categories. This process created the four initial categories seen in Figure 4-1.

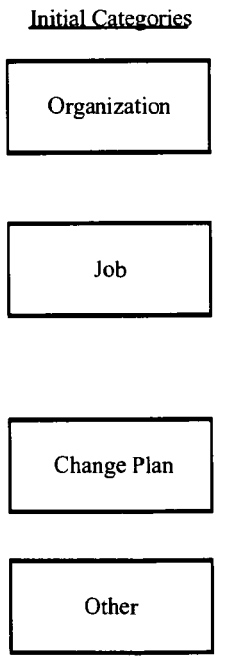


Figure 4-1. The initial categories of action triggers identified in Phase 1.

During this grouping process it became evident that there were two problems with the identified concepts. Firstly, some of the concepts could be interpreted very broadly in meaning. The surrounding text was consulted to obtain more specific meanings, but in cases where that was not possible, no attempt was made to infer what was actually meant. Concepts that were not clearly defined would be excluded from further analysis. Secondly, there were two types of concepts being dealt with. There were *action trigger* concepts and *action moderating* concepts (Figure 4-2). *Action triggers* influence a middle manager's decision regarding the type of action to perform: compliant or *alternative. Action moderators* influence the specific actions performed. The primary purpose of this research was to determine which concepts *cause* a middle manager to act, the *action triggers*. Thus the moderating concepts needed to be removed before further analysis was performed.

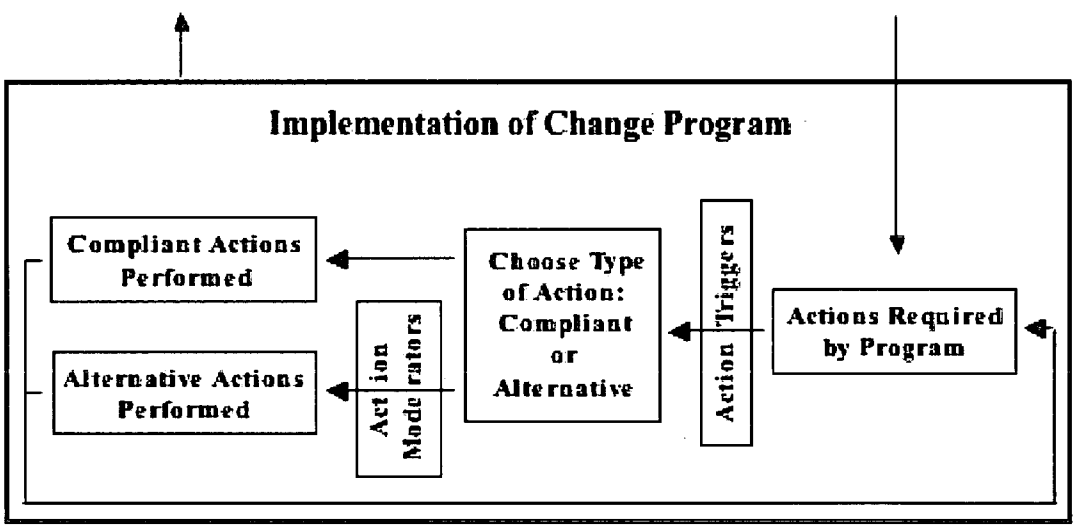


Figure 4-2. Implementation Phase of Stability ↔ Pursuance Model.

All of the 110 concepts were reviewed with the intention that vague and moderating concepts would be removed (see Appendix IV). An example of a vague concept is: 'Challenges the status quo' which arose several times. Since status quo could apply to anything from the type of work required to the layout of the office, it was removed from further analysis. 'Psychological contract' was another concept that was eliminated because the texts referred to these contracts in a very broad, general sense, which may have related to superior managers, the management process,

organisational goals or even something else, as psychological contracts are unique to each individual. Concepts containing mention of 'bad feelings' were also excluded from the analysis because it was unclear as to the cause of the bad feeling. 'A bad feeling about the impact of the program' or 'a bad feeling about the leader of the change' would have been acceptable. A total of 27 concepts were eliminated because they were not specific enough (see Appendix IV), leaving 83 concepts.

In order to differentiate between the moderating concepts and trigger concepts, a new question was developed, CA2. The 83 concepts remaining fell into two groups, those that would be unique to each middle manager, and those that would be unique to a change program. This research only wanted to identify action triggers as they result in *alternative actions* being performed. Keeping this in mind, the much more specific CA2 question was developed:

CA2: *Could this trigger an action by a middle manager?*

Middle manager was included in this question to ensure that concepts related specifically to other levels were not included. CA2 was applied to the 83 concepts, those that received a 'no' answer were removed from the categorisation process, affecting eight concepts (Appendix IV). These eight concepts in addition to the 27 non-specific concepts resulted in 35 concepts being eliminated from the original 110 concepts, leaving 75 concepts. These concepts all related specifically to the change being implemented, not to an individual's personal characteristics.

The elimination of the 35 concepts meant that most of those previously included in the *Other* category were removed from the analysis, as well as several others. Instead of trying to fit the remaining 'other' terms into the existing categories, the process was started anew. The initial categories were abandoned and the process of grouping was started from the beginning. The 75 concepts (Appendix III minus those in Appendix IV) were again grouped on the basis of similarity, forming 13 action triggers. These action triggers were then grouped into four 'Final Phase 1 Categories'. These categories differed slightly from the initial categories as seen in Figure 4-3.

The 75 concepts making up the action triggers are shown in Table 4-1. The numbers in the table refer to the texts that identified the action trigger. The texts used for the analysis are shown in Appendix II.

Authors often referred to the same concept with slightly different words or terms (Weber 1990). The 'ritual and habit' action trigger in the *Tangible Aspects of the Job* category provides an example. 'Ritual' and 'habit' are often used interchangeably. For example, in text 5, 'ritual' was identified and recorded at one place in the text, and 'habit' in another. Upon inspection of the text around the concepts, they were found to mean nearly the same thing. As this analysis concentrated on concept per document, these redundancies were not counted individually. In instances where concepts overlapped, the multiples were put into parentheses, accounting for each of the 75 concepts.

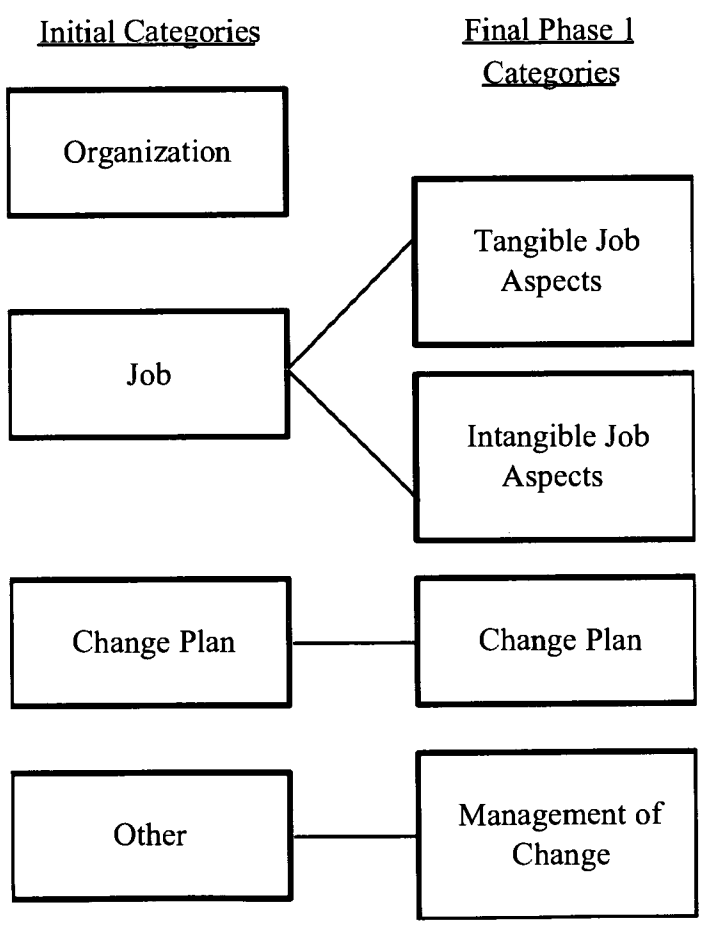


Figure 4-3. Final Phase 1 categories in comparison to initial categories.

Table 4-1. Texts Identified and Organised into Categories in Phase 1.

Category	Action trigger	Texts identified
Management of Change		1, 3, 7, (22, 22), 23, 24
Tangible Aspects of Job	Work ritual and habit	2, (5, 5), 10, 18, 22
	Knowledge skills	2, 8, 9, 17, 19
	Workload & responsibilities	3, 9, 13, 17, 21
	Working conditions	5, 23
Intangible Aspects of Job	Authority and power	2, 6, 8, (9, 9), 12, 18
	Respect and status	2, 14, 18, 21
	Comfort and security	9, 14, 17, 18, 23
	Career advancement	9, 21
	Individual goals	12, 19, 24
	Alliances and relationships	9, 15, 20
Change Plan	Need of	17, 19, 22, 24
	Goals of	5, 6, 7, 11, 19, (22, 22), 23, 24
	Design of	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 22, 25

At this time the semantic reliability (Insch et al. 1997) was tested. A colleague having some knowledge of the analysis process examined the categories to evaluate their relatedness and meanings. It was important to have an independent party (colleague in this instance) perform this test as the coder is often approaching the topic with a singular mind-set and may not have considered alternative interpretations and meanings. This colleague was not going to comment on the action triggers, but on how they were grouped together into categories. The result from this examination of relatedness identified that the 'Change Plan' category should have included *who, what, why and how*. It was currently missing the *who* as the 'Management of Change' category was separate. The colleague recommended integrating it into the 'Change Plan' category. Otherwise the categories were judged as independent of one another and the action triggers in each related.

After the categories developed were judged to be appropriate, the stability test was then performed to determine the accuracy of the coding scheme. The stability test was performed in Phase 2 by repeating the process used in Phase 1.

4.2.5 Phase 2 – Category Stability

The purpose of this phase was to ensure that the coding scheme used to identify and create the action triggers and categories was stable and sound. The best way to

determine this was to repeat the entire process, but at a later time. The identification and grouping process would be considered stable if there were none to very few differences between the two attempts. Large differences would have indicated that another approach was needed.

None of the texts or abridged documents were looked at for a month. The idea was that the second phase of the research would begin with little memory of the decisions made in the Phase 1. The same process as in Phase 1 was followed once the month had passed, in October 2002. As the process stability was being tested, the same questions were used to obtain the initial list of concepts. Thus, question CA1 was again applied to the texts:

CA1: *Could this influence a middle manager's decision to act?*

The relevant concepts were identified, highlighted and again recorded on a separate document. This concept document was then compared to the document created in the Phase 1. The concern was that if the lists differed substantially, another method of identifying concepts would have been necessary. However, it was discovered that the documents scarcely differed. One concept was overlooked the second time, 'organisational values' in text 6. This concept was added to the Phase 2 list to ensure that the concepts used in this phase were identical to those of Phase 1.

The moderators and vague concepts were again excluded (Appendix IV) by applying question CA2 to the abridged texts:

CA2: *Could this trigger an action by a middle manager?*

The same 75 concepts remained after applying this question. Similar concepts were again grouped into action triggers and then formed into categories. These categories were then compared to those of Phase 1. This was again to ensure that the process being used was stable and another method of categorisation was not needed. The grouping and category development produced the same results as it had before with one exception. This second time the 'Management of Change' concepts were included in the 'Change Plan' category as 'leader of' Figure 4-4, as suggested by

the colleague at the end of Phase 1. Otherwise all of the concepts were associated with the same action triggers as in Phase 1, as shown in Table 4-2.

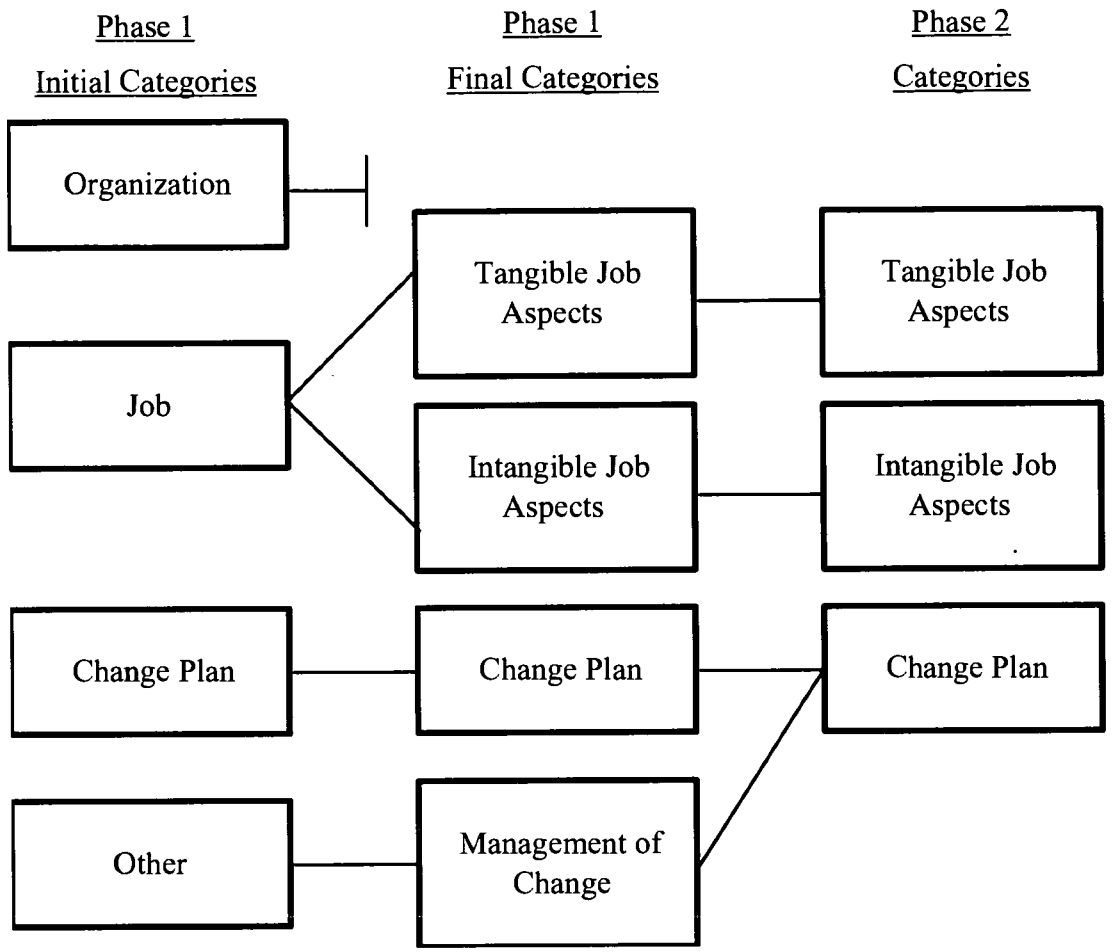


Figure 4-4. Categories identified in Phase 2.

The next step was to test the semantic reliability again. This time the semantic reliability was tested at a research group meeting and divisional conference presentation. A large number of people with various backgrounds and levels of understanding of the topic examined the categories. However, both groups were satisfied with the independence of the categories and the similarity between action triggers in each category. These categories then formed the basis of the coding scheme to be used for the remainder of the analysis. Phase 3 was then conducted to determine if other concepts could reliably be assigned to a single action trigger and category.

Table 4-2. Category Development in Phase 2.

Category	Action trigger	Texts identified
Tangible Aspects of Job	Work processes	2, (5, 5), 10, 18, 22
	Knowledge & skills	2, 8, 9, 17, 19
	Workload & responsibilities	3, 9, 13, 17, 21
	Working conditions	5, 23
Intangible Aspects of Job	Authority and power	2, 6, 8, (9, 9), 12, 18
	Respect and status	2, 14, 18, 21
	Comfort and security	9, 14, 17, 18, 23
	Career opportunities	9, 21
	Individual goals	12, 19, 24
	Alliances and relationships	9, 15, 20
Change Plan	Need for	17, 19, 22, 24
	Goals of	5, 6, 7, 11, 19, (22, 22), 23, 24
	Design of	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 22, 25
	Leader of	1, 3, 7, (22, 22), 23, 24

4.2.6 Phase 3 – Analysis of Remaining Texts

Phase 3 tested the coding scheme finalised in the previous Phases (1 and 2) with the remaining 25 texts. The purpose was to determine if the guidelines and rules for categorising the concepts were stable. If they rules were stable concepts from the new texts would be unquestionably assigned to a single action trigger. An unstable coding scheme would mean a single concept might fit the criteria of more than one action trigger.

Even though the purpose of this third phase differed from the previous phases, a similar process was used. The remaining 25 documents were again made into abridged documents, assigned numbers (Appendix II) and printed twice. As in the previous phases, the relevant concepts were identified, highlighted and recorded in a separate document. The concepts were then assigned to the best fitting action trigger. This process continued until all 25 of the texts were analysed and every concept was placed.

The question CA2 was used as the initial question rather than CA1 to immediately exclude moderators and vague concepts.

CA2: *Could this trigger an action by a middle manager?*

This process identified 127 concepts as seen in Appendix V. The vast majority of concepts easily coincided with the existing action triggers. However, while attempting to assign each a place, it was discovered that some of the concepts did not fit into the existing categories. One concept concerned 'senior support of the change plan', and appeared in 15 texts. This action trigger was different than the 'leaders of change'. It was still related to the *Change Plan* category, so it was included as a different action trigger named 'Senior support of'.

Three texts, 50, 54, and 69 made reference to actions being influenced by peers. Even though they were not related to middle managers directly, these texts discussed how some employees are greatly influenced by their peers. The purpose

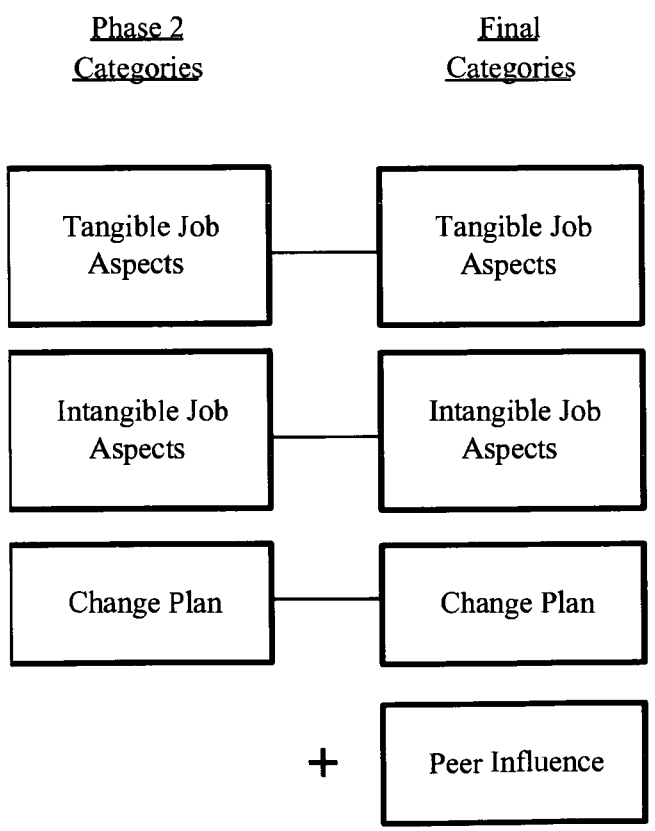


Figure 4-5. The final categories developed from the content analysis.

of this study was to identify all action triggers that *might* influence a middle manager's actions so the concept was included in the analysis. Unfortunately this concept did not fit into any of the existing categories. A new category, *Peer Influence*, had to be created with this being the only action trigger. The category changes are shown in Figure 4-5. All of the other concepts fit into the existing action triggers and are shown in Table 4-3.

Table 4-3. Final Texts Identified and Categorised.

Category	Action trigger	Texts identified
Tangible Aspects of Job	Work processes	53, 54, 55, 58, 61, 62, 63, 70
	Knowledge & skills	51, 54, 56, 58, 59, 63, 65, 69, 71, 72
	Workload & responsibilities	54, 56, 58, 61, 69, 70, 74
	Working conditions	51, 54, 70, 71, 73
Intangible Aspects of Job	Authority and power	53, 56, 69, 70
	Respect and status	54, 61
	Comfort and security	53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 61, 68, 70, 72, 74
	Career opportunities	71
	Individual goals	
	Alliances and relationships	
Change Plan	Need for	50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 59, 64, 71, 72, 73, 74
	Goals of	50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 59, 61, 66, 67, 73, 74
	Design of	50, 51, 52, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74
	Leaders of	51, 52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72
	Senior support of	50, 51, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 68, 69, 71, 73
Peer Influence	Peer Influence	50, 69, 70, 72, 73

As part of this final analysis, it was necessary to perform the stability reliability test one last time. The stability reliability test was to ensure that any novel concepts as

well as all of the other concepts were assigned to the appropriate action trigger. The final 25 abridged texts were examined and concepts assigned to categories a second time. This reclassification happened approximately one month after the previous analysis, in November 2002. The results of the two Phase 3 processes were compared to ensure that the coding scheme was indeed stable. This comparison showed that all of the concepts had been identified and categorised correctly the first time and that the process was considerably stable.

Table 4-4 shows the total number of concepts from all 50 articles that were categorised. All duplicate concepts from the first phases of the analysis were excluded from this table. In total, 16 action triggers in four categories were identified as a result of this content analysis.

Table 4-4. Total Number of Texts Discussing Each Category.

Category	Action trigger	Texts Identified
Tangible Aspects of Job	Work processes	13 texts
	Knowledge & skills	15 texts
	Workload & responsibilities	12 texts
	Working conditions	7 texts
Intangible Aspects of Job	Authority and power	10 texts
	Respect and status	6 texts
	Comfort and security	15 texts
	Career opportunities	3 texts
	Individual goals	3 texts
	Alliances and relationships	3 texts
Change Plan	Need for	15 texts
	Goals of	19 texts
	Design of	33 texts
	Leaders of	24 texts
	Senior support of	15 texts
Peer Influence	Peer Influence	5 texts

4.3 Categories Defined

The literature used to develop the categories of action triggers (Figure 4-6) did not concentrate specifically on middle managers, rather on employees in general. Middle managers are a type of employee and the focus of this work. The following definitions thus explain the contents of the action triggers and how they might influence middle managers in choosing to perform *alternative actions*. It is

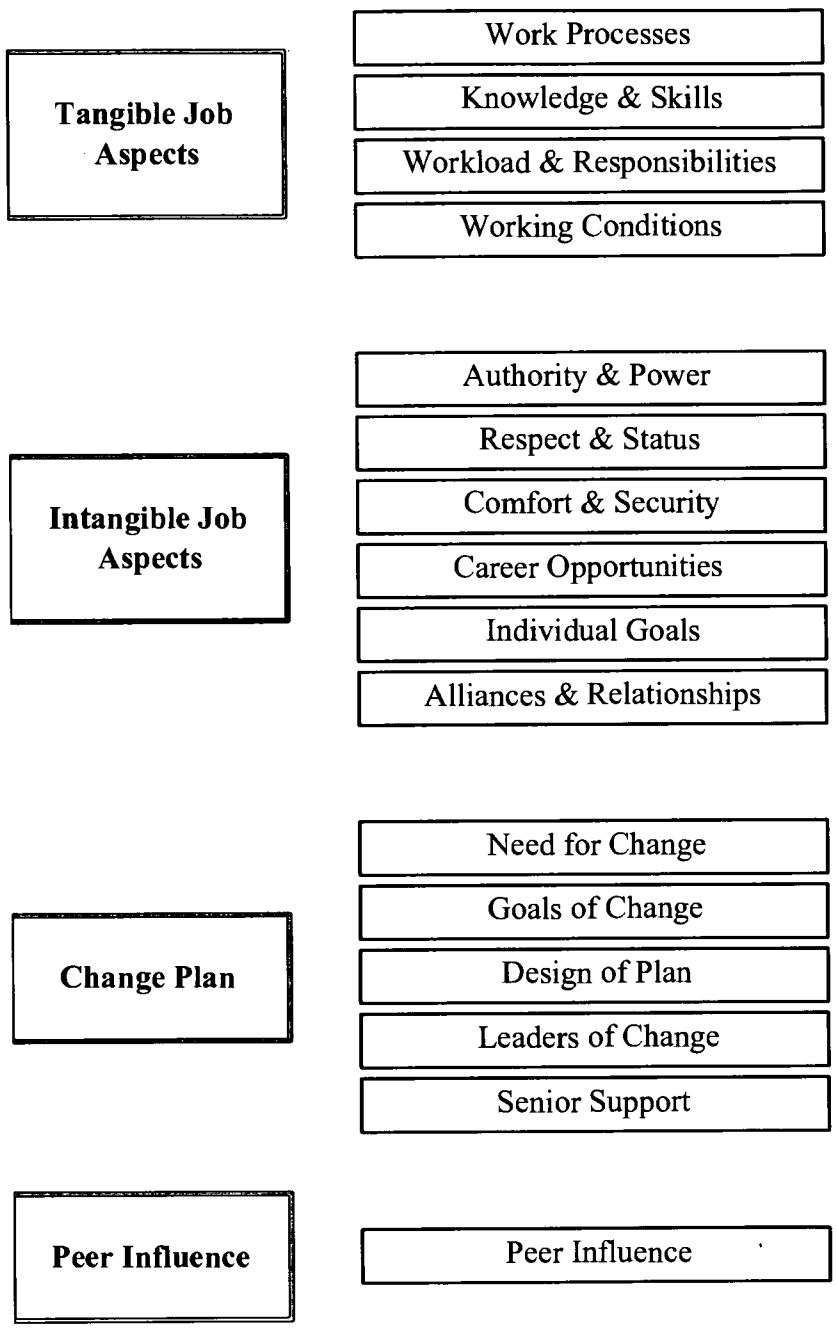


Figure 4-6. Influential action triggers grouped into categories.

important to remember that the same action trigger may influence a middle manager to perform a promotional action at one time and a hindering action at another time.

All of the action triggers discussed below may be affected by uncertainty. Most people want to know how they are going to be affected by the impending change. Middle managers who are unsure of how they will be affected may perform hindering actions to prevent the change from succeeding (Maurer 1998; Reis & Pena 2001; Waddell & Sohal 1998). Proposed change programs will undoubtedly present several 'unknowns', regardless of how detailed the initial plan is, and these unknowns worry some people (Lundberg & Young 2001; Mabin et al. 2001). Alternatively, some people thrive on challenges and the unknown is appealing to them. For these people, organisational change with many unresolved issues is seen as a positive thing, and they may actively promote it (Ragsdell 2000).

Uncertainty itself was often mentioned as a reason for action in the texts, but was much too vague in meaning for this analysis. However, uncertainty about a concept in particular may provide enough reason for a middle manager to act *alternatively*. Instead of explaining how uncertainty may affect each action trigger, it is assumed that uncertainty plays a role for most of them (excluding *Peer Influence*).

4.3.1 Tangible Job Aspects

The Tangible Job Aspects category of action triggers refers to the tangible aspects of a middle manager's position. As described in the literature, changes to any of these will often evoke hindering actions. However, some middle managers may act promotionally as they see the benefits in changing the current system, or improving their skill base. There are four action triggers in this category, Figure 4-7:

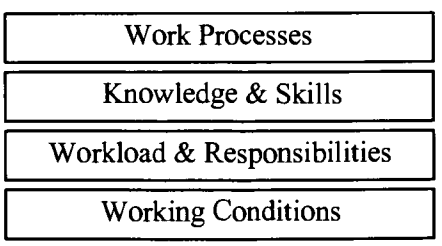


Figure 4-7. The four action triggers in the *Tangible Job Aspects* category.

Work Processes

Work Processes is the first action trigger in the Tangible Job Aspects Category, Figure 4-7. How middle managers work, everything from the reporting hierarchy to standard paperwork, is included in this action trigger, as well as the work processes that will be altered once the change is implemented. Changes to core work processes which result in a new way of working may be very upsetting (Mezias et al. 2001; Miller et al. 1994; Shields 1999; Spiker & Lesser 1995). These routine ways of working are almost habitual and are deeply ingrained (O'Conner 1993; Pardo de Val & Fuentes 2003; Rumelt 1995; Trader-Leigh 2002). People find comfort and simplicity in being able to perform tasks the same way every time without having to put forth much cognitive effort (Band 1995; Kanter 1985; Oreg 2003). Changes to these processes means the normal ways of working no longer applies, and middle managers will need to become mindful of the processes they use in performing their jobs (Kanter 1985). Being asked to work in these new ways may be threatening (Argyris & Kaplan 1994) especially if they are not fully understood (Folger & Skarlicki 1999). Middle managers would often prefer to keep the inefficient procedures they know (Dawson 1996) than to expend time and energy to change or learn new more efficient ones (Kanter 1985).

This action trigger may also produce promotional actions. In some situations middle managers may recognise problems with the current processes and methods of working. The challenges involved with the new ways of working may be viewed as opportunities for improvement (Breu & Benwell 1999).

Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge and Skills, Figure 4-7, is the second action trigger in this category. It includes the skills and knowledge a middle manager will need once the change has been implemented. Change often requires new skills (Ashford 1988; Eitel 2004; McConville & Holden 1999). Middle managers who have been in their current roles for some time may be concerned about the increased knowledge and skills that the change will require of them (Huy 2002; Kets De Vries 1999; Senior 2000; Woodward & Hendry 2004). The middle managers are capable of performing their jobs now, but their competence in the future is not so certain (Atkinson 2005; Band 1995; Moran & Brightman 2000; Savery & Luks 2000; Scandura et al. 2000;

Stensaker et al. 2002). There are several reasons middle managers might resent having to learn new skills. Firstly, some middle managers have *no desire* to learn new skills (Kegan & Lahey 2001). Secondly, some middle managers fear that they will be *unable* to develop the skills necessary (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). Thirdly, some middle managers are concerned with the ability of the organisation to provide appropriate levels of training and development (Allen-Meyer 2001; Atkinson 2005; Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Edwards & Sohal 2003; Jackson & Humble 1994; Kotter 1996; Newell & Dopson 1996; Tan & Tiong 2005; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005).

The literature concentrates on the potential for hindering associated with this action trigger; however, it may also encourage promotional actions. Many middle managers recognise that change is inevitable, and the more skills and knowledge they have, the more useful they are to the organisation. Middle managers who believe they are capable of learning may want to encourage a change requiring new skills (Eby et al. 2000). Some middle managers look forward to increasing their competency, especially when they believe their new knowledge and skills will be useful in the future, no matter what position they occupy in the organisation (Doyle et al. 2000).

Workload and Responsibilities

Workload and Responsibilities, Figure 4-7, is the third action trigger in the Tangible Job Aspects category. It includes the workload and responsibilities a middle manager will have once the change is introduced. A common question people have during a change program is, 'How will my workload be affected?' (Mabin et al. 2001; Scandura et al. 2000), and middle managers are no exception. Most middle managers expect any major change to result in more work (Buchanan et al. 1999; Burdett 1999; Doyle et al. 2000; Holden & Roberts 2004) and they want to know how this extra work is to be completed (Brockner 1992; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Saunders et al. 2002; Trader-Leigh 2002). Middle managers want to know how their schedule will be affected and if extra hours will be expected for a short time or permanently (Huy 2002; Kanter 1985; Savery & Luks 2000). Studies have shown that prolonged increases in workload lead to increased dissatisfaction (Balogun 2003; Newell & Dopson 1996; Proctor & Doukakis 2003; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005) which could eventually lead to hindering actions being performed. However,

there are also middle managers who enjoy the increased variety in their work after the introduction of new tasks (Brockner 1992).

Much the same applies for middle managers who are given more responsibilities (Kets De Vries 1999; Ragsdell 2000). Many will view them negatively, however, there are some middle managers who will view more responsibilities positively (Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003; Pate et al. 2003; Senior 2000;) and may decide to promote the change. There are also some middle managers who see a loss of responsibility (by passing it on to lower level employees) as positive (Davis & Fisher 2002). Fewer responsibilities allow more time to be spent on other tasks.

Working Conditions

Working Conditions is the fourth and last action trigger in this category, Figure 4-7. This action trigger includes a range of concepts including everything from the physical working space to pay and incentives. This action trigger also includes the physical and measurable aspects of a middle manager's working environment that will be altered during the change. Changes to the physical setting of the organisation may cause middle managers to object (Porras & Hoffer 1986) because, for example, they may have to change to a different office or location, possibly away from their friends (Kets De Vries 1999; Waddell & Sohal 1998). On the other hand, some middle managers may look forward to a new or different working environment.

The most obvious aspects of this action trigger involve pay structures, rewards and recognition which, when increased, are almost always seen as beneficial (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; Galpin 1996; Shields 1999; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005; Woodward & Hendry 2004). Rewards are often used to encourage employees to act in the manner necessary for the change to succeed (Brockner 1992; Kotter 1996; Sauser & Sauser 2002; Waddell & Sohal 1999). Besides being beneficial to the employee, rewards show that the new way of working is not just a short-term need (Armenakis et al. 1999).

To reduce the chance of hindering actions it is important that the rewards or recognition provided by the organisation adequately match the changed position of

the middle manager (Day 1999; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Hornsby, Kuratko & Zahra 2002). A little more pay for a lot more work will not be seen as an equitable situation (Folger & Skarlicki 1999). Similarly, no change in remuneration, or even a reduction in other benefits will certainly not be appreciated (Senior 2000; Taplin 2002, 2003). Additionally, promised benefits and rewards that are not received may also encourage hindering actions (Allen-Meyer 2001; Jorgeson et al. 2003).

Another component of this action trigger relates to stress management programs. Organisational change is a stressful event (Newell & Dopson 1996; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005), especially for middle managers. Change often requires middle managers to work harder and differently. Many middle managers feel that they would greatly benefit from stress reduction programs, especially if they were provided by the organisation as part of the change process (Doyle et al. 2000; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005). Organisations that don't provide programs to reduce stress often find that health care costs (including time off work) for affected employees rise (Marks & De Meuse 2005).

4.3.2 Intangible Job Aspects

The Intangible Job Aspects category of action triggers includes the aspects related to a middle manager's position that are difficult to define. Again the literature emphasises the potential for hindering actions in relation to these action triggers. However, this category also provides opportunities to encourage promotional actions. There are six action triggers in this category, Figure 4-8:

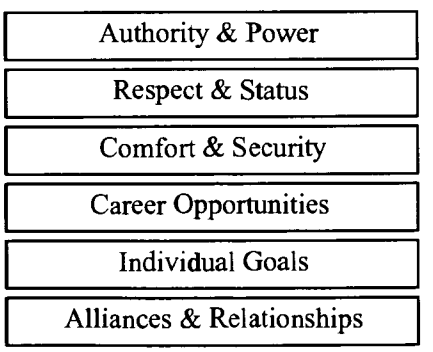


Figure 4-8. The six action triggers in the *Intangible Job Aspects* category.

Authority and Power

Authority and Power is the first action trigger in the Intangible Job Aspect category, Figure 4-8. It includes the authority, power, and even freedom middle managers believe they operate with in the organisation. While there are differences between these terms, the literature defines them all very similarly. Changes that reduce a middle manager's authority, power or control in the organisation will not be viewed positively (Atkinson 2005; Band 1995; Fenton-O'Creevy 1996; Kanter 1985; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Oreg 2003). Middle managers have often spent a great deal of time and effort to obtain their authority or power which puts them in a better position than lower level managers (Mezias et al. 2001). A change that threatens to decrease a middle manager's power or authority will understandably be viewed negatively (Edwards & Sohal 2003; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Hay & Hartel 2000; Kegan & Lahey 2001; Waddell & Sohal 1999). Many middle managers will do whatever they can to protect the power they have (Macri et al. 2002).

Freedom in this context is the latitude that middle managers have in which to work in the ways they desire. Generally by the time employees become middle managers, they have earned quite a bit of freedom, and a loss of freedom may be more influential as an action trigger than a loss of power (Huy 2002; Kets De Vries 1999).

Again this trigger has the potential to trigger promotional actions as well: increasing middle managers' authority, power or freedom increases the likelihood of their promotional actions during the change (Lundberg & Young 2001; Scandura et al. 2000). Even with no increase in power or freedom, if middle managers are allowed to exercise it to aid the implementation, they will more likely be supportive of the change (Miller et al. 1994).

Respect and Status

Respect and Status, Figure 4-8, is the second action trigger in this category. It includes the respect and status that middle managers believe they possess. Since middle managers operate between senior managers and the frontline managers, respect and status are often important issues for them. Middle managers are not going to support a program in which they lose the respect of other middle managers

(Band 1995). Likewise if a threat is perceived of a middle manager's status (Edwards & Sohal 2003; Fenton-O'Creevy 1996; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Kanter 1985; Maurer 1996b; Proctor & Doukakis 2003; Ragsdell 2000; Trader-Leigh 2002). The concern with this is that a change plan does not necessarily have direct control over this action trigger. Middle managers must earn the respect of others. As earning respect is difficult, this action trigger is less likely to cause a middle manager to perform promotional actions.

Additionally, middle managers do not want to 'lose face'. For example, middle managers who have promoted a specific way of working or idea will not be likely to support a change that requires them to admit they were wrong (Kanter 1985). If a middle manager is allowed to save face in this situation (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979) or if this type of situation is avoided altogether, a middle manager may be more willing to support the change.

Comfort and Security

Comfort and Security is the third action trigger in the Intangible Job Aspect category, Figure 4-8. It includes the comfort and security middle managers feel. The main component of this action trigger is job security. Job security is of great importance for many middle managers when a change plan is announced (Atkinson 2005; Hay & Hartel 2000; Kets De Vries 1999; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Maurer 1996a; Trader-Leigh 2002; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005; Waddell & Sohal 1999; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000). Middle managers who feel uncomfortable with the stability of their position (believe job is threatened) will struggle in dealing with the other aspects of the change (Eby et al. 2000; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Maurer 1996b; Mezias et al. 2001; Reichers et al. 1997; Savery & Luks 2000; Scandura et al. 2000). Several rounds of lay-offs or rumours of more lay-offs will only increase middle managers' discomfort (Ashforth & Mael 1998; Brockner 1992; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Ghoshal & Bartlett 2000; Holden & Roberts 2004; Jorgeson et al. 2003). Middle managers would often rather know they have lost their position than to keep wondering (Kanter 1985). Occasionally this action trigger results in middle managers choosing to leave the organisation on their own terms rather than continue speculating about the permanency of their positions (Edwards & Sohal 2003). Middle managers who worry about the security of their positions may be

less inclined to perform hindering actions as they worry about the repercussions of those actions, however, their compliance in these instances is artificial (Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003; Pate et al. 2003).

