



Lesson Plan

Leading Change

10 May 2022



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How to Use this Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is divided into three key sections and an appendix containing supporting material.

The **About the Lesson** section outlines the lesson and identifies requirements for its effective use. Course Directors should use this section to (a) understand the purpose and context of the lesson, (b) learn about lesson pre-requisites, and (c) guide the selection of facilitators.

The **Before the Lesson** section provides details on the preparation required for this lesson, including participant prerequisites (if any), recommended facilitator pre-course readings, and guidance on how to prepare the classroom.

The **Presenting the Lesson** section contains the actual lesson plan. It provides the recommended outline, discussion, and slide prompts along with actual *questions* and *recommended language* for the facilitator to use in the classroom.

The **Appendix** includes any required in-class handouts or exercise material.

For more information on how lessons are structured, or how to use them in the course, see the **Course Director's Handbook** or **Facilitator's Resources**.

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About the Lesson

Leading Change

Overview

Squadrons face a myriad of potential challenges. To be successful they must adapt to implications of “change.” The scope of organizational change varies dramatically across the squadrons. During this process flight commanders are both a role model and advocate for their flight members. The flight commander has a specific role as a *change agent* regarding organizational change: to support the organizational change culture and help shape its meaning to members of the flight. This lesson highlights some tools used to support change at the flight-level.

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will:

1. Identify the steps in the commonly-accepted change model used by the Department of the Air Force leaders.
2. Describe the role of the flight commander in organizational change.
3. Identify methods to effectively implement change at the flight level.

Recommended Prerequisites

- Followership lesson
- Mission Command (*this lesson encourages localized, independent pursuit of innovative solutions to complement the commander’s vision.*)

Recommended Time

- 50 minutes

Recommended Facilitator Qualifications

This lesson is designed for a facilitator with the following minimum qualifications:

1. Subject matter knowledge
2. Command-level experience

Subject matter knowledge can be developed using the information presented in **Preparing the Facilitator** section of this document.

Before the Lesson

Preparing the Participant

- None. There is no pre-work for this lesson.

Preparing the Facilitator

All required materials and participant preparation, plus:

- Review *Leading Change* by John Kotter online at

“How to be Awesome at Your Job” podcast 073: <https://awesomeatyourjob.com/073-leading-change-with-dr-john-kotter/>

Note: This podcast is provided on a commercial website and is for information only. Use within this program does not constitute endorsement of the vendor nor its products by the Air University.

(Optional) Additional deep-dive preparation materials are available on *The Flight Commander's Edge* website.

Preparing the Classroom

Ensure the classroom provides/is provisioned with:

- Adequate classroom space for separate small group discussions.
- White boards or easels with butcher block paper (one per group).
- Computer and projector (internet connectivity not required).

Preparing Required Materials

Prepare one copy of each handout below for each participant. Do not distribute handouts before the class.

- Air University Global College, *The Eight-Step Change Process* (2022)
- Air University Global College, *Managing Expectations for Leading Change* (2022)
- Air University Global College, *Overcoming Resistance* (2022)
- Air University Global College, *Leading Change Self-Assessment Worksheet* (2022)

Handouts are available in the Appendix.

Presenting the Lesson

NOTE: This lesson is designed for up to five (5) groups of participants. Groups should be no larger than five (5) members to maximize participation during small group discussion.

Introduction (5 minutes)

The introduction to the lesson sets the stage for future learning through a group interactive exercise on how people react to change.

Slide 1: Leading Change

Introduce the lesson.

One of the more challenging things your boss, and your boss's boss, face is transforming an organization. That organization could be a wing, a squadron, or the entire Department of the Air Force.

Both the Air Force and Space Force have hundreds of change efforts simultaneously underway at any given moment.

There is a good chance that you, as a flight commander, are responsible for implementing one (or more) of them.

What role do you, as a flight commander play in the business of *leading change*?

This lesson examines a few straightforward tools and techniques you can use with your flight to guide them through the process of change and overcome any roadblocks, which inevitably ensue.

Slide 2: Objectives

This slide lists the lesson objectives.

After participants have reviewed the lesson objectives, continue.

Slide 3: Interactive Exercise

Begin the exercise.

Today, the first thing we are going to do is an interactive exercise.