The comfort aspect comes into play in a different kind of situation. Middle managers may not support a change where their jobs are secure but coworkers and valued employees are forced out of the organisation (Marks & De Meuse 2005). This is especially true when it is believed the organisation will suffer because these workers take invaluable knowledge and experience with them (Doyle et al. 2000). In many organisations middle managers had the belief that good performance and long service to an organisation would lead to the security of their jobs (Jackson & Humble 1994). Seeing that this is not true in all instances may make middle managers un*comfort*able with the change and lead to hindering actions.

Middle managers that know their positions or others' are not at risk will be more likely to promote the change. However, the organisation must be trusted for these claims to be believed (Doyle et al. 2000; Eby et al. 2000; Huy 2002; Maurer 2000; Miller et al. 1994).

Career Opportunities

Career Opportunities is the fourth action trigger in this category, Figure 4-8. It includes the opportunities available for middle managers' future career advancement. While some middle managers are content with their position in the organisation, there are others who are looking to move up in the hierarchy. The new organisational trend is to develop leaner, flatter organisations through elimination of hierarchical levels (Balogun 2003). This type of change removes avenues of progression and are often viewed negatively by middle managers (Brockner 1992; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Newell & Dopson 1996), occasionally causing middle managers to resort to leaving the organisation for other opportunities (Allen-Meyer 2001). Alternatively, promotions (Ragsdell 2000) or increased opportunities for advancement (as long as they are realistic) (Staehle & Schirmer 1992) will be viewed positively (Kets De Vries 1999; Ragsdell 2000) and possibly result in promotional actions.

Individual Goals

Individual Goals is the fifth action trigger in this category, Figure 4-8. All of a middle manager's personal goals apart from career progression are included in this action trigger, which unfortunately means it is vague and very personalised. A middle manager may have the goal of introducing a organisational daycare program, implementing a recycling program, improving research and development times, and so forth. Changes to certain aspects of the organisation are going to trigger hindering actions because they block or conflict with such personal goals (Lundberg & Young 2001; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Moran & Brightman 2000; Petrini & Hultman 1995). An example might be an organisation that decides to outsource its marketing program. Any middle manager with personal goals involving the marketing program is going to be more likely to hinder the change than middle managers without similar personal goals. The opposite should be true as well. Organisations that alter conditions to increase the chances of a middle manager achieving personal goals are more likely to be promoted.

Alliances and (Working) Relationships

This is the sixth action trigger, *Alliances and Relationships*, in the Intangible Job Aspect category, Figure 4-8. It includes alliances and other working relationships that may be affected by the change. In many organisations middle managers form alliances to help get their regular daily work done. A change that threatens the usefulness of these alliances is not going to be viewed positively (Kets De Vries 1999). Changes that strengthen these relationships may encourage promotional actions.

Alliances are just one specific kind of working relationship. This action trigger includes all working relationships that may be affected by the change. Implementing or changing teams[4] and movement between divisions are also covered by this action trigger. Many middle managers have learned how best to work with the people around them (Maurer 1997). A change that diminishes the value of these relationships will most likely be viewed negatively (Marks & De

[4]The formation of teams may affect several action triggers. The Alliances and Relationsips action trigger team example concerns only the relationships that are affected by the formation of teams.

Meuse 2005; Tierney 1999; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005). However, middle managers that believe the change will increase the value of their current relationships or present opportunities to expand their contact group may be more likely to promote the change.

4.3.3 Change Plan

This category of action triggers includes everything from why the plan is needed, to how the plan will be implemented. These action triggers are not personally motivated as are the first two categories; rather they are organisationally motivated. Middle managers will choose to act based on the perceived impact the change has on the organisation. These action triggers are not concerned only with the organisation, but the success of the major change program as well. There are five action triggers in the Change Plan category, Figure 4-9:

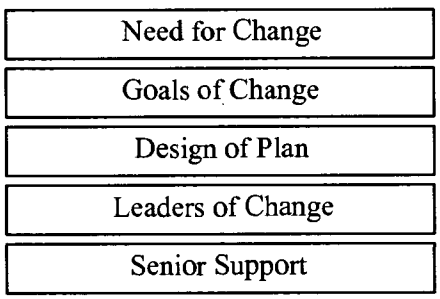


Figure 4-9. The five action triggers in the *Change Plan* category.

Need for Change

Need for Change is the first action trigger in this category, Figure 4-9. This action trigger concerns the need for the change, not how the plan will meet this need, or the need of the goals. The key to this action trigger is in showing the discrepancy between the current operating position and the desired operating position (Allen-Meyer 2001; Armenakis & Harris 2002; Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Galpin 1996; Jorgeson et al. 2003; Rumelt 1995; Saunders et al. 2002). The benefits of changing (in terms of survival) must be apparent (Day 1999; Hay & Hartel 2000; Kotter 1995; Reichers et al. 1997). Middle managers must see that the need for change is real, and not fabricated (Armenakis et al. 1999; Mezias et al. 2001; Molinsky 1999; Moran & Brightman 2000; O'Conner 1993; Oxtoby et al.

2002; Petrini & Hultman 1995; Savery & Luks 2000). Only after middle managers understand the need for the change will they be able to promote it (Proctor & Doukakis 2003). However, if middle managers disagree with the need for change (Coghlan 1993) they may choose to hinder the change (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979; Senior 2000).

Goals of Change

The second action trigger in this category is *Goals of Change*, Figure 4-9. Only the desired outcomes anticipated are included in this action trigger. Goals during major change are crucial, as they show all employees what the organisation is attempting to achieve (Saunders et al. 2002; Scandura et al. 2000; Senior 2000; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). Middle managers may agree that there is a need for change but not agree with the goals set by the designers (Armenakis & Harris 2002; Kabanoff et al. 1995; Maurer 2000; Waddell & Sohal 1998). Inappropriate, contradictory or 'fuzzy' goals for the change program could lead to hindering actions (Bashein & Markus 1994; Kotter 1995; O'Conner 1993; Pardo de Val & Fuentes 2003; Proctor & Doukakis 2003; Shields 1999; Taplin 2001; Tessler 1989; Trader-Leigh 2002).

Occasionally major change goals alter the values or mission statement of the organisation. In many organisations there is a group of middle managers that identify quite strongly with the organisation. They see their role in the organisation as strongly intertwined with the organisation values and align themselves with the mission statement (Moran & Brightman 2000). Changes to the values or mission statement of the organisation are likely to result in hindering actions by these middle managers (Trader-Leigh 2002).

Even for the middle managers not as closely aligned with the organisation, opposing goals will likely encourage hindering actions while complementary goals will encourage promotional actions (Oxtoby 1994; Young 2000). Many middle managers will evaluate the changes based on the goal's alignment with the current organisational values and vision (Reger et al. 1994; Young 2000).

Design of Plan

Design of Plan is the third action trigger in the Change Plan category, Figure 4-9. It includes all aspects of the change plan except the goals: such as the logic, order and methods of change as well as the fairness and complexity of the plan. Middle managers who are confused (Kotter 1995; Maurer 1998) by the plan or find it too complex (Burdett 1999; Larkin & Larkin 1996) may respond with hindering actions. Middle managers are not going to support something that they don't fully understand or don't have complete information for (Mabin et al. 2001; Maurer 2000; Miller et al. 1994; Newell & Dopson 1996; Piasecka 2001; Reger et al. 1994; Shields 1999; Waddell & Sohal 1999). The way in which the plan is presented to middle managers may also be quite influential in how middle managers act (Allen-Meyer 2001; Coghlan 1993; Edwards & Sohal 2003; Kabanoff et al. 1995). Middle managers may assume that part of the plan is to keep them out of the loop (Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Proctor & Doukakis 2003). Middle managers who are not fully informed about the change program are likely to fill in the blanks themselves, which often results in negative beliefs about the change (Atkinson 2005; Brockner 1992; Larkin & Larkin 1996; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Reichers et al. 1997).

The more substantial portion of this action trigger concerns the middle manager's evaluation of how the plan aims to reach the expected outcomes (Band 1995; Buchanan et al. 1999; Wooldridge & Floyd 1990). Middle managers' assessments are based on how they believe the change plan will be implemented (Armenakis et al. 1999; Hay & Hartel 2000; Kets De Vries 1999) and what results will be produced. Change plans that don't appear to be well thought out (Reichers et al. 1997), not heading in the 'right direction' (Huy 2002), or are not in the appropriate order (Bashein & Markus 1994; Beugelsdijk & Slangen 2001; Stensaker et al. 2002), or do not have the right approach (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Eby et al. 2000; Moran & Brightman 2000) may be seen as being mishandled (Petrini & Hultman 1995). Middle managers who don't believe the desired goals will be met (O'Conner 1993) or the change will fail (Hay & Hartel 2000; Petrini & Hultman 1995) are likely to perform hindering actions. However, the reverse is likely to be true as well: middle managers who believe the plan will meet the desired objectives in a logical and appropriate way are more likely to promote the change (Armenakis & Harris 2002).

One commonly researched aspect of organisational change concerns justice and fairness. Several different types of justice have been identified (procedural, interactive, distributive) (Lundberg & Young 2001). Change plans that give rise to perceptions of any type of injustice or unfairness are likely to result in hindering actions (Brockner 1992; Brockner & Wiesenfled 1996; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Hay & Hartel 2000; Thornhill et al. 1997; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000; Woodward & Hendry). One reason middle managers may perform hindering actions is that they see themselves as personally being harmed by the organisation (Ambrose et al. 2002). Conversely, when a plan is seen as being fair to all, it is more likely to be promoted (Cardy, Gove & DeMatteo 2000; Saunders et al. 2002).

Leaders of Change

Leaders of Change is the fourth action trigger in this category, Figure 4-9, and includes the designers and implementers of the change plan. Middle managers who do not trust those responsible for designing or implementing the plan (Doyle et al. 2000; Eby et al. 2000; Huy 2002; Maurer 2000; Miller et al. 1994), may question the designers' and leaders' commitment to the change and middle managers' interests (Taplin 2003; Reichers et al. 1997; Wanous et al. 2000). In these instances the middle managers are going to be less likely to support the change and more likely to hinder it. However, the reverse is also true, middle managers who have great confidence in the designers and leaders are more likely to promote it.

Change leaders in particular have the crucial role of encouraging the other employees to participate and act appropriately (Senior 2000). During periods of stress, such as during a major change, particular attention is paid to how leaders act (Rumelt 1995). Those that talk and act in a congruent manner, 'walk the talk', will be more trusted and will encourage followers to act in a similar way (Armenakis et al. 1999; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000). Those whose talk differs from their actions may be seen as lacking commitment (Burdett 1999; Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000). Employees will be more likely to mirror the leaders actions than comply with their contradictory requests (Victor & Franckeiss 2002). Thus, it is very important for the change leaders to act as they are requesting others to.

Change leaders may also be assessed on their style of leadership. Middle managers who see change leaders using inappropriate or poor management styles will be less inclined to follow them (Nadler & Tushman 1989; Reichers et al. 1997; Stensaker et al. 2002; Waddell & Sohal 1998). Middle managers who believe their leaders are not competent at keeping the change moving along will encourage hindering actions (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; O'Conner 1993). The opposite is undoubtedly just as true, middle managers with strong leadership styles and competent actions will encourage promotional actions (Buchanan et al. 1999; Oxtoby et al. 2002; Scandura et al. 2000; Waclawski 2002).

Senior Support

Senior Support is the last action trigger in the Change Plan category, Figure 4-9. It includes the support and commitment from the top levels. The visible support and commitment of senior management is important (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Doyle et al. 2000; Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; Mezias et al. 2001; Oxtoby et al. 2002; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Thornhill et al. 1997; Woodward & Hendry 2004) especially in the form of resources such as time and money (Bashein & Markus 1994; Nadler & Tushman 1989). Middle managers who have seen a previous change fail because of lacking senior support will not expect anything different for this change (Armenakis & Harris 2002; Rumelt 1995). It is important that the support from the senior level is exhibited early in the change process (Argyris & Kaplan 1994). Middle managers are not going to promote the change until they know who else is going to support the program (Armenakis et al. 1999; Eby et al. 2000; Galpin 1996; Kotter 1995; Scandura et al. 2000; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000). However, it is not just verbal acknowledgement required from the senior level but their actions (Balogun 2003; Huy 2002; Stace & Dunphy 2001; Trader-Leigh 2002). Once a demonstration of the senior support has been made, middle managers will consider promotional actions (Armenakis & Harris 2002). Senior managers that promote the program at the beginning but then disappear are only likely to encourage hindering actions (Allen-Meyer 2001; Edwards & Sohal 2003; Fletcher & Taplin 2002).

4.3.4 Peer Influence

This category differs from the other categories as it consists of a single action trigger. It does not involve personal or organisational motivations, but rather peer motivation.

Peer Influence refers to the importance of the *group effect*, when people in a group act alike (Huy 2002; Rumelt 1995). It includes the fact that some middle managers take cues from coworkers (Brockner 1992). People in groups often exhibit different behaviour than they would on their own. This may be due to peer group pressure (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). However, it may be due to the exchange and discussion of ideas and reasoning about aspects of the change (Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Mezias et al. 2001). While the group effect is not fully understood, it should be kept in mind that some middle managers may be persuaded by the actions of others (Armenakis & Harris 2002; Ashforth & Mael 1998; Cialdini 2001). This should hold true for promotional as well as hindering actions.

4.3.5 Summary of Influences

Action triggers related to personal aspects could possibly be more influential than those related to the organisation. A major change that provides a middle manager with a higher level position may be actively promoted even though it is obvious that the change is not beneficial to the organisation. Several action triggers may encourage promotional actions, while others hindering actions (Eby et al. 2000). The action type chosen is going to be based on a cost-benefit analysis (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). At this time, however, it is unclear how the action triggers would be weighted in importance. The cyclical re-evaluation of actions performed (as depicted in the Implementation Phase of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model, Figure 4-2) may give some clues to how these contradictory action triggers are dealt with. A middle manager may be more influenced by one set of action triggers at the beginning of a change and another set upon re-evaluation (Eby et al. 2000). This is the reason some middle managers perform different actions at different times.

4.4 Summary

Content analysis was chosen for its ability to identify, extract and categorise relevant concepts from existing literature. The purpose of this study was to explore

the existing literature to develop rules to consistently identify action triggers. However, the literature used for the content analysis did not focus solely on middle managers. Since the roles in a change program are different for each level of manager in the organisation, there may be different action triggers for each level as well. The four categories of action triggers identified are only the beginning of this research. The 16 action triggers were explained as if they were influential to middle managers, however, it was necessary to consult with actual middle managers to see if the action triggers identified were actually influential. The action triggers identified may not apply to middle managers and not all may have been identified. Study Two was designed to complement the results of this study. It employed one-on-one interviews with middle managers actually experiencing major organisational change to determine the relevance and comprehensiveness of the action triggers identified in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE
STUDY TWO: INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

Study One identified 16 action triggers that might influence middle managers' actions during the implementation of major organisational change. Most of these action triggers were identified from literature that did not directly pertain to middle managers. It was therefore necessary to gather information from middle managers themselves to verify the appropriateness of these action triggers. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten middle managers currently participating in a major change program.

This chapter first explains the development and administration of the interview questions. The results of these interviews are then described in the order of the number of comments provided by the middle managers for that grouping. The results of this study are then compared to those of Study One. This comparison is necessary as the methods of analysis for the two studies differed. Even after the discrepancies were accounted for, the interviews had only confirmed the existence of two action triggers, and indicated the existence of nine others, leaving five unidentified. Study Three was thus designed to complement the first two studies by exposing the action triggers to a greater number of middle managers with various major change experiences.

5.2 Study Design

During the interviews the middle managers were asked to discuss the aspects relating to the current change that influenced their decisions to act. The answers given by the participants were then thematically grouped.

5.2.1 Interview Questions

The questions used for the interviews may be seen in Appendix VII. There were four main sections to the interview: the introduction, the core, the review and the finishing questions.

The main purpose of the initial questions (Section A, Appendix VII) was to put the participant at ease. Most participants had no idea what to expect from a research interview and were concerned that the questions were going to be difficult to answer or too personal. For this reason, questions that were simple to answer were asked first. These questions asked about the participants' current position, their time in it, as well as their time with the organisation overall. These are standard questions that each participant would have been asked many times before in casual conversation.

The final initial question (A5) asked about previous experiences with change. This question was intentionally vague so participants could choose to discuss things at a level they were comfortable with. The previous experience could have been experience with the current change, experience with another organisation, or even significant personal experiences. This question did not mention the current change in particular but served to lead participants to that topic. Ideally participants would attempt to relate past change actions, processes and outcomes to the current major organisational change.

After the introductory questions came the core questions, Section B. These questions were based on the action triggers identified in the content analysis: tangible job aspects, intangible job aspects, peer influence, and various aspects of the change plan. Since the interviews were to last only an hour, there was time to ask just one question for each action trigger. As all of the components in each action trigger were directly related, discussion of one component specifically (job security for example) would provide evidence for support of the entire action trigger (*Comfort and Security*). This did not mean that the participants' answers were restricted to the single component of the action triggers. The questions required more than simple yes or no answers, for example: 'How are these changes supposed to affect your work and position?' (question B5). This was a more open-

ended approach than: 'Do these changes negatively affect your position?' The open-ended approach meant participants could answer each question without being influenced toward the negative or positive and discuss and relate other issues of importance to the issue brought up in the original question. Additionally, there were some opportunities for each participant to discuss 'other' aspects of the change that had influenced their decisions to act.

After the core questions came the review questions. Participants were asked (C1) about the actions they had performed in response to the change program: compliant, hindering or promotional. The next question, C2, asked if the participants' feelings about the program had changed since they first learned about it. The last question of the Section, C3, reiterated the focus of the study. It summarised the topics covered in the previous answers, and then asked if there were any other aspects that were influential in the middle manager's decision to act.

The last questions were the finishing questions. D1 asked if the participant had any other thoughts or comments. Finally D3 asked if the participant would like to receive a copy of the findings.

5.2.2 Pilot Study

The interview questions were tested through a pilot study of four participants. The purpose of this was to ensure that the questions were clear and addressed the appropriate subjects. It also gave an idea of the expected time frame.

The participants in the pilot study were not middle managers, but people who had experienced a great deal of change in their workplaces. They were told the purpose of their involvement was to improve the quality of the interview questions. The interview progressed as it would have with the middle managers, but the pilot study participants were asked to comment on the quality and clarity of the questions at the end of the interview. Two participants were interviewed with the original set of questions. Their comments resulted in no changes to the content or design of the questions, but slight rewording and clarification.

One of the recommendations was to change question B1 regarding the middle manager's role in development of the program to be more change specific:

It had been: *What role did you have in the development of the current change program?*

It was changed to: *I understand Cini is currently implementing changes to HR, Loss Prevention, and OH&S, what role did you have in the development of these changes?*

The two pilot study participants also mentioned the personal nature of some of the issues that could arise, and suggested that confidentiality safeguards warranted another mention. The issue was discussed at the beginning of the interview, but the D2 statement was included at the end of the interview as well:

D2: *Just to reiterate, everything you have said will be combined with the data from the other interviews. In the findings there will be no way to relate any item specifically to you in any way.*

These changes were made, and the final two pilot participants were interviewed. These final participants believed that the questions were appropriately worded and clear. Time was not a concern with any of the participants. All of the interviews were conducted satisfactorily within one hour.

5.2.3 University Ethics Requirements

The University of South Australia's research guidelines had to be met for approval to use human participants in research (Appendix VI). These guidelines required approval from the Ethics Review Board before contacting participants. The guidelines also dictated methods for contacting participants and the basic design of the consent forms required from the organisation involved and each participant. The letter requesting participation, information sheets, consent forms and interview questions were designed, submitted and approved by the Ethics Review Board.

Participants were to be mailed an initial introductory packet describing the purpose of the study and what would be required of them if they chose to participate. The first item in the packet was a letter formally requesting participation. It provided a brief introduction to the researcher, explained the design of the interviews, and asked for cooperation. The next item was the information sheet. This sheet provided a brief overview of the research and a more detailed description of what was expected of the participant. It explained how the interviews, taking about an hour, would be used to learn more about middle managers' opinions regarding different aspects of the current change program. The last item was the consent form. This form was a standard format that explained the outcomes of the study and reiterated that participants were able to withdraw at any time. These documents are all shown in Appendix VI.

5.2.4 Participants

Once ethics approval had been obtained, it was necessary to recruit the participants. Contact was made with the South Australian/Tasmanian State Manager of Cini Logistics (a pseudonym, as are all names used) regarding the South Australian branch. In order for the State Manager to grant approval for the study, a meeting was necessary to ensure that the guidelines of the organisation would be met regarding the research. During this meeting the State Manager described the goals and plans of Cini National and how they related to the South Australia Cini Logistics organisation specifically.

Cini Organisation. In November 2002, Cini National was a national retail organisation owning several different operating groups in several different industries (Figure 5-1). The National Office was based in Melbourne, and a number of management levels were based there (Figure 5-2). Many of these levels were senior managers; they were involved with decision making for the entire organisation and had little contact with the physical aspects of the business. The middle managers in this organisation were those responsible for the different operating groups in the different states. Thus most were not based in Melbourne. At this time there were seven different operating groups being managed by the company, including one for marketing and one for logistics (Figure 5-1). Each group had its own State Manager and operating system in every state. Additionally

these groups (including logistics) each had State Human Resource and Occupational Health and Safety teams.

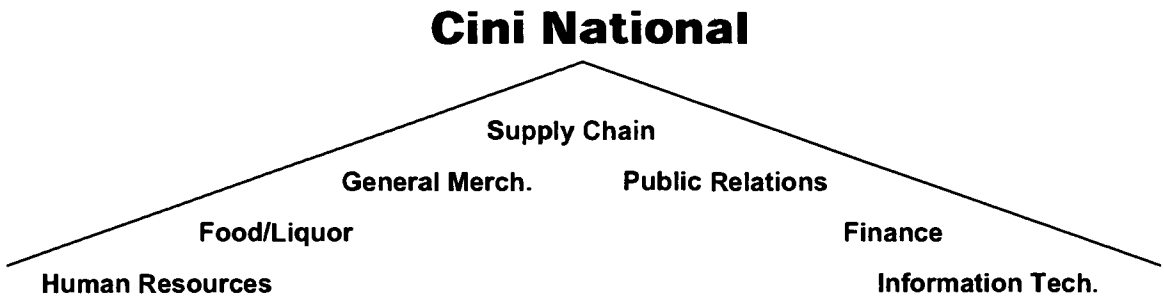


Figure 5-1. The different operating groups under the Cini National umbrella.

Immediately prior to this study, several of Cini's top-level managers and board members were replaced. This was the initial motivator for major changes across the entire organisation. The majority of the proposed changes focused on eliminating redundancies and increasing standardisation between groups. These changes included removing several levels of senior managers in Melbourne (Figure 5-3). The standardisation was necessary as every operating group's state management team operated with their own rules, regulations and procedures. The goal was to coordinate operations of a single operating group across the country. This meant the same procedures, recording and reporting measures would be used nationally. This would simplify transfers of product, information and even employees between stores (which every operational location was called regardless of function). The warehouses were called DCs for short (distribution centre) and depending on the context middle managers would use either term.

The major changes were just beginning to be implemented at the time the study took place (December 2002). The reduction in management levels was not going to have any real effect on the middle managers in South Australia. Middle managers had very little if any contact with the senior levels of management in Melbourne, their main concern was that the stores under their control were operating properly. The middle managers were going to be affected by the standardisation changes, but were not yet fully aware of exactly how. Some of the changes had been introduced,

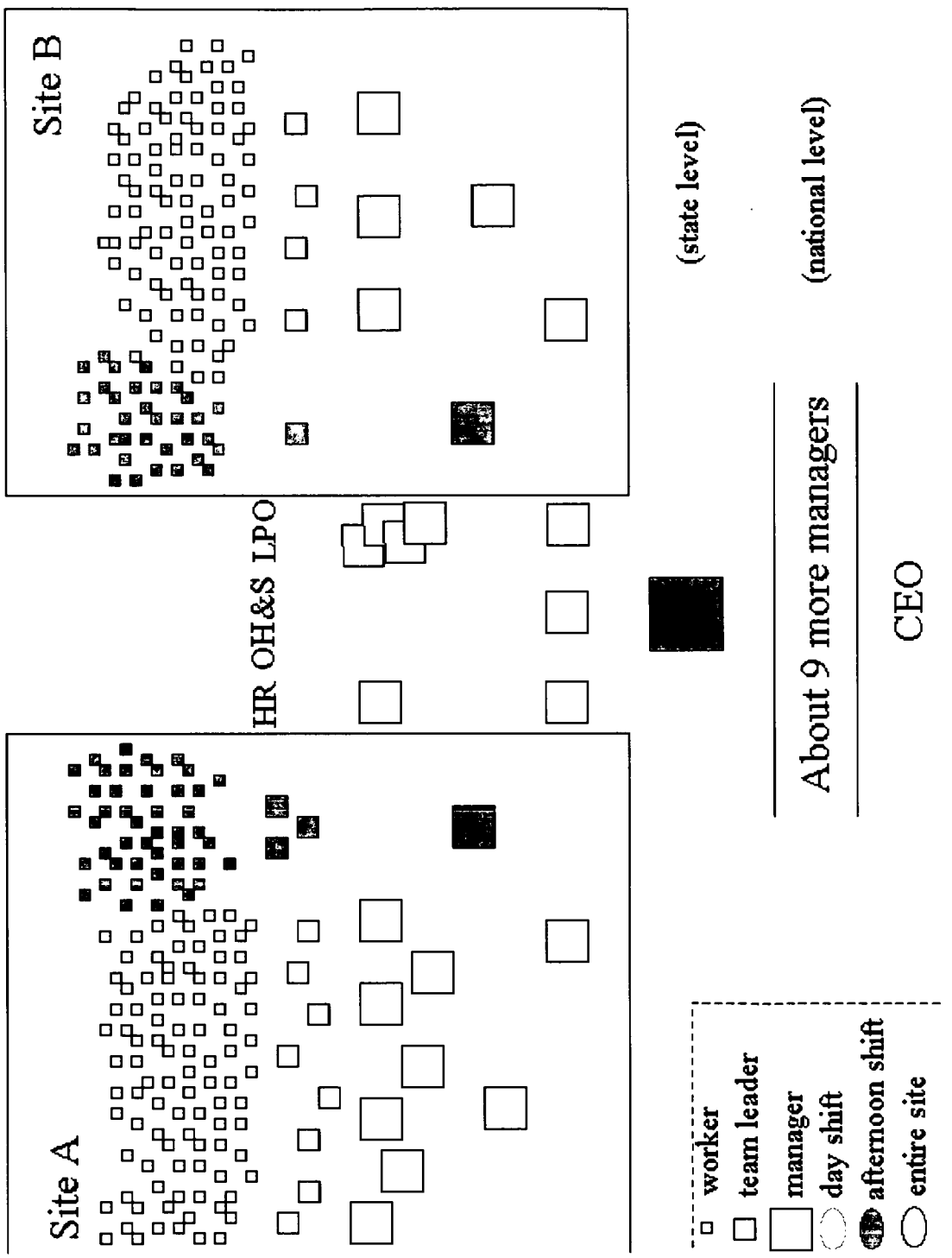


Figure 5-2. The SA Cini Logistics site operations in relevance to the middle managers at the national level of the organisation.

and it was common knowledge that more changes would be implemented later. The changes at Cini were major, as per the definition of major change for this thesis. The middle managers had been informed that many more similar sized changes should be expected in the future. However, not all of the details had been finalised nor announced.

Cini Logistics. Cini's South Australia (SA) Logistics operations were based in two warehouse sites in Adelaide. The main site, A, was slightly larger than B, a newer site. The State Manager operated out of Site A. This was the original site but due to the increase of products it had to supply, Site B was added about three years ago. Both sites had a Site Manager, Day Manager, and Afternoon Manager. There were also a variety of other managers: Systems, Despatch, Receiving, Office etc. (Figure 5-2). There were approximately twelve managers at Site A and seven at Site B. Anyone with *Manager* in their title was a middle manager. The *Team Leaders* were the frontline managers of Cini Logistics. They were in direct control of the actual warehouse floor operations. Several of the middle managers would go onto the floor during their shift to check on operations and Team Leaders' progress, but many of the middle managers never set foot on the floor during their shift.

The SA Cini Logistics ran a day shift and slightly smaller afternoon shift, five days a week. The majority of the middle managers worked during the day, with only the Afternoon Manager and possibly another working during the afternoon shift. Site A used 7 to 12 Team Leaders per shift while Site B operated most shifts with 4 or 5. Most Team Leaders were in charge of 10–15 pickers. The pickers were the employees who picked the cartons that went on pallets. These were wrapped and secured by other workers before being moved by forklift to the proper area for loading onto a truck for shipping.

This study was designed to investigate how middle managers decide to act during organisational change. This meant that the group of interest from the SA Cini Logistics organisation was the manager level. They were not involved in organisation-wide decisions, they only had control over their own area in the store. The middle managers were not in charge of the hands on day-to-day operations of the site. They had some influence in this area, but most were not regularly on the

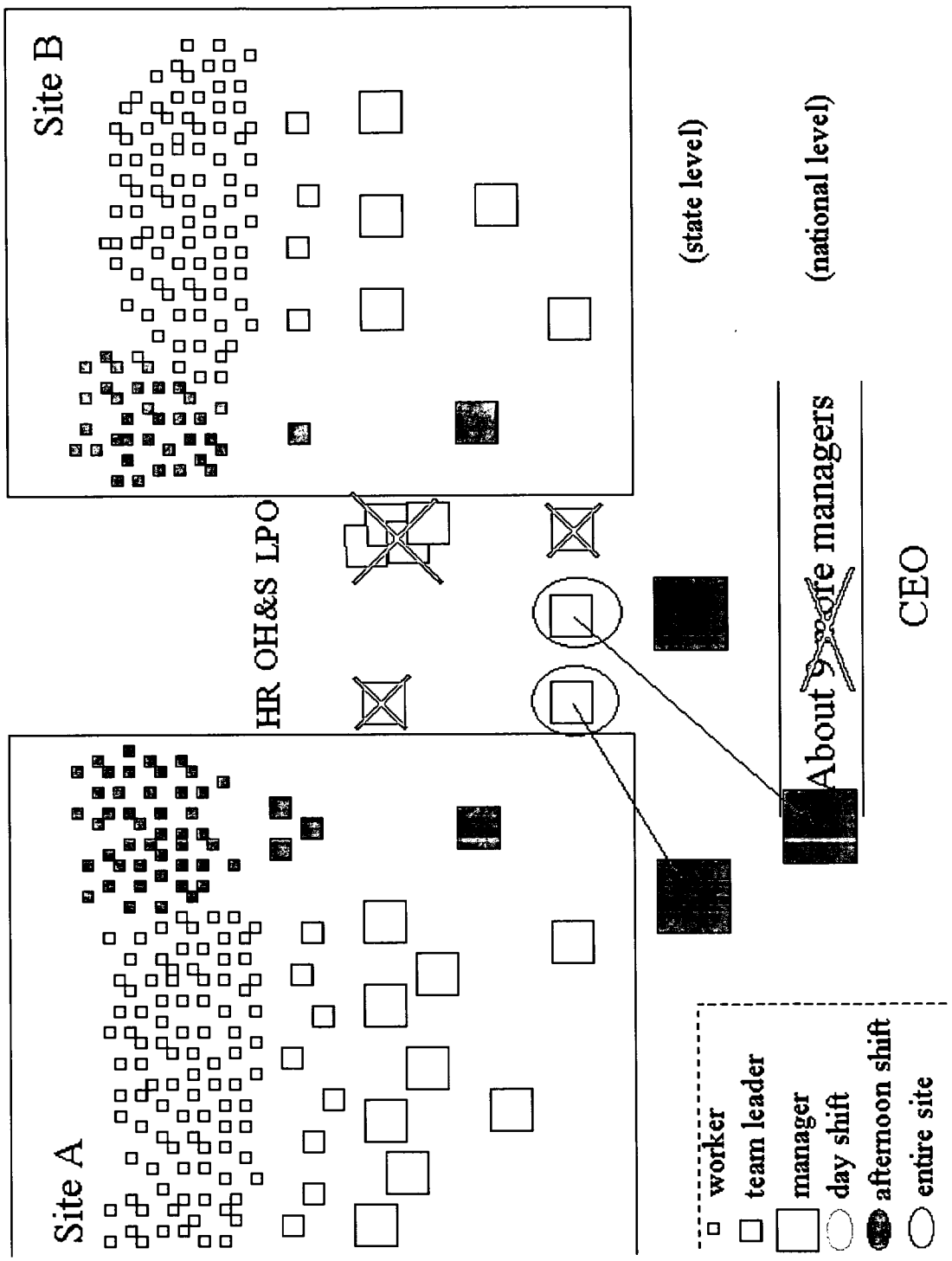


Figure 5-3. The changes planned for the Cini organisation.

floor to ensure every individual was doing the correct job. These middle managers were the individuals that the State Manager was asked to identify.

Participant Selection. Discussions with the State Manager resulted in ten middle managers participating in the interviews. There had recently been an internal climate study and a group of middle managers felt that Cini National was trying to devise a way to get rid of them. The State Manager felt that these middle managers would be uncooperative and even possibly give false answers if forced to comply. He decided it was in everyone's best interest not to ask them to help. Instead he provided a list of ten middle managers he was sure would be willing to participate.

The State Manager agreed to contact the Site Managers to inform them that he had approved the study. He also told them that the middle managers involved should be allowed to participate in the hour interview during work time. The State Manager asked that the individual information packets (described in the ethics requirements section) were sent to him so that he could include a coversheet for each middle manager to explain his approval of the study. He thought this would make them more likely to cooperate.

Interview Arrangements. Once the participants had received the participation-request packets, they were contacted by e-mail or telephone to arrange a time slot for the interview. The interviews were held on site in private meeting rooms and were all conducted within a three-week span.

At the interview meeting, initial introductions were made and the information sheet reviewed. Participants were asked if they had any questions about the study before they began answering questions. Participants were also asked to allow the interview to be audio taped. Finally, each participant was required to sign a consent form. The audio recorder was turned on and interview questioning began. At its conclusion, participants were asked if they would like a copy of the results of the study. They were thanked for their time and cooperation.

5.2.5 Data Analysis

The interviews were held with middle managers and asked about the aspects of a change program that affected their decisions to act. Thus it was not necessary to identify and extract relevant items as done in the previous study. Instead, the analysis needed only to reduce the data to a manageable amount and organise it in a useful way. A coding/thematic analysis was chosen for this purpose.

Descriptive codes (Miles & Huberman 1994) were chosen for the analysis. The codes assigned to the data described the theme they referred to (Patton 2002). The use of descriptive coding meant the data was only labelled; no attempt was made to uncover patterns or use other interpretations of the data. Theme was the concept size (as in the content analysis) as this allowed multiple themes in a paragraph or single sentence to be identified.

The interviewer transcribed each interview immediately after its conclusion so that notes about the context and general impressions could be recorded along with the answers of the participants. The middle managers did not review the documents after the interviews had been transcribed. This was mostly due to an access issue. However, several precautions were made to ensure accuracy and privacy. Every transcribed interview document was compared to the tape upon its completion for accuracy. Every name and location was altered across all interviews. All personal information including experiences, roles, position, background, etc. was removed from the final documents presented in this work and all other works.

The first step of the analysis was to read through all of the material (Patton 2002). This read through, along with the research question driving the study, helped identify the initial list of the codes and definitions. The development of the definitions was almost as important as the codes themselves (Miles & Huberman 1994). Creating definitions ensured that only themes meeting the criteria would be labelled with a particular code.

The next step was to assign codes to the relevant sections of the data. Codes were written in the margins next to the relevant section. Multiple codes were used for

text with multiple themes (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 2002). New codes and definitions were developed as needed during the coding process. Once all of the themes had been identified, they were entered into a spreadsheet. Themes were copied from the transcripts and pasted into rows. This allowed multiple-themed text to be pasted in several areas without losing the relevant context.

The original themes used were quite broad in order to make the data a bit more accessible through a rough first cut (Figure 5-4). At this point all of the material had been coded. However, not all of it was relevant to the research question. Interviews, field notes and written observations often result in a lot of material that does not relate to the research question (Miles & Huberman 1994). Obviously extraneous data were removed from further analysis. This included most personal information as well as operational information. Further analysis was then conducted to break the remaining broad themes into more specific themes (Figure 5-4).

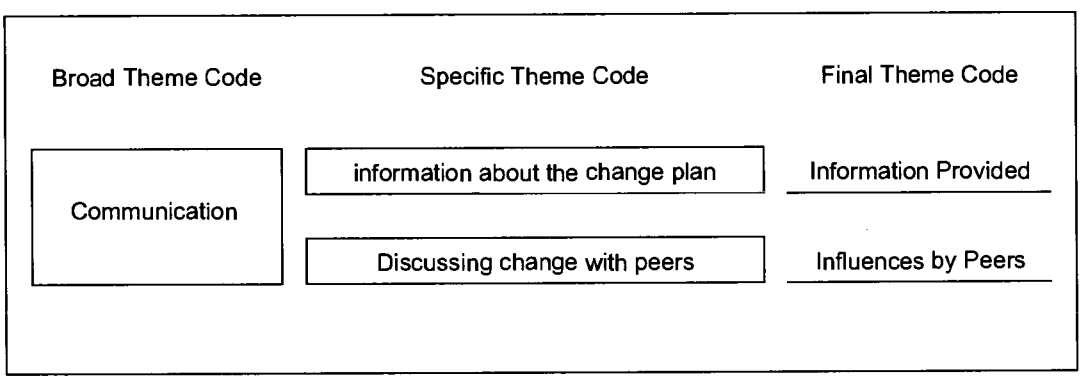


Figure 5-4. The coding process employed.

As the coding in this study was done in a spreadsheet, each code was examined several times over the course of the analysis rather than using recoding to check for reliability (Miles & Huberman 1994). This was to ensure that all of the identified sections met the criteria of that row (code). Additionally, another coder, a business management Ph.D. candidate, was employed to analyse the transcribed notes. The second coder was given the transcribed data and walked through a sample of the coding process, using communication as an example, otherwise no other communication occurred between the coders. At the completion of the analysis the comparison of the two sets of coded material showed that the only difference was

that the second coder did not include as much contextual information when assigning text to a code row. This meant that all of the codes and their subsequent grouping into action trigger categories was agreed upon by both coders.

The final part of the analysis involved organising the final themed codes into groups of action triggers. Codes that represented similar themes were grouped together. This process resulted in identifying 12 action triggers 10 with no *alternative action* support and 2 with *alternative action* support. These actions triggers were then grouped into categories. This process was performed solely on the data obtained during the interviews. The 12 action triggers identified in the interviews corresponded to 11 different action triggers from Study One (due to overlapping which will be explained later).

5.3 Results

The ten middle managers interviewed were asked about the changes Cini was currently experiencing and their actions in regards to the change. The intention was to identify the aspects that were influential to their decision making process. However, none of the middle managers believed they had hindered the change in any way (even though a few hindering stories were told during the interviews). A few claimed to have promoted the program, but could not provide any examples of doing so. Most simply complied with the change.

The middle managers identified 12 themes in four categories (Figure 5-5). At the time of the interviews, only two of these had triggered an *alternative action.* The other ten, while not related directly to an *alternative action*, were identified about the aspects of the current major change program that were important to them. These would be the aspects that might result in them choosing *alternative actions* in the future, if the level of dis/agreement with any of them increased.

The previous changes at Cini and participant demographics are discussed before the 12 action triggers. The previous changes show just how novel the current level of change was for many of the Cini middle managers. The four categories of action trigger themes identified in the interviews are then discussed in order of frequency

of citation: the first category identified contains the greatest number of action triggers, with each subsequent category containing a decreasing number (as in Figure 5-5). There were no differences identified between the responses of the middle managers based on the Site where they worked. Even though the cultures were quite different, most of the middle managers felt the same action triggers were important to them.

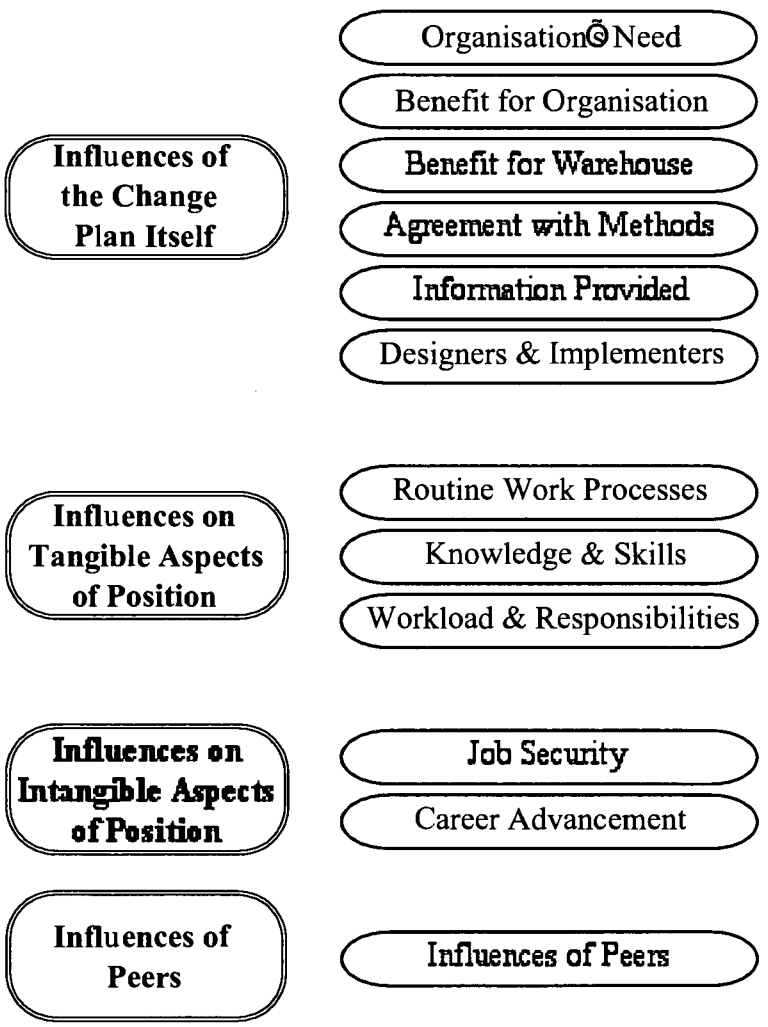


Figure 5-5. Categories of action triggers identified during the analysis of the middle manager interviews.

Instead of specifying the exact number of middle managers who discussed an action trigger, the terms shown in Table 5-1 were used:

Table 5-1. The Number of Middle Managers that Terms Refer to.

Few Several	2 or 3 middle managers
Some Number	4, 5, or 6 middle managers
Most Many	7, 8, or 9 middle managers

5.3.1 Previous Changes at Cini

One of the initial questions (A5) concerned the middle managers' previous experiences with change. While this question was intended to get the middle managers more comfortable with the interviewer and process, it provided some interesting results. The local South Australian branch of Cini logistics had experienced a limited number of changes within the last fifteen years, none of them dictated by the National Office. Many of the middle managers were unsure as to what to expect from the current major change process. The middle managers who had dealt with major change in other organisations believed that the Cini 'lifers' were at a slight disadvantage. For example, one of the new to Cini middle managers had been through a similar major change previously. He believed that those who had been with the organisation for a long time and hadn't experienced major changes were going to struggle with accepting the current changes:

> Having an understanding of having been through it [major organisational change] before, I think it helps people...People do resist change, that is a natural reaction, but at least if you've been through it before you have some experience, personal experience. - Jones

Over the last two decades there had been minimal occasions where the middle managers of Cini logistics were affected by any change, nonetheless major change. The four most important changes were touched upon by most of the middle managers:

1. About 13 years ago Cini switched its second shift from nights to afternoons:

> They had changed it from a day shift and night shift operation to day shift and afternoon shift, so lots of the people that came onto afternoon shift were old night shift people, so that involved a bit of upheaval for their lives...with starting and finishing and meal times. - Smith

Day shift had to begin work earlier so they could finish earlier. This was a major adjustment for everyone, but once it was put in place, many of the employees appreciated the change. Since they were no longer driving during peak hours, their commuting times decreased.

2. Nearly 6 years ago a higher racking system at Site A was introduced. Product quantities moving through the site increased and the only option for increasing storage was to go up:

> We went up another height, so instead of sit down forks we had to get reach trucks. That was a big change, they were pretty apprehensive about that...they lost their sit down forks...which meant they now had to stand up all day instead of sitting and some of them are still not too keen on that. – Archer

This change affected only a part of the workforce of Site A. The pickers and middle managers did not have to adapt, only the fulltime forklift drivers.

3. Until four years ago Site A was the sole operator with Site C acting as an overstock storage facility. It became obvious that even with the installation of taller racking, Site A did not have the capacity for further expansion. Site B was established and Site C ceased to exist. While those at Site C were affected, and also those that left A to work at Site B, the general operations at Site A did not change:

> I was down in Site C looking after the site, when that closed down and went out to Site B, so that was no real big impact for here [Site A]. The main thing was when we had to train people up here to do roles over at site B, but there were no real big dramas with that. – Archer

All of the floor workers (pickers and forklift drivers) at Site A were affected by the change as it meant the composition of the stock changed. Instead of carrying all brands at both warehouses, only half of the brands as before were stored at each

site. However, this would not have affected how they picked the stock. Some may have lost coworkers or middle managers to the new site, but were otherwise not affected directly by this change.

On the other hand, the Site B workers and middle managers who were moved from Site A would have experienced quite a significant amount of change. In fact, it was observed that some were very resistant to the new culture at first:

> It was hard. For the first 12 months we had to knock the stuffing out of people. It was like with a dog and holding the biscuit up, after awhile he'll learn you want him to sit. It was a long hard, very hard process to get people to the way we wanted them, the way we wanted the shed set up...A lot of the old people would come up with the, 'We've got to do it this way because that is the way we've always done it.' No thinking, and we had to sort of say, 'we know you've done it that way, but we want you to do it like this,' and then go back a few days later and tell them again, not like that but this...It was pretty tough but it pays off. - Bennett

Almost every middle manager mentioned that those at Site B would be more understanding of the change process than those at Site A. Even the middle managers at Site A made this observation (however, there were no differences in their responses).

4. Finally, the last far-reaching change happened about three years ago and again involved working times. A new Site middle manager had been hired and convinced the State Manager that the afternoon shift times should be adjusted:

> It used to be 4:30 to midnight, but Matthew Portway has changed that from 3:30 to 11.- Smith

None of the middle managers were quite sure why this time change was important to Matthew, but it did affect all of the workers. It meant that the ending of the first shift often slightly overlapped with the beginning of the second shift. Having experienced little previous major change, many of the middle managers were only now learning how a major change could impact them and the organisation. It was impossible for most of the middle managers to describe previous *alternative actions* as they had not previously had the opportunity to perform them. Thus, they were

only able to discuss the aspects of importance at this time, which could possibly result in *alterative actions* in the future.

5.3.2 Participant Demographics

The ages of the middle managers interviewed varied from early 30s to late 40s. Two of the ten were females. These were the only female middle managers working in the warehouses at this time. The middle managers' lengths of tenure with Cini varied greatly from 1.5 years to 25 years, as seen in Figure 5-6. This graph shows that while many of the middle managers had not spent a great deal of time in their current position, many had spent a substantial amount of their working lives in the Cini organisation. These 'lifers' had moved around the organisation to work in different departments and sometimes in different states.

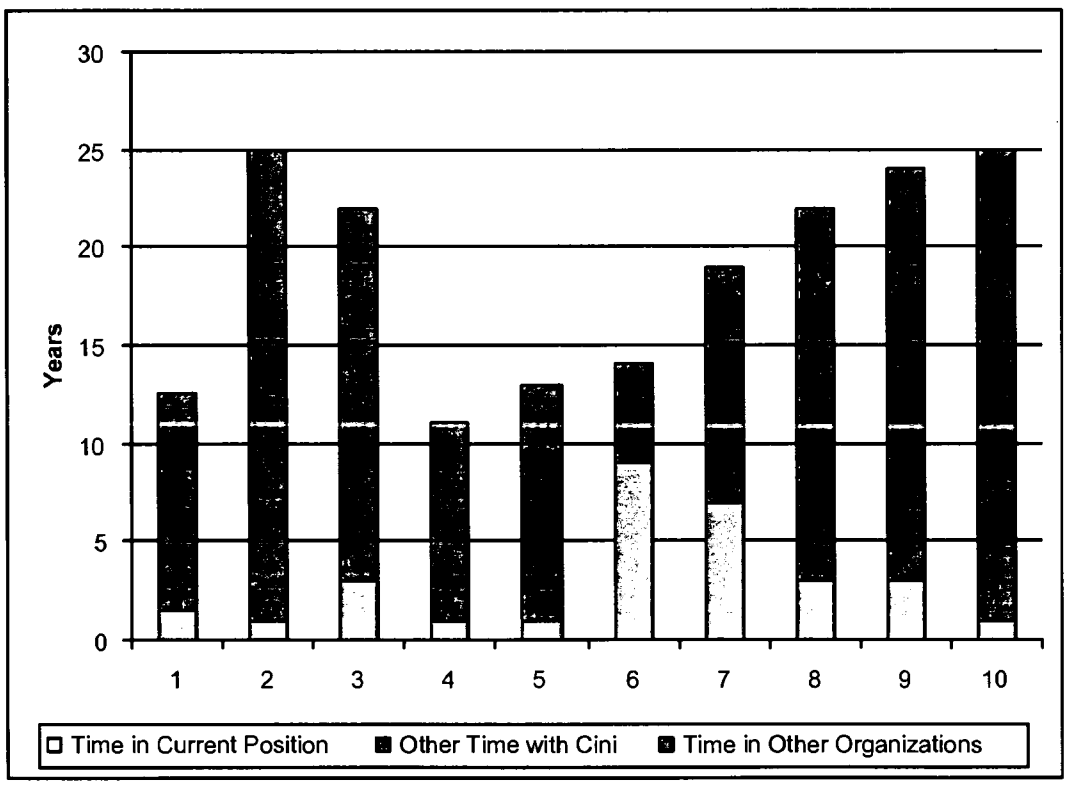


Figure 5-6. Interviewed middle managers' work experiences.

There were five middle managers interviewed from Site A and five middle managers from Site B. This choice was important as the cultures of the two sites were very different. As Site B was a new site, the planning team was able to

develop a more flexible Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), different operating procedures, and a more employee friendly culture. They believed that the more employee friendly the culture, the more productive the employee:

> What we did when we set up site B, the whole management team went away for a three-day course, and we said, 'Right, this is your new site, what do you want in your new site?' The whole course was about culture and change and what culture do we want to put in, like it or not you need a culture, it is unavoidable, but we had the chance to actually set the culture, so that was what it was all about. Then we did the same thing with the workers when we opened the site, we asked them, 'what do you want here', 'we want the managers to be able to come up and say hello, not just walk on past you; we want a pool table and a BBQ'. The culture over there is they are all very friendly, they all get along, it is a very nice site to work at. – Harne

Employees at Site B take few if any sick days during the year compared to Site A where most employees take the entire number they are allotted. Productivity at Site B (under budget every term) is much higher than at Site A (consistently over budget). Site B middle managers believe that these are just a few of the more obvious signs of how the culture affects the way in which the workers operate. Interestingly, the hindering actions described were all performed by Site B middle managers. Otherwise there was no notable difference in response to the change by the managers based on the site they worked at.

The next sections describe the action triggers (and hindering actions) identified by the middle managers in more detail. The chapter ends with a comparison of these action triggers to those identified through the content analysis of Study One.

5.3.3 Influences of the Change Plan

The greatest number of comments from the middle managers related to aspects of the change plan. Six action triggers were mentioned by the middle managers as important in relation to the change plan, Figure 5-7.

Organisation's Need (for Change)

The *Organisation's Need (for Change)* is the first of six action triggers in this category, Figure 5-7. Many of the middle managers discussed the 'need' for change during the interview. Irrespective of how they felt about how the change



Figure 5-7. The six action triggers in the

***Influences of the Change Plan Itself* category.**

was progressing and impacting others, the need for it was recognised as a separate issue. Some of the middle managers believed that they understood exactly why change was necessary:

> We started as Cini supermarkets and then we had T Mart and then picked up M Mart and picked up L Land, so it grew and grew...when they brought in B store they redid the B store structure, and put a lot of Cini procedures into it, but it still remained B store with the B store people...Every operating group had its own recruitment, every operating group had their own HR manager...Even though we have 7 or 8 operating groups in one state, we don't need 7 or 8 state HR managers...we need just 1 HR person who can advise all of the different stores...centralising...if you look at what the people do, they can do away with the job, and that is being honest, and goes for a lot of them. - Harne

> It is reducing duplication and duplicated roles, you have a National Office doing the overall stuff and you have people all over the country doing the same thing in many different areas, in the state office you have people looking after stores, in the warehouse you have people looking after the warehouse, but they are all doing the same job, instead of having three groups looking after people it {HR, OH&S} has been reduced to one group with a liaison person in each state. - Laing

> [B]lind Freddy could see that we as a company were too, there is just too many people, the structure is that we have one operation...the company is building empires within itself...and for us to survive in the future, this company's got to grow and got to get bigger and the only way to do that, unfortunately, is with a little pain, and...he could get rid of 5,000 {employees} tomorrow and it wouldn't really affect us, it is just too top heavy. - Bennett

While these middle managers saw the need for change, a few of the others didn't have as clear a picture, they just trusted the intentions of the plan designers. They believed that the senior managers leading the change were doing so for the right reasons and therefore should be supported:

> I think their initial goal is to improve the company...I can't see them doing it for any other reason than to improve it....changing for change's sake isn't good. You need to do it for a reason or improvement. - Monet

However, some of the 'fully understanding' middle managers were concerned that those who did not fully understand the need for change were not going to be as committed and cooperative as necessary. These 'fully understanding' middle managers believed that the only way to get support from everyone was to make sure everyone else 'fully understood' the change as well:

> If you want to put changes in always explain what brought the change about, what the change will be, talk what the future will be...even if it is just a change of procedure, if you can give them a history and a future people tend to go, 'Oh, ok, that is fine' it doesn't matter what area...I've always found that if you are upfront and the reasons why...most people will always accept it. – Harne

This was what the others believed as well, once the other middle managers understand just *why* change is necessary, they will be much more likely to participate fully than when they are told to 'just do it'. Besides the need for change, the middle managers were concerned with the benefactors of the change.

Benefit for Organisation

The *Benefit for the Organisation* is the second action trigger in this category, Figure 5-7. All of the middle managers expressed concern about benefits of the change for the organisation. The impact on the organisation was especially important for the middle managers that had been with Cini for a long period of time. These middle managers had grown to identify strongly with the organisation and wanted to see only changes that encouraged the organisation's success.

Six of the middle managers believed that the proposed changes were designed to benefit Cini. They believed that anyone who cared about the organisation would see the benefits for the organisation and cooperate with the changes:

> This change is the integration of the eight separate business units. The eight units are very segregated. There are no links between them at all. The OH&S and HR changes will amend that. They are forming units at the National Office level that will affect service of all the different units. This will provide a higher level of reliability and consistent service to all of the people in all of the states compared to the large variety they are currently receiving. - Khan

In addition to streamlining the operations and creating a more standardised organisation, there was also the view that the changes would produce better middle managers. Many of the middle managers at Cini had worked their way up from lower levels in the organisation. By improving their skills and experiences now, they would be more effective middle managers when promoted:

> I think it {change} will give managers more experience with the things they need to know, and need to be able to do and need to be able to deal with. In the past they wouldn't have dealt with most of them and when they are going up into a more senior management role they are missing the benefits of having to deal with those sorts of situations that now confront them as a senior manager that didn't confront them in their lead up years which I think is crucial for people going into senior management. – Laing

While most middle managers were trying to see the positive aspects of the change, some still had doubts. These middle managers believed the organisation *should* be the main benefactor, but whether it really would, remained to be seen:

> It seems at this stage, to us, those in the working world, it seems some sort of positive move, but until it all happens and occurs, we won't have a definitive answer and they won't either. – Laing

However, the middle managers weren't concerned only about the benefit to the organisation as a whole. The middle managers thought that the warehouse itself should benefit from the changes.

Benefit for Warehouse

The *Benefit for Warehouse*, Figure 5-7, was actually discussed with a hindering action example indicating that it is indeed an action trigger. Most of the middle

managers agreed that the changes would benefit the organisation (or were supposed to), but there was not as much confidence about the benefit for individual stores (in this case the local warehouses). Even so, some middle managers strongly believed the changes would benefit the middle managers locally:

> I'm a big supporter of the whole change process, especially this one, it is long overdue, and if we have to pick up more work so be it, in the end it will make our job easier, by picking up this extra work, we'll make our job easier to run the shed {warehouse}. - Bennett

Centralising HR in particular was viewed as a way for each warehouse to increase efficiency:

> Being newer to the organisation than most, I've noticed some things that could be change. Like some of the processes used in HR. Everyone is busy, they are always working so you can't just get rid of them, but the processes they are using are very repetitious. The same work is being done over and over by different people. Things certainly could be streamlined and made more efficient. - Khan

Efficiency was extremely important to most of the middle managers. Many mentioned the importance of operating under budget. The middle managers viewed some of the changes as being especially beneficial for the warehouse budget:

> That was probably one of the reasons they {Loss Prevention Officers} were taken away, they weren't contributing to the operation of picking cartons, which is what we are doing, so the more that people aren't assisting with picking cartons the more likely they are to be cut away because it hurts productivity. - Smith

On the other hand, a few of the middle managers believed the intentions were good, but they weren't convinced the final result would be the same:

> [W]hether we see here any of the improvement waits. – Monet

The need for some standardisation was seen as necessary, there was concern that Cini was going too far. While the standardisation would improve operations, each state is different. Some middle managers believed that differing state regulations and even the weather required some individualisation. Harne was one of the biggest

supporters of the change, but had some concerns with the universal standardisation processes being proposed:

> [T]hat {standardisation} doesn't always work...because each state is different and that is the one thing they really don't recognise. We've just gone for our own self insurance for occupational safety and I worked on that project for 12 months. The work code and standards we've got to meet are different than NSW and Victoria, but the National Office keeps saying this is the standard you have to do, and we keep saying we can't, that is your standard, but we have to do better than that, so there are things like that.
>
> All of our stock is purchased by a group called Rebuy. In every state in June, July, and August you get your rain, but in Darwin that is the dry season and it rains in November, December, and January, but we always got our umbrellas in June. It was just standard. That is where they don't have the foresight of trying to distinguish, that is when they have the problem, they purchase in June only and they can't deviate from that. -Harne

These middle managers believed basic standards should be introduced, but they would have to be slightly modified for each individual state and operating group. The majority of the stores were retail outlets, and the logistics group was a relatively small portion of the entire organisation. Being in the minority meant that a few of the middle managers were afraid of being overlooked.

Finally, a few middle managers believed the changes would not benefit the warehouse in any way. Rather, they would only make certain aspects worse:

> I suppose the top man thinks they are {beneficial}, but you don't see him out in the warehouse to see what change he's made is affecting everybody. Its alright for him to say, 'if we get rid of these people we save so many millions a year,' and that's the way we see it. But he must have a long term plan that is going to... increase his bonus at the end of the year, we are the silly mugs who just have to put up with it. – Archer
>
> For them who make the idea it is a good idea, for those trying to make it work it might not be a good idea. There is one in progress now that isn't a good idea...It will fix the problems on their end, but to get it up and running here is a lot of extra work for here to make the change there, and I can see a lot of bickering between two areas of the company because they will end up saying 'its your fault,' 'no its yours.' It will end up causing a lot of confusion. - Monet

The latter comment concerned a code system that had been in place for many years. To change the codes was a simple process for those in the National Office. However, it would be a major undertaking for the individual warehouses to change them. Monet thought that the amount of trouble this would cause the warehouses had not been taken into consideration before the decision to change was made.

The first hindering action performed involved the proposal of a weekly team talk. Site B middle managers did not think their warehouse would benefit at all if they were to fully implement this policy:

> They want a team talk once a week, we think that for the sake of the budget and everything that is a little silly, to just have a team talk for the sake of having one. So we're not doing it, but we had the committee talk about it and decided we're not. If there is an issue, operational wise or safety wise that has to be discussed, we'll have a talk there and then, but its not worth having a talk and getting up and saying 'We have nothing to talk about, but thanks for attending, this just cost us about $3,000.' – Quinn

These middle managers believed that the other states operated completely differently and were not nearly as well organised as South Australia. The National Office was continually trying to enforce policies that aligned other states with South Australia; however the policies often were too strict. The team talk issue was just the latest example. The entire organisation would benefit from more communication and discussion between middle managers and employees, but following the policy exactly would be detrimental to the warehouse budget.

Agreement with Methods

Many of the middle managers discussed their level of *agreement with the methods* being used in implementing the change. This fourth action trigger, Figure 5-7, is another actual action trigger, supported by two hindering examples. This action trigger includes the methods and approach used to implement the change. One of the aspects of the program that many middle managers had discussed was the speed of change. One middle manager thought the changes were being implemented at much too slow of a pace:

> [T]hey are not happening quick enough. Lets get it over and do it bang. You do it bit by bit and it takes 12 months people are going to whinge for 12

> months, you do it in a month and they are only going to whinge for a month. - Bennett

However, most of the middle managers wanted more time to adjust to the changes. They felt overwhelmed by the number of changes that the National Office was trying to implement in such a short time:

> [T]hey were coming in thick and fast, every time you turned around something was different. - Laing

> I think the hardest thing is because they are trying to do everything at the same time. I know why they are doing it for, but it would be nice if they just did a bit and you got comfortable with that and then they would do the next part. – Archer

> I believe change should come in slowly when it can. Sometimes it can't, but to get people used to the idea, let it weigh on their mind. - Quinn

These middle managers wanted to first become comfortable with one or two aspects and learn how they would need to operate with those changes before learning other aspects.

The general sentiment was that the National Office ignored the middle managers. However, the National Office had heard some of the middle managers' concerns. This had never happened before, and some middle managers recognised that the current changes were including more input from the middle managers:

> I've seen it they {HR} are only going to be over the road...That is where the company actually shifted a little. When they originally announced the HR plan, there wasn't going to be any instate. Now they've put in place two State HR Advisors. I think they probably have listened to some of those concerns. - Jones

Middle manager input was also occasionally being sought before other changes were announced:

> Like this change with the codes, they have asked the DCs what they think about them and are getting some positive replies and some negative, and they may then change it or just stick with their original decision. It is getting done with a lot more input from the DCs though...The guy we are dealing with in National Office communicates, 'this is what is in the drafts,' and so

> forth. We've actually changed it twice from the original and it has been going back the drawing board...I think we are getting better because we now put out a letter and it goes out to all of the people in every DC and then they can get back to us with their responses which is good, it hasn't happened before...There is more communication now than there used to be. – Monet

The second hindering action involved Site B middle managers complaining about a change being required of the DCs. Even though they knew that the National Office had been adjusting some of their decisions based on middle manager input, they were not convinced that this one would be overruled:

> There is something that is coming up and we don't agree with it...We think it is stupid basically so we aren't going to implement it yet. There is a period of grace, and Kevin Loaring {State Manager} agrees with us, and we're trying to get out of doing it. We are actually the only DC that has put up their hand and said, 'We don't want to do this.'...We don't believe it is necessary. – Quinn

The middle managers in this case had agreed to try and avoid implementing this portion of the change. While the complaint itself is not necessarily a hindering action, the middle managers were not necessarily going to fully implement the change if it was not altered. This meant a hindering action had not yet been performed but was very likely in the future.

While the middle managers expected to be heard in relation to some of the changes, they weren't too hopeful about others. There had been other changes where the National Office had not incorporated their feedback. One in particular was the requirement that all middle managers take turns to answer alarm call outs:

> [W]e've all argued against it because we can't understand their logic and the principles behind it...It deals with alarm call outs. We actually trained people who can handle those types of situations, and they are saying now they don't want them to do it. We have to do it, but at the same time I go 'How do we do it? How can we deal with it?' – Harne

The complaint about alarm call outs was common. Cini had trained people to perform this function as needed, and it had never been in the middle managers' job description before. Additionally, some of the middle managers lived over a half

hour away and they believed it was *ridiculous* to have security wait for them to arrive before being allowed to do anything. These issues had been pointed out to the National Office, but the initial directive remained.

While most components of the change had been dictated by the National Office in detail, other aspects were left up to the individual stores:

> They've {each DC} received the information as far as what is changing, but that always is at a very high level. Like the HR level was supposed to be reduced as of the first of November, so it has really been up to each site to sit down and work out what does that mean for each site. That is what we've done with Loss Prevention, that's what we did with Safety, and that's what we've done with HR. – Jones

Basic operating procedures were also left up to the individual stores to determine. While it was not directly related to the current major change, Site B had recently implemented a change to its picking procedures for budgie seeds. Quinn disagreed with the change and how it was implemented without being tested:

> [W]e have a lot of problems with bags and 10kg bags of budgie seeds that come off the floor. We've actually raised them so they come up off the floor, and I've looked at it and I don't agree with it...its dangerous. So I asked James if I could do a risk assessment of if, he said 'yes.'...Any other manager would have said 'no,' its already been approved. I still would have gone and done it because it is good for me to say I believe in this. I would have put it before the OH&S committee anyhow, (I have a problem with authority). I would have done it no matter what...I believe I'm right and this is wrong. – Quinn

This hindering action was one that Quinn strongly felt was necessary. The change had just been implemented without a risk assessment being performed. Quinn would have performed an independent risk assessment regardless of what James had said. While it was not an action to directly stop the change from being implemented, the risk assessment was being performed to provide a legitimate reason for convincing the higher level site managers to stop the change.

Information Provided

Information Provided, is the fifth action trigger discussed by the middle managers in this category, Figure 5-7. Many of the middle managers had received the same information at the same time. However, each middle manager had a very different

opinion about the appropriateness, usefulness and delivery of the information. It seems that the way a middle manager perceives the information is much more influential than what the information is.

A few of the middle managers believed that the leaders of the change were continually providing adequate information about the change:

> Gordon Easling is quite big on sending out e-mail forms of communication which get distributed across the network, so you probably see an average about one a day, so basically all of the managers that have access to PCs get those automatically. – Jones

> Gordon Easling, the CEO of Cini doesn't do very much without telling us. We get e-mail after e-mail. He is the only CEO I've ever seen or know of that does this. He sends up to five messages a day sometimes, and they go out to all employees. He will even have meetings where he sends out to all 174,000 employees, if you want to go in on the phone conference you can. I've never actually been involved. I've never been worried about it, but he's very much a communicator, so he's explaining why. – Harne

E-mail was an effective way of reaching many of the middle managers; however, there were middle managers who did not have access to a PC during the day or were not able to regularly check their e-mail. For them this was not the best method of communication. Cini did provide other methods of communicating with employees:

> Communication is key and the organisation is doing a wonderful job at communicating the reason for change to those who are most affected, those who are leaving. They get pulled into conferences and meetings where they are told why they need to leave, how the reorganisation is working, and how they will be affected and what they can do to try and get other jobs similar to theirs by reapplying and being moved to different areas like at the national level, where most of the work will be now. The leavers are well educated and understand their part in the plan, maybe not the entire big picture, but at least the role they have in helping the organisation to better itself. - Khan

As it turned out, some of the Cini employees who were best educated about the change process were those who were most likely to be leaving the organisation. For those that were staying with the organisation and not privy to these conferences and meetings, there were site meetings involving all middle managers:

> Our manager...got us all together and explained the changes that were coming about and why they were coming about. Pretty much precisely what they were; a reduction in staff as with the loss Prevention and HR and the work cover as well, the OH&S and it was all reverted back out of the DCs and back to the main office so they are looking out for everybody in the state as I said before rather than lots of groups looking after different sections. - Laing

> Kevin Loaring went through and put a big thing up on the board and who did what and breakdown, breakdown, breakdown for the OH&S side of it particularly since that was the first part of it, but Kevin went through it and told us how it is going to fit together and all the rest of the stuff, but it is a matter of these things get decided in head office. - Smith

More recently information about the change was only being distributed through the hierarchical network. By the time the information reached the middle managers being interviewed, it had been passed on by at least three other managers:

> He will tell us when he knows. There is a lot of stuff going on at the head office like with the bloody board and everything, and if it affects us like they are going to sell off part of the organisation or something like that, they will pass it on to Kevin who will pass it on to us. – Smith

Many middle managers were frustrated with the lack of details. Some felt that there was more information available than what they were being given. It might not have been given to the State Manager, but it was believed that he knew a bit more than he was sharing:

> They are at a national level, and they let the state ops manager know what is going on, but what he filters down is not too much, what he's actually getting told I'm not too sure of.- Archer

However, Harne didn't believe the State Manager was keeping information secret, rather, even he wasn't given specific details:

> [T]here are obviously a lot of details we can't know about. They are confidential, but as much as what they can tell us we've been told. – Harne.

Not all of the middle managers agreed with that theory. The earlier changes had been explained in detail, but not the more recent ones. Many of the middle managers did not understand what their roles in implementing the changes would

be. They felt that this was a breakdown in communication by the plan designers. The middle managers knew that they were expected to take on new tasks, but didn't know exactly what they were:

> If they don't tell me everything I need to be told it will eventually affect them. If they aren't open and honest about everything and I don't know something I can't help them and that is a problem and only makes their workload bigger. If they don't tell me the whole story, only half, I can't help them. – Monet

> With OH&S for months and months they said this is what is going to happen with the safety department, and we knew we were going to lose our coordinator from here and pick up more work, and that went through, and that was alright, but with HR, we had a meeting in here and they said, as of this date there won't be anymore HR, and that is what they said, and they still haven't gotten us together and told us what parts we need to do or anything like that. – Archer

> [T]hey {Loss Prevention} used to look after dangerous and hazardous goods. They used to look after all of that sorts of stuff and that's all been lumbered onto me and they expect you to know what to do and you don't and they don't tell you and you keep asking, they do that and then expect you to do your daily stuff as well. – Archer

> I think it was portrayed in more detail to the senior managers, and the second line of management were then called together as a team and it was explained and put to us how it was expected to operate with some question marks as to how it would affect us overall. - Laing

While these comments were about tasks they would be performing directly, some middle managers were also concerned about indirect aspects of the change that could have an impact, especially with hiring of new and casual staff:

> [I]f they don't directly affect you, you shouldn't really have to worry about them... [T]hey have taken HR out of various areas, but they haven't set up a team for employing people...That's not an issue for me either, but is still one I address through my boss in talking to him and seeing how it is going and how it is going to affect us and if it is going to affect us. Like it is getting close to Christmas and we should have had three or four people on board as casual staff two or three weeks ago, but we are only getting them on board now. That is affecting us on an operational level and the only people more worried about it than me are the operations manager and the dayshift manager, because they need to find ways to get the work done and maybe getting around the issue to get the staff. - Laing

There was some scepticism about the planning taking place in the National Office. There was some speculation that the reason the middle managers were not more informed was because the plans hadn't yet been developed. The National Office was introducing changes before it had completely worked out all of the details:

> [Y]ou don't know what is coming down from the top level, the national point of view. They have to formulate the changes and work out where they are going to fit into the operation, so until such time until they have such full formulation they can't tell people what is going to happen and where and how the changes will be. – Laing

Previous experience showed that once the plan designers had gathered the relevant information, they could produce a very detailed plan. It was just a matter of gathering the information. However, the middle managers would have appreciated all of the details initially rather than as they were being given. The Operations Manager had already devised a local plan to address one part of the change, as there was no detail provided by the plan designers. However, after the local plan had been implemented the National Office announced the final plan. They wanted their details put into action regardless of what was already in place:

> [T]he National Office is even directing who is getting involved for the people that have to pick up that work, whereas what had happened, the Operations Manager said, 'Righty-oh, this is what we're going to achieve, I've got these people, they can do the work and that will achieve the result.' The National Office said, 'no, we don't want just those people involved, we want all these extra people involved.' They committed a very hard line on the people that are going to pick up these duties. Even though they've {State and Site managers} gone back and said its not necessary we're doing it this way and have it all covered, the National Office said no we want these other people in it. - Harne

Even though the middle managers knew more information would likely be provided later, the lack of early information from the National Office was distressing. The middle managers felt that they were being 'kept in the dark', as they weren't informed of impending changes until the last minute, or sometimes after the fact:

> [Y]ou weren't being told about it, then all of a sudden you find out about it because you haven't done it the right way. Then you start to get your back up because you were changing but didn't know anything about it. I think that was the frustrating part, the changes were coming but we weren't being

> informed with enough time to put your mind towards it, to balance it up and work with it. - Laing

> They don't communicate up front, everything seems to be behind closed doors and under the table sort of stuff ...We seem to hear more from the workers on the floor than we do from the upper levels, so the standing joke is if you want to know what is going on you ask a cleaner and the truth is that 90% of that is true too...We didn't even get told that Loss Prevention were going. When the Loss Prevention manager left we kept asking about who was going to fill the role and were told that it was still being decided, but they knew it was going to be phased out. – Archer

> First it was through the grapevine, then we officially were told by the management, then we started to receive e-mails about how what was happening and how it was going to work. Generally you heard bits and pieces about HR going in other states and how things were going there, and it all just built up and we knew it was going to happen it was just a matter of when. - Monet

Many of the middle managers felt that these initial informational sessions had been quite helpful. They understood how the proposed changes fit into the 'big picture' and were supposed to benefit the organisation. However, such information was no longer being provided to the middle managers:

> In the first instance what they did was they painted the big picture: the company in the future is going to focus in these areas, the four focus areas. But basically what the initiatives are to achieve that in a way, they've only ever announced one, which was like a rightsizing exercise. The centralisation of support services was really what it was doing but they had a title for it, so basically in that case they simply announced that the company was going to go through this exercise and all work through each of the businesses. The rest have simply been 'this is the change as of such and such a date'. - Jones

The middle managers were well aware of the fact that the changes they were experiencing were only the 'beginning'. The initial informational sessions had explained that the change was going to be a lengthy process affecting many different aspects of the organisation. However, since the more recent changes had not been put into the context of the 'master plan' the middle managers didn't know what or how much more change to expect:

> I am and others too probably, are wondering what else will be changing and how that will affect us. They know these little changes are all part of the big

> picture, but nobody is quite sure what the big picture is, at least not at this level. - Khan

> [You] always hear the rumours and that, and they reckon that there is still more to come, more chops and more change, but have to wait and see. - Archer

Most of the middle managers decided that worrying took too much effort, they had to get on with their jobs. They couldn't spend all of their time and effort worrying about something they had no control over:

> I don't think you can worry about it, I think more will happen, I think it's a fact of life, but you just got to roll with it basically, you can stand in the river above the waterfall, but you aren't going to stop the waterfall. - Jones

> You have to deal with it when it happens, if you worry about things that much, then that affects your work, and I'm here to do a job for Cini. – Monet

It was not just the methods being employed that concerned the middle managers. The abilities of the designers and the leaders who were making and implementing the change plan were also discussed.

Designers and Implementers

This is the final action trigger of this category, *Designers and Implementers*, Figure 5-7. Not all middle managers were convinced that the senior managers designing the changes were fully competent. It was believed that they were not 'in touch' with the operational aspects of the organisation and thus not really sure how the changes were going to impact all areas. The middle managers assumed the change plan and all of its components originated somewhere in the National Office, mostly instigated by the new CEO, Gordon Easling:

> The management level right above me is not responsible for the development of the changes. I have worked to build a rapport and get to know these people and trust them and they trust me and trust in the work I do. I know that they are not the ones deciding on the changes...It is the senior management and CEO who are responsible. – Khan.
> There is a big picture in mind... and that is all coming down from the CEO and the board and the senior management team within the CEO's answerable operatives, what they put together and what they are trying to work towards. - Laing

Some of the middle managers had great faith in the vision Gordon Easling was projecting. They thought this was an excellent opportunity for the organisation:

> [A] man with vision has come to the company. A man called Gordon Easling, and he has seen what we've all known for years and is going to act upon it...I'm probably one of the few that support him. I think it is long overdue and for us to survive in the future, this company's got to grow and got to get bigger and the only way to do that, unfortunately, is with a little pain. - Bennett

> I see it as a good thing because it is new blood, fresh ideas. Its not just generating the same people all the way through the system and not gaining anything out of it, whereas if you get someone out of another industry or outside of the business you are involved in there is a lot more things you can learn out of it, because everybody learns something different out of different places. - Laing

Even though Gordon Easling had limited retail experience, he had previously run other successful organisations. His plan was to utilise organisational experts:

> Gordon Easling was very upfront in the beginning, he has no retail experience, but he was brought on board to manage the company and he knows how to do that. There are lots of experts in the company who do know retail and he will leave that part up to them. They know how to get the sales in the [stores], we just need someone with direction who knows how to manage. -Harne

Even though Gordon said he would utilise the experts in the organisation, this did not put the middle managers completely at ease. These so called 'experts' (senior managers) were not seen as knowledgeable about all of the different areas of the organisation. Even though most of them had risen through the ranks of Cini, most had come from the retail outlets not the 'behind the scenes' jobs. There was concern that the logistics side would not be given appropriate consideration:

> One thing they need to be careful of is the, HR, ER (employee relations), IR (industrial relations), whatever you want to call it. You've got a significant exposure in the distribution centres across the country, they are quite industrial, they are 100% unionised, ongoing grievances, disputes, reconciliations, so you want to be a little bit careful. By pulling our specialist resource out that you don't want to end up costing you more because of lost time with disputes or other issues, productivity type issues that cost the company money, so that in theory you are taking away the HR

> person and saving whatever you save, but you cost yourself more over here because of all the unrest this person used to help settle. That is the only thing the company needs to be aware of. I don't think they are, probably not totally aware. I think we in the logistics business certainly are, but I'm not sure at the highest levels that they have a clear understanding. - Jones

While senior management was obviously responsible for planning the changes, most of the middle managers considered them responsible for the implementation as well. They knew their State Manager, Kevin Loaring, was not responsible for the change program, as he often knew little more about the changes than they did.