Follow the below steps in order. Allow minimal time for participants to react to your instructions but keep them moving and without too much confusion. Ensure there is room to conduct this exercise.

- 1. Stand up and listen to these instructions exactly.**
- 2. Pair up. Once you do, face your partner.** (Wait until complete.)
- 3. Take a good look at your partner. Very shortly, you are going to have to describe their appearance, just like in a police line-up.**
- 4. Be sure you can pick your partner out of a line of people. Be able to describe them in detail.** (Wait 30 seconds.)

5. **Turn away from your partner. (Rotate 180-degrees, so your backs are to each other.)**
6. **Now, each of you should make ONE change to your appearance. (For example, take off your glasses, put your hat on, etc.)** (Wait until complete.)
7. **Turn back around.**
8. **See if you can identify the change your partner made.** (Wait until complete.)
9. **Turn away from your partner again.** (Wait until complete.)
10. **This time make THREE additional changes to your appearance. Be quick.** (Wait until complete. Note that some participants will have difficulty changing three things – there may not be that many to change. This is expected.)
11. **Turn around. Can you identify the three changes made?** (Wait until complete.)

Direct participants to return to their seats.

Observe participants as they sit. Many participants will automatically fix (readjust) the things they changed in their appearance.

When complete, continue.

Initial Discussion (5 minutes)

The interactive exercise centers on describing how people react to change. This helps to describe the role of the flight commander in organizational change efforts.

(No slide) Interactive Exercise Outbrief

Continue the exercise.

In this exercise, you followed a simple set of steps associated with change.

Did any of you have trouble following the instructions?

(Show hands.) Slight pause.

How many of you re-adjusted from that change as soon as you sat down?

(Show hands.) Slight pause.

So, why did we do this exercise? What did we learn about change and change processes?

See note below.

Slide 4: Interactive Exercise (cont.)

Note: the bullets on this slide provide a quick summary of the anticipated responses. You should not display this slide until after the conversation is over and participants have provided their responses.

Anticipated response: There are three key takeaways from this exercise. Ensure participants understand these three key takeaways:

- A little change is easy.
- A lot of change is hard.
- Given opportunity (without reinforcement), change is quickly reversed, and we go back to a more comfortable way of doing things.

Participants may want to linger on this discussion and share stories of change gone wrong in their organizations. Keep the discussion on track and centered around these three points. Participants will have an opportunity to share their change stories during the activities later in the lesson.

Slide 5: "Leading" Change

Continue the presentation.

Your boss, and your boss's boss, have likely been taught to "lead change" using an eight-step process from Harvard Business School. It is a well-researched and documented approach to implementing and anchoring change (so that it doesn't revert) in an organization.

Your involvement with these steps, as a flight commander, is as an enabler – an agent for change.

Content Presentation (10 minutes)

This section of the lesson introduces Kotter’s eight-step change process and then identifies methods for managing expectations while implementing change.

Slide 6: The Eight-Step Change Process

Distribute the **Air University Global College, *The Eight-Step Change Process Reference Sheet (2022)*** document.

When complete, continue.

Before we continue, it is important that you have a basic understanding of the eight-step change process.

The worksheet provides a quick overview of the process and the actions involved at each step. This is the procedure your leadership will likely follow when implementing any change in your organization.

Take a moment to review it before we move on.

Pause for one or two minutes (1-2) for students to review the worksheet, then continue.

Slide 7: The Role of the Flight Commander

Continue the presentation by posing the following question to the large group.

About now, you should be asking yourselves these two questions:

With change, what is the role of the flight commander?

How do you serve as an “agent” of change in your organization?

Discuss in the large group. Write answers from participants on the board. Note that this discussion focuses on the role of the flight commander as a change agent, not specific tasks to implement or anchor change. (Specific behaviors are addressed in the next part of the lesson.)

Anticipated responses: Answers vary but should focus on flight commanders serving as both a *role model* (in adopting the change) and an *advocate* for how the change affects their flight members. In one, they represent the organization. In the other, they represent the needs and concerns of their people. In both they need to support their squadron commander’s vision for change.

The role of the flight commander during a change process can be summed up as “it depends.” Every change situation is different.

Ensuring you are aware of the eight-steps outlined here will help you identify where you fit in the change process along with some of the possible actions you can take to help anchor change in your organization.