Summary

Many of the middle managers agreed with the need for change, however, several were concerned that those who didn't fully understand the need couldn't fully support the program. Additionally, while the goals of the change were seen as beneficial to the organisation by a number of the middle managers, almost an equal number of middle managers were questioning the actual benefit. As for the impact of the change on the warehouse, more managers than not were unsure that the warehouse would actually benefit.

One of the hindering actions uncovered in the interviews related to the benefit for the warehouse. Site B middle managers were not going to have the weekly team talks they were directed to. They didn't believe that it would benefit the warehouse as the senior managers told them it would. This was one of the hindering examples that was identified in the interviews.

Regarding the methods used to implement the plan, there was a great deal of disagreement with them. Many disagreed with the speed of change and the communicated methods. However, these concerns were counteracted somewhat by the belief that this was 'how the organisation operates'. Several middle managers commented that Cini has never been very adept at communicating with its employees. This was nothing particularly unique to the current major change.
Some of the middle managers were quite certain that the senior managers responsible for the change were actually listening to the input of those that would be most affected. The second hindering action story was related in this section. The

middle manager couldn't exactly recall what the issue was, but knew that the Site B middle managers did not agree with how this change should proceed, and had been discussing their concerns with those responsible. They were going to try and convince senior management of 'our side', so the change could be modified appropriately. Only after their decision had been made would they decide whether to comply with the change or not. Since they had agreed not to hold weekly team talks (first hindering example), it was possible that the middle managers would avoid fully implementing this change as well if it was not altered.

Quinn explained how the budgie seed issue required the third hindering action. However, it was not necessary as James, the Site Manager agreed to the risk assessment. Quinn didn't agree with the methods that had been used to determine the new way of operating (picking budgie seed bags) and was prepared to act against the wishes of the Site Manager to investigate the danger of the movements required.

The final action trigger in this category showed how middle managers need to trust at least in part the designers of the plan. The middle managers were concerned that incompetent people would develop a faulty plan. About the same number of middle managers trusted the designers as were questioning their abilities. Those questioning the designers were not convinced that the approach was appropriate.

Only a few instances of hindering actions had been discussed by the middle managers. However, from their comments, it is obvious that some of the middle managers were questioning the change in several ways. Further events in the future could have easily caused them to be more affected by any of these action triggers and thus choose to perform different actions. The next two sections discuss the action triggers of importance related to the middle managers positions.

5.3.4 Influences on Tangible Aspects of Position

The action triggers related to the middle managers' positions have been split into two groups of slightly different aspects. The first group relates to the three tangible aspects relating to the middle managers' positions, Figure 5-8:

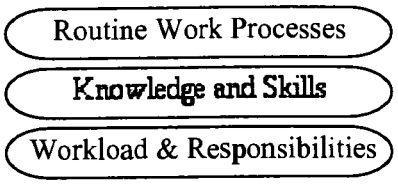


Figure 5-8. The three action triggers in the *Influences on Tangible Aspects of Position* category.

Routine Work Processes

Routine Work Processes is the first action trigger in this category, Figure 5-8. Routine work processes, the ways that the middle managers perform their normal everyday work, often become habitual. None of the middle managers admitted that a change to their routine processes was a personal concern, but a number believed that others were viewing the changes negatively for this reason:

> People here don't like changes very much, and here we want to implement just a little change and are finding a fair bit of resistance already. It is just changing one piece of paperwork to another. Its amazing really, that's what happens though, people get really precious about the way they do things and they get funny if you want to change it, even if it saves you time and effort in the long run. - Smith

A few middle managers recognised that while most middle managers did not want to change, a few would appreciate the opportunity to try something different:

> Most of the managers who have been here for a long time do not want to change. They are going to work here until they retire and want to continue working as they have been. On the other hand there are some people that will embrace the changes because they are looking forward to new things...these people also see the changes as positive. - Khan

While none of the middle managers were personally concerned with routine work process changes, some did discuss the impact of knowledge and skill changes.

Knowledge and Skills

Knowledge and Skills make up the second action trigger of this category, Figure 5-8. Some of the middle managers were viewing the changes as an opportunity to learn more about the organisation. These middle managers were not concerned with the fact that learning new skills and tasks would require more work. They believed that mastering these skills would make them more valuable to the organisation:

> To me it's a lifelong learning process...I look at everything as a challenge and way to learn... and want to learn as much as I can. - Quinn

> [G]ood because you are learning more about the business, it gives you more of a look into other areas, increasing your management skills ...you need to learn something every day. – Monet

The only comments regarding this action trigger were positive. However, there were some concerns with the additional workload and responsibilities the middle managers had been given as a result of the change.

Workload and Responsibilities

Workload and Responsibilities is the last action trigger identified by the middle managers in this category, Figure 5-8. Even though they involved more work, a number of the middle managers were viewing the new responsibilities positively:

> Definitely have more to do, that is a good thing, as I said before the more you do the more stable your job is. – Archer

Several middle managers thought the increase in workload was beneficial as it would allow them to learn about other aspects of the organisation.

> [E]ventually you become better at what you are doing and things become easier and you get more opportunity to go elsewhere...you get involved in different areas and that can put you in another direction, the more experience in any department you can get the better it is, I think we are very lucky because with my work at Cini there basically is not much I haven't done. – Monet

A few middle managers thought they already had more than enough to do and not enough time to do it. These middle managers thought that the additional tasks they were expected to complete would be a burden:

> We just got told Tuesday, with loss prevention going, well gone, we team managers now have to take up more roles with midnight callouts and that, which didn't go down very well and we said well, 'what's in it for us?' so that is where the change is the hardest, because you have to do more. – Archer
>
> I know that when we got the e-mail about the pallet checks and bag checks they grumbled about it, but what do you do when you are told that is what you need to do. - Smith

A couple of the middle managers admitted that more work meant things were going to be passed onto the Team Leaders. One middle manager believed that this was the only way to manage:

> Slowly they {Team Leaders} are getting more and more work as well. Mainly because we can't do it all ourselves, so we try to pass a bit of it on to them, a bit more delegation. – Archer

> I don't think it will make it harder, it will put other pressures on me in relation to my understanding of the issue at hand and being able to divorce myself from precisely what I am doing to dealing with that problem, and that is just a matter of me calling in a Team Leader and saying, 'here take over my role here, I have another problem I need to sort out,' and then I can divorce myself from that and go and sort out the other problem that needs attention. – Laing

> [I]f we have to pick up more work so be it...I'm quite happy to do that if that is what we have to do...We being humans, we tend to, once we get a job, we find some way to pawn it off, bits and pieces off to other people. I think if you work at a job for 5 years and you haven't found a way to pawn it all off, you're doing something wrong, so I'm very sure what anyone gets extra now as a result of this, they will be able to handle quite easily. – Bennett

While most of the middle managers had discussed this action trigger, there were many different takes on what the changes meant for each middle manager personally.

Summary

The middle managers all declared that changes to their routine work processes was not an issue. However, many of them believed that others (including other middle managers) were greatly affected by the changes to their routine work processes. There was a split, some believed that the changes were viewed positively by others, and some thought they were unwelcomed by others. Several different anecdotes were provided to support these claims.

The action triggers relating to *Knowledge and Skills* and *Workload and Responsibilities* were spoken of relatively positively. All of the middle managers who discussed how different knowledge or skills would be needed for their position

in the future were viewing it as a positive opportunity. Most of the middle managers discussed the changes to their workload or level of responsibility. A few saw the increases negatively, but most were looking forward to the changes as it increased their value to the organisation.

No hindering actions were performed regarding the tangible aspects of the middle managers positions, but neither were any promotional actions performed. From the generally positive comments regarding the action triggers in this category it would appear that quite substantial perception changes would be required before hindering actions would be performed. However, a bit more support regarding these action triggers would be necessary before promotional actions would be performed.

5.3.5 Influences on Intangible Aspects of Position

These are the two intangible action triggers that the middle managers discussed in relation to their positions, Figure 5-9:

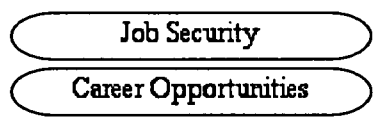


Figure 5-9. The two action triggers in the *Influences of Intangible Aspects of Position* category.

Job Security

Job Security is the first action trigger in this category, Figure 5-9. While the changes did not involve downsizing or redistributing middle managers, a few middle managers thought their level might be affected with future changes:

> Under the current climate they may just say we don't need these people any more and that's it. That is the hardest part at the moment...other people are concerned about losing their jobs as well. - Archer

A few middle managers were certain that their positions were not in jeopardy; the changes were not aimed at them. Even so, they still occasionally wondered if their positions were secure:

> Yeah, it is always interesting in these situations because no one at my level or lower, even my boss, no one knows exactly where it is going to end, so it always does put in people's minds, they've done it to that, they've done it to

> that, and they've done it to that, what's the next and what does that mean to me...It is something people are certainly aware of, but I don't personally believe there will be major change at that, because...they are allocating more responsibility to line managers...I don't see it as affecting them from the point of view of not having a job, but it is a question that people have in their mind all of the time, where does it finish? - Jones

> You look at HR and think, if they can get rid of a whole department, what else can they do? At the same time, we are the operation side of it and they don't want to be doing anything that directly affects the operation. We are the people who actually do all the work, and that is one of the things Kevin Loaring did say. The closer you are to the actual operation, the picking the cartons the operation side of it, the better off you are. The people outside of it, those who aren't actually contributing to the managing of cartons, they aren't as in a stable position. People in the stores, people in the warehouse, and those, are much closer to the day to day operations are much safer that those in the head office who are so far removed. They might be more vulnerable. I'm not in that position so why should I worry. - Smith

> There might be some people around the country that would be, I'm pretty pleased about how I do my job and achieving what we achieve and am reasonably comfortable that if it was to happen, I would be one of the last, it is a worry, that is the bad part about change. - Monet

Other middle managers were not worried about the changes at all. They knew that the retail stores were not going to close and they needed to be stocked. The middle managers worked in the warehouses that stocked the stores. They were crucial to the organisation's success:

> I think there are other levels in the structure that should be looking around to see which way it is going to go, but not at my level at the current time... We still have to get the gear out of the warehouse into the stores for customers to buy. If we don't have the workers the stock doesn't move out of the distribution centre and doesn't get to the stores and the stores don't make any money, and the stores go down the gurgler. - Laing

> As operators we are very safe. People are happy with the way we are doing things here. I don't think you could take the operators out of the company and expect it to work. So I'm very safe and confident that we will be here in the future. - Bennett

While the middle managers did not think their actual positions were threatened by the changes, they believed they had to comply with what was requested of them. Many middle managers thought the real threat was in non-compliance with the

changes directed by the National Office, and they would be asked to leave the organisation if they did not comply with the directives:

> If you ask me whether they are following because they want to or they are following because they have to, they are following because they have to. - Jones

> They have to accept them basically, whether they like it or not, the change is coming in and you have to accept it. - Harne

This was a very important topic for the middle managers, and all of them addressed it in some way. The other action trigger in this category, career advancement, was not nearly as important to the middle managers.

Career Advancement

This is the second action trigger in this category, Figure 5-9. Only a number of middle managers expressed their thoughts about the change affecting opportunities for advancement. A few of the middle managers were quite interested in advancing further in the organisation, and were hoping the changes would make that progression easier, as Jones had previously experienced:

> [S]ome people...are looking forward to new things and increasing the opportunities. They see the changes as a way that will allow them to climb the ladder to other management positions more easily...I have already been told to apply for a position in the National Office. I would be doing similar work, it would just be at the national level instead of the state level. - Khan

> [A]t my previous organisation...for ten years, basically the place was tipped on its head and it was just consistently changed and consistently restructured...we went from like 6000 employees to 1500...and went from 1990, would have had about 60 people in the warehouse and in 98 when I left, I had about 22 or 21 or something like that...I think I applied for a job about 4 times, for that period of time, to be honest it was a fantastic opportunity because what was in it for me was that I made quite a significant career progression during that time simply because of the change and the opportunities that arose, so that is where a positive experience can influence, and as part of that the changes that are happening here now are similar. – Jones

Harne also believed that the changes would provide advancement opportunities, but most of the local middle managers weren't interested. They did not see the changes

as providing new opportunities for the future, just interfering with their current position:

> Unfortunately the managers that we have on the floor here, are not capable of actually going any further. They are not really career minded, they are not trying to get up to the top role, they've got their job they get their payslip every month and that is really what they are...[T]hey won't accept change, because they keep getting taken out of that comfort zone. They've been doing it, some of these managers have been doing the same thing for 15 years, and so when something else comes up, they don't like it. – Harne

The other middle managers did not see this as an important topic.

Summary

Job Security was the action trigger that most middle managers felt was the greatest influence on the actions of other middle managers. A number of the middle managers actually worried a bit about their job's existence currently or in the future. A few were very comfortable with their position's security. They didn't have any reason to worry about their jobs and could focus on more important things. While some of the middle managers were concerned about the permanence of their position, most of middle managers believed that others believed they had to comply or risk losing their job.

Of those that discussed career opportunities, all viewed the changes as an opportunity for future advancement. However, at least one of the middle managers didn't think these opportunities would be highly valued by others. Even so, the opportunities would be present for those who were interested.

Again no promotional or hindering action examples were provided with the data regarding the action triggers of the intangibles aspects related to their positions. While the possibilities for career advancement encouraged a positive view of the change, the belief about the threat to job security was a strong indicator for why no *alternative actions* had been performed. Many middle managers believed that the main reason other middle managers had thus far been so compliant was because they feared losing their jobs. This indicated that managers would have to disagree

quite strongly with certain aspects before they would be willing to hinder the change and risk their position.

5.3.6 Influences of Peers

The *Influence of Peers* was the only action trigger in this category. The middle managers who discussed the influence of peers were adamant that they were capable of making a decision on their own and didn't depend on their co-workers:

> I'm pretty lucky, I feel I can make a decision. Well, I can make a decision and then tell them because it is my area. - Monet

> If it is one I can understand and I can see the benefits in my mind, even though others may see it differently... - Laing

However, during the course of the interview a few admitted that they did value the opinions and actions of others:

> If we were all sitting around here having an operations meeting and it got brought up that a group of people said we shouldn't be doing this, we don't agree with it. I might turn around and say I don't agree with it either. If they say they aren't going to deal with it, I might say it isn't easy and I might not do it either. We aren't just going to say that without reason though, if we had an operations meeting Matthew would be here and we would discuss it with him and he might be able to review the change or tell other people to review it. – Jones

This action trigger is not affected by a middle manager's personal beliefs about the change, but rather the beliefs and actions of peers. The data regarding this action trigger is a bit unclear. Many of the middle managers explicitly stated that they did not take into account their peers opinions and actions before making their decisions to act. However, several of them did admit to listening to their peers, and if their comments differed, and re-evaluate their positions.

5.3.7 Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify the aspects of a change program that result in middle managers performing *alternative actions*. Ten middle managers at the Cini organisation were asked about their organisational change experiences. The interview data were analysed through thematic coding. This was done to ensure that

the action triggers identified were not influenced by the findings of Study One. 12 action triggers were identified from the middle managers' answers, and many of those identified were very similar to those identified in Study One. The next section explains how the two studies compare.

5.4 Comparing Results of Studies One and Two

Even with the interviews being analysed independently of the content analysis, there were many similarities. Many of the action triggers from the content analysis were identified in the interviews, Figure 5-10. This figure shows how the action trigger themes identified in the interviews correspond to the action triggers identified in the content analysis. Two of the content analysis action triggers (goals of change and design of plan) were each supported by two action triggers from the interviews. While one action trigger (designers and implementers) from the interviews provided support for two of the action triggers (leaders of change and senior support) from the content analysis. These slight discrepancies exist because of the different methods of analysis used. The coding analysis for this study grouped related themes, while the content analysis of the previous study used a more rigorous approach which included testing the semantic reliability of the action triggers and categories.

Due to the more rigorous analysis method of Study One, those action triggers and categories were retained. The action triggers identified in the interviews were discussed as they related to the original action triggers. The comparison of the results of Study One and Study Two will be discussed in the order of the action triggers as identified in Study One, as opposed to the interview order of popularity.

The evidence provided by the interviews for the existence of the action triggers is classified as unidentified, moderate or substantial. These classifications refer to the number of middle managers that identified the action trigger. Table 5-1 (p. 123) shows the terms that have been used throughout the results section and are continued to maintain consistency, as seen in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2. The Criteria Used to Classify the Evidence from the Interviews.

	Interviews Number of Respondents	
Unidentified	0, 1	
Moderate	Few Several	2, 3
	Some Number	4, 5, 6
Substantial	Most Many	7, 8, 9
	All	10

Unidentified – None or one middle manager described how this action trigger was influential in the decision to act, further research would be necessary to confirm its existence

Moderate – A few to a number (2-6) middle managers described how this action trigger was influential in their decisions to act, meaning there is some support but it is not a substantial amount

Substantial – Most to all (7-10) middle managers described how this action trigger was influential in their decisions to act, providing overwhelming support for this action trigger

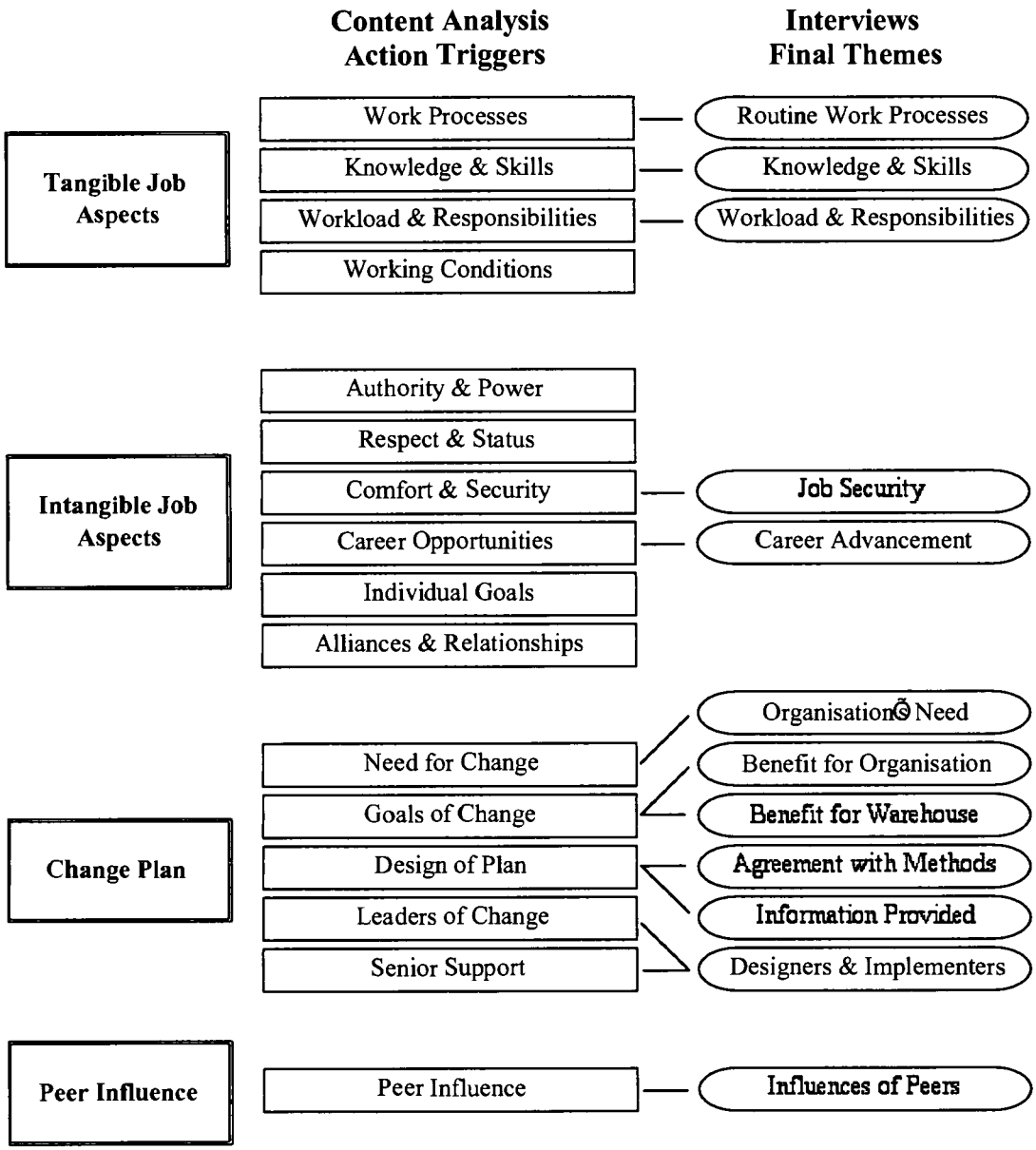


Figure 5-10. The action triggers identified in the interviews and how they correspond to the action triggers identified in the content analysis.

5.4.1 Tangible Job Aspects (Influences on Tangible Aspects of Position)

The content analysis identified four action triggers in this category. Three of these were discussed in the interviews with the middle managers:

- Work Processes,
- Knowledge and Skills and
- Workload and Responsibilities.

Working conditions were not discussed during the interviews.

No hindering actions were performed regarding these triggers, but neither were any examples of promotional actions shared.

Work Processes (Routine Work Processes)

The texts in the content analysis explained how routine and habitual work processes are important to middle managers. Some middle managers might hinder a change that altered their basic ways of working as they prefer things to stay the same. At the same time, other middle managers might promote a change that required them to try new ways of working.

Interview Evidence: Moderate (Unidentified for self, substantial for *others*

None of the middle managers in the interview were concerned with how the change was going to alter their routines and habits. However, some of the middle managers believed that *others* viewed the changes negatively for this reason. These *other* middle managers were upset because they had to change their ways of working. On the other hand, some of the middle managers believed that some of the *other* middle managers were looking forward to changing their routine work processes.

Even though there was no *alternative action* support from the middle managers for this action trigger, there was for *other* middle managers. Many of the middle managers who addressed this issue provided anecdotal support of instances where the *other* middle managers had acted. As this was not first hand information it was not considered substantial, even though the anecdotal evidence was substantial.

Knowledge and Skills (Knowledge and Skills)

The content analysis showed that change often presents middle managers with the need to learn new skills and information. In many cases, middle managers feel that they are not capable of adequately mastering the new knowledge and skills and will thus hinder the change. On the other hand, some middle managers will embrace the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skill levels. These middle managers will very likely promote the change.

Interview Evidence: Moderate

Only a couple of middle managers addressed *Knowledge and Skills* in the interviews. They were pleased that the change was providing an opportunity to master new skills that would make them more valuable to the organisation.

Workload and Responsibilities (Workload and Responsibilities)

Middle managers may respond to increases in workload or responsibilities with hindering actions. They could also promote a change that reduces their workload, but the literature emphasised that reductions were extremely rare.

Interview Evidence: Substantial

The interviews showed that only a few middle managers felt the current change would increase their workload in a burdensome way. These middle managers felt they currently had more than enough to do and not enough time to do it. They were not pleased that the change meant they were expected to complete more tasks in the same amount of time. Some of the other middle managers viewed the changes to their workloads more positively. They believed more would be expected of them, but it was only a minor increase over what they were already doing. It was also mentioned that if they did have trouble doing everything, the middle managers would just pass the tasks onto the team leaders. The middle managers were positive about this action trigger because they believed it would increase efficiency and they would become more indispensable to the organisation.

Working Conditions

The content analysis found that altering middle managers' working conditions might influence their actions. This included everything from the physical working

space to pay and incentives. The proposed link was that an improvement in working conditions would result in improved support for the change and vice versa.

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

This action trigger was not mentioned during the interviews. The change plan being implemented did not alter the physical working space of the middle managers, their pay, or incentives for complying with the change. As none of these aspects were impacted by the change, there was no real influence on the middle manager's decision to act. This may be unique to this change. It is possible that this aspect will be more influential in other change programs where there are such changes.

5.4.2 Intangible Job Aspects (Influences on Intangible Aspects of Position)

The content analysis identified six action triggers for this category. Two of these were discussed in the interviews with the middle managers:

- Job Security and
- Career Opportunities.

The remaining four were not considered important to the Cini middle managers in relation to the current changes:

- Authority and Power,
- Respect and Status,
- Individual Goals and
- Alliances and Relationships.

Again no promotional or hindering examples were provided for this category. The most support was provided for the *Comfort and Security* action trigger.

Authority and Power

According to the content analysis, middle managers whose perceived authority, power or freedom as negatively impacted by the change could possibly attempt to hinder the change. On the other hand, increases in their authority, power or freedom could lead middle managers to actively promote the change.

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

The middle managers were asked about the impact of the change with respect to their authority and power, but none thought it was a relevant for this change.

Respect and Status

The content analysis indicated that middle managers who felt that their respect or status levels were reduced by the change might possibly hinder the change. Middle managers who expected increased respect and status might promote the change.

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

None of the middle managers in the interviews felt the current change was going to impact on their respect or status in the organisation.

Comfort and Security (Job Security)

The content analysis showed that comfort and security could be very influential to a middle manager's decision to act. Middle managers who felt that their jobs were safe and not likely to be eliminated were more likely to promote the change. However, uncertainty about their positions or knowing that other valued and influential employees were being removed from the organisation may encourage hindering actions.

Interview Evidence: Substantial

A specific group of individuals within the organisation were targeted for removal during the changes at Cini. This group did not include anyone from the middle managers' level. This meant that at least a few of the middle managers believed their jobs were quite secure. Even though their level was not targeted, some middle managers were a bit concerned about their job not now, but more so in the future. While this concerned some of the middle managers, many commented on the importance of compliance. Most of the middle managers believed that the prevailing belief in the organisation was that one had to comply with the change or risk losing their job.

A mention of comfort regarding this trigger was also mentioned. One of the middle managers had a friend who had been with the organisation for 25 years and was asked to leave (from an area outside of the warehouse). The middle manager being interviewed understood how the change was beneficial, but still felt this friend should not have been targeted for removal.

Career Opportunities (Career Advancement)

Change plans that inhibit a middle manager's opportunities within the organisation could result in hindering actions by middle managers. On the other hand, a change that creates new opportunities for middle managers may be promoted.

Interview Evidence: Moderate

Only a small number of middle managers discussed career advancement opportunities during the interviews. However, they all believed the changes had improved the ability to advance within Cini. Some felt they would personally benefit while others just recognized the opportunities in general.

Individual Goals

The content analysis identified that changes that helped middle managers achieve their individual goals would be promoted while plans that interfered with middle managers' goals would be hindered.

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

The middle managers interviewed did not reference any individual goals. This could have been because the changes did not impact those goals, or because the middle managers did not have personal goals.

Alliances and (Working) Relationships

The content analysis showed that important relationships no longer possible or useful due to the change may encourage middle managers to hinder the program. However, relationships that are strengthened may cause a middle manager to promote the change.

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

The comments of the middle managers in the interviews did not refer to any type of working relationships impacted upon by the change.

5.4.3 Change Plan (Influences of the Change Plan Itself)

The content analysis identified five action triggers relating to the Change Plan. Each of these was addressed by middle managers during the interviews:

- Need for Change
- Goals of Change
- Design of Plan
- Leaders of Change
- Senior Support

Of the three *alternative actions* discussed in the interviews, all three were hindering and performed in relation to action triggers in this category.

Need for Change (Organisation's Need)

The content analysis proposed that the more middle managers agreed with the need for change, the more likely they would be to promote the change. The same correlation applied for middle managers who did not agree with the need for change, they would be more likely to hinder it.

Interview Evidence: Substantial

The comments from the interviews with the middle managers supported these correlations. Many of the middle managers agreed that a need for change was present. However, were concerned that others did not appear to have the same understanding. These middle managers were concerned that the others were not going to be as supportive of the program as necessary because they didn't understand the true need for it.

Goals of Change (Benefit for Organisation and Benefit for Warehouse)

The content analysis recognised that goals benefiting the organisation would be most likely promoted. Inappropriate goals would encourage hindering actions.

Interview Evidence: Substantial

The interviews supported the existence of this action trigger as described in the content analysis. However, it was not just the goals benefiting the organisation that were important to the middle managers, they also evaluated the benefit to the warehouses as well. While the goals of the change were seen as beneficial to the organisation by a number of the middle managers, almost an equal number of middle managers were questioning the actual benefit. As for the impact of the change on the warehouse, more middle managers than not were unsure that the warehouse would actually benefit.

The first hindering action related to the benefit for the warehouse. The Site B middle managers had decided that the required weekly team talks were not going to benefit the warehouse, and were only going to hold talks when necessary.

Design of Plan (Agreement with Methods and Information Provided)

This action trigger covers all of the different components of the change plan: logic, order, methods, complexity and so on. Plans seen as complex or confusing could possibly trigger hindering actions. While clearly organised and presented plans could encourage promotional actions. Likewise with the perceived justice of a plan; plans that were seen as fair and just to everyone would be promoted more than those with unfair or unjust aspects.

Interview Evidence: Substantial

The interviews with the middle managers focused on aspects slightly different than those identified in the content analysis. The middle managers were not concerned with the complexity of the plan, but rather in the speed of change and the way information was shared. All of those who discussed the speed of the change were not happy, whether it was too fast or slow. However, many of the middle managers were more concerned with the information they received regarding the change. Some of the middle managers felt that they were well informed about the change and given an appropriate amount of information. These middle managers had more positive opinions of the change than the others. The other middle managers felt that vital information was not being passed along, and the route that information took

was ineffective. They admitted that this made them more suspicious and critical of other aspects of the change.

Justice and fairness were not mentioned by any of the middle managers. A few of the middle managers discussed components of the change that they did not agree with, but it was because they were inappropriate, not unjust. There was a range of issues regarding the change that the middle managers had concern with. Almost every middle manager discussed at least one portion of the change program that was not quite right. While the middle managers were not in agreement with certain aspects of the plan, they were willing to accept them, as they agreed with the other components. It seemed that as long as there weren't 'too many' problems with the plan, the middle managers would be willing to go along with what was requested of them. These small problems, however, may have been enough to prohibit the promotion of the change by the middle managers.

The second hindering action related to this action trigger. The manager couldn't exactly recall what the issue was at present, but knew that the Site B middle managers did not agree with how this part of the change should proceed, and had been discussing their concerns with those responsible. They did not want to comply with this issue unless adjustments were made.

The third hindering action was also discussed in relation to this action trigger. Quinn didn't agree with the methods that had been used to determine the new way of picking the budgie seed bags and was prepared to act against the wishes of the Site Manager to investigate the danger of the movements required, but permission for this assessment had been granted.

Leaders of Change and Senior Support (Designers and Implementers)

These were identified as two separate components in the content analysis: those in charge of designing and implementing the plan and those who support it at the senior level. However this differentiation was not identified during the interviews. The texts used for the content analysis had separated the designers and implementers from the senior managers. There is often some overlap, but it was recognised in the literature that a plan could be developed and implemented without the full support of the senior management.

According to the content analysis, middle managers who believed that those designing and leading the change were competent and capable of directing the change would be more likely to promote the change. Trust may also play a part in this aspect. Designers and leaders that are not trusted or viewed as competent will likely deter middle managers from promoting the change, to possibly hinder it.

The content analysis also recognised that senior members of the organisation are crucial to the success of change. It is the senior level that ensures the appropriate amount of time, employees and other resources are allocated to the change. A middle manager will not be likely to promote a change that does not have adequate support from the senior level.

Interview Evidence (Leaders of Change): Substantial

Interview Evidence (Senior Support): Substantial

As mentioned before, the middle managers interviewed were not able to differentiate between these two action triggers for this change. The middle managers believed that the motivation, design and implementation were all being pushed by the senior level of management, the CEO in particular. However, the comments still supported the propositions from the content analysis. The middle managers who trusted the CEO and believed he was competent in leading the change were quite supportive of the change. Those who did not think he was leading the change appropriately or was not capable of working in the retail industry were not very confident about the change's chance of success.

5.4.4 Peer Influence (Influences of Peers)

The content analysis found that middle managers could possibly be greatly influenced by the actions of their peers. If peers were performing hindering actions, a middle manager might also begin to act that way, and vice versa.

Interview Evidence: Moderate

The interviews were inconclusive regarding this category. Most of the middle managers avoided answering the questions related to the importance of their peers' actions. There were a couple of brief references to peers, but in general no clear

agreement or disagreement with what was identified in the content analysis. The middle managers who responded claimed they were not affected by their peers, but later provided examples of when they were influenced by peers.

5.5 Summary

The ten middle managers from Cini identified 11 of the 16 action triggers as influential to their decisions to act. (Two of these action triggers were supported by hindering action descriptions.) It is possible that the major change currently being implemented at Cini did not affect the other 5 action triggers. The action triggers of importance may be situation specific. It is possible that other middle managers experiencing other changes may be influenced by a different subset of action triggers. Additionally, while all of the middle managers were cooperative in answering the questions, none of them directly admitted to ever hindering the change. Three hindering examples were provided, but on the whole the middle managers were all very supportive of the change. While the three hindering examples were provided, no promotional actions were discussed. It is possible that the action triggers of a change program influencing promotional actions differ from those influencing hindering actions.

Study Three, using questionnaires, was thus developed to complement the first two studies. The goal of Study Three was to expose the action triggers to a greater number of middle managers participants with differing major change experiences. The belief was that this would result in a greater number of both hindering and promotional actions being identified.

CHAPTER SIX
STUDY THREE: QUESTIONNAIRES

6.1 Introduction

Sixteen potential action triggers were identified in Study One. These action triggers were then tested through interviews in Study Two. However, there were only ten participants in Study Two and they did not identify all of the action triggers as influential. Study Three was designed to complement these previous studies by exposing the action triggers to a larger more diverse sample of middle managers. The results of Study Three confirmed the existence of all 16 action triggers, most with a range of influence between 1 and 5.

Additionally the resulting *alternative action* responses to the questionnaires did not correspond to the general sentiment of the literature or the results of Study Two. The majority of existing literature focuses on the hindering actions middle managers perform during organisational change programs. Study Two also identified only hindering actions. The questionnaire results showed a skew of promotional actions being performed by middle managers. Due to this discrepancy, three more interviews were conducted to clarify the responses to the questionnaires to complete this study.

6.2 Study Three Design

The target population for this study guided the development of the questionnaire questions. After informal testing of the questions, the questionnaire was tested through a pilot study. Finally, the questionnaire was administered to the target population and data gathered. An analysis of averages was performed.

6.2.1 Participants

The questionnaire instrument was used for its ability to reach middle managers from many different organisations in both the public and private sectors to identify

as many organisational change experiences as possible. The target population was middle managers enrolled in postgraduate management courses in three institutions: Adelaide Institute of TAFE, Australian Institute of Management and University of South Australia.

Only a few classes at each institution were targeted to limit the possibility of involving the same participants more than once. Participants from nine classes responded to the questionnaire. Students enrolled in these classes were middle managers with a variety of backgrounds and experiences; thus the classes provided an effective means of testing the action triggers against a large number of different change experiences.

6.2.2 Questionnaire Development

The complete questionnaire may be seen in Appendix VIII. The main questions regarding promotional (Section B) and hindering actions (Section C) were the first developed. These questions were a modified form of the research question:

RQ: *What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?*

Questionnaire: *How influential were the following to your actions regarding the change program...*

Since the target population was made up of middle managers from a variety of different organisations, it was unlikely that they were all experiencing organisational change while answering the questionnaire. Thus the questions were designed to ask the middle managers about the most recent change situations they could recall. Unfortunately, most people are unable to recall events in detail, especially if they happened in the less than recent past (Czaja & Blair 1996). For this reason middle managers were asked to recall only one time when they performed promotional actions and one when they performed hindering actions. Additionally, since change is complex, the middle managers were asked to think only of a single action or group of actions they performed when completing each

section. In identifying a single action for each type of *alternative action* participants could answer both the promotional and hindering questions.
In both Sections B (promotional) and C (hindering) the action triggers identified in the content analysis were presented through a single statement. Rather than presenting a questionnaire overwhelming in size that discouraged completion (Gill & Johnson 2002), only one statement for each of the 16 action triggers was provided for the participants to rate. As all themes in each action trigger are very similar and closely related (i.e. Comfort and Security) a single statement was deemed adequate.

While the purpose of the questionnaire was to determine which action triggers were influential to middle managers' decisions, this questionnaire went one step further. The questionnaire asked *how important* each action trigger was. Instead of indicating only that an action trigger was influential, middle managers were asked to indicate each action triggers importance, using a rating scale of 1 to 5, slightly influential to extremely influential. Middle managers had to circle the number best representing the influence of that action trigger on their decision to act. This rating system allowed middle managers to indicate the more important action triggers with higher numbers. The 1 to 5 answer range was based on the Likert scale, and being ordinal, aided the analysis of the questionnaire by limiting the types of answers that were possible (Gill & Johnson 2002; Remenyi et al. 1998).

The next questions developed were the filter questions (Remenyi et al. 1998). The filter questions eliminated the individuals who were not part of the target population (Czaja & Blair 1996). Question A2 (Appendix VIII) dealt with middle managers' experiences of major change. If the middle manager had not experienced major change, there was no need to complete the questionnaire. The next filter question eliminated all but middle managers (question D4). The majority of the postgraduate management students were believed to be middle managers, and the focus of this research was middle managers; no other levels were to be included in the analysis.

The last questions developed were the demographic questions (section D). such as age, sex, occupation, and education level (Remenyi et al. 1998).

Finally a reminder statement was included at the end of the questionnaire to ensure all questions were answered (Czaja & Blair 1996) and an introductory letter added. The reminder statement directed middle managers to check that all of the questions had been answered completely and thanked them for their participation. The introductory letter was a request for participation. This letter explained what the study was focusing on and what the main questions would be asking. It was important that the middle managers knew the importance of the study and how their cooperation would be helpful. The letter was also to make the questionnaire appear interesting so middle managers would be more likely to complete it (Gill & Johnson 2002; Remenyi et al. 1998).

A great deal of help in designing the questionnaire came from colleagues with knowledge in the area being studied. It was important to have these reviews early in the process to ensure that the questions were appropriate for the pilot study (Czaja & Blair 1996). The first review was performed after the initial question development. A colleague reviewed the questions and provided feedback on the clarity, order and general appearance. The recommendations included a definition of 'major organisational change' in the introductory letter, changing the order and design of the questions and adding a 'warm up' question before the main questions.

The change definition and more explanation of the study were put into the introductory letter. The main questions were altered to make it clearer which answer line went with which statement. The demographic questions were ordered differently to flow better. The 'warm up' question A3 (Appendix VIII) was also added. Even though this question does not directly pertain to the study, an inclusion which is not recommended (Gill & Johnson 2002), the colleague thought the jump to the 'important' questions was too much. Question A3 asked middle managers to briefly describe the change that they had experienced. A3 was a general question that would cause the middle managers to start thinking about the change and be in the right frame of mind for the more specific questions (Gill & Johnson 2002; Remenyi et al. 1998).

The revised questionnaire was then shown to two more colleagues. The next colleague agreed with the new order, but pointed out some wording issues and recommended a clearer rating description. Each of the 1 through 5 ratings in sections B and C needed to have a definition associated with them, rather than just the first and last ones. Finally, it was pointed out that the introductory letter had to comply with the university ethics policy. The final colleague found several grammatical errors and recommended a few changes to the introductory letter.

Once all revisions had been completed, it was necessary to look at the appearance of the questionnaire. It has been shown that questionnaires that are too long, have very small print or have other unappealing characteristics are going to produce poorer results than well designed questionnaires (Czaja & Blair 1996; Remenyi et al. 1998). The length of the questionnaire was not an issue as there were few questions. All of the reviewers approved of the font size. One recommended that the different sections be made more distinct by using different coloured paper.

6.2.3 Pilot Study

Once the questionnaire had been developed it needed to be tested on a sample population (Remenyi et al. 1998). Pilot testing ensured that the focus, phraseology, question sequencing and overall presentation (Gill & Johnson 2002) were correct. The pilot test was conducted by administering the questionnaire to 15 Ph.D. students to ensure the questionnaire was appropriately designed for the target population (Gill & Johnson 2002; Remenyi et al. 1998).

Middle managers from the target population were not used for this pilot study. Rather the classes of postgraduate management students were used only for the actual data collection. The Ph.D. students were not all middle managers, but were able to provide feedback on the structure and wording of the questionnaire. The aim of this pilot testing was not to obtain enough responses for an analysis of answers, but to determine if the questionnaire was appropriately designed.

The Ph.D. students were given the questionnaire in the same format and setting as the target population would be. The Ph.D. students were told to complete the questionnaire and identify any areas of concern. The average time to complete the

questionnaire was about 15 minutes. Several of the students explained that it took this long as they tried to think of alternative options that were not included in the answer lists. On the whole they found the questionnaire to be well designed and complete. A few wording issues and grammar mistakes were identified and corrected. One middle manager did not realise there were different sections (B and C) until it was too late. The differing sections were then explained more clearly in the introductory letter. No other concerns were identified.

6.2.4 Questionnaire Distribution

Postgraduate management students in four classes of a Management Graduate Certificate program were the first targeted in this study. The next were students in two classes of a Management and Supervision certificate program. Finally, three classes of MBA students were targeted. These different classes were chosen because many middle managers were taking them, either by personal choice or with organisational support. Targeting these specific classes meant that a variety of organisational areas and experience levels were represented.

The lecturers of these classes agreed to distribute the questionnaires and encourage their completion. Several of them set aside 10-15 minutes of class time for this purpose. Students were informed that the questionnaire was part of a Ph.D. research study and their cooperation would be appreciated. They were told that it concerned their experiences with major organisational change. Each student was provided with an addressed prepaid envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire to ensure complete anonymity of the middle managers (unless they opted to write in their e-mail addresses to receive the results of the study).

6.2.5 Analysis

Questionnaire responses were entered into a spreadsheet. For the two main sections of interest (B and C), middle managers were allowed to write in answers if applicable. As there was only a limited amount of room to describe each action trigger each 'other' answer was examined to determine if it was part of an existing action trigger or if it was indeed unique. If the 'other' answer was part of an existing action trigger, the rating was compared to the rating of the action trigger,

and the higher rating was retained. Had enough middle managers given the same answer, it would have been analysed for its influence, however this did not occur. Questionnaires that were not properly completed were not included in the analysis (which only applied to one). It was imperative that the main questions (B and C) concerning promotional and hindering actions were complete. Since the scale used allowed for unimportant items to be assigned a '1,' there was no guarantee that a blank item was unimportant.

Averages were used as more sophisticated statistical techniques were not justified as the assumptions they involve were not met (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 2005; Thorne & Giesen 2004). Firstly, the sampling was convenient meaning the participants were not representative of all middle managers (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 2005). Secondly the normality assumption would not apply (Thorne & Giesen 2004). Thirdly, the sample size of 27 was too small (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 2005; Thorne & Giesen 2004). It is not uncommon to use averages as an approximation, especially as the rating scale was ordinal (Thorne & Giesen 2004). Averages provide a descriptive summary of the results (Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 2005; Thorne & Giesen 2004).

The frequency of ratings was recorded and used to develop the averages for all action triggers. The averages were then calculated for each action trigger. Since different action triggers may be more influential in different change programs than others, an average is a good indicator of an item's importance across all types of change (George 1992). Even though '1' was equivalent to 'not at all', it was included in the averages to show the importance of the different action triggers on the whole. Finally the averages were ranked to show which action triggers were more influential on the whole.

6.3 Study Three Results

Of the 241 questionnaires distributed 75 were returned, a response rate of 31%. Of these 75 only 27 were returned by middle managers (see Table 6-1), 14 were returned by people who had never experienced organisational change, 33 by managers from other levels, and 1 was not completed.

Table 6-1. Identifying the 75 Questionnaire Respondents.

14	No change experience
1	Improper response
15	Frontline managers
15	Senior managers
3	Other level
27	**Middle managers**
75	Total responses

It was not expected that such a large number (14) of respondents would have no change experience, nor that so many small organisations would be represented. Many of the senior managers (15) were from small organisations where many of their decisions did have organisational wide impact, even though they were not in a 'typical' senior managers role. Despite these unexpected results, the largest hierarchical group represented included the 27 traditional middle managers.

6.3.1 Middle Manager Respondents

There was no 'typical' middle manager respondent. The 27 middle managers were not all from one sector, organisational area, or even age range. Rather they were well dispersed among all demographic categories.

Sector. Of the 27 middle managers, 9 (33%) worked in the public sector while 17 (63%) worked for private organisations. One person (5%)[5] did not fill out the question properly and was counted as 'no response' as seen in Figure 6-1:

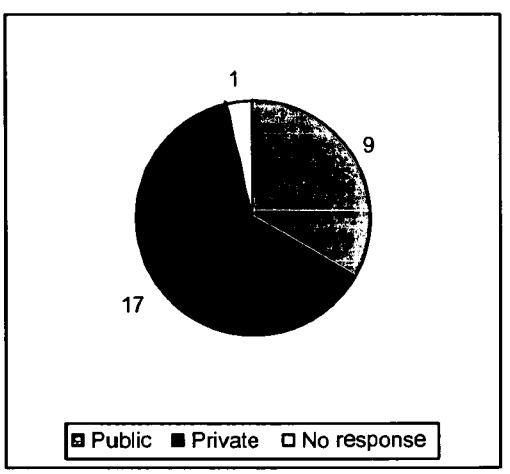


Figure 6-1. Middle managers by sector

[5] Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Organisational Area. The middle managers also represented a variety of organisational areas, with manufacturing being the most common, Table 6-2:

Table 6-2. Middle Managers by Organisational Area.

1	Agriculture
7	Manufacturing
2	Construction
1	Accommodation, cafes, and restaurants
1	Transport and storage
3	Communication services
5	Finance and insurance
3	Government administration and defence
4	Health and community services

Gender. Of the 27 middle managers 41% (11) were women while 59% (16) were men, as shown in Figure 6-2:

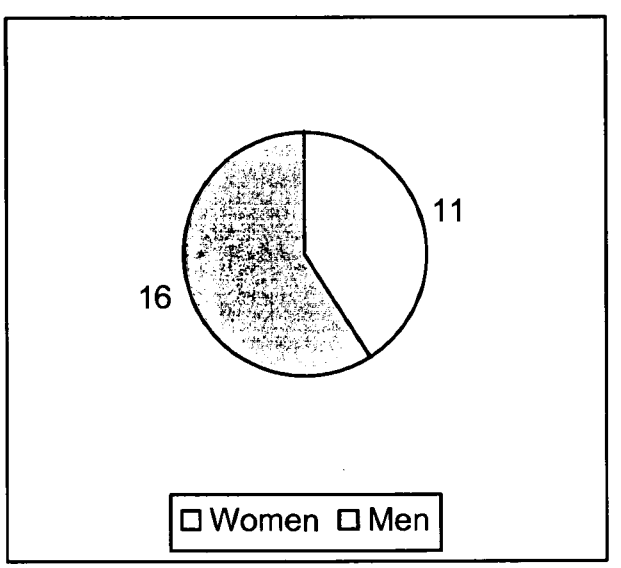


Figure 6-2. Middle managers by gender.

Age. The ages of the middle managers ranged from under 25 to over 50, as seen in Figure 6-3. No average age is available as the middle managers selected an age

range, not a specific number. This question showed that the middle managers were distributed across different age groups.

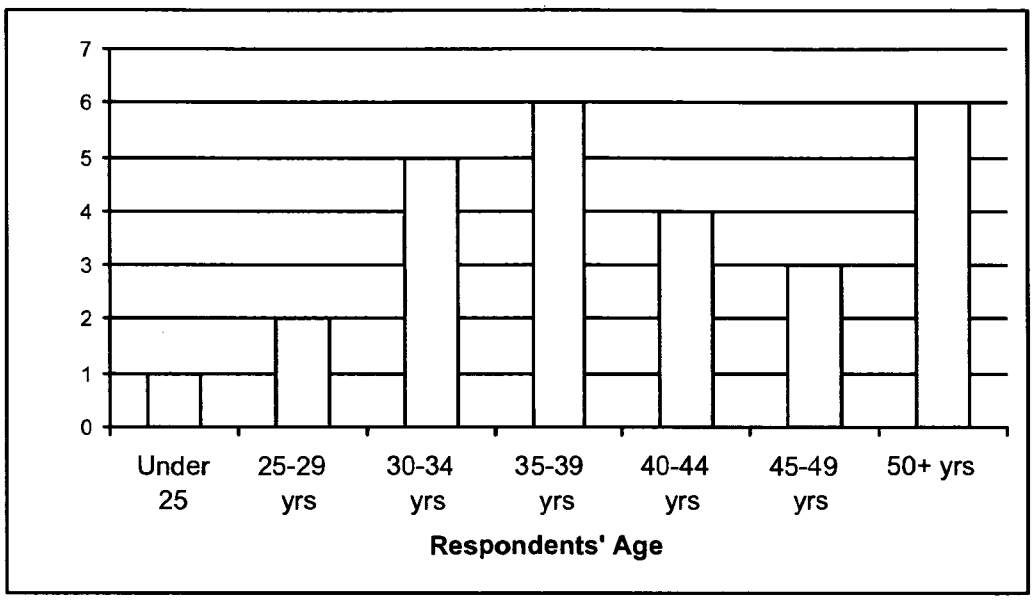


Figure 6-3. Middle managers by age.

Education. The middle managers also had obtained various levels of education. The middle managers were asked to identify the highest level of education they had received prior to their current course. While many of the middle managers had received university degrees, a sizeable number had only completed high school previously, as shown in Table 6-3:

Table 6-3. Middle Managers by Level of Education Prior to Current Course.

7	High school
4	Certificate
4	Diploma
12	University degree

Interestingly, while the middle managers' ages ranged greatly, most of them had been middle managers only a relatively short time, 13 less than 4 years (Figure 6-4). While six of the middle managers were over 50, only one had been working as a middle manager for 15 or more years.

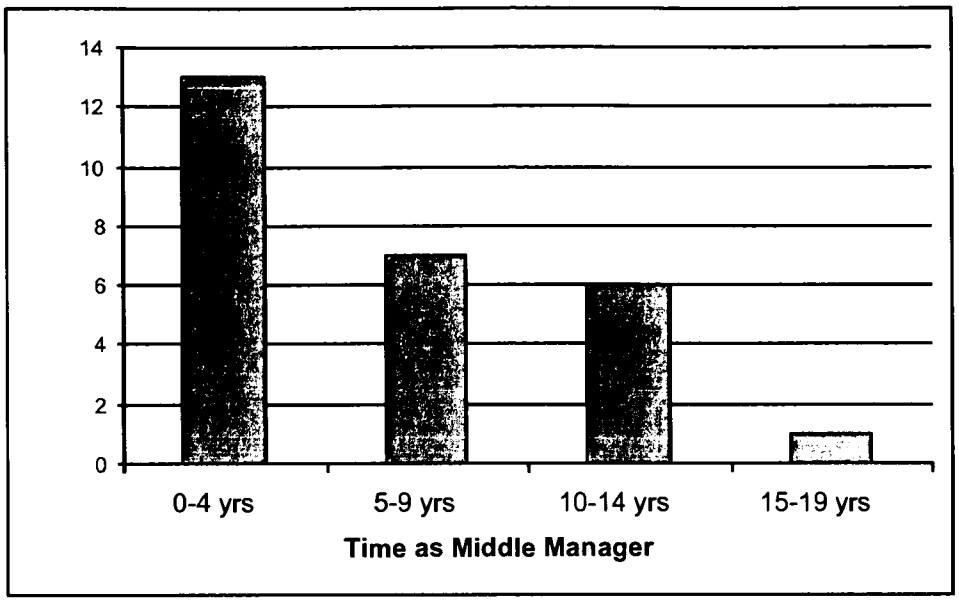


Figure 6-4. Middle managers time in position.

Change Experience. It was important to determine when the middle managers had most recently experienced major organisational change. Had all the middle managers experienced change more than a few years ago, the data would be much less reliable. However, most of the middle managers were experiencing change at the time of the questionnaire, Table 6-4:

Table 6-4. When Middle Managers Last Experienced a Major Change

18	Currently attempting a major change
3	Within the last year
3	1-2 years ago
3	3 or more years ago

Changes experienced. Two of the middle managers described experiencing the same change as they were from the same organisation. However, all of the other middle managers described different change programs. The following is a breakdown of the different types of change experienced by the 26 middle managers (there was one non-respondent).

12 of the middle managers had experienced structural change:

- 2 were merging separate groups into a single group
- 1 was merging groups and downsizing
- 1 was splitting a large group into smaller groups
- 1 was incorporating a matrix structure
- 1 was changing from a functional to geographical structure
- 1 was moving staff from one location to another in its restructure
- 1 was changing job roles and thus location for staff
- 1 was changing only job roles
- 1 was restructuring to cut costs
- 1 was in the process of a structural review
- 1 was adding managers to the structure

The above changes all related to the structure of the organisation. Many of these middle managers had only experienced structural changes. However, the reasons for and types of changes were quite varied, as were the expected results.

8 of the middle managers had experienced the re-engineering of processes:

- 2 were changing from a push to pull process (same organisation)
- 1 was altering processes and downsizing
- 1 was altering only processes
- 1 was implementing new technology and working conditions
- 1 was integrating its sales and services platform
- 1 was attempting to "go global"
- 1 was implementing a framework for professional practice

The re-engineering of processes means that all of the ways of operating (processes) are revamped or changed to be more effective and efficient. Most (not all revealed specifics) of these re-engineering efforts had been to different parts of the organisation and were instigated for different reasons.

1 middle manager experienced both structural and re-engineering changes

This middle manager had experienced a very significant amount of change as both the structure and operating processes of the organisation were significantly altered.

5 of the middle managers had experienced changes relating neither to structural changes or changes due to the re-engineering of processes.

1 middle manager had experienced capturing knowledge changes

1 middle manager had experienced cultural change

1 manager had implemented new 'industry standard' software

2 middle managers (from different organisational areas) had experienced changes required by recent legislation amendments (neither elaborated on the type of changes that were actually implemented)

1 middle manager did not answer this question

These 5 changes are quite varied and unique to either the industry (legislative changes and software) or to the organisation (knowledge and culture).

In total the 26 middle managers described 25 very different and unrelated changes.

Summary. The above respondent characteristics have shown the many differences between the participating middle managers. The middle managers are from both the public and private sectors and nine organisational areas. They range in age from under 25 to over 50. The middle managers also have different education levels, some high school only, others had certificates or diplomas while almost half had university degrees. Finally, most of the middle managers were currently experiencing major change where all but two were experiencing different types of change. All of these differences meant that the averages identified for the different action triggers were representative across many types of major change.

6.3.2 Promotional Actions

The first main question (Section B, Appendix VIII) asked the middle managers to *'Try to remember an intentional action or group of actions you performed that actively promoted the change...'*. The middle managers were then asked to indicate

the level of promotional action they had performed (Table 6-5). A *considerable* promotional effort was performed by 14 middle managers, while 9 had done *everything possible* to promote the change.

Table 6-5. Level of Promotional Action Performed by Middle Manager.

4	Slight attempt to promote the change
0	Moderate attempt to promote the change
14	Considerable attempt to promote the change
9	Did everything possible to promote the change

The middle managers were then asked to rate each action trigger regarding its influence on the decision to promote the change. The middle managers were asked to circle the number that best represented the item's influence. The definitions shown in Table 6-6 were provided before the list of action triggers. The entire questionnaire is provided in Appendix VIII.

Table 6-6. Definitions of Ratings for Action Triggers' Influence.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Slightly influential	Moderately influential	Considerably influential	Extremely influential

The middle managers were asked to circle the relevant number for each action trigger. There were two additional lines for 'other' terms for the middle managers to contribute their own answers. Several items were written in and rated. However, the written in answers were all components of existing action triggers.

Table 6-7 shows the number of times each rating was chosen per action trigger for the promotional action question. Only two action triggers, impact on work habits (1) and change in workload (5), did not have the full range of ratings selected. The last column in the table shows the average of the action trigger. Averages were used to give an understanding of the influence of the action trigger across different change situations. The limited number of middle manager responses (27) to the questionnaire meant that comparing action triggers by the type of change experienced was not possible.

Table 6-7. Average Ratings of Action Trigger Influence in Decision to Promote Change.

Action triggers	Respondents per Rating: Not at all influential 1	Slightly influential 2	Moderately influential 3	Considerably influential 4	Extremely influential 5	Average Rating
Tangible Aspects						
The impact on work habits	0	7	4	11	5	3.5
The need for new skills/knowledge	3	9	7	4	4	2.9
The change in workload	1	8	7	11	0	3.0
The change to working conditions	6	9	5	2	5	2.7
Intangible Aspects						
The impact on authority/power/freedom	3	5	12	4	3	3.0
The impact on respect or status level	3	8	6	8	2	2.9
The impact on job's security	5	9	7	2	4	2.7
The impact on career advancement opportunities	4	4	9	6	4	3.1
The impact on individual goals	5	2	8	9	3	3.1
The impact on alliances or work relationships	1	3	7	12	4	3.6
Change Plan Aspects						
The argument explaining the need for change	3	4	2	11	7	3.6
The specified goals of the change	1	6	0	11	9	3.8
The design of the plan	1	8	6	9	3	3.2
The change leader	2	6	8	10	1	3.1
The support of senior management	1	4	3	11	8	3.8
Peer Influence						
Peers' opinions and actions	3	8	7	7	2	2.9

The averages provided support for the action triggers initially identified through the content analysis. Table 6-8 shows how the averages were assigned the insignificant, moderate and substantial labels classifying the level of support.

Insignificant – none to little evidence was provided to support the existence of this action trigger

Moderate – evidence shows that the action trigger exists, however, the average rating indicates it is only slightly influential across many types of major change implementations or is quite influential, but only for certain types of major change implementations

Substantial – evidence shows that the action trigger exists and the average rating indicates it is quite influential across many types of change implementations

Table 6-9 shows the different action triggers and the level of evidence provided by the average derived from the questionnaires. The averages of all the action triggers were well above 2, *slightly influential*, closer to 3, *moderately influential*. As the range of ratings was 1 to 5 for 14 of the 16 action triggers, these averages not only confirmed the existence of all 16 action triggers, but also indicated that their influence varied, likely with the type of major change program being implemented.

Table 6-8. The Criteria Used to Classify the Evidence from the Questionnaires.

	Questionnaires Averages
Insignificant	< 1.5
Moderate	≥ 1.5 < 3.5
Substantial	≥ 3.5 ≤ 5

Table 6-9. Promotional Action Ranking of Action Triggers by Average Rating.

Level	Average	Action trigger
Substantial	3.8	The specified goals of the change (CP) The support of senior management (CP)
	3.6	The argument explaining the need for change (CP) The impact on alliances or work relationships (I)
	3.5	The impact on work habits (T)
Moderate	3.2	The design of the plan (CP)
	3.1	The impact on career advancement opportunities (I)
	3.1	The change leader (CP) The impact on individual goals (I)
	3.0	The change in workload (T)
	3.0	The impact on authority/power/freedom (I)
	2.9	The impact on respect or status level (I)
	2.9	The need for new skills/knowledge (T) Peers' opinions and actions (P)
	2.7	The impact on job's security (I) The change to working conditions (T)
CP = Change Plan triggers, T = Tangible triggers, I = Intangible triggers		

6.3.3 Hindering Actions

As only three of the middle managers completed the hindering action section meaning the averages were not calculated for the action triggers. The sample size was too small for any use to be derived from the averages, instead only the rating responses of the three middle managers were provided in Table 6-10:

Table 6-10. Level of Hindering Action Performed by Middle Manager.

2	Slight attempt to hinder the change
0	Moderate attempt to hinder the change
1	Considerable attempt to hinder the change
0	Did everything possible to hinder the change

Table 6-11. Ratings of Action Trigger Influence in Decision to Hinder Change.

	Respondents per Rating				
	Not at all influential	Slightly influential	Moderately influential	Considerably influential	Extremely influential
Action trigger	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Tangible Aspects					
The impact on work habits	0	2	0	1	0
The need for new skills/knowledge	1	1	1	0	0
The change in workload	1	2	0	0	0
The change to working conditions	1	1	0	1	0
Intangible Aspects					
The impact on authority/power/freedom	1	2	0	0	0
The impact on respect or status level	1	1	0	1	0
The impact on job's security	1	0	1	1	0
The impact on career advancement opportunities	1	2	0	0	0
The impact on individual goals	1	2	0	0	0
The impact on alliances or work relationships	1	1	1	0	0
Change Plan Aspects					
The argument explaining the need for change	0	1	0	1	1
The specified goals of the change	0	1	0	1	1
The design of the plan	0	1	0	2	0
The change leader	0	0	1	2	0
The support of senior management	0	0	1	2	0
Peer Influence					
Peers' opinions and actions	0	1	0	2	0

As with the promotional action question, the same information regarding the definitions of the ratings was provided for this question (Table 6-7). Since there were only three middle managers, only the individual middle manager rankings for the action triggers are provided, Table 6-11. No averages were calculated for the hindering actions.

As only three answers were provided for the hindering action question, they were not included in the final analysis of this study. There was not enough data to determine if the action triggers influencing hindering actions were the same as those influencing promotional actions. The following comparison of the questionnaire results to the interview results does not include any of the data regarding the hindering actions performed as obtained in the questionnaires.

6.4 Comparing Results of Studies Two and Three

The middle managers interviewed in Study Two did not address all 16 action triggers during the interviews. Five action triggers were not discussed:

- Working conditions
- Authority, power, and freedom
- Respect and status
- Alliances and working relationship
- Individual goals

Additionally, the middle managers did not initially identify any *alternative actions* they had performed (these were only described during the course of the interviews).

The analysis of the questionnaires revealed slight differences in respect to the interview findings. The first was that the interviews had all related to one specific change program, while the questionnaires enquired about the action triggers in relation to many different change programs. The second was shown by the action trigger averages (of promotional actions), was that *all* 16 action triggers did influence middle managers to perform *alternative* (at least promotional) *actions*. Finally, all of the middle managers had performed promotional actions, while only a few had performed hindering actions.

Regarding the first difference, all of the middle managers at the Cini organisation were experiencing the same change at the same time. The middle manager questionnaire respondents had experienced different changes and were in different stages of the change at the time of completion. These differences tested the influence of the action triggers across a wide variety of programs. For all but one

action trigger, there was at least one response of 1, indicating that the action trigger was not influential in that decision.

The second difference related to evidentiary support for the action triggers. While the middle managers interviewed did not discuss five of the 16 action triggers, four received moderate support and seven substantial. The averages of the questionnaire (promotional action) responses showed that all 16 action triggers were influential as the average of each action trigger was greater than 2.5.

The most notable difference regards the *alternative actions* performed. In the interviews, when asked directly, none of the middle managers said they had attempted to act *alternatively*. During the course of the interview three hindering actions were described. No promotional actions were described. Contrarily, all 27 middle manager questionnaire respondents described actively promoting the change at one time or another, while only three described hindering actions.

While this difference in *alternative actions* of the middle manager questionnaire respondents compared to the interviews is quite striking, it is further distinctive when compared to the literature. The general sentiment of the literature (Balogun 2003; Fenton-O'Creevy 96, 98; Huy 2002; Jackson & Humble 1994; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Watad & Will 2003) portrays *most* middle managers as very resistant to any change and prepared to hinder it when an opportunity arises. However, this proclivity to hinder change was not found in the interviews, and is certainly contrary to the questionnaire results of 27 promotional actions compared to three hindering actions.

None of the data from the questionnaires or interviews could explain why more middle managers had not described performing hindering actions. The assumption after the interviews was that middle managers were not comfortable admitting directly to others (the interviewer) that they performed hindering actions. The use of questionnaires was supposed to eliminate this concern. However, there were fewer hindering actions in relation to the promotional actions described in the questionnaires than in the interviews.

One of the goals of this research was to use the results to develop a way to test middle managers' perceptions about a change during its implementation. There are numerous reasons why middle managers might not have described taking hindering actions, ranging from the design of the questionnaire to the simple fact that they had nothing to describe. If there were issues concerning the design of the questionnaire, identifying these would be useful for practitioners attempting to design their own testing instruments. Study Three was designed to clarify the reasons middle managers might not have described performing hindering actions.

6.5 Study Three Clarification

Interviews are often conducted after a questionnaire study to clarify or complement the results (i.e. Campbell & Martinko 1998; Wooldridge & Floyd 1990). For this study middle managers who had responded to the questionnaire were asked to describe their experiences with it. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted to discuss the questionnaire design to speculate as to why other middle managers might not have described performing hindering actions.

6.5.1 Interview Questions

The questions used in the clarification interviews are shown in Appendix IX. There were four main parts to the interview: the initial questions, questionnaire focus, situation questions and finishing questions. The initial questions (Section A) were questions designed to build trust between the interviewer and interviewee. They concerned position, time in that position and time with the organisation.

The questions in Section B focused on the questionnaire. These questions concerned the impression and experiences the middle managers had while they were completing the questionnaire. The middle managers were given the questionnaire to review in the hope that it triggered memories of their experiences taking it. The purpose of this section was to determine if the design of the questionnaire was unclear or otherwise inhibitive. The last question (B2a) asked for suggestions regarding future questionnaire designs.

The situation questions (Section C) focused on the discrepancy between the general perception in the literature that middle managers hinder change and the responses

received in the previous studies. The participants were asked to speculate why middle managers might not have described performing hindering actions. The middle managers were first asked to come up with their own responses and then probed with several further questions if necessary (C1a, C1b). These probing questions asked if middle managers have just been misrepresented, and in reality don't hinder change or if the questionnaire design was a main factor. This question was the real heart of the interview and all answers were discussed in detail. The final question (C2) asked how to overcome these issues to gain accurate responses in the future. Even if the design of the questionnaire was at fault, this section would help identify ways to better obtain the relevant information from middle managers in the future.

Finally the finishing questions (Section D) were included. These questions were virtually identical to those of Study Two. At this point any last comments were asked for, and questions of the participant answered. The confidentiality information was reiterated and the participants thanked for their time.

The questions were submitted for ethics approval. As this study was very similar to the previous studies, few changes were necessary for approval by the Ethics Review Board. They approved the questions, information sheet, consent forms and method for contacting participants. The information sheet and consent forms were those that were used in Study Two, with slight modifications (Appendix X).

6.5.2 Interview Process

Due to the nature of this study, participants in a previous study being asked to participate again, the first interview acted as a pilot study. There was a limited number of potential participants and it was not possible to use a separate group to test the questions. The interview went well with the first participant, and it was unnecessary to change the process or alter any of the questions.

Participant Selection. In Study Three, there was a space at the end of the questionnaire for middle managers to provide their e-mail addresses for a copy of the results of the study. Those middle managers who did were sent the results and asked to help with the next study. They were told that the questionnaire results were

not what was expected and needed to be further examined. The e-mail went on to ask the middle managers if they would consider participating in a 30-45 minute interview regarding their experiences with the questionnaire. The information sheet (Appendix X) was provided as an attachment to the e-mail in addition to the results of the questionnaires.

The middle managers willing to participate were asked to respond by e-mail with the days and times that suited them for the interviews, and further contact details. These middle managers were then contacted and a time and place set for the interview. Only eight middle managers had provided their e-mail addresses, and after a reminder e-mail, three agreed to meet for an interview.

Two of the participants had spent their entire working careers in the public sector, while the third had only worked in the private sector. Two were males, one was a female. They were all about the same age, late thirties to early forties. The three middle managers all had immense experience with many various major organisational change programs.

Interviews. The participating middle managers were all interviewed at their offices. Upon meeting, the participants were given a copy of the information sheet to review the study. They were told that their responses would not be associated in any way with any information that could identify them. The middle managers were also told about the storage of the data obtained from the interviews. They were then asked if they approved of the interviews being audiotaped. Lastly, before the interviews began, the middle managers were asked to sign a consent form as required by the ethics policy of the university. The interviews then ensued, lasting approximately 45 minutes. During the interviews the middle managers were asked the set questions (Appendix IX), and then asked for details or clarification as needed. At the appropriate time before the relevant questions, the middle managers were shown a blank copy of the questionnaire that they had previously filled out. At the conclusion of the interviews the middle managers were asked if they would like a copy of the results from these interviews and thanked again for their time.

6.5.3 Analysis

The coding/thematic analysis used for Study Two was again used for these clarification interviews. The transcripts were read and sections labelled with codes that described the content. The coded sections were entered into a spreadsheet and organised. The same process as in Study Two was used to break broad codes into more specific codes. The specific codes were then grouped together as relevant.

6.6 Clarification Results

All three of the middle managers interviewed recognised their hierarchical level as being powerful. The believed their main role was often that of a go between, working with both senior and lower level employees. This *middle* role puts them in a position to greatly influence the outcome of major organisational change:

> [T]hey [middle managers] can play an important role really, if they wish to, they have a lot of opportunities to do so, because they are between the two levels. They are in a quite powerful position between the other groups. – Nov

However, just because they have the ability, not all middle managers will automatically attempt to hinder organisational change, many issues play a part in the decision making process:

> Look I don't know if you can generalise, I think it depends on a whole range of things... – Nov

While they found it a bit difficult to speculate as to why other middle managers might not describe performed hindering actions, the middle managers interviewed did identify several possible reasons. Firstly, they agreed that middle managers as a whole regularly attempt to emphasise the positives of a situation. Second, they agreed that the questionnaire design was partly to blame in Study Three. However, they were able to provide some ideas for improved questionnaire designs for future use.

6.6.1 Emphasising the Positives

The middle managers interviewed believed that middle managers as a whole are really not that different from other levels of employees in an organisation. Middle

managers want to give the appearance of being 'good' employees. Being 'good' means that the middle managers will attempt to present themselves in the most positive way possible:

> [M]ost people try to promote the best image of themselves that they can, unless they are keen to get themselves sacked. – Nov

> People tend to give the answer that they are most comfortable with...how they would like the situation to be rather than how it is or has been. - Sept

The middle managers interviewed speculated that in certain instances other middle managers may emphasise the positives (promotional actions) *and* gloss over the negatives (hindering actions). It is not just the senior level that the middle managers may want to convince, but possibly themselves as well:

> [P]eople don't like to see themselves as being obstructive [to the change]...it is people wanting to have a positive view of themselves, perhaps it is about wanting to sort of have a perception of some control over what it is that they are doing...people don't like to see their power or sense of control as being usurped. So that is possibly it. – Oct

One of the middle managers interviewed believed that other middle managers often don't realise they are even performing hindering actions. Some middle managers convince themselves that regardless of what they are supposed to do, they only act in the best interest of the organisation, and so the action couldn't possibly be a hindering one:

> I think that in most instances the people are not willing to admit it even to themselves that they acted against the change and what the company wanted them to do. If they can't admit it to themselves they surely aren't going to admit it to someone else. – Sept

This lack of hindering action recognition may be linked to the magnitude of the action performed. One of the middle managers interviewed was quite certain that most middle managers have hindered major organisational change in some way, however they were often only *little*, relatively inconsequential actions:

> I know that *everyone* does *little* things to resist the change at some point. – Sept

Taking all of these comments into account presents a possible explanation for the limited number of hindering actions described in questionnaires (and even possibly the interviews). The participating middle managers may have been trying to present themselves foremost as 'good' employees. They may not have considered the *little* hindering actions they performed as noteworthy. The combination of a 'good' middle managers performing insignificant actions would prevent most hindering actions from every being identified

In the interviews of Study Two, the hindering actions were portrayed as minor events where the employees involved were 'looking out' for the organisation and trying to protect it through their actions. In all of the three hindering action instances the middle managers may honestly not have considered their actions as hindering.

While the hindering actions of the Study Two were identified through the stories told relating to the change, this elaboration was not possible with the questionnaires. The middle manager questionnaire respondents were responsible for identifying their own actions as hindering. The questionnaire was designed to allow responding middle managers to remain completely anonymous in order to freely describe their hindering actions. However, as suggested by the middle managers interviewed in this clarification study, the responding middle managers may not have viewed themselves as ever having hindered the change. In addition to the 'good' and insignificant theory presented above, the questionnaire design also may have inhibited responses.

6.6.2 Questionnaire Design

The three middle managers agreed that the design of the questionnaire was a likely factor for the limited responses to the hindering action question:

> I find that this type of format doesn't lend itself to particularly honest answers... they say what they think the people asking the question are looking for. – Sept

One of the main problems with the questionnaire was that the promotional question was always presented before the hindering question. Due to the nature of questionnaires, this meant that the middle managers were more likely to fill out the first of what appeared to be two very similar questions:

> In part they went through this one [promotional action question], but then they got to the next one [hindering action question] and it looks much the same. Its kind of, I already answered that once, I don't need to do it again. – Oct

The likelihood of only completing the first question was exacerbated by the complexity of the questions. The questions required a fair bit of effort to coordinate all of the different components of the question (meaning, rating scale, and actual influence, then circling the correct number):

> [I]t takes quite a bit of time to work out exactly what you are asking –Oct

> It [questionnaire] had a...big long checklist. That way is a bit intimidating. – Sept

Middle managers most likely filled out the promotional question and then decided it was too much work to also fill out the hindering question. It was also mentioned in the clarification interviews that the two very similar questions [promotional and hindering] may have lead some middle managers (those who didn't clearly read the instructions) to believe they could only complete one:

> [P]erhaps presenting them with only these choices [promotional or hindering] people are going to say, well I promoted it. – Nov

Finally the middle managers in the clarification interviews discussed the 'time' in the change. Major organisational change is a very long, complicated, detailed process. Middle managers who were not currently experiencing the change were not as likely to accurately remember the details of a past change. They were much more likely to remember promotional actions over the hindering ones.

> Its just that they might not remember them later...I can't remember all of the different aspects that I thought were important. If it was a long time

> before, they would have a different view of it now...At the time if you had asked his [worker who had been forced to switch jobs in last change] opinion about the change he would have been quite negative about it. Now he would have forgotten about that and say that the change was pretty positive. – Sept

Besides finding faults with the questionnaire, the middle managers interviewed were able to provide several ideas for the development of future questionnaires.

6.6.3 Increasing Identification of Hindering Actions

The middle managers interviewed were asked to identify some ways of increasing the identification of hindering actions (assuming they were performed). It was suggested that the best approach would be to avoid the checklist approach, and make the questions more personal. This personal approach included using multiple simplified questions, requiring only agree/disagree or yes/no types of answers. They believed this alternate format would increase the number of hindering actions identified:

> It might be that if the questions were in a form of a statement about how you felt... I can easily answer that. I have to think about it less. So putting it that way would be better...The more you can personalise it more so that it is easier to agree or disagree with it rather than ignore it. - Oct

> Regarding a good questionnaire: [T]he questions were asked in a particular way where it was...more 'yes' 'no', but the questions you were asked, as you went through you realised that the questions you being asked later on actually challenged your previous answer so you were required to think more deeply and give an honest answer. It is harder to collect the data obviously. - Sept

Another idea was to make the questions more open ended so that the middle managers could write in their own answers, and not be limited by those provided:

> In questionnaire have a place for people to write in their own answers rather than having the big long checklist...Its harder to analyse, but it would get better answers from people – Sept

The middle managers also thought the number of hindering actions would increase if the questionnaire was administered at the appropriate time. A middle manager's

opinion about the change can alter over the course of the program and data would have to be continuously collected in order to remain relevant:

> [T]he change I was talking about...took place over a number of years. So its not only the time between reflecting, but what part in the process you are actually at and asking people. The first reaction might be resistance...but as the process moves on and people learn about effects of things they might take a more proactive role. - Nov

> [T]here is a two sided aspect to it all of the time, and depending on how you look at those two aspects makes a difference how you are going to answer that questionnaire. If you are feeling threatened at that particular time, you'll answer it differently than if you are feeling productive and trying to move forward.-Sept

Finally, the type of change may also influence the responses of the middle managers. Instead of having a single questionnaire (as in Study Three) that asks questions about aspects unrelated to the current change (irrelevant action triggers), each questionnaire could be change specific:

> If we are talking in terms of change of structure versus change in plant equipment...Changes in structure are cultural change. – Sept

All of the middle managers interviewed recognised that implementing these ideas into a questionnaire would be a very time consuming for the development and data analyses processes. However, they believed that unless these changes were incorporated into the design, future questionnaires would not appropriately identify the actual actions performed.

6.6.4 Summary

The middle managers participating in the clarification interviewed identified two key reasons for middle managers not to describe hindering actions in the questionnaires. The first related to *emphasising the positives*. The belief was that most middle managers want to present themselves as a *good* employee. While the middle managers may perform *little* hindering actions they try to explain (to others as well as themselves) that they were performed only to benefit the organisation not hinder the change.