Application Activities (15 minutes)

Up to this point, the lesson has focused on the mechanics of the change process and the role of the flight commander as a change agent.

There are two options for this part of the lesson – Activity 1 **or** Activity 2. Both are 15-minute group engagements which provide specific behaviors flight commanders can use to support change in their organizations.

Choose one of the activities, then continue.

Activity 1: Managing Expectations Activity

In this activity, participants look at how they can manage expectations in their flights to smoothly implement change.

Distribute **Air University Global College, 12 Lessons: *Managing Expectations for Leading Change (2022)***.

When complete, continue.

Begin the activity.

One of the most important things you can do as a flight commander is help your subordinates understand the change that is coming. By helping to “manage expectations” you can ensure a smoother transition to, or adoption of, any change.

The handout before you is a list of things you can do to help manage expectations in your organization.

Slide 8: Managing Expectations Activity

Continue the activity.

In your small groups, take a few minutes to review and discuss the handout. As you do, consider the following:

How would you implement these ideas in your organization?

(or, how have you seen these ideas implemented?)

What other ideas would you add to help manage expectations?

Try to identify at least ONE new skill or behavior to augment the list on the handout. Record your thoughts on your whiteboard/easel. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the group at the end of the exercise.

Monitor group discussions to stay on track. Conversation should focus on managing expectations or clarifying and adding a new one to the list.

After five to ten (5-10) minutes, continue.

Slide 9: Managing Expectations Outbrief

Review each group's contributions at the white board. Ask one group member to summarize their proposed skills/behaviors for the group.

Remind students that they can record ideas in the notes column of their worksheet.

Anticipated responses: Vary but should focus on active engagement. Effective leaders actively engage their subordinates when leading change. This encourages adoption and anchors the change in culture and practice.

When complete, continue.

Activity 2: Overcoming Resistance

In this activity, participants look at how they can overcome resistance in their flights to smoothly implement change.

Distribute the **Air University Global College, *Overcoming Resistance (2022)*** to all participants.

When complete, continue.

Begin the activity.

Resistance to change is normal. As you saw in our initial exercise, it doesn't stick unless reinforced. This is natural resistance to change. There can be many other forms of resistance. As a flight commander and change agent, it will be your job to overcome that resistance.

Researchers have identified nine (9) major reasons for resistance to change. These reasons are documented, with explanations, on the handout.

Slide 10: Overcoming Resistance Activity

Continue the activity.

In your small groups, take about 10 minutes to review and discuss the handout. As you do, consider the following:

How would you combat these problems in your organization?

(or, how have you seen these problems overcome?)

Try to identify at least ONE approach to overcome resistance in each area. Record your recommendations on your easel. Be prepared to present your approaches to the group when we reconvene.

Monitor group discussions to stay on track. Conversation should focus on techniques to overcome resistance at the flight level.

After ten (10) minutes, continue.

Slide 11: Overcoming Resistance Outbrief

Ask each group to brief their recommended approaches.

Anticipated responses: Answers will vary but should focus on actions flight commanders can take in responses to recognized resistance (some situational examples provided below).

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We need to be good messengers. <i>Operational forces may not be likely to understand the impetus behind a change effort, nor see its benefits as leadership. Need to be good messengers both up the chain of command as well as to flight.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We need to be sure to keep Airmen and Guardians in the loop of the change vision. <i>Time and distance cloud the message, and the priorities in the Pentagon do not always translate to the priorities in a geographic combatant command overseas, a MAJCOM or base on the west coast, or a Reserve or National Guard unit.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once people get involved be sure to praise them in public. <i>Perhaps they have too many things on their plate already, or they are uncomfortable taking the lead or getting involved until they see progress.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We need to be proactive with communication and help generate buy-in. <i>Even if all parties agree with the vision, they may do so passively.</i>

Lesson Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

The final lesson activity is a self-assessment of leading change behaviors. This activity feeds the final lesson in the course – *The Road Ahead* – and will be used to support the development of the students' personal development plan.

Distribute the **Air University Global College, *Leading Change Self-Assessment Worksheet (2022)*** to all participants.

When complete, continue.

Slide 12: Self-Assessment Exercise

Initiate the self-assessment and wrap up the lesson.