Secondly, the questionnaire design may also have inhibited middle manager respondents from identifying more hindering actions. The long checklist approach may have been intimidating and unclear for some of the middle managers. Additionally, the order of the questions may have led some middle managers to believe they only needed to choose one question to answer, and most would naturally have chosen the first question.

The middle managers interviewed provided some ideas for questionnaire designs in the future. They suggested avoiding the checklist approach, and making the questions more personal and simple, requiring only agree/disagree or yes/no answers. The middle managers interviewed also suggested including more change specific and open ended questions. Finally they recommended administering the questionnaire at the same time in the change for all middle managers.

6.7 Summary

The results of the questionnaire (promotional actions only) confirmed the existence of all 16 action triggers being influential to the decision to act *alternatively,* in at least some instances. The range of ratings indicates that the action triggers are situation specific. Not *all* 16 action triggers will be influential in *every* major organisational change program. The action triggers of importance will vary with the type of major change being implemented.

Each of the 27 middle managers provided an example of performing a promotional action, but only three described performing a hindering action. These overwhelming positive responses differed from the interview results where *only* hindering actions were identified, and the sentiment of the literature. Thus, three final interviews were conducted to clarify this discrepancy between Studies Two and Three.

The clarification interviews identified two aspects of importance, the design of the questionnaire and middle managers' proclivity to *emphasise the positives*. While these aspects may have impinged on the data collected in Study Three, the middle managers identified several ideas for future questionnaire development. All of the results from the three studies are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN
DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

The current research explored the following: *What aspects of major organisational change programs trigger alternative actions (promotional or hindering) to be performed by middle managers?*

As part of this research, the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model was developed to conceptualise and clarify the existing organisational change literature. In reviewing the model a lack of comprehensive literature regarding how middle managers make decisions to act was discovered. Three complementary studies were conducted to explore the topic and provide new insight and interpretation regarding middle managers' decisions to act alternatively:

Study One – a qualitative content analysis of literature
Study Two – interviews with middle managers
Study Three – questionnaires for middle managers, and interviews with three of those middle managers

Together these three studies provided a holistic exploration of action triggers and their influence on middle manager action during major organisational change. In Study One, 16 action triggers were identified from a sample of the literature and organised into four categories (Figure 7-1). Evidence was then provided in Studies Two and Three confirming the existence and influence of the action triggers in middle managers decisions to act *alternatively*. This list of 16 action triggers is more comprehensive than previous related work, but all 16 action triggers are not influential in every major change situation. The action triggers of influence vary with the type of change initiative attempted. In addition to identifying the action

triggers of importance to middle managers, Study Three also identified several reasons that may have prohibited middle managers from openly describing hindering actions they had performed. These included the design of the questionnaire instrument and middle managers' tendency to emphasise the positives. These results are further discussed in the following sections.

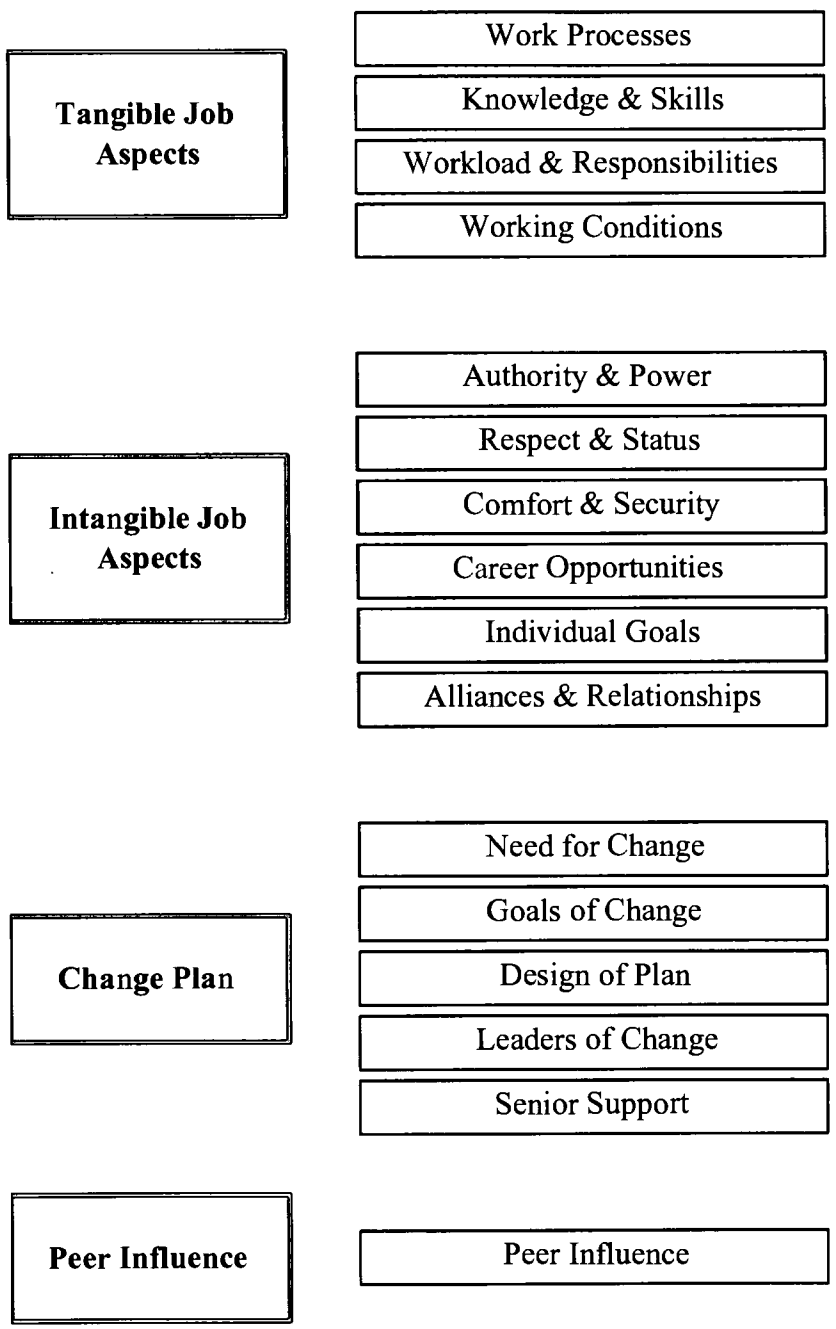


Figure 7-1. Action triggers grouped by category, as originally identified in Study One.

7.2 Sixteen Action Triggers

The 16 action triggers (Figure 7-1) were first identified through a content analysis of a sample of organisational change literature. Action triggers are aspects relating to a major change program that trigger middle managers to perform hindering or promotional actions. However, the literature used to identify the action triggers did not focus on middle managers. The interview and questionnaire studies were subsequently designed to verify the existence and applicableness of these action triggers to middle managers. Together Studies Two and Three provided evidence to *confirm* the existence of all 16 action triggers.

The interviews with the middle managers in Study Two addressed only 11 of the 16 action triggers (see Figure 5-10, p 155). Of these 11 action triggers, the existence of two was *confirmed*, while evidence only *indicated* the existence of nine others. Further research, through the questionnaires in Study Three *confirmed* the existence of all 16 action triggers. The evidence is explained below for each individual action trigger. There were three classifications of evidence used:

Confirmed – evidence was provided of the existence of the action trigger
Indicated – evidence indicated (but did not confirm) the existence of the action trigger
Unidentified –evidence was not provided to support the action trigger's existence

Table 7-1 shows how these classifications were applied to the evidence obtained in the research in Studies Two and Three:

For the interviews, the existence of an action trigger was *confirmed* when an *alternative action* was discussed in relation to an action trigger and *indicated* when any number of the middle managers discussed the importance of the action trigger in their decision to act. In the questionnaires any average greater than 2 (slightly influential, see Table 7-2) was *confirmed,* as were all action triggers as their averages were 2.7 or greater.

Table 7-1. The Criteria Used to Classify the Evidence in the Interview and Questionnaire Studies.

Classification	Interviews	Questionnaire Averages
Confirmed	an *alternative action* was related to the action trigger	> 2
Indicated	any number of middle managers expressed the importance of the action trigger in their decision to act	
Unidentified	no middle managers identified this action trigger	

Table 7-2. Definitions of Questionnaire Ratings.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Slightly influential	Moderately influential	Considerably influential	Extremely influential

The questions for the interviews and questionnaires did not address every component of each action trigger. However, support of one component is equivalent to support for the entire action trigger. All of the components in each action trigger are closely related with common characteristics making them inseparable. The following explanations are provided under the assumption that the action trigger in its entirety is supported even when only one component of it may have been discussed or identified. Additionally, only the promotional actions identified in the questionnaire are discussed (as in Chapter 6). The next few sections discuss the evidence provided for each of the 16 action triggers.

7.2.1 Tangible Aspects of Position

The four action triggers in this category refer to tangible aspects of a middle manager's position. Table 7-3 shows the levels of evidence for these action triggers. The interviews did not provide *confirmatory* evidence for any of the action triggers, and one was *unidentified.* The questionnaires *confirmed* the existence of all four action triggers.

Table 7-3. The Evidentiary Support Provided by the Interviews and Questionnaires for the Tangible Action Triggers.

	Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support
Tangible Job Aspects	*Work Processes*	Indicated	Confirmed
	Knowledge & Skills	Indicated	Confirmed
	Workload & Responsibility	Indicated	Confirmed
	Working Conditions	Unidentified	Confirmed

Work Processes

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

The interview evidence indicating the existence of the *Work Processes* action trigger was unique as it pertained specifically to other middle managers. None of the interviewed middle managers claimed this was an issue personally, however, many insisted it was for 'others'. Seven middle managers were quite certain that others were strongly influenced by changes to their work processes, some negatively, some positively. Three middle managers even provided anecdotal evidence to support their opinions. The confirmatory evidence for this action trigger in the questionnaire study was provided with an average of 3.5.

The main component of this action trigger is the idea that middle managers will have to become conscious of the way they work (Band 1995; Kanter 1985; Oreg 2003), and recognise that old habits and routines are no longer appropriate if their work processes change (Kanter 1985). Four of the middle managers interviewed believed others get 'precious' about the way they do things, as they are habitual and deeply ingrained (O'Conner 1993; Pardo de Val & Fuentes 2003; Rumelt 1995; Trader-Leigh 2002) and they 'get funny' when things are changed (Mezias et al. 2001; Miller et al. 1994; Shields 1999; Spiker & Lesser 1995), and often prefer to keep the inefficient procedures they know (Dawson 1996) rather than save time in the long run.

The less popular topic in the literature of promotional actions being related to the change in routine work processes (Breu & Benwell 1999) action trigger was more

strongly supported. Firstly the middle managers interviewed suggested that some of the others may be encouraged by changes to the work processes to promote the change. Secondly, all 27 of the questionnaire respondents identified this as an influential action trigger in their decision to promote the change as well.

Knowledge and Skills

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

Six of middle managers discussed the *Knowledge and Skills* action trigger during the interviews to indicate support for its existence. The confirmatory evidence of the questionnaires was provided with an average of 2.9.

The *Knowledge and Skills* action trigger pertains to future competence (Kanter 1985) as change often requires new skills (Ashford 1988; Eitel 2004; McConville & Holden 1999). This action trigger is most often associated with hindering actions as middle managers are concerned with their future competence (Atkinson 2005; Band 1995; Moran & Brightman 2000; Savery & Luks 2000; Scandura et al. 2000; Stensaker et al. 2002). However, the middle managers interviewed were quite positive about the future and the changes requiring new skills and knowledge. They believed themselves capable of learning what was needed (Eby et al. 2000) and applying it in the future, no matter what position they occupied in the organisation (Doyle et al. 2000). Similarly, 24 of the 27 middle manager respondents to the questionnaires indicated the importance of this action trigger in their decision to act.

Workload and Responsibility

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

Nine of the middle managers discussed the *Workload and Responsibility* action trigger during the interviews to indicate its existence. The questionnaire provided confirmatory evidence of its existence with an average of 3.0.

The *Workload and Responsibility* action trigger most often refers to the fact that organisational change usually results in more work for middle managers (Buchanan et al. 1999; Burdett 1999; Doyle et al. 2000; Holden & Roberts 2004; Kanter 1985).

However, this action trigger also includes changes in responsibilities and control that a middle manager has (Kanter 1985). Three of the middle managers interviewed viewed the changes to their workload negatively as they required more work to be done in the same amount of time (Brockner 1992; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Saunders et al. 2002; Trader-Leigh 2002).

On the other hand, six of the middle managers viewed the changes to their workload and responsibilities positively (Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003; Pate et al. 2003; Senior 2000). Some of the middle managers were pleased as they believed the new variety of tasks (Brockner 1992) would allow them to learn more about other areas of the organisation. However, to cope with the increases, at least several of the middle managers were planning to pass along more tasks to the frontline managers. The questionnaire results showed that 26 of the 27 middle managers indicated that the changes to their workload and responsibilities influenced their decision to promote the change.

Working Conditions

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

The *Working conditions* action trigger was not identified as an important component of the change by the middle managers in the interviews. However, its existence was confirmed through the questionnaire study with an average of 2.7.

The largest component of this action trigger concerns rewards and incentives offered, or the lack of them, to encourage the change (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; Galpin 1996; Shields 1999; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005; Woodward & Hendry 2004). It also concerns the physical environment that the middle manager is expected to work in (Kets De Vries 1999; Porras & Hoffer 1986; Waddell & Sohal 1998). The latter was the focus of the questionnaire question, 21 of the 27 middle manager respondents indicated that changes to their working conditions (office space, etc.) influenced their decision to promote the change. This component of the action trigger had not been identified in the literature specifically as leading to promotional actions. However, working conditions also could have been interpreted as including rewards or recognition. When appropriately applied, reward structures

are likely to encourage promotional actions (Day 1999; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Hornsby et al. 2002).

7.2.2 Intangible Aspects of Position

The six action triggers in this category refer to the intangible aspects of a middle manager's position. Table 7-4 shows the support provided in the research for these action triggers. The interviews did not provide *confirmatory* evidence for any of the action triggers and four were *unidentified.* The questionnaires *confirmed* the existence of all six action triggers.

Table 7-4. The Evidentiary Support Provided by the Interviews and Questionnaires for the Intangible Action Triggers.

	Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support
Intangible Job Aspects	*Authority & Power*	Unidentified	Confirmed
	Respect & Status	Unidentified	Confirmed
	Comfort & Security	Indicated	Confirmed
	Career Opportunities	Indicated	Confirmed
	Individual Goals	Unidentified	Confirmed
	Alliances & Relationships	Unidentified	Confirmed

Authority and Power

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

The middle managers in the interviews did not identify the *Authority and Power* action trigger as an important component of the change. However, an average of 3.0 in the questionnaire study confirmed the existence of this action trigger.

The *Authority and Power* action trigger most often refers to the power and freedom middle managers believe they have. It is more commonly associated with hindering actions as changes that result in a decrease in a middle manager's power or authority will be viewed negatively (Edwards & Sohal 2003; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Hay & Hartel 2000; Kegan & Lahey 2001; Waddell & Sohal 1999). Many middle managers will do whatever they can to protect the power they have (Macri et al. 2002).

However, this action trigger may also encourage promotional actions, as 24 of the 27 middle managers identified in the questionnaires. Increasing middle managers' authority, power or freedom may result in promotional actions (Lundberg & Young 2001; Scandura et al. 2000) as may just allowing the middle managers to exercise their power and freedom to aid the implementation (Miller et al. 1994).

Respect and Status

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

The middle managers at Cini did not identify *Respect and Status* as important to them during the current major change. The questionnaires did confirm the existence of this action trigger with an average of 2.9.

This respect and status action trigger concerns the amount of respect or status middle managers believe they possess currently compared to what they expect to possess after the change is implemented. Middle managers are not going to support a program in which they lose the respect of other middle managers (Band 1995). Likewise if a threat is perceived of a middle manager's status (Edwards & Sohal 2003; Fenton-O'Creevy 1996; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Kanter 1985; Maurer 1996b; Proctor & Doukakis 2003; Ragsdell 2000; Trader-Leigh 2002).

In regards to the questionnaires, 24 of the 27 middle managers identified the changes to their respect and status as influential to their decision to promote the change. Little literature focuses on this action trigger as being promotional however, a change that has the potential to hurt a middle manager but doesn't may be enough to encourage a promotional action.

Comfort and Security

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

In the interviews the middle managers indicated that the *Comfort and Security* action trigger did exist. An average of 2.7 in the questionnaires confirmed the existence of this action trigger.

This comfort and security action trigger most often involves the level of security middle managers believe exists for their current positions (Atkinson 2005; Hay & Hartel 2000; Kets De Vries 1999; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Maurer 1996a; Trader-Leigh 2002; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005; Waddell & Sohal 1999; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000). Three of the middle managers interviewed were somewhat concerned with the possibility of losing their job, which is not uncommon (Eby et al. 2000; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Maurer 1996b; Mezias et al. 2001; Savery & Luks 2000; Scandura et al. 2000). Three of the middle managers were not concerned at present, but were a bit worried about future possibilities of losing their jobs as rounds of layoffs are common and often increase middle managers' discomfort (Ashforth & Mael 1998; Brockner 1992; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Ghoshal & Bartlett 2000; Holden & Roberts 2004; Jorgeson et al. 2003).

Three of the middle managers interviewed were completely comfortable with their position and had no concerns about losing their jobs at all. However, seven of the middle managers believed that others (including other middle managers) needed to comply with what was requested of them for the change, or risk losing their job. They believed that the change was only going ahead because the other middle managers believed anything but compliance would equal termination which may result in fewer hindering actions, however, this type of compliance is artificial (Ogbonna & Wilkinson 2003; Pate et al. 2003).

This action trigger also includes the issue of coworkers and valued employees being forced out of the organisation (Marks & De Meuse 2005). One middle manager had a friend who had been with Cini for over 25 years and was asked to leave due to the recent changes. The middle manager interviewed was slightly un*comfort*able with this as all Cini employees generally believed that good performance and long service would lead to job security (Jackson & Humble 1994).

Again there is limited support in the literature for the promotional actions influenced by this action trigger. Of the 27 middle manager respondents to the questionnaire, 22 indicated that comfort and security were influential in their decision to act. As uncertainty about their positions may increase the likelihood of hindering actions, certainty may increase the likelihood of promotional actions;

middle managers that know their positions or others' are not at risk will be more likely to promote the change. However, the organisation must be trusted for these claims to be believed (Doyle et al. 2000; Eby et al. 2000; Huy 2002; Maurer 2000; Miller et al. 1994).

Career Opportunities

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

Existence of the *Career Opportunities* action trigger was indicated in the interviews. The existence of this action trigger was confirmed in the questionnaire study with an average of 3.1.

This action trigger includes the opportunities available for middle manager career progression. The current trend is to develop leaner, flatter organisations through elimination of hierarchical levels (Balogun 2003) which removes avenues of progression for middle managers (Brockner 1992; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Newell & Dopson 1996). However, in the case of the Cini change five of the middle managers believed that the change would be offering new opportunities. A change that provides middle managers promotions (Ragsdell 2000) or increased opportunities for advancement (Staehle & Schirmer 1992) will be viewed positively (Kets De Vries 1999; Ragsdell 2000) and possibly result in promotional actions. Two of the middle managers were personally excited by the expected advancement prospects, as were 23 of the middle managers who responded to the questionnaire. Two of the middle managers interviewed were not personally interested in advancement but knew others that were. However, one middle manager didn't believe the new opportunities were enough to encourage support from most of the middle managers.

Individual Goals

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

Individual Goals is another unidentified action trigger in the interviews. Confirmatory evidence for this action trigger was provided with an average of 3.1 in the questionnaire study.

Individual Goals includes all of a middle manager's personal goals apart from career progression. Changes that block or conflict with personal goals may result in hindering actions being performed (Lundberg & Young 2001; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Moran & Brightman 2000; Petrini & Hultman 1995). Even though it is not specified in the literature, the opposite should be true as well. Organisations that alter conditions to increase the chances of a middle manager achieving personal goals are more likely to be promoted. The questionnaire analysis showed that 22 of the 27 middle managers indicate that this action trigger was influential in their decision to promote the change.

Alliances and Working Relationships

Interview Evidence: Unidentified

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

Alliances and Working Relationships was yet another unidentified action trigger in the middle manager interviews. However, its existence was confirmed by the average of 3.6 in the questionnaires.

This action trigger includes alliances and other working relationships that may be affected by the change. Many middle managers have learned how best to work with the people around them (Maurer 1997). A change that diminishes the value of these relationships will most likely be viewed negatively (Kets De Vries 1999; Marks & De Meuse 2005; Vakola & Nikolaou 2005). Even though it is not specified in the literature. Changes that increase the value of these relationships or present opportunities to expand their contact group may trigger promotional actions. The support by 26 of the 27 middle manager respondents to the questionnaires indicated that changes impacting their alliances and working relationships were influential in their decision to promote the change.

7.2.3 Change Plan

The five action triggers in this category refer to the change plan itself. The levels of evidence provided for these action triggers are shown in Table 7-5. The interviews provided *confirmatory* evidence for two of the action triggers and indicated the

existence of the other three. The questionnaires *confirmed* the existence of all five action triggers.

Table 7-5. The Evidentiary Support Provided by the Interviews and Questionnaires for the Change Plan Action Triggers.

	Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support
Change Plan	*Need for Change*	Indicated	Confirmed
	Goals of Change	Confirmed	Confirmed
	Design of Plan	Confirmed	Confirmed
	Leaders of Change	Indicated	Confirmed
	Senior Support	Indicated	Confirmed

Need for Change

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

Support for the *Need for Change* action trigger was indicated in the interview study. The questionnaires confirmed its existence with an average of 3.6.

The *Need for Change* action trigger involves understanding that the need for change is real (Armenakis et al. 1999; Mezias et al. 2001; Molinsky 1999; Moran & Brightman 2000; O'Conner 1993; Oxtoby et al. 2002; Petrini & Hultman 1995; Savery & Luks 2000) This need is made obvious by showing the discrepancy between the current operating position and the desired operating position (Allen-Meyer 2001; Armenakis & Harris 2002; Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Fletcher & Taplin 2002; Galpin 1996; Jorgeson et al. 2003; Rumelt 1995; Saunders et al. 2002). Nine of middle managers in the interviews believed that there was a valid need for the organisation to change. However, three of the middle managers in the interviews did not completely understand why change was needed, but were sure that those in charge were acting responsibly. This "blind faith" concerned some of the other middle managers who didn't believe you could fully support a program without fully understanding the need. Only after middle managers understand the need for the change will they be able to promote it (Proctor & Doukakis 2003).

Middle managers who disagree with the need for change (Coghlan 1993) may choose to hinder the change (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979; Senior 2000). Assuming that the opposite of this is true, understanding the need for change could explain why 24 of the 27 middle manager respondents to the questionnaire identified the need for change as influential in their decisions to promote the change.

Goals of Change

Interviews: Confirmed

Questionnaire Research: Confirmed

Identification in the interview study of an *alternative action* confirmed the existence of the *Goals of Change* action trigger. This action trigger's existence was also confirmed in the questionnaire study with an average of 3.8.

The action trigger, *Goals of Change*, are crucial as they identify exactly *what* the organisation is attempting to achieve as a result of the major change (Saunders et al. 2002; Scandura et al. 2000; Senior 2000; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). The hindering action associated with this action trigger was performed (by not holding weekly team talks) because it was not seen to be in the best interest of the warehouse. They believed it was an inappropriate goal as it would not benefit the warehouse as the plan designers believed it would. This disagreement with this goal of the change was enough to result in a hindering action (Bashein & Markus 1994; Kotter 1995; O'Conner 1993; Pardo de Val & Fuentes 2003; Proctor & Doukakis 2003; Shields 1999; Taplin 2001; Tessler 1989; Trader-Leigh 2002). Three of the other middle managers in the interviews expressed some disagreement with the goals for the warehouse, but were going to wait and see the results before making any decision to act *alternatively*.

While four of the middle managers believed that the warehouse would benefit from the change, most of the positive comments were in relation to the benefit of the change for the organisation. This agreement with the goals for the organisation meant these middle managers were more likely to promote the change (Oxtoby 1994; Young 2000). Agreement with the goals of the change influenced 26 of the 27 middle manager respondents to the questionnaire in their decision to promote the change.

Design of Plan

Interview Evidence: Confirmed

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

Two *alternative actions* were identified in the interview study confirming the existence of the *Design of Plan* action trigger. This action trigger's existence was also confirmed in the questionnaire study with an average of 3.2.

The *Design of Plan* includes the overall appropriateness of the plan for change (Burdett 1999; Petrini & Hultman 1995) and the belief that it is possible to achieve what is proposed (O'Conner 1993; Petrini & Hultman 1995). It includes all aspects of the change plan: the logic, order and methods of change as well as the fairness and complexity of the plan. All of the middle managers discussed at least one of the components of this action trigger. The two most important aspects of concern were the agreement with methods and information provided.

The middle managers interviewed had two main concerns with the methods being used to implement the change; the speed of change and the input from lower levels of the organisation. The expectations of middle managers regarding these methods' influence is a major component of this action trigger (Armenakis et al. 1999; Band 1995; Buchanan et al. 1999; Kets De Vries 1999; Wooldridge & Floyd 1990). Eight of the middle managers had reservations about the speed of change. Two thought the changes were being implemented too slowly, but six thought they were being pushed too quickly, however, all of these managers disagreed with the speed and were not convinced that the current approach was the right approach (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Eby et al. 2000; Moran & Brightman 2000).

Two of the three hindering actions identified in the interviews were associated with the methods employed as well. The first hindering action related to the picking of budgie seeds. Quinn believed that the process for determining the development of the new method of picking the seeds had been mishandled (Petrini & Hultman 1995). Quinn had intended to perform an independent risk assessment of the process regardless of manager approval because the approach used had been faulty (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Eby et al. 2000; Moran & Brightman 2000)

The second hindering action had not yet been performed by the Site B middle managers. The middle managers disagreed with the way a portion of the change was to be implemented. They believed it was 'stupid' and explained to senior management that it wasn't a necessary part of the change (Burdett 1999). Four of the middle managers believed (and were reassured) that the senior design team was incorporating some of the middle manager feedback (Burdett 1999).

The second aspect of this action trigger that the middle managers discussed related to the information provided regarding the change. The middle managers believed they had been provided with adequate information about the change at the beginning. However, they were concerned that the information they were receiving wasn't complete. Middle managers are not going to support a plan that they don't fully understand or have complete information for (Mabin et al. 2001; Maurer 2000; Miller et al. 1994; Newell & Dopson 1996; Piasecka 2001; Reger et al. 1994; Shields 1999; Waddell & Sohal 1999). Four of the middle managers were concerned with the methods of relaying information (mostly by e-mail) and through the hierarchical chain. The way in which the plan is presented to middle managers is quite influential in how the middle managers may choose to act (Allen-Meyer 2001; Coghlan 1993; Edwards & Sohal 2003; Kabanoff et al. 1995; Kanter 1985). Using the hierarchical network to relay information may cause middle managers to assume that part of the plan is to keep them out of the loop (Proctor & Doukakis 2003).

While all of the comments regarding the agreement with methods and information provided tended to be negative this action trigger may also lead to promotional actions being performed as well. Twenty six of the 27 middle manager questionnaire respondents indicated that the Design of the Plan was influential in their decision to promote the change. However, it was not clear if the middle managers agreed specifically with the logical and appropriate methods of the plan (Armenakis & Harris 2002), the fairness of the plan (Cardy et al. 2000; Saunders et al. 2002), the information provided or all of these different aspects.

Leaders of Change

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

The interviews with the middle managers of Cini indicated existence of this action trigger, *Leaders of Change*. The questionnaire provided confirmatory evidence of the existence of this action trigger with a 3.1 average.

The *Leaders of Change* action trigger concerns the competence of and confidence in those designing and implementing the change (O'Conner 1993). The middle managers interviewed all believed that the CEO was the instigator for all of the changes and only the senior members of the organisation were involved in the designing and planning of the change. While the support for this group varied, there were four middle managers that had begun to question the change leaders' abilities. It was not necessarily poor leadership abilities making the middle managers less inclined to cooperate with the change leaders (Nadler & Tushman 1989; Reichers et al. 1997; Stensaker et al. 2002; Waddell & Sohal 1998), but more so an issue of trusting those responsible for the design of the plan (Doyle et al. 2000; Eby et al. 2000; Huy 2002; Maurer 2000; Miller et al. 1994). These middle managers were questioning the abilities of the senior managers to understand the lower levels of the organisation and commitment to the middle managers' interests (Taplin 2003; Wanous et al. 2000)

There were however, four middle managers that did trust the change leaders. These interviewed middle managers believed that the leaders were setting an example of how they wanted others to act (Armenakis et al. 1999; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000). They also trusted in the leadership styles and competence of the middle managers as did many of the middle manager respondents to the questionnaire. This faith in the leaders of the change was enough to influence 25 of the 27 respondents to the questionnaire to promote the change (Buchanan et al. 1999; Oxtoby et al. 2002; Scandura et al. 2000; Waclawski 2002).

Senior Support

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

As the perceived leader and designer of the change was the CEO, Cini middle managers did not perceive any differentiation between the designers, leaders and senior supporters. Thus the interviews with the middle managers of Cini indicated the existence of this action trigger, *Senior Support,* as well as the Leaders of Change action trigger previously. Additionally, the questionnaires provided confirmation of the existence of this action trigger with a 3.8 average.

The *Senior Support* action trigger includes perception of support from the senior level of the organisation throughout the change process. The middle managers interviewed at Cini all believed that the senior level of the organisation was driving the change meaning their support and commitment were very visible (Beer & Eisenstat 1990; Doyle et al. 2000; Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; Mezias et al. 2001; Oxtoby et al. 2002; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Thornhill et al. 1997; Woodward & Hendry 2004) and wasn't just verbal acknowledgement but their actions that indicated this (Balogun 2003; Huy 2002; Stace & Dunphy 2001; Trader-Leigh 2002). This demonstration of senior support was also a factor in 26 of the 27 middle manager questionnaire respondents' decisions to promote the change (Armenakis et al. 1999; Eby et al. 2000; Galpin 1996; Kotter 1995; Scandura et al. 2000; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000).

7.2.4 Peer Influence

This category consists of the single action trigger, peer influence. The support for this trigger is shown in Table 7-6. The interviews did not provide *confirmatory* evidence for this action triggers, but the questionnaires *did.*

Table 7-6. The Evidentiary Support Provided by the Interviews and Questionnaires for the Peer Influence Action Trigger.

Peer Influence	Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support
	Peer Influence	Indicated	Confirmed

Interview Evidence: Indicated

Questionnaire Evidence: Confirmed

This action trigger was indicated to exist in the middle manager interviews. None of the middle managers admitted directly to being influenced by their peers. Three adamantly denied it, explaining that they were more than capable to make up their own minds. However, during the course of the interviews, two middle managers described occasions where their peers had influenced their opinions. *Peer Influence* was confirmed as an action trigger with an average of 2.9 in the questionnaires.

Peer Influence refers to the ideas that people in a group act alike (Huy 2002; Rumelt 1995). While the middle managers interviewed didn't believe they were influenced by their peers, later stories indicated that they occasionally were influenced by coworkers (Brockner 1992). Twenty four of the 27 middle manager respondents to the questionnaires were influenced by their peers in choosing to promote the change. However, it was not clear whether this influence was due to peer group pressure (Kotter & Schlesinger 1979) or an exchange and discussion of ideas and reasoning (Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Mezias et al. 2001).

7.2.5 Summary

The above sections show how each of the 16 action triggers were supported by Studies Two and Three. While Study Two only confirmed the existence of two of the action triggers, it indicated the existence of nine others. The middle managers interviewed knew that the study was investigating the aspects of change that influenced their decisions to act during the change they were experiencing. They were asked to discuss each aspect that was influential in their decision making process. While few *alternative actions* had been performed at the time of the interviews, their comments indicated that changes to some of the action triggers could have resulted in more *alternative actions* being performed in the future, and not necessarily only hindering actions. There were several action triggers that the middle managers had felt very positively about at the time of the interviews, which could have resulted in future promotional actions.

The questionnaire results confirmed the existence of all 16 action triggers and their influence in the decision to perform promotional actions. While the majority of the literature focuses on the hindering actions performed during organisational change, there was some support for the promotional actions to be influenced by the 16

action triggers as well. The next section describes how these 16 action triggers comprise a more comprehensive list than previous related works.

7.3 Action Trigger Comprehensiveness

The above sections confirm the existence of the 16 action triggers. These 16 action triggers provide a more comprehensive list than those found in previous literature. Most of the texts in which these 'action triggers' (the term action triggers is unique to this research) were identified focused on other topics (e.g. Allen-Meyer 2001; Armenakis & Harris 2002; Buchanan et al. 1999; Lundberg & Young 2001; Mezias & Starbuck 2003; Piasecka 2001; Spiker & Lesser 1995; Victor & Franckeiss 2002). One of the most common topics in the previous literature associated with organisational change has been resistance, by identifying it or suggesting how to 'get rid' of it (Band 1995; Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Mabin et al 2001; Maurer 1996, 1997, 1998; Petrini & Hultman 1995; Trader-Leigh 2002; Waddell & Sohal 1998). The previous literature did not focus on the action triggers that may cause the resistance or promotional actions. Additionally, many of the texts examined for the content analysis in Study One focused on a small number of 'action triggers' e.g. (Folger & Skarlicki 1999; Saunder et al. 2002; Thornhill et al. 1997; Tierney 1999; Wiesenfeld et al. 2000).

There is a limited number of works that have included a large number of action triggers. However, some of them study the action triggers for overall organisational actions, such as Rumelt (1995) and Pardo de Val & Fuentes (2003). Few authors have focused on numerous action triggers related to *individual* actions. Of the literature concerning individual actions, much of it is not recently published and is presented as a list of 'reasons people resist (or reject) change'. These lists are compiled mainly from the observation of individuals acting within organisations experiencing major change, not empirical studies:

- Kotter & Schlesinger 1979,
- Kanter 1985,
- O'Conner 1993,
- Petrini & Hultman 1995 and
- Burdett 1999.

However, two studies did identify their action triggers empirically:

- Fenton-O'Creevy 1998
- Trader-Leigh 2002.

While these seven texts are the more 'complete' works in the existing literature (see Appendix XI) each only identified between five and ten items. However, in combining the items identified in these previous related works, support for most of the action triggers from the current research was provided, as shown in Table 7-8. The codes shown in Table 7-7 were used to show what related work had an item corresponding to the current work's action triggers. A more detailed description of the items identified and their correspondence to the current study's action triggers is provided in Appendix XI.

Table 7-7. The Codes of Related Works Identifying Items Used to Provide Support for the Action Triggers of the Current Research.

Code	Authors of Related Work
S	Kotter Schlesinger (1979)
K	Kanter (1985)
O	O'Conner (1993)
P	Petrini and Hultman 1995
F	Fenton-O'Creevy 1998
B	Burdett 1999
T	Trader-Leigh 2002

One of the eight items identified by Burdett (1999) was *Resent arrogance and exploitation.* Even though this item was quite specific, it did not correspond to any action trigger's definition as determined in the categorisation process of Study One (Appendix XI). Many of the other *more complete works* also had items that did not correspond to action triggers (Fenton-O'Creevy 1998; Kotter and & Schlesinger's 1979; Petrini & Hultman 1995; Trader-Leigh 2002).

None of these seven texts identified action triggers from all four categories identified in the current study and two identified items corresponding with the *Change Plan* category only (O'Conner 1993; Petrini & Hultman 1995). Two of the other related works had action triggers in more than one category but were still

concentrated heavily in the change category (Burdett 1999; Fenton-O'Creevy 1998).

Table 7-8. The Number of Items Identified in Previous Related Work Corresponding to the Current Research's Action Triggers.

Category	Action Trigger	Items Corresponding
Tangible Aspects of Position	*Work Processes*	S
	Knowledge & Skills	B, S, K
	Workload & Responsibility	K, B
	Working Conditions	F
Intangible Aspects of Position	*Authority & Power*	K, T
	Respect & Status	K
	Comfort & Security	F
	Career Opportunities	F
	Individual Goals	*None*
	Alliances & Working Relationships	*None*
Change Plan	*Need for Change*	P, O, O
	Goals of Change	S, O
	Design of Plan	P, P, K, O, F, B, B, B, B
	Leaders of Change	B, O
	Senior Support	F
Peer Influence	*Peer Influence*	S

Besides over-representing a single category of action triggers, some of the related works also over-represented a single action trigger. Four of Burdett's seven reasons for resistance not only corresponded with the *Change Plan* category, but with the *Design of Plan* action trigger. Another example was O'Conner's (1993) *Lack of belief that there is a serious need for change* and *Different descriptions of the need for change*, both related to the *Need for Change* action trigger. Petrini and Hultman (1995) also had two items correspond to the *Design of Plan* action trigger.

There were also two instances where a single item identified in one of the works corresponded with two separate action triggers. The first was Fenton-O'Creevy (1998) which combined the possibilities of job promotion and loss into a single item. Job promotion opportunities relate to the action trigger *Career Opportunities* while job loss relates to the action trigger *Comfort and Security*. As the definitions

provided with these items were quite clear and specific, they were able to support the relevant action triggers. The other instance of a single item relating to two action trigger was Burdett's (1999) *Complexity and workload are overwhelming.* This item corresponded with both the *Design of the Plan* action trigger in relation to the complexity of the change, and the *Workload and Responsibility* action trigger with regards to the overwhelming workload.

As shown in Table 7-8, there is the greatest correspondence between the items of the related texts and the *Change Plan* category of action triggers. The related texts also provide support for all but two of the action triggers, *Individual Goal* and *Alliances and Relationship.* As all 16 of the action triggers had been proven to exist through the research of Studies Two and Three, this comparison to the seven other related works indicates that the list of 16 action triggers is much more comprehensive than previous related works. However, as indicated in the research, not all 16 action triggers may be influential in any one specific change situation. The next section further discusses the influence of the action triggers in relation to the type of change.

7.4 Action Triggers Situation Specific Influence

The action triggers identified in this research may be situation specific. The existence of two action triggers was confirmed by the middle manager interviews while the existence of nine others was only indicated, and five were unidentified. The questionnaires of Study Three confirmed the existence of all 16 action triggers, however, the range of influence of each action trigger varied greatly, as did the types of change that the managers experienced. There are two ways to interpret these results. The first is to assume that some action triggers are more important than others. However, an alternative explanation is that only a subset of action triggers are influential in any specific change situation.

7.4.1 Types of Change

All of the middle managers at Cini were experiencing the same major change initiative. This did not mean that all of the middle managers were affected in the same way. A variety of middle managers types had been interviewed (Site, Day, Afternoon, Systems, Despatch, Receiving, Office etc.). Some of these middle

managers were more affected by the variety of changes being implemented than others (i.e changes to product id codes were going to have a greater impact on the Receiving manager than the Office manager). In effect, this meant that the middle managers interviewed were not all experiencing the same type of change.