In this lesson, we've looked at how, as a flight-level leader, you will support the leading change initiatives of your boss (or bosses' boss) by being a change agent. You have seen the commonly-accepted change model typically used by the Department of the Air Force leaders. And you have had the opportunity to do a couple activities to reinforce the notion that change is not easy, but by identifying methods to help implement change at the flight level it can lead to success.

Now, it's time to take a moment to reflect on those skills and behaviors.

The *Leading Change Self-Assessment Worksheet* is designed to help you plan for your future. The instructions are self-explanatory. Take a moment to read them, then fill out the sheet. If you need more time, you can go into the break.

Keep this worksheet for reference. You will need it again for the last lesson of the course.

End. Break (10 minutes).

Appendix: Required Materials and Handouts

The materials required for this lesson include:

- Air University Global College, *The Eight-Step Change Process* (2022)
- Air University Global College, *Managing Expectations for Leading Change* (2022)
- Air University Global College, *Overcoming Resistance* (2022)
- Air University Global College, *Leading Change Self-Assessment Worksheet* (2022)

These handouts, on the following pages, are designed for printing directly from the lesson plan. Ensure you print enough copies for all class participants.

The Eight-Step Change Process

Developed by the Air University Global College

Step	Actions	Notes
Establish a Sense of Urgency	Identify and discuss crisis, potential crisis, or major opportunities.	
Form a Powerful Guiding Coalition	Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort. Encourage the group to work together as a team.	
Create a Vision	Create a vision to help direct the change effort. Develop strategies for achieving vision.	
Communicate the Vision	Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies. Teach new behaviors by example of the guiding coalition.	
Empower Others to Act on the Vision	Get rid of obstacles to change. Change systems of structures that undermine the vision. Encourage risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions.	
Plan for and Create Short Term Wins	Plan for visible performance improvements. Create those improvements. Recognize and reward employees involved in the improvements.	
Consolidate Improvements and Produce Additional Change	Use increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that don't fit the vision. Hire, promote, and develop employees who can implement the vision.	
Institutionalize New Approaches	Articulate connections between new behaviors and organization success. Develop means to ensure leadership development and succession.	

Adapted from Kotter, John P. "Leading Change," *Harvard Business Review* March-April 1995: 3.

Note: While Kotter's steps represent an important starting point, these are not considered a complete, all-encompassing solution to leading an organizational change effort. These steps may not occur in order presented.

Managing Expectations for Leading Change

Developed by the Air University Global College

One of the most important things you can do as a flight commander is help your subordinates understand the change that is coming. By helping to “manage expectations” you can ensure a smoother transition to, or adoption of, any change.

The handout before you is a list of things you can do to help manage expectations in your organization.

Skills	Behaviors	Other ideas
Under-promise and over-deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define your own measures of success Set and communicate timelines and standards you intend to meet 	
Set short-term goals together with your key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set realistic end dates Manage expectations by establishing short-term goals 	
Have your stakeholders commit in a public setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committing in public and with peers to help stakeholders become partners in the change process 	
Repeat messages to communicate clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain good relationships Be a good communicator Repeat messages to ensure consistency and clarity 	
Changing the message is a strength, not a weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modify your message when the truth or situation changes Embrace the role of “communicator” 	
Set up regular meetings and a single communications center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently communicate the change vision and status Use a website, blog, bulletin board, or other common communications center 	

Skills	Behaviors	Other ideas
Managing expectations calls for establishing two-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research stakeholders; learn about them and their culture • Listen reflectively 	
Always communicate what is not possible and why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to get to “yes” but don’t be afraid to say “no” 	
The organizational leader should lead the managing expectations efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the boss, but always remember that you are the voice of the boss to your people 	
Being positive is a catalyst in managing expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide enthusiastic communication to encourage positive responses 	
Don’t fear inevitable incidents, just respond promptly to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond swiftly with appropriate actions to not lose trust 	
Get around egos by always using honest, two-way communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present both good news and not-so-good news • Use specific feedback 	

Adapted from Everett Spain, “Managing Expectations while Leading Change,” *Military Review*. 2007.