The different types of changes experienced by the middle manager questionnaire respondents were more obvious. The middle managers had been asked to briefly describe the change that they most recently experienced. The answers to this question showed that the 26 middle managers who responded to the question described 25 very different and unrelated changes (A more detailed summary of these changes was provided in Chapter 6).

Twelve of the middle managers had experienced structural change, eight of the middle managers had experienced the re-engineering of processes, one middle manager experienced both structural and re-engineering changes and five of the middle managers had experienced changes relating neither to structural changes nor changes due to the re-engineering of processes.

All of these varied changes served to show that the action triggers of influence in a middle manager's decision to act were change dependent. Further explanation of this is shown in the following sections.

7.4.2 Classification of Research Results

Five action triggers (Working Conditions, Authority and Power, Respect and Status, Alliances and Relationships and Individual Goals) were not discussed by any of the middle managers in Study Two. However, in the questionnaires these action triggers had average ratings greater than 2.5 (between slightly influential and moderately influential, Table 7-9); of 2.7, 3.0, 2.9, 3.6, 3.1 respectively. Alliances and relationships, in fact, received one of the highest ratings (3.6) of all action triggers in the questionnaires but was not mentioned in the middle manager interviews.

Besides contrasting with the results of the interviews, the questionnaires showed that the importance for each action trigger varied greatly. The range of ratings was

between 1 and 5 for 13 of the 16 action triggers (one had no 1 rating, one no 3 and another no 5, Table 7-9). This range of ratings meant that for most of the action triggers there was at least one instance where it was not influential (1) in the decision to act *alternatively*. This would indicate that the action triggers of influence to middle managers may very likely be related to the *type* of change being experienced (Eby et al. 2000; Pardo de Val & Fuentes 2003; Worrall et al. 2004).

Table 7-9. Definitions of Ratings for Action Triggers' Influence Used in the Questionnaires for Study Three.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Slightly influential	Moderately influential	Considerably influential	Extremely influential

A further comparison of the interview and questionnaire results as well as further questionnaire results are provided below.

The original classifications of the data (as used in Chapters 5 and 6) were used to show how the differences between the action triggers show how different types of change may result in a subset of action triggers being influential. Table 7-10 shows how these labels were applied to the evidence obtained in Studies Two and Three.

Insignificant - None or one middle manager interviewed described how this action trigger was influential in the decision to act, further research would be necessary to determine its existence

OR Questionnaire evidence provided none to little support for the existence of this action trigger

Moderate - A few to a number (2-6) middle managers interviewed described how this action trigger was influential in their decisions to act

OR Questionnaire evidence shows that the action trigger exists, however, the average rating indicates it is only slightly influential across many types of major change implementations or is quite influential, but only for certain types of major change implementations

Substantial – Most to all (7-10) middle managers interviewed described how this action trigger was influential in their decisions to act

OR Questionnaire evidence shows that the action trigger exists and the average rating indicates it is quite influential across many types of change implementations

Table 7-10. The Criteria Used to Label the Evidence from the Interview and Questionnaire Studies.

	Interviews Number of Respondents		**Questionnaires** Averages
Minimal	0, 1		< 1.5
Moderate	Few Several	2, 3	≥ 1.5 < 3.5
	Some Number	4, 5, 6	
Substantial	Most Many	7, 8, 9	≥ 3.5 ≤ 5
	All	10	

Table 7-11 organises the 16 action triggers by the levels of support identified in the interviews and questionnaires. Three action triggers were substantially supported by both studies. Five action triggers were substantially supported by one study and moderately supported by the other. One action trigger was substantially supported by the questionnaire study and insignificantly supported by the interview study. Three action triggers were moderately supported by both studies and four were moderately supported by the questionnaire study but insignificantly supported by the interviews.

The five levels of combined support (Table 7-11) are described in the next sections. The results for the action triggers in each of these levels are examined. This examination shows how the action triggers of influence vary with the type of change being experienced.

Table 7-11. Action Triggers Ordered by Level of Support.

Combined Support	Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support	Category
Two Substantial Levels of Support	*Need for Change*	Substantial	Substantial	Change Plan
	Goals of Change	Substantial	Substantial	Change Plan
	Senior Support	Substantial	Substantial	Change Plan
One Substantial Level, One Moderate Level of Support	*Work Processes*	Moderate	Substantial	Tangible
	Workload & Responsibility	Substantial	Moderate	Tangible
	Comfort & Security	Substantial	Moderate	Intangible
	Design of Plan	Substantial	Moderate	Change Plan
	Leaders of Change	Substantial	Moderate	Change Plan
One Substantial Level, One Insignificant Level of Support	*Alliances & Relationships*	Insignificant	Substantial	Intangible
Two Moderate Levels of Support	*Knowledge & Skills*	Moderate	Moderate	Tangible
	Career Opportunities	Moderate	Moderate	Intangible
	Peer Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Peer Influence
One Moderate Level, One Insignificant Level of Support	*Working Conditions*	Insignificant	Moderate	Tangible
	Authority & Power	Insignificant	Moderate	Intangible
	Respect & Status	Insignificant	Moderate	Intangible
	Individual Goals	Insignificant	Moderate	Intangible

Two Substantial Levels of Support

Three action triggers, *Need for Change*, *Goals of Change* and *Senior Support*, were substantially supported by both the interview and questionnaire studies, Table 7-12. These action triggers were all mentioned by many of the middle managers in the interviews and the questionnaire rating averages were all greater than 3.5. All three of these action triggers had a range of responses of 1 to 5 (Table 7-9) meaning it was slightly influential or not at all for a number of the middle managers. However, more than half of the responses to the questionnaires identified a level of influence at 4 or 5, and were mentioned by most middle managers. These results indicate that these action triggers are (perhaps of strong influence when important but) not always influential (as there were rating 1 responses) in a middle manager's decision to act.

Table 7-12. Action Triggers With Two Substantial Levels of Support.

Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support	Category
Need for Change	Substantial	Substantial	Change Plan
Goals of Change	Substantial	Substantial	Change Plan
Senior Support	Substantial	Substantial	Change Plan

One Substantial Level and One Moderate Level of Support

Five action triggers were substantially supported by one study and moderately supported by the other, Table 7-13. The first of these action triggers, *Work Processes*, was mentioned by many middle managers in the interviews, but only as it pertained to others. None of the middle managers believed this was an important action trigger for themselves personally. *Work Processes* did however average a rating greater than 3.5 in the questionnaires. The rating of 1 (Table 7-9), *not at all influential*, was never assigned to this action trigger, but the other ratings all were.

Table 7-13. Action Triggers With One Substantial Level and One Moderate Level of Support.

Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support	Category
Work Processes	Moderate	Substantial	Tangible
Workload & Responsibility	Substantial	Moderate	Tangible
Comfort & Security	Substantial	Moderate	Intangible
Design of Plan	Substantial	Moderate	Change Plan
Leaders of Change	Substantial	Moderate	Change Plan

With regards to *Work Processes* the questionnaires show the importance of this action trigger across *all* types of change experienced, but the interviews do not (not influential personally for middle managers), indicating this action trigger may be situation specific as well.

The other four action triggers in this combined support level (*Workload & Responsibility, Comfort & Security, Design of Plan* and *Leaders of Change)* were substantially supported by the interviews and moderately by the questionnaires (Table 7-10). All of these action triggers were mentioned by most of the middle managers in the interviews, but had a full range of responses (Table 7-9) provided in the questionnaires (except for *Workload & Responsibility* which had no 5 rating responses). Again these results indicated the action triggers' influence varied across change types and was situation specific.

<u>One Substantial Level and One Insignificant Level of Support</u>

One action trigger, *Alliances & Relationships,* was substantially supported by the questionnaire study and insignificantly supported by the interview study, Table 7-14. This is an obvious example of how an action trigger may be situation specific. None of the middle managers interviewed thought it was influential in their decision to act, while many of the questionnaire respondents did. The range again included 1 to 5 rating responses (Table 7-9) indicating the situation specific nature of the action trigger.

Table 7-14. Action Trigger With One Substantial Level and One Insignificant Level of Support.

Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support	Category
Alliances & Relationships	Insignificant	Substantial	Intangible

Two Moderate Levels of Support

Three action triggers, *Knowledge & Skills, Career Opportunities and Peer Influence,* were moderately supported by both studies, Table 7-15. These action triggers were discussed by about half of the middle managers as being influential in their decision to act, but not by the other half. The responses to the questionnaires included all 5 rating levels (Table 7-9). These results show that these three action triggers were not influential in every change situation.

Table 7-15. Action Triggers With Two Moderate Levels of Support.

Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support	Category
Knowledge & Skills	Moderate	Moderate	Tangible
Career Opportunities	Moderate	Moderate	Intangible
Peer Influence	Moderate	Moderate	Peer Influence

One Moderate Level and One Insignificant Level of Support

Four action triggers were moderately supported by the questionnaire study but insignificantly supported by the interviews, Table 7-16. None of these action triggers were mentioned by any of the middle managers in the interviews as influential to their decisions to act. All of these action triggers had responses across the rating range of 1 to 5. These results show that the action triggers are not influential in every change (certainly not those at Cini) but are for other types, making them situation specific.

Table 7-16. Action Triggers With One Moderate Level and One Insignificant Level of Support.

Action Trigger	Interview Support	Questionnaire Support	Category
Working Conditions	Insignificant	Moderate	Tangible
Authority & Power	Insignificant	Moderate	Intangible
Respect & Status	Insignificant	Moderate	Intangible
Individual Goals	Insignificant	Moderate	Intangible

7.4.3 Summary

The above sections serve to show how a comparison of the response rates indicates that the action triggers are situation specific. The middle managers interviewed and responding to the questionnaire did not all experience the same type of change. The changes and impact on most middle managers was unique (some of the Cini managers would have experienced very similar changes). This uniqueness helped to explain the great range of responses regarding the influence of the individual action triggers. All middle managers interviewed never made the same comments regarding the same action triggers, nor did the questionnaire respondents all indicate the same level of influence for a single action trigger. This indicated that the action triggers are situation specific. The situation may not only related to the type of the change, but the stage of the change. As change is such a complicated and lengthy process, separate portions of the same program may provide opportunities for different action triggers to be influential at different times (Pardo de Val & Fuentes 2003). While the situation specific nature of the action triggers explained why not all middle managers identified all action triggers as influential, it does not explain why there were so few hindering actions identified.

7.5 Identification of Hindering Actions

Only three hindering *alternative actions* were identified in the interviews with the ten Cini managers. These managers were not restricted to one each, but were able to discuss as many as appropriate. While all 27 middle manager questionnaire respondents identified a promotional action only three identified a hindering action that had been performed. While some evidence has begun to appear that shows middle managers may not be as resistant as often portrayed in the literature

(Balogun 2003; Davis & Fisher 2002; Fenton-O'Creevy 2001; Woodward & Hendry 2004), the majority of the literature focuses on the many hindering actions for which middle managers are often responsible. This larger segment of literature implies that almost all middle managers will perform several hindering actions for each change they are implementing (Balogun 2003; Fenton-O'Creevy 96, 98; Huy 2002; Jackson & Humble 1994; Staehle & Schirmer 1992; Watad & Will 2003). This expected popularity of hindering actions was not identified in the current research as only three hindering actions were identified in each of the interview and questionnaire studies. Thus, the clarification interviews at the end of study Three (with three middle managers who had completed the questionnaires) were designed to explain this lack of hindering responses.

7.5.1 Questionnaire Design

The three middle managers from the clarification study all agreed that a differently designed questionnaire would have been more appropriate. The long checklist approach was not suitable for the topic, nor was the ordering of the main questions (promotional before hindering). The checklist approach (Appendix 8) required too much coordination between the idea, rating and recording of the answer (according to the middle managers interviewed) and was very long and intimidating looking. The middle managers also noticed that the main promotional question (Section B, Appendix 8) was presented before the main hindering question (Section C). This had been the case for all of the questionnaires distributed. The middle managers believed that the others probably thought you could only choose one and answered the first (promotional) or thought the second hindering question looked too much like the first and didn't bother to complete it. These aspects alone would have greatly reduced the number of hindering responses identified. However, there were still the issues of the 'good employee' and insignificant actions.

7.5.2 Middle Managers' Focus on the 'Positives'

The three middle managers interviewed believed that most middle managers would attempt to hinder organizational change in small ways. However, most middle managers want to portray themselves as 'good employees'.

Hindering actions may not have been identified as such as they were only 'insignificant'. In comparison to how the literature and anecdotal evidence describes hindering actions (mainly as obvious resistance) the hindering actions that were possibly performed by participants in this research may have been viewed as insignificant (Balogun 2003; Davis & Fisher 2002). These hindering actions may have also been considered insignificant in the whole scheme of things. Middle managers wanting keep their 'good' reputation might have just glossed over these actions and focused only on the more 'major' promotional actions they performed. This desire to appear 'good' may have meant that any hindering actions could also be explained in terms of how it was beneficial to the organisation. Instead of identifying hindering actions as such (hindering the implementation of a poorly designed component), middle managers responding to the questionnaires may have considered them promotional actions, as the actions they performed were in the best interest of the organisation (trying to save time and money that would be wasted if poor component was implemented). The middle managers interviewed in the clarification study were asked if the questionnaire encouraged the above emphasis of the positive, as explained in the next section.

The questionnaire essentially asked respondents to critically analyse their hindering actions, which they couldn't (didn't perform any) or wouldn't ('good employee' or considered insignificant) do, resulting in an over-representative amount of promotional actions being identified (Waddell & Sohal 1999). However, the middle managers interviewed provided several suggestions for more appropriate questionnaire designs in the future. They involved simplifying the responses required of the respondents and, including more change specific and open-ended questions. The middle managers believed that these changes would garner more accurate *alternative action* descriptions.

7.6 Summary

The development of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model and three subsequent exploratory studies provided new insight and interpretation regarding the influences on middle managers' actions. This research identified 16 action triggers in four categories that influence middle managers' actions during major organisational

change. These action triggers will determine whether middle managers perform *alternative actions* or compliant actions during the change. However, not all 16 of these action triggers will be influential in every major change initiative. Rather the action triggers are situation specific. While the literature portrays these action triggers to mostly influence middle managers to perform hindering actions, this was not shown in the results of the current research. The clarification interviews showed that the questionnaire design was prohibitive and that middle managers naturally tend to emphasise the positives. The next chapter discusses how the information about the action triggers and increased ability to identify hindering actions may be used to help practitioners develop better organisational change programs.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The ever increasing occurrence of major organisational change makes the need for understanding the decision making process used by employees in choosing their actions more important. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model, developed for this research, showed how the actions of middle managers specifically relate to a major change program. In clarifying this relationship, the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model identified a lack of comprehensive literature regarding how middle managers actions. Three complementary studies were conducted to explore this topic and provide new insight and interpretation of the action triggers influential in middle manager decisions to act. Together these three studies identified 16 situation specific action triggers. These action triggers influence the decision making process of middle managers during organisational change implementations, resulting in the performance of *alternative actions* (promotional or hindering). This list of 16 action triggers comprises a more comprehensive list than in the previous literature.

An increased understanding of these action triggers is critical as many major change initiatives attempted have failed, often being blamed on middle managers. The present research contributed greatly to the literature firstly through the development of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model and secondly by having focused solely on the actions of middle managers during major change. This work identified a comprehensive list of influential action triggers resulting in related (*alternative*) but different (hindering and promotional) actions being performed by middle managers. These findings are also useful for practitioners attempting to design major change plans to encourage promotional actions and eliminate hindering ones. However, as the present research progressed, several opportunities for future research were identified.

8.2 Research Design

The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model was developed to conceptualise and clarify the literature related to organisational change. As part of the literature review, it was found that there was a lack of comprehensive literature regarding how middle managers make decisions to act. This lack of literature led to the research in the remainder of the thesis.

The key strength of the present work was that it used several different methods across three complementary studies to verify the influence of the action triggers on middle managers' decisions to act. Each study was designed to further investigate the results of the previous study resulting in a holistic view of the subject. The content analysis in Study One used 50 texts out of the thousands available to identify the 16 action triggers. As these articles were mostly theoretical and did not concentrate on middle managers, Study Two was designed to verify the existence of the action triggers. One-on-one semi-structured interviews with middle managers were developed to identify the action triggers of relevance during the organisation's current major change implementation. Through the interviews with the ten middle managers, mostly male, from the single organisation, 11 of the action triggers were identified. Study Three was developed to further investigate the existence of the action triggers. Questionnaires were used to access a larger number of middle managers from a wide variety of organisational areas and change experiences. While the responses of the 27 middle managers (out of the 75 total responding managers) proved the existence of all 16 action triggers influence on promotional actions, only three hindering actions were identified. Three of the middle manager questionnaire respondents participated in the clarification interviews to identify the reasons for the limited number of hindering responses. The middle managers interviewed all provided invaluable information regarding the responses to the questionnaires. The various complementary methods used in these three studies resulted in a very thorough examination of the existence and influence of the 16 action triggers identified.

8.3 Action Triggers

The key finding of this research was the identification of 16 action triggers. Representing various aspects of major organisational change programs that trigger

alternative actions by middle managers, these action triggers were grouped into four categories: *Tangible Job Aspects*, *Intangible Job Aspects*, *Change Plan* and *Peer Influence*. The *Tangible Job Aspects* category included four action triggers: work processes, knowledge and skills, workload and responsibilities, and working conditions. The *Intangible Job Aspects* category included authority and power, respect and status, and comfort and security. This category also included career opportunities, individual goals, and alliances and relationships. The *Change Plan* category included all aspects relating to the actual change such as the need for change, goals of change and the design of the plan, as well as the leaders of change and senior management support. The final category, *Peer Influence*, included only one action trigger, peer influence.

These action triggers are situation specific meaning that not all 16 are influential at any one time. Only a subset of the action triggers may influence a middle manager's decision to act *alternatively* (promote or hinder) in any specific situation. While any one decision to act may not be influenced by all 16 of the action triggers, they were all found to be influential across situations. In identifying the influence of these 16 action triggers, a more comprehensive list than any previous work was developed. These action triggers were identified through research on several subsets of middle managers in the Adelaide area, however, they are likely to be more widely influential.

All of the middle managers interviewed in Study Two were from a single retail organisation and the responding middle managers in Study Three were all involved in postgraduate courses. However, the organisational areas and experiences with change were very different across the studies. These differences in the types of change experienced especially indicate that the action triggers identified are likely to be influential to other middle managers in other geographical areas, and possibly other management levels. While this research focused solely on middle managers, the action triggers identified are likely to influence employees in other levels of the organisation. The 16 action triggers were originally identified and supported by literature that did not directly (or solely) relate to middle managers. The present research's findings regarding action triggers influence on middle managers contributed greatly to the academic knowledge in these areas.

8.4 Present Research's Contribution to Academic Knowledge

The present research contributed to the literature in several ways. The first was the development of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model. Before its development, no single model represented the entire organisational change process in a similar way. Other works (listed in Appendix I) have covered portions of the process, and the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model was produced by examining and combining them. The value of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model is that it provides new insight into the process of major organisational change and how its different topics are linked. Additionally, it does not outline a single method of change, but rather identifies the different options available, and the general process that should be used.

The second contribution to the literature was the identification of a comprehensive compilation of 16 action triggers that influence middle managers' actions during major change implementations. While the action triggers were initially extracted from the organisational change literature, 50 different texts were used to identify the various action triggers. The 16 action triggers identified cover all tangible and intangible aspects related to a middle manager's job as well as all aspects relating to the change plan and peer influence. This focus on action triggers was important as it related all *alternative actions* to each action trigger.

Another contribution of the present research was the relation of both hindering and promotional action performance to every action trigger. Previous work has focused mostly on hindering actions and very little research has considered the idea that a *single* 'action trigger' may cause a middle manager to promote the change if they agree with it or attempt to hinder the change if they disagree with it. While this work contributed to the theory that an action trigger may result in either type of *alternative action*, it also added to the literature regarding promotional actions specifically. Promotional actions, in relation to organisational change, have been lacking in the literature, especially in regards to middle managers.

Middle managers, who are under-represented in organisational change research, were the focus for the present research. The action triggers identified apply specifically to them and the actions they chose to perform during major

organisational change. Besides studying the action triggers' influence on both types of *alternative actions*, the present research also identified several considerations that need to be accounted for when studying middle managers who have performed these *alternative actions*. The clarification interviews indicated that middle managers may only view their actions as insignificant and may tend to only *emphasise the positives*. These clarification interviews also contributed to the literature by identifying several ideas for the development of an instrument to better identify the *alternative actions* performed by middle managers. Besides contributing to the academic knowledge of these areas, the findings of the present research also present implications for practice.

8.5 Present Research's Implications for Practice

The findings of the present research may serve to aid practitioners in several ways. The first relates to the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model. This model provides practitioners with an overview of the major organisational change process and how all of the many different varied components are related. Practitioners could use the model to help develop the change program best suited to their organisational situation. The findings of the results of the three studies also relate to the use of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model. It is crucial for practitioners to understand how the compilation of 16 action trigger influence middle managers' actions during major change implementations. Plan designers in particular who understand actions triggers' influence will be able to design the plans that emphasise the action triggers that encourage promotional actions and de-emphasise those that encourage hindering actions. In addition to the action triggers being important in the initial plan development, they are also important for later plan alterations. The present work also provided practitioners with the knowledge that the action triggers are situation specific. An organisation attempting a major change that is different from a previous attempt may be confused by different responses to the same approach. Plan designers who understand that different action triggers may be at work will be able to adjust the plan appropriately. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model shows how frequent evaluations may be used to identify the action triggers of influence to incorporate into a future plan design alternation.

Additionally, the leaders of change during the implementation phase will need to be aware of the 16 action triggers and their potential for influence. Ideally the change leaders would be able to recognise the action triggers of influence for the specific change and relay that information back to the planners (as part of the evaluation of the implementation) so the plan may be altered appropriately. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model encouraged the altering of the change plan to obtain the best results, ideally encouraging promotional actions.

Finally, the present work identified several considerations for those developing an instrument to identify *alternative actions* performed by middle managers. The middle managers comments' in the clarification interviews indicated that practitioners need to be aware of middle managers de-emphasising the significance of their actions as well as their tendency to emphasise the positives.

While these findings will assist practitioners in producing more successful changes, more research is needed to improve understanding. The present work has presented many opportunities for further related research.

8.6 Future Research

While the findings of the present work contributed to the academic knowledge and provided applications for practitioners, it also presented many opportunities for further research. Several areas for future research were identified from the research on the action triggers themselves, and while other areas were identified in the introduction of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model developed for the literature review. All of these areas are discussed, beginning with the research potential relating to the action trigger portion of this work.

8.6.1 Relating to Present Research Findings

Action Triggers Lead to Promotional and Hindering Actions

One area for future research would be to determine if all of the action triggers influence hindering actions as well as promotional actions. The results of Study Three supported the action triggers' influence on promotional actions, but not necessarily hindering actions. Questionnaires or interviews could help to determine if all of the action triggers do in fact influence either type of *alternative action* to be

performed. This research could be performed in conjunction with the identification of the frequency and types of *alternative actions* actually performed by middle managers.

Promotional Actions Actually Performed

The questionnaire responses in Study Three showed that the participating middle managers performed more promotional actions than hindering actions. While this tendency to perform promotional actions was not supported by the middle managers' beliefs in the clarification interviews, it requires further examination. Some of the more recent literature has also begun to question the idea that middle managers continuously attempt to hinder major change from being implemented. Identifying the frequency of the actual *alternative actions* performed could help determine which actions triggers are influential in these instances (as discussed in the previous paragraph). While it is important to determine if the action triggers are influential in both types of *alternative action*, it is also important to determine if the action triggers are influential to other managers as well.

Actin Trigger Influence on Wider Manager Population

Future research could assess the influence of the action triggers across a wider population of middle managers. The existence of all 16 action triggers was confirmed for the populations studied, but not for middle managers in other geographic locations or even other levels of managers (even though the action triggers were taken from literature relating to these other levels). Future research could use either interviews or questionnaires to determine if the 16 action triggers are influential to these other groups of managers. This research on wider populations of middle managers could be performed in conjunction with research regarding the situation specific nature of the action triggers.

Situation Specific Action Triggers

The results of the present work showed that the 16 action triggers were not all influential in every major change situation. Further research could determine if there were any correlations between the type of change being implemented and the action triggers of importance. Comparing the experiences of several different organisations each experiencing a different type of change could identify

correlations. This cross organisational comparison would determine if certain action triggers were commonly associated with certain types of change. A cross organisational comparison could also be used to determine if some of the action triggers are more influential than others (for example if a specific tangible job aspect action trigger is always more influential than a specific change plan action trigger).

Relative Action Trigger Importance

A large scale research project would be necessary for determining action triggers' relative influence. Many managers from many organisations experiencing many types of change would need to be included. A research project in a single organisation would only serve to identify the actions of influence for that specific type of change being implemented. The action triggers being situation specific complicates the simplicity of the research allowed. A large research project would be required to account for the variations of the change situations experienced. This research would determine if certain action triggers are more influential in the decision to perform *alternative actions* over other action triggers. It may be helpful to first determine if the level of disagreement with the action trigger affects the influence of that action trigger.

Level of (Dis)Agreement with Action Triggers

Future research could investigate whether the influence of an action trigger corresponds to the importance of the action trigger or the level of (dis)agreement with it in regards to the current change. For example, if the *Need for Change* was identified as only slightly influential in the decision to promote a change. This could be because it is only slightly influential in the decision to change, or it could be that there was only a moderate level of agreement with the action trigger, which was not enough to result in a promotional action on its own. Middle managers will comply with a change until the level of (dis)agreement is enough to trigger an *alterative action.* Identifying this turning point, where the level of (dis)agreement with the change results in an *alternative action* being performed would be crucial to helping understand the influence of action triggers. One crucial aspect of this research would be the nearness of time in relation to when the *alternative actions* were performed. This comparison across time would identify the levels of

(dis)agreement required before a middle manager choses to perform an *alternative action*. While interviews would be best able to gather the relevant data for this research, questionnaires could be used, but not without some of the considerations discussed in the classification interviews.

Questionnaires

The middle managers in the clarification interviews explained how the study of *alternative actions* performed by middle managers is more complex than it first appears and the questionnaire used only exacerbated the problem. The three middle managers were certain that every middle manager performed hindering actions. However, due to the perceived insignificance of the actions and the tendency for middle managers to portray themselves as good employees, few hindering actions were identified in the questionnaires. The questionnaire design prohibited middle managers from identifying hindering actions because of the checklist design and question order. The middle managers provided several ideas for improving the design, including using a variety of questions requiring simple 'yes' or 'no', or 'agree' or 'disagree' answers asked in a less direct or 'obvious' way. The middle managers believed this was the only way to get the respondent to actually think about their actions and answer 'honestly', rather than answer as they think they should. This information will be invaluable for the design of instruments to investigate sensitive topics. Future research could determine if this is indeed the best design for identifying *alternative actions*. As the study of action triggers and *alternative actions* is very complex, identifying the instrument best used to study them may be difficult.

These areas for future research have all thus far focused solely on action triggers. However, in the Implementation Phase the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model also identified the importance of the action moderators. Future research could further investigate the aspects of change that moderate the *alternative actions* performed by middle managers, and even other levels of managers. Many of the above ideas for future research on action triggers may also apply to action moderators. This present research did not identify any action moderators, but perhaps other works could be

used as starting points (i.e. Levine & Badger 1993; Oreg 2003; Shields 1999; Weber & Weber 2001).

8.6.2 Stability ↔ Pursuance Model

Evaluation

In addition to these areas of future research regarding the action triggers, the present work also presented the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model in the literature review. One of the areas in the model requiring more research is Evaluation Phase. The evaluation of major change is recognised by many as an important part of the change process; however, a limited amount of work has focused on how this should occur. It is common knowledge that the measures used need to apply to the change and represent the changes just implemented, but there is little advice about what type of measure should be used in specific situations. Further research could concentrate on the measures that accurately identify the impact of the changes implemented, and how often and when these measures should be employed. Many major change leaders overlook the importance of evaluation and further research could show how this is a crucial phase in implementing a successful organisational change program.

Change Plan Development

One way to make the evaluations of major change more useful is by using the information obtained to alter the plan. As change is cyclical, an important component is using information obtained from one phase in the next. The most important of these is in using information from the Evaluation Phase. Future research needs to identify the most effective ways of taking the information learned about the change in the Evaluation Phase and using it to alter the plan for a more successful change. The Development Phase presents many opportunities for future research as well.

As identified in the literature review, the Development Phase portion of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model lacks organisation. A great deal of advice about how an organisation should attempt to develop a plan is provided; however, it is very incoherent and quite often contradictory. Little work has focused explicitly on the planning process and how an organisation should attempt to construct a plan

suitable for them. While there is surely no 'magic solution' that applies to every situation, guidelines and processes for organisations attempting to design their own program would be extremely useful. This research could also identify how long an organisation should spend in the planning stage.

However, further research on the time that should be spent in the Development Phase is only the beginning. Future research could identify how and when organisations should move to the next phase in a change program. This would include determining how long each of the periodic evaluation, planning and implementation phases should last. This information could help practitioners understand what length of time is too short to accomplish the goals and what is too long, and therefore if alterations to the plan should already have been put in place.

8.7 Summary

The present research contributed to academic knowledge, provided useful information for practitioners, and presented opportunities for future research. This work contributed to the literature by developing the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model and identifying a comprehensive compilation of 16 action triggers in four categories. It also related hindering and promotional actions to the same action triggers and focused solely on middle managers.

The present work provided useful information for practitioners to guide the development of major organisational change plans to encourage promotional actions and eliminate hindering ones. Practitioners may also benefit from the knowledge that different action triggers may be influential in different situations. Finally, the present research identified several areas for future research.

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APPENDIX I

MODELS USED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STABILITY ↔ PURSUANCE MODEL

The following were used in the development of the Stability ↔ Pursuance Model in Chapter Two. The models and other important aspects of change that were discussed in these texts were combined to form a more comprehensive model. The Stability ↔ Pursuance Model was then presented and explained using existing literature. This explanation of the model identified a lack of comprehensive work regarding the aspects influential to middle managers when choosing to perform actions during major organisational change, which led to the research in the remainder of the thesis.

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Six Conditions that Ensure Change Process Success
Day, GS 1999, 'Creating a Market-Driven Organization', *Sloan Management Review,* vol. 41, no. 1, Fall, pp. 11-22.

(Nine Wedges of the) Change Management Process Model
Galpin, TJ 1996, *The Human Side of Change: A Practical Guide to Organization Redesign*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

Eight Steps for Successful Large-Scale Change
Kotter, JP 1995, 'Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail', *Harvard Business Review,* vol. 73, no. 2, pp. 59-67.

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Unfreezing, Moving and Freezing
Lewin, K 1947, 'Frontiers in Group Dynamics', *Human Relations*, no. 1, pp. 5-41.

Lewin, K 1952, 'Group Decision and Social Change', in *Readings in Social Psychology*, Holt, New York.

12 Recommended Steps for Implementing Change
Mento, AJ, Jones, RM & Dirndorfer, W 2002, 'A Change Management Process: Grounded in Both Theory and Practice', *Journal of Change Management,* vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 45-69.

Five-Phase Transition Dynamic
Nortier, F 1995, 'A New Angle on Coping with Change: Managing Transition', Journal of Management Development, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 32-46

Organisational Development Process
Senior, B 2000, 'Organizational Change and Development', in *Introduction to Work and Organizational Psychology*, N Chimel, Blackwell, Malden, MA.

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Tessler, DJ 1989, 'The Human Side of Change', *Director,* vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 88-93.

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Organisation Development
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APPENDIX II

TEXTS USED IN STUDY ONE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The 50 texts used in the content analysis for Study One are listed below. The texts used for the category development (Phases 1 and 2) are in Table II-2. Twenty-five randomly chosen texts were examined for concepts that might influence a middle manager's actions during a change program. The sources used for the final analysis (Phase 3) are listed in Table II-3. These 25 texts were used to check the stability of the categories developed. Each text is described as theoretical or empirical, with the empirical work being identified with the codes shown in Table II-1.

Table II-1. Legend for Codes Used in Reference Tables II-2 and II-3.

Code	Meaning
T	= Theoretical
CS	= Case Study
I	= Interviews
S	= Survey
E	= Ethnography

Table II-2. Texts Used in Category Development, Phases 1 and 2.

Text	Details of Text	Theoretical	Empirical
1	Weber, PS & Weber, JE 2001, 'Changes in Employee Perceptions During Organizational Change', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal,* vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 291-300.		S
2	Band, WA 1995, 'Making Peace with Change', *Security Management,* vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 21-23.	T	
3	Burdett, JO 1999, 'Leadership in Change and the Wisdom of a Gentleman', *Participation & Empowerment,* vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 5-14.	T	
4	Cardy, RL, Gove, S & DeMatteo, J 2000, 'Dynamic and Customer-Oriented Workplaces', *Journal of Quality Management,* vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 159-186.	T	
5	Shields, JL 1999, 'Transforming Organizations', *Information Knowledge Systems Management,* vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 105-115.	T	
6	Young, AP 2000, "I'm just me': A Study of Managerial Resistance', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 375-388.	T	
7	Maurer, R 2000, 'What Blocks Support?' *Journal for Quality & Participation,* vol. 23, no. 3.	T	
8	Kegan, R & Lahey, LL 2001, 'The Real Reason People Won't Change', *Harvard Business Review,* vol. 79, no. 10, pp. 85-92.	T	

9	Kets De Vries, MFR 1999, 'Transforming the Mind-Set of the Organization', *Administration & Society,* vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 640-675.		CS
10	Spiker, BK & Lesser, E 1995, 'We Have Met the Enemy', *Journal of Business Strategy,* vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 17-21.	T	
11	Reger, RK, Mullane, JV, Gustafson, LT & DeMarie, SM 1994, 'Creating Earthquakes to Change Organizational Mindsets', *Academy of Management Executive,* vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 31-46.	T	
12	Lundberg, CC & Young, CA 2001, 'A Note on Emotions and Consultancy', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 14, no. 6, pp. 530-538.	T	
13	Mabin, VJ, Forgeson, S & Green, L 2001, 'Harnessing Resistance: Using the Theory of Constraints to Assist Change Management', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* vol. 25, no. 2-4, pp. 168-191.	T	
14	Maurer, R 1996, 'Using Resistance to Build Support for Change', *Journal for Quality & Participation,* vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 56-63.	T	
15	Maurer, R 1997, 'Transforming Resistance', *HR Focus,* vol. 74, no. 10, pp. 9-10.	T	
16	Maurer, R 1998, 'Is it Resistance, or isn't it?' *Manage,* vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 28-30.	T	
17	Savery, LK & Luks, JA 2000, 'Organizational Change: The Australian Experience', *Journal of Management Development,* vol. 19, no. 3/4, pp. 309.		S
18	Macri, DM, Tagliaventi, MR & Bertolotti, F 2002, 'A Grounded Theory For Resistance to Change in a Small Organization', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 292-310.		E
19	Moran, JW & Brightman, BK 2000, 'Leading Organizational Change', *Journal of Workplace Learning: Employee Counselling Today,* vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 66-74.	T	
20	Tierney, P 1999, 'Work Relations as a Precursor to a Psychological Climate for Change', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 120-133.		S
21	Ragsdell, G 2000, 'Engineering a Paradigm Shift?: An Holistic Approach to Organisational Change Management', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 104-120.	T	
22	O'Conner, CA 1993, 'Resistance the Repercussions of Change', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal,* vol. 14, no. 6, pp. 30-36.	T	
23	Waddell, D & Sohal, AS 1998, 'Resistance: A Constructive Tool for Change Management', *Management Decision,* vol. 36, no. 8, pp. 543-548.	T	
24	Petrini, C & Hultman, KE 1995, 'Scaling the Wall of Resistance', *Training & Development,* vol. 49, no. 10, pp. 15-18.	T	
25	Piasecka, A 2001, 'Creating Champions', *Industrial and Commercial Training,* vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 69-72.		CS

Table II-3. Texts Used in Final Analysis, Phase 3.

Text	Details of Text	Theoretical	Empirical
50	Armenakis, AA & Harris, SG 2002, 'Crafting a Change Message to Create Transformational Readiness', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 169-183.	T	
51	Beer, M & Eisenstat, RA 1990, 'Why Change Programs Don't Produce Change', *Harvard Business Review,* vol. 68, no. 6, pp. 158-166.	T	
52	Beugelsdijk, S & Slangen, A 2001, 'Shapes of Organizational Change: The Case of Heineken Inc.' *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 311-326.	T	
53	Mezias, JM, Grinyer, P & Guth, WD 2001, 'Changing Collective Cognition: A Process Model for Strategic Change', *Long Range Planning,* vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 71-95.	T	
54	Senior, B 2000, 'Organizational Change and Development' in *Introduction to Work and Organizational Psychology,* ed, N Chimel, Blackwell, Malden, MA.	T	
55	Coghlan, D 1993, 'A Person Centred Approach to Dealing with Resistance to Change', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal,* vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 10-14.	T	
56	Scandura, TA, Doerr, KH & Tejeda, MJ 2000, 'Employee Attitudes Toward Organizational Change: The Implementation of Total Quality Management' in *Advances in the Management of Organizational Quality*, Vol. 5 eds, D Fedor, & S Ghosh, JAI, pp. 71-94.		S
57	Larkin, TJ & Larkin, S 1996, 'Reaching and Changing Frontline Employees', *Harvard Business Review:*, vol. 74, no. 3, pp. 95-104.	T	
58	Doyle, M, Claydon, T & Buchanan, D 2000, 'Mixed Results, Lousy Process: The Management Experience of Organizational Change', *British Journal of Management,* vol. 11, no. 3, pp.S53-S80.		S
59	Oxtoby, B, McGuiness, T & Morgan, R 2002, 'Developing Organisational Change Capability', *European Management Journal,* vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 310-320.		CS
60	Thornhill, A, Saunders, MNK & Stead, J 1997, 'Downsizing, Delayering - But Where's the Commitment? The Development of a Diagnostic Tool to Help Manage Survivors', *Personnel Review,* vol. 26, no. 1/2, pp. 81-98.		I
61	Trader-Leigh, KE 2002, 'Case Study: Identifying Resistance in Managing Change', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 138-155.		S, I
62	Miller, V, Johnson, J & Grau, J 1994, 'Antecedents to Willingness to Participate in Planned Organizational Change', *Journal of Applied Communication Research,* vol. 22, pp. 59-80.		S

63	Stensaker, I, Falkenberg, J, Meyer, CB & Haueng, AC 2002, 'Coping Mechanisms and Consequences', *Organizational Dynamics,* vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 296-312.		I
64	Buchanan, D, Claydon, T & Doyle, M 1999, 'Organisation Development and Change: The Legacy of the Nineties', *Human Resource Management Journal,* vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 20-37.		S
65	Eby, LT, Adams, DM, Russell, JEA & Gaby, SH 2000, 'Perceptions of Organizational Readiness for Change: Factors Related to Employees' Reactions to the Implementation of Team-Based Selling', *Human Relations,* vol. 53, no. 3, pp. 419-428.		S
66	Victor, P & Franckeiss, A 2002, 'The Five Dimensions of Change: An Integrated Approach to Strategic Organizational Change Management', *Strategic Change,* vol. 11, 35-42.	T	
67	Waclawski, J 2002, 'Large-Scale Organizational Change and Performance: An Empirical Examination', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 289-304.		S
68	Wiesenfeld, BM, Brockner, J & Thibault, V 2000, 'Procedural Fairness, Managers' Self-Esteem, and Managerial Behaviors Following a Layoff', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decisions Processes,* vol. 83, no. 1, pp. 1-32.		S
69	Huy, QN 2002, 'Emotional Balancing of Organizational Continuity and Radical Change: The Contributions of Middle Managers', *Administrative Science Quarterly,* vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 31-69.		I, CS
70	Folger, R & Skarlicki, DP 1999, 'Unfairness and Resistance to Change: Hardship as Mistreatment', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 35-50.	T	
71	Allen-Meyer, G 2001, 'What's in a Name?' *Strategy & Leadership,* vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 4-7.	T	
72	Reichers, AE, Wanous, JP & Austin, JT 1997, 'Understanding and Managing Cynicism About Organizational Change', *Academy of Management Executive,* vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 48-59.		I, S
73	Kotter, JP 1995, 'Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail', *Harvard Business Review,* vol. 73, no. 2, pp. 59-67.	T	
74	Saunders, MNK, Thornhill, A & Lewis, P 2002, 'Understanding Employees' Reactions to the Management of Change: An Exploration Through an Organisational Justice Framework', *The Irish Journal of Management,* vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 85-108.		I, CS

APPENDIX III

CONCEPTS IDENTIFIED IN STUDY ONE CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORY DEVELOPMENT

Table III-1 contains the first 110 concepts identified in the first 25 texts used in the category development of the content analysis. The texts the numbers correspond to are listed in Appendix II.