Overcoming Resistance

Developed by the Air University Global College

Reason	Why?	Ideas & Methods to Overcome
Lack of Trust	A basic reason for members to resist change efforts stems from the mistrust of those proposing changes. Mistrust can magnify other sources of resistance as well. If personnel feel there are hidden agendas or unknown implications for change efforts, these beliefs may lead to further resistance.	
Belief that change is unnecessary	If it "isn't broke don't fix it," describes this area of resistance. If previous methods and processes are working, why change them?	Example: Leaders must convince members that proposed changes are vital to the organization's success.
Belief that the change is not feasible	Even though subordinates may believe there are problems that need to be addressed, some may resist due to their belief that change initiatives will fail. Particularly where radical changes in procedures or processes are being considered, subordinates may resist due to their cynicism and doubts over the possibility of success.	
Economic threats	Regardless of the benefits to the organization, in some cases change may result in lost income, benefits, or job security. If so, subordinates may see change as inherently threatening. Such is the way when technology is used to replace people and processes as within manufacturing concerns. In the Air Force, initiatives for remotely piloted aircraft have threatened the livelihood for some aircrew members.	

Reason	Why?	Ideas & Methods to Overcome
Relative high cost	Regardless of the value of the change initiatives, inevitably they come at a price. Often the costs may appear to outweigh the benefits, thus leading to resistance. Resources must be expended to implement most changes, while resources for previous methods are eventually replaced or lost. Training time and new equipment are just two expenses involved in change. Costs associated with change become easy targets for those resisting change.	
Fear of personal failure	Change may replace some areas of expertise with new technologies or methods. People with low confidence levels may resist change due to their fear of failing and/or their unwillingness to learn new skills or processes.	Example: A proposed change would be more attractive to one who is given adequate time and training to learn new skills or processes.
Resentment of interference	There are some that resist change simply to avoid feeling that they are controlled by others. Attempts to manipulate or force change will foster resentment or hostility in subordinates such as these. These members will continue to resist change efforts until they acknowledge the merits of the initiative or at least perceive some personal gain from it. Resistance to change is a natural response by people that want to protect their interests.	Example: Leaders should accept this as a normal reaction rather than an unwarranted obstacle. Active resistance is a sign of strong beliefs and values that could serve as a powerful entity in the change effort if harnessed and redirected. By learning how to redirect these forces, effective leaders can actually improve the transformation process.
Threat to values and ideals	Changes that appear to threaten one's values or beliefs will meet strong resistance. Threats to workers' values may invoke strong emotions that promote resistance. If the values are imbedded within an organizational culture, the resistance could become widespread.	
Loss of status and power	Major changes in organizational structure often lead to a shift in individual power and status for some members. In some cases, authority shifts causing changes in decision-making or supervisory authority. This too can produce resistance to change efforts.	

Adapted from Yukl, G., and Lepsinger, R, "Leading Change Adapting and Innovating in an Uncertain World," *Leadership in Action*: Volume 26:2, 2006.

Leading Change Self-Assessment Worksheet

This self-assessment provides an opportunity for you to assess your own leadership skills and behaviors. These skills and behaviors are based upon the concepts addressed within this lesson. *You will use these worksheets again during the final lesson of the course.*

NOTE: Not all these skills and behaviors were covered in this lesson, rather, they reflect what an ideal flight commander should know and be able to do in this topic area.

Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 in each of the areas below:

5 – Needs No Improvement

3 – Average

1 – Needs Significant Improvement

ICL Reference Organizational	Skill	Behavior	Self- Assessment (1-5)
Managing Organizations and Resources	Communicate Change	At the team or flight level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the importance of proactively embracing leading change Proactively communicate and alert team of latest efforts _____ _____ 	
Managing Organizations and Resources	Implement Vision	At the team or flight level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate openness and support of different and innovative change ideas offered by others to solve problems or address issues _____ _____ 	
Managing Organizations and Resources	Adapt to Change	At the team or flight level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and supports organizational changes Help individuals overcome resistance to change _____ _____ 	

Some tips:

- Ask your supervisors, peers, and subordinates how they perceive your behaviors in these areas. Often, we are biased toward ourselves, meaning we tend to rate ourselves better than others actually perceive us. In leadership we must strive to minimize the differential between how *we think we behave* and *how others perceive* our behaviors.

My Notes