Table III-1. The Initial Concepts and Texts They Were Found in.

Text Found in	Concept Identified
1	trust in management communication Participation
2	ritual and habit loss of control lost respect/status future competence (lack skills) feasibly planned/coordinated uncertainty unprepared/surprise
3	perceived workload change complexity of plan unnecessary bureaucracy not listened to leaders attitude towards change need touch on what care about commitments not honoured not feel right/heart
4	psychological contract Fairness
5	organisational values organisational cultures change in working conditions core work processes new way or role of working believe in plan
6	organisational values power shift psychological contract Uncertainty
7	just against leader lack of information disagree with goal
8	power shift need to learn new skills

9	loss of authority future competence (lack skills) loss comfort, security lose sense freedom lose responsibility threatens alliances career advancement not sure will succeed with plan previous change experiences internal/external locus control emotional commitment
10	organisational cultures new way or role of working communication Participation
11	not match organisation identity Understandable
12	power shift not match goals individual injustice Uncertainty
13	Personality emotions participation in dm perceived workload change lack info previous experience uncertainty challenges the status quo
14	lost respect/status loss comfort, security challenges the status quo
15	quality working relationship previous experience
16	lack info Uncertainty
17	perceived workload change beyond capabilities/skills loss comfort, security need for change
18	ritual and habit loss comfort, security power shift loss status

19	Constituency (environment) encourage participation not match goals organisation threatens current mastery not match goals individual need for change
20	Organisation climate affects interpersonal relations coherent plan
21	lost respect/status lose responsibility career advancement
22	encourage participation deeply ingrained habits believe in plan mismanagement agreement about goals confidence in manager of change need for change belief goals attainable
23	inappropriate/poor management style loss comfort, security belief goals attainable uncertainty working conditions challenges the status quo
24	mishandling change not match goals individual need for change belief goals attainable
25	Understandable

APPENDIX IV

CONCEPTS REMOVED FROM STUDY ONE CONTENT ANALYSIS CATEGORY DEVELOPMENT

These are the concepts that were identified in the first part of the content analysis category development. The original attempt to group the different concepts made it obvious that there were two problems with a number of the concepts. Some of the concepts were too broad in meaning to categorise (27) and some of the concepts were moderating aspects (8). In other words, they would not cause managers to take action, but affect the action taken. The number after each theme refers to the article that the phrase was found in. The texts are listed in Appendix II. From the original list of 110 concepts, 35 were removed.

Too broad to categorise (27)

Twenty-seven concepts were excluded from the analysis as they were not specific (Table IV-1). It is unclear as to what aspect of the change program in particular they are referring. For example, 'affects the status quo' arose several times. Since it could apply to anything from the type of work required to the colour of the room, it was removed. 'Psychological contract' was another concept that was eliminated. This was because the texts referred to these contracts in a very broad, general sense, which may have related to specific managers, the management process, organisational goals, or even none of these, as psychological contracts are unique to each individual. Twenty-seven concepts were too broad and removed from analysis.

Table IV-1. The 27 Concepts Removed from Analysis due to Vagueness.

Concept	Text
consistency (environment)	19
history with other change programs	9, 13, 15
Challenges the status quo	13, 14, 23
psychological contract	4, 6
communication	1, 10
not feel right/heart	3
uncertainty	2, 6, 12, 13, 16, 23
needs to touch on what care about	3
unnecessary bureaucracy	3
commitments not honoured	3
Participation[6]	1, 3, 10, 13, 19, 22

[6] Special Note About Participation: Participation has been the focus of much research, usually studied as a trigger of action. This research considered participation to be a blanket term that could apply to a variety of aspects including communication, goals, plan design, etc. Thus when it was not identified more specifically it had to be removed from further analysis.

Moderators (8)

These concepts, Table IV-2, were removed from the analysis after the question, 'Would this trigger an action by a middle manager?' During the content analysis it because clear that action moderators are personal and unique to each middle manager. Action triggers on the other hand are unique to the change being implemented. Action triggers will cause a person to act, however, once the decision to act is made, action moderators will influence the type of action taken. Eight moderators were removed from the concept list.

Table IV-2. The Eight Concepts Identified as Moderators and Removed from Further Analysis.

Concept	Text
Personality	13
internal/external locus control	9
emotions	9, 13
unprepared/surprise	2
organisation culture	5, 10
organisation climate	20

APPENDIX V

STUDY ONE CONTENT ANALYSIS PHASE 3 CONCEPTS

These were the final concepts identified in Phase Three of Study One (Table V-1). The purpose of this phase was to determine the stability of the categories. This meant that instead of grouping like concepts into categories, concepts identified would be assigned into the existing categories. If concepts could *not* be assigned to multiple categories, that meant there was a problem with the stability of the coding; however, that was not the case. The terms here are listed according to the text (shown by the number) they appeared in. The texts are listed in Appendix II, Table II-3. In the final 25 texts used for the analysis, 127 concepts were identified:

Table V-1. Category Stability Concepts Identified in the Final Phase.

Text	Concepts identified in the text
50	need for change misunderstand plan need support commitment from higher ups people in groups persuade each other goals of plan
51	CEO/other manager commitment new skills go unused useful underlying principles of plan need for change goals of change manager competent to do change Pay systems
52	order of change to take place Role of management in change
53	need for change senior manager commitment change habit/ritual job security affects power
54	need for change new working processes job security additional responsibilities affects on working conditions status goals of the change change leader's role Lack of knowledge and skills
55	need assessment of goals habit know missing info about plan position threatened (lose job)

56	agreement with goals top management support job insecurity increased workload change leader's commitment power skills to change
57	complexity of plan trust change leader top management support
58	program too complex senior level support use knowledge learning job comfort change in work processes increase in workload Trust managers (leading change)
59	leadership of change program justifies change need goals clearly displayed progress increase abilities of all support of all in organisation (top managers)
60	commitment of senior management trust change managers style/skills logic/order/fairness/justice/clarity of plan
61	more work agree with goals of plan custom/habit commitment of senior leaders job security social status
62	knowledge of employee about plan requires new role (habits) Trust leaders of change
63	not completed one program before start another changes existing routines leader of change increase employees skills
64	management of change (leader) reason for change (need) poor plan design top level support
65	plan for change self efficacy for change (skills) support from senior managers Trust in leaders of change
66	goals of the change plan and approach to change, understand requirements change leaders actions

67	goals of change change leaders
68	leaders of change procedural fairness job security support of change
69	change in workload change in privileges executive support way plan going group affect trust leaders of change New skills and knowledge
70	fairness of plan impact on position (job) impact on power increased workload rewards (working conditions) voices of coworkers new work processes actions of change leaders
71	need for change top management commitment rewards for compliance (working conditions) training being wasted career progression possibilities information relayed about plan
72	lack of information about change change leaders don't care job security necessity for change conferring with co-workers training and support
73	sense of urgency (need) for change top managmenet support others in the organisation (peers) picture of future goals confusing and incompatible plan components working conditions
74	need for change outcomes expected (goals) unfairness of plan implementation job security increases in workload

APPENDIX VI

STUDY TWO INTERVIEW DOCUMENTS

The following pages were sent to potential participants in Study Two. The purpose of the documents was to inform them of the study and ask for their participation. They conformed to the requirements of the University's Ethics Policy. All of the documents were presented to participants on university letterhead.

Introductory Letter

Dear (Middle Manager),

Research Project: Change Program Perceptions and Middle Manager Actions

The perceptions that influence how middle managers decide to act during change programs is an area that has not been widely researched in the past.

The opportunity has now arisen, as part of a doctoral research project at the University of South Australia through its International Centre for Management and Organisational Effectiveness (ICMOE), to invite your organisation to participate in a series of interviews designed to examine the perceptions of change programs that affect middle managers' decisions to comply, take hindering actions, or perform promotional actions during implementation. These interviews will take place over the next 2 months.

Ms. Emily Pollack is undertaking this research as part of her doctoral studies through the University. An information sheet providing further details of the proposed research is attached.

Your support and cooperation will be extremely important, as it will not only assist in a broader understanding of managers and how they make decisions, but it is also expected to be of material personal benefit to you in your role as a manager.

If you are willing to participate or would like more information about the study please e-mail Emily at xxxxx.xxxxx@unisa.edu.au. Once you have agreed to participate, a time for your interview will be arranged. Your consent to participate is required in writing before this research can commence. A consent form is attached for this purpose. The consent form may be given to Emily at the interview. You will be notified when the research has been completed and results become available.

Please contact me personally or the University's Human Research Ethics Committee, (which has approved this research project), if you wish to discuss any aspects, particularly in relation to confidentiality or ethical issues. Contact details are also provided on the attached information sheet.

Signed
Professor T V
Director, International Centre for Management and Organisation Effectiveness

Information Sheet

Research Project: Change Program Perceptions and Middle Manager Actions

Researcher: Emily Pollack
(office phone) xx-xxxx-xxxx
(e-mail) xxxxx.xxxxx@unisa.edu.au

Supervisor: T V
(office phone) xx-xxxx-xxxx
(e-mail) xxxxx.xxxxx@unisa.edu.au

Research Purpose:

The aim of this research is to improve the understanding of middle mangers' decisions when participating in a change program implementation. At this time it is not known why certain managers reject change programs while others embrace them. This study will determine which aspects of a change program are influential in a middle managers decision to act. A clearer understanding of this will enable designers and implementers of future programs to specifically address issues of concern.

Research Questions:
The research will address the following questions:
1. What perceptions of a change program influence a middle manager's decision to act during the initial stages of a change program implementation?
2. Do different perception categories vary in the amount of influence they have on the decision to act?

Approach and Role of Participants:
This research will involve middle managers in the Cini organisation. Each manager will be individually interviewed for about one hour. The interview will be recorded on tape. During this time participants will be asked to discuss their experiences and participation in the change program currently being implemented. They will be asked about how the program was developed, how it will be implemented, how it will affect the organisation, and how it will affect their positions within the organisation.

Confidentiality:
Individuals will not be identified in the research reports or otherwise identified in anything but a generic sense. Data obtained from specific respondents will be kept confidential and be presented or published in aggregated form only. Primary information from the interviews will be kept separately in a secured office during the research process prior to completion of the research.
It is proposed that all data will be stored as both hard copy and on CD-ROM. A copy will be held in a secure location by ICMOE. All information collected will be retained for 7 years.

Independent Contact: Ms. Vicki Allen, Ethics Officer, Research Services, Mawson Lakes Campus
Phone: xx xxxx xxxx Fax: xx xxxx xxxx email: xxxxx.xxxxx@unisa.edu.au

Consent Form

Research Project: Change Program Perceptions and Middle Manager Actions

Researcher's name Emily Pollack

Supervisor's name Professor T V

- I have received information about this research project.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during this interview.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

Name of participant .....

Signed .....

Date .....

I have provided information about the research to the research participant and believe that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's signature and date

..... **Date** .....

APPENDIX VII

STUDY TWO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions were used as a guide for the interviews in Study Two. The actual questions varied according to the previous answers of the participants. All of the initial and finishing questions were asked of each participant. In most cases, only the first question of each group in the main question section was asked. This was because most of the participants covered all of the remaining questions with their initial answer. When answers did not address a question or were unclear, further questions were asked.

A. Initial Questions

A1. What is your current position?

A2. How long have you been working with Cini?

A3. How long have you been in your current position?

A4. How many people do you manage or oversee?

A5. What previous experiences have you had with change?

B. Core Questions

There are many stages to this change program and I am interested in the early stages, not including the initial introductory phase. This is after you learned about the program and actually started to implement some of the changes. So think about your thoughts and feelings recently when answering the following questions.

B1. I understand Cini is currently implementing changes to HR, Loss Prevention, and OH&S, what role did you have in the development of these changes?

B2. What is the purpose of the overall change program?

B2a. Does it support the goals of the organisation?

B3. What role do you have in implementing the change program?f

B3a. Have all of the required actions, steps, phases, and so forth been clearly explained to you?

B3b. Do you relay progress to anyone or are you the highest authority for the implementation?

B4. How will you know if the program has been implemented successfully?

B4a. Is the program going to produce the desired outcomes?

B4b. Is this the ideal state for the organisation to aim for?

B5. How are these changes supposed to affect your work and position?

B5a. Are the requirements for performing your job different than they were before the program?

(skills, energy, paperwork, processes, time)

B5b. Has it affected your position in the organisation's hierarchy?

B5c. What about your power and freedom in the organisation?

B6. How do your coworkers feel about the changes?

B6a. Do their actions or comments affect your actions or comments at all?

C. Review Questions

C1. How would you describe your actions concerning the change program?

Compliant, hindering, promotional

C2. Have your feelings regarding the program changed since you first heard about it and began implementing the changes?

C3. I am interested in the aspects of a program that influence how people will act, why they comply, go above and beyond, or resist. Could you tell me which aspects of the program were most important in your decision to act, not your initial reaction, but after you'd had some time to adjust and the program was beginning to be implemented.

You've mentioned

__workload __plan design __change leader __management

__need for plan __ingrained behaviours __career advance __intangibles

__peers __knowledge/skills __work condition __goals of organisation

C10. Is there anything else that you can think of?

D. Finishing Questions

D1. Is there anything else you've thought about that you would like to mention, it doesn't have to be directly related to anything that we've been talking about.

D2. Just to reiterate, everything you have said will be combined with the data from the other interviews. In the findings there will be no way to relate any item specifically to you in any way.

D3. Would you like a copy of the final findings of the interviews?

APPENDIX VIII

STUDY THREE QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

This is the questionnaire that was distributed to all of the participants in Study Three. An introductory letter was included. This letter explained the study and asked those reading it to complete the attached questionnaire. The questionnaire was attached as was an addressed pre-paid envelope, so that the questionnaires could be returned anonymously. Each section of the questionnaire (as indicated in the header) was on different coloured paper. In total, participants were given six sheets of paper, one for the letter and five for the actual questionnaire. The following varies from that as it was necessary to alter the formatting to fit within the thesis.

Introductory Letter

Research Project: Organisational Change Experiences

Research Purpose:
I am investigating what makes people embrace change and actively promote it, or attempt to hinder it, rather than just complying with what is requested. Major organisational change is a long drawn out process, people often have the opportunity to choose how they act several times during the program. I am interested in how you felt and acted during the last organisational change program you were involved in.

I have defined **Major change** as change that alters the structure, basic operations, or functions of an organisation. It affects most people in the organisation and takes a great deal of time, effort, and financial resources to implement.

There are four parts to the questionnaire.

1. **Section A** asks about the most recent major organisational change you experienced.
2. **Section B** asks about the aspects that influenced your decision to intentionally *promote* the change.
3. **Section C** asks about the aspects that influenced your decision to intentionally *hinder* the change.
4. **Section D** asks for demographic questions about you and your work position. These questions will help determine if some groups are more affected by different aspects of change than other groups.

At the end of the questionnaire there is a place for your e-mail address if you would like a copy of the results.

All records that contain personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to the identification of any individual will be released. The questionnaires will be translated to electronic data. All questionnaires and electronic data will be stored in a locked area for 7 years and then be destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to complete and return the questionnaire or not.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact my supervisor
Professor T V, E-mail: xxx.xxxx@unisa.edu.au, Phone: XXXX XXXX

or if you have any ethical concerns about this research

Vicki Allen
Executive Officer of the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee
E-mail:xxx.xxx@unisa.edu.au, Phone: XXXX XXXX

Thank you for your cooperation,

Researcher: Emily Pollack

Section A: Most Recent Major Organisational Change

Please respond to each question with a check (✓) or (X) in the appropriate box.

1. When did your organisation last attempt a major change program?

- ☐ [1] We are currently attempting a major change.
- ☐ [2] We completed a major change program within the last year.
- ☐ [3] We completed a major change program 1-2 years ago.
- ☐ [4] We completed a major change program 3 or more years ago.
- ☐ [5] I have not experienced major organisational change with my organisation. If you choose this concept there is no need for you to continue with the questionnaire.

2. What was your primary role during the change?

- ☐ [1] Design of the change program
- ☐ [2] Responsible for ensuring others cooperated with the change
- ☐ [3] Responsible only for changes to my position
- ☐ [5] I had no role in the change program. If you choose this option there is no need for you to continue with the questionnaire.

3. Briefly describe the major organisational change that you most recently experienced. A few sentences will be sufficient.

Section B: Promoting the Change

Refer to the major organisational change you just described. Try to remember an **intentional** action or group of actions you performed that actively **promoted** the change above and beyond what you were expected to do (i.e. encouraged others to comply, did more than you were asked to, etc.). The best way to answer the scale is by thinking of the most specific situation you can. Please respond to each question with a check (✓) or (X).

1. Which statement best describes the action(s) you performed to promote the change:

- ☐ [1] I made no attempt to promote the change. Skip to the next section.
- ☐ [2] I made a slight attempt to promote the change.
- ☐ [3] I made a moderate attempt to promote the change.
- ☐ [4] I made a considerable attempt to promote the change.
- ☐ [5] I did everything possible to promote the change.

Keeping this situation in mind, please indicate which of the following, and by how much, these aspects influenced your *intentional* decision to **support** the change. Please indicate the influence of each by circling one number next to each statement. Please refer to the following table when making your decision.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all	Slightly influential	Moderately influential	Considerably influential	Extremely influential

How influential were the following to your actions regarding the change program…

2. The argument explaining the need for change	1	2	3	4	5
3. The specified goals of the change	1	2	3	4	5
4. The design of the plan (order, fairness, complexity, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
5. The change leader (abilities, style, attitude, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
6. The support of senior management (commitment, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
7. The impact on your work habits (processes, methods, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
8. The impact on your alliances or work relationships	1	2	3	4	5
9. The impact on your job's security	1	2	3	4	5
10. The need for new skills/knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
11. The impact on your authority/power/freedom	1	2	3	4	5
12. The impact on your career advancement opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
13. The change in workload (energy, time, responsibility, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
14. The impact on your respect or status level	1	2	3	4	5
15. The change to your working conditions (office, pay, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
16. The impact on your goals (besides career advancement)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Your peers' opinions and actions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Other (please state)	1	2	3	4	5
19. Other (please state)	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Hindering the Change

Again refer to the major change you described earlier. Try to remember an **intentional** action or group of actions you performed that actively **hindered** the change, where you acted against the program (i.e. didn't do as told, encouraged other to resist, etc.). The best way to answer this is by thinking of the most specific situation you can. Please respond to each question with a check (✓) or (X) in the appropriate box.

1. Which statement best describes the action(s) you performed to hinder the change:

- ☐ [1] I made no attempt to hinder the change. Skip to the next section.
- ☐ [2] I made a slight attempt to hinder the change.
- ☐ [3] I made a moderate attempt to hinder the change.
- ☐ [4] I made a considerable attempt to hinder the change.
- ☐ [5] I did everything possible to hinder the change.

Keeping this situation in mind, please indicate which of the following, and by how much, these aspects influenced your *intentional* decision to **hinder** the change. Please indicate the influence of each by circling one number next to each statement. Please refer to the following table when making your decision.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Slightly influential	Moderately influential	Considerably influential	Extremely influential

How influential were the following to your actions regarding the change program...

2. The argument explaining the need for change	1	2	3	4	5
3. The specified goals of the change	1	2	3	4	5
4. The design of the plan (order, fairness, complexity, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
5. The change leader (abilities, style, attitude, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
6. The support of senior management (commitment, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
7. The impact on your work habits (processes, methods, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
8. The impact on your alliances or relationships	1	2	3	4	5
9. The impact on your job's security	1	2	3	4	5
10. The need for new skills/knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
11. The impact on your authority/power/freedom	1	2	3	4	5
12. The impact on your career advancement opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
13. The change in workload (energy, time, responsibility, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
14. The impact on your respect or status level	1	2	3	4	5
15. The change to your working conditions (office space, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
16. The impact on your goals (other than career advancement)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Your peers' opinions and actions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Other (please state)	1	2	3	4	5
19. Other (please state)	1	2	3	4	5

Section D: Demographics

Please respond to each question with a check (✓) or (X) in the appropriate box.

1. Which sector does your organisation operate in?
   - ☐ [1] Public
   - ☐ [2] Private

2. How long have you been with your current organisation?
   - ☐ [1] 0-4 years
   - ☐ [2] 5-9 years
   - ☐ [3] 10-14 years
   - ☐ [4] 15-19 years
   - ☐ [5] 20-24 years
   - ☐ [6] 25 years or more

3. What industry is does your organisation operate in?
   - ☐ [1] Agriculture
   - ☐ [2] Mining
   - ☐ [3] Manufacturing
   - ☐ [4] Electricity, gas, and water supply
   - ☐ [5] Construction
   - ☐ [6] Wholesale trade
   - ☐ [7] Retail trade
   - ☐ [8] Accommodation, cafes, and restaurants
   - ☐ [9] Transport and storage
   - ☐ [10] Communication services
   - ☐ [11] Finance and insurance
   - ☐ [12] Property and business services
   - ☐ [13] Government administration and defence
   - ☐ [14] Education
   - ☐ [15] Health and community services
   - ☐ [16] Cultural and recreational services
   - ☐ [17] Personal and other services
   - ☐ [18] Non-classifiable economic units

4. What level of manager are you?
   - ☐ [1] Frontline–have direct control over frontline employees
   - ☐ [2] Middle–oversee other managers, but can't make organisation wide decisions
   - ☐ [3] Senior–make decisions that affect the entire organisation
   - ☐ [4] Other (please specify) _____

Section D: Demographics

5. How long have you worked in this level of management?

- ☐ [1] 0-4 years
- ☐ [2] 5-9 years
- ☐ [3] 10-14 years
- ☐ [4] 15-19 years
- ☐ [5] 20-24 years
- ☐ [6] 25 years or more

6. What age bracket are you in?

- ☐ [1] Under 25 year old
- ☐ [2] 25-29 years old
- ☐ [3] 30-34 years old
- ☐ [4] 35-39 years old
- ☐ [5] 40-44 year old
- ☐ [6] 45-49 years old
- ☐ [7] 50 years old or more

7. What is your sex?

- ☐ [1] Female
- ☐ [2] Male

8. Excluding your present program, what is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ [1] High school
- ☐ [2] Certificate
- ☐ [3] Diploma
- ☐ [4] University degree

If you would like a copy of the results of this questionnaire, please fill in your e-mail address.

Please go back over the questionnaire to ensure that you did not miss any questions.

Thank you very much for you help, I greatly appreciate it.

APPENDIX IX

STUDY THREE CLARIFICATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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The following questions were used as a guide for the interviews in Study Three. The actual questions varied according to the previous answers of the participants. In most cases, only the first question of each group in the main question section was asked. This was because most of the participants covered all of the remaining questions with their initial answer. When answers did not address a question or were unclear, further questions were asked.

I'm just going to ask you a few questions about your position and organisation and then about the questionnaire that you completed.

A. Initial Questions

A1. What type of industry do you work in?

A2. What is your position in your organisation?

A3. How long have you been with the organisation?

A4. Are you currently implementing any change?

A4a. When did your organisation last implement a major change?

B. Questionnaire Focus

This is the survey that you filled out as part of your class, could you quickly look through it to refresh your memory? (Give a copy of the survey)

B1. Do you remember thinking anything about the design of the questionnaire when you first looked at it before you started to complete it?

B1a. Was the layout, and presentation appropriate (colours, length, fonts)?

B1b. What about the wording or terms (clear meaning, easy to understand)?

B2. Did you encounter any difficulties when filling out the questionnaire?

B2a. Do you have any ideas how to overcome them?

B3. Do you remember if you completed the promotional action question, the one that asked if you ever went above and beyond the call of duty to see a change succeed?

B3a. Do you remember what change experience you thought about when rating the different statements?

B3b. Was this the only time that you attempted to promote a part of the change, or did you attempt to promote it often?

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B4. Do you remember if you completed the hindering action question, the one that asked if you ever tried to stop part of the change that you thought was detrimental?

B4a. Do you remember what change experience you thought about when rating the different statements?

B4b. Was this the only time that you attempted to hinder a part of the change, or did you attempt to hinder other parts as well?

C. Situation Questions

C1. In the literature and general opinion, middle managers often attempt to hinder a change program. Many times this will be to try and stop changes they think are poorly designed or will hurt the organisation. The actions they take to promote the change are much less discussed. However, in the survey most of the managers said they performed only promotional actions. Do you have any idea why this might be?

C1a. Do you think the general opinion of middle managers is correct, that they often hinder change, or are they really more positive than given credit?

C1b. Do you think the design of the questionnaire caused people to avoid answering the hindering question part?

Want to impress the researcher

Mistook promotional actions as compliant

Defined hindering too strongly

C1c. Are there are other reasons that middle managers might not have admitted to taking hindering actions?

Too many surveys

Not willing to admit to themselves how acted

C2. Do you have any ideas how we could overcome all of these issues to get a more accurate understanding of the actions middle managers are really performing?

D. Finishing Questions

D1. Is there anything else you've thought about that you would like to mention, it doesn't have to be directly related to anything that we've been talking about.

D1a. Did you have any questions for me?

D2. Just to reiterate, everything you have said will be combined with the other interviews. In the findings there will be no way to identify you specifically.

D3. Would you like a copy of the final findings of the interviews?

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APPENDIX X

STUDY THREE CLARIFICATION INTERVIEW DOCUMENTS

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The following pages were sent to the potential participants for the interviews in Study Three. The purpose of the documents was to inform them of the study and ask for their participation. They conformed to the requirements of the University's Ethics Policy. All of the documents were presented to participants on university letterhead.

Research Project: Change Program Perceptions and Middle Manager Actions

Information Sheet

Researcher: Emily Pollack
(office phone) xx-xxxx-xxxx
(e-mail) xxxx-xxxx@unisa.edu.au

Supervisor: T V
(office phone) xx-xxxx-xxxx
(e-mail) xxxx-xxxx@unisa.edu.au

Research Purpose:

The aim of this research is to examine the design of the questionnaire used to examine aspects that influence middle manger to take action during a major change program. Its appropriateness for the topic will be examined by interviewing managers who have completed it. A clearer understanding of this will enable designers and implementers of future programs to specifically address issues of concern.

Research Questions:

The research will address the following questions:

1. What aspects of the questionnaire are useful in obtaining the relevant information from middle managers regarding the actions they performed during a period of organisational change?
2. What needs to be included/removed to entice more middle managers to be honest about the alternative actions they have taken during organisational change?

Approach and Role of Participants:

This research will involve middle managers who have already completed the questionnaires. Each manager will be individually interviewed for about 45 minutes. The interview will be recorded on tape. During this time participants will

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be asked to discuss their experiences with the questionnaire and about their perceptions of how other managers may have responded.

Confidentiality:

Individuals will not be identified in the research reports or otherwise identified in anything but a generic sense. Data obtained from specific respondents will be kept confidential and be presented or published in aggregated form only. Primary information from the interviews will be kept separately in a secured office during the research process prior to completion of the research. It is proposed that all data will be stored as both hard copy and on CD-ROM. This will be held in a secure location by ICMOE. All information collected will be retained for 7 years.

Independent Contact: Ms. Vicki Allen

Ethics Officer, Research Services, Mawson Lakes Campus

Phone: xx xxxx xxxx Fax: xx xxxx xxxx email: xxxx-xxxx@unisa.edu.au

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Consent Form

Research Project: Change Program Perceptions and Middle Manager Actions

Researcher's name Emily Pollack
Supervisor's name Professor T V

- I have received information about this research project.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage.
- I understand that I will be audiotaped during this interview.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

Name of participant .....
Signed .....
Date .....

I have provided information about the research to the research participant and believe that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher's signature and date .....
Date .....

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APPENDIX XI
SUPPORT OF ACTION TRIGGERS BY OTHER RELATED WORKS

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The following seven works are those most closely related to the present work and were used to discuss the comprehensiveness of the 16 action triggers identified in this thesis. These related works concentrated on individual actions and the aspects that influence employees to perform the actions they choose. All of the items (not all corresponded to action triggers) identified in each of these related works are examined to determine which action triggers best correspond. This is to help evaluate the comprehensiveness of the list of 16 action triggers in comparison to previous similar works.

The comparison of the items from related works to the action triggers of the current research was performed using the definitions and classification scheme for the action triggers developed in the content analysis of Study One (Chapter 4). Items of previous works that did not match the criteria used in Study One were given the label *None* as they did not correspond with any action triggers. The definitions provided in the associated text for each of the items identified in the related works were used for this comparison. In several cases the term or brief description of the item indicates a different action trigger may be of relevance, but this was not supported in the text the item was identified in. An example of this was Kanter's (1985) The "Difference" Effect – while this term itself could relate to anything, the definition in the text referred specifically to routine work processes. Thus the in text definitions were used to label all of the items identified below.

Below each related text is identified with the relevant items listed in a table. The corresponding category and action trigger are also listed. Explanations regarding the lack of correspondence between the 'None' items and action triggers are provided. Summaries of the items that did correspond with action triggers are provided as well.

Kotter & Schlesinger 1979

Kotter, J & Schlesinger, L 1979, 'Choosing Strategies for Change', *Harvard Business Review*, March-April, pp. 106-114

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Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) identified the four common reasons people resist change, and two less common. Items 1 and 2 were too broadly defined to correspond with any action triggers and Item 4 was more of an action moderator than an action trigger. Items 3, 5 and 6 all correspond with a single action trigger, each in a different category, Table XI-1:

Table XI-1. Action Triggers Corresponding to Kotter and Schlesinger's (1979) 'Common Reasons for Resistance'.

	Item (Reasons)	Category	Action Trigger
1	Desire not to lose something of value	None	
2	Misunderstanding of the change and its implications	None	
3	Belief that the change does not make sense for the organisation	Change Plan	Goals of Change
4	Low tolerance for change	None	
5	Fear unable to develop new skills and behaviour	Tangible Aspects	Knowledge & Skills
6	Peer group pressure	Peer Influence	Peer Influence

Kanter 1985

Kanter, RM 1985, 'Managing the Human Side of Change', *Management Review*, vol. 74, pp. 52-56.

Kanter (1985) identified the 'ten most common reasons managers encounter resistance to change'. Four of these ten reasons did not correspond with an action trigger. Items 2 and 10 were too broadly defined to classify and item 9 was more of an action moderator than action trigger. Nor did item 7 match the definition of any action trigger. The remaining six items (1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8) each corresponded with a single unique action trigger in three different categories, with the strongest support being shown for the *Tangible Job Aspects* category with three action triggers corresponding, as seen in Table XI-2:

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Table XI-2. Action Triggers Corresponding to Kanter's (1985) 'Ten Most Common Reasons Managers Encounter Resistance to Change'.

	Item	Category	Action Trigger
1	Loss of control	Intangible Aspects	Authority & Power
2	Excess uncertainty	None	
3	The surprise factor	Change Plan	Design of Plan
4	The "Difference" Effect	Tangible Aspects	Work Processes
5	Loss of face	Intangible Aspects	Respect & Status
6	Concerns about future competence	Tangible Aspects	Knowledge & Skills
7	Ripple effects	None	
8	More work	Tangible Aspects	Workload & Responsibility
9	Past resentments	None	
10	Sometimes the threat is real	None	

O'Conner 1993

O'Conner, CA 1993, 'Resistance the Repercussions of Change', *Leadership & Organization Development Journal,* vol. 14, no. 6, pp. 30-36.

O'Conner (1993) identified five "common causes of resistance" (p 33). All five of these causes corresponded only with action triggers in the *Change Plan* category. Items 1 and 2 by both corresponded with the same action trigger, *Need for Change*, while the remaining items (3, 4, and 5) each corresponded with three different action triggers in the *Change Plan* category, Table XI-3:

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Table XI-3. Action Triggers Corresponding to O'Conner's (1993) 'Common Causes of Resistance'.

	Item	Category	Action Trigger
1	Lack of belief that there is a serious need for change	Change Plan	Need for Change
2	Different descriptions of the need for change	Change Plan	
3	No agreement about goals for change	Change Plan	Goals of Change
4	Lack of belief that the goal is attainable	Change Plan	Design of Plan
5	No confidence in the manager of change	Change Plan	Leaders of Change

Petrini and Hultman 1995

Petrini, C and Hultman KE 1995, 'Scaling the Wall of Resistance', *Training & Development,* vol. 49, no. 10, pp. 15-18.

Petrini and Hultman (1995) identified six 'reasons for resistance to change'. Items 1, 2 and 3 were too broadly defined to correspond with any of the action triggers. Items 4, 5 and 6 all corresponded with action triggers in the *Change Plan* category. Item 4 corresponded to a single action trigger while items 5 and 6 both corresponded to the *Design of Plan* action trigger, Table XI-4:

Table XI-4. Action Triggers Corresponding to Petrini and Hultman's (1995) 'Reasons for Resistance to Change'.

	Item	Category	Action Trigger
1	Believe individual needs already being met	None	
2	Believe change will make it harder to meet individual needs	None	
3	Risks outweigh the benefits	None	
4	Believe it is unnecessary to avoid or escape a harmful situation	Change Plan	Need for Change
5	Believe organisation is mishandling the change process	Change Plan	Design of Plan
6	Believe the change attempt will fail	Change Plan	

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Fenton-O'Creevy 1998

Fenton-O'Creevy, M 1998, 'Employee Involvement and the Middle Manager: Evidence from a Survey of Organisations', Journal of Organizational Behavior, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 67-84.

Fenton-O'Creevy (1998) identified five 'predictors of middle management resistance' after statistically analysing 155 questionnaire responses. Item 5 did not correspond with any of the action triggers as it did not correspond with any of the definitions. Item 1 included the possibility of job promotion and loss which meant it corresponded with two separate action triggers. Job promotion opportunities corresponded with the action trigger *Career Opportunities* while job loss corresponded with the action trigger *Comfort and Security*. The remaining three items (2, 3, and 4) all corresponded with a single action trigger, Table XI-5.

Table XI-5. Action Triggers Corresponding to Fenton-O'Creevy's (1998) 'Predictors of Middle Management Resistance'.

	Item	Category	Action Trigger
1	Job promotion and loss	Intangible Aspects	Career Opportunities
		Intangible Aspects	Comfort & Security
2	Performance measurement and reward changes	Tangible Aspects	Working Conditions
3	Power tools (access to information, resources, etc.)	Change Plan	Design of Plan
4	Lack of senior management support	Change Plan	Senior Support
5	Pressure (change fatigue and performance pressure)	None	

Burdett 1999

Burdett, J.O. (1999) 'Leadership in Change and the Wisdom of a Gentleman', *Participation & Empowerment,* vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 5-14.

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Burdett (1999) used the story of his grandfather to show that resistance to change is not inherent in people's make-up, rather there are legitimate reasons for people to reject change. Item 1 was too broadly defined to correspond with any action triggers nor did item 8 correspond to any of the action triggers. Four of the items (4, 5, 6, and 7) all corresponded to the *Design of Plan* action trigger. Item 4 also corresponded to the *Workload and Responsibility* action trigger. Items 2 and 3 each corresponded to a single unique action trigger, Table XI-6:

Table XI-6. Action Triggers Corresponding to Burdett's (1999) Reasons to Reject Change.

	Item	Category	Action Trigger
1	Fails to impact on something they feel passionate about	None	
2	Refuse to follow leaders not personally committed	Change Plan	Leaders of Change
3	How people learn is not as important as what they learn	Tangible Aspects	Knowledge & Skills
4	Complexity and workload are overwhelming	Tangible Aspects	Workload & Responsibility
		Change Plan	Design of Plan
5	Not listened to	Change Plan	
6	New ways of work are superimposed on outdated structures	Change Plan	
7	Become bogged down by unnecessary bureaucracy	Change Plan	
8	Feel exploited	None	

Trader-Leigh 2002

Trader-Leigh, KE (2002) 'Case Study: Identifying Resistance in Managing Change', *Journal of Organizational Change Management,* vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 138-155.

Trader-Leigh (2002) identified seven different 'key resistance forces' after statistically analysing 107 surveys. Ten factors were originally tested, but only seven were found to have significant loadings (only these seven are listed below). However, when trying to identify corresponding action triggers, the definitions in

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the text provided for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 overlapped between numerous action triggers. Item 4 for example, Redistributive factor, included loss of control, funding, policies, procedures, etc. This one item has components of numerous action triggers, and was thus labelled *None* as it was not defined to clearly match any action triggers, Table XI-7:

Table XI-7. Action Triggers Corresponding to Trader-Leigh's (2002) 'Key Resistance Forces'.

	Item	Category	Action Triggers
1	Self interest	None	
2	Psychological impact	None	
3	Tyranny of custom	None	
4	Redistributive factor	None	
5	Destabilisation	None	
6	Cultural compatibility	None	
7	Political constraints	Intangible Aspects	Authority & Power

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