

4/3 BURKE-LITWIN MODEL

What is it?

The "Burke-Litwin model" is a model of organisational change and performance. It provides a link between an assessment of the wider institutional context and the nature and process of change within an organisation. It makes the following key points:

- The external environment is the most powerful driver for organisational change
- Changes in the external environment lead to changes in the "transformational" factors within an organisation - its mission and strategy, its organisational culture and its leadership. These are referred to as transformational because if changed, they have an impact across the whole organisation and its staff
- Changes in these transformational factors lead to changes in the "transactional" factors within an organisation - its structure, systems, management practices and climate. These are more operational factors and changes in them may or may not have an organisation-wide impact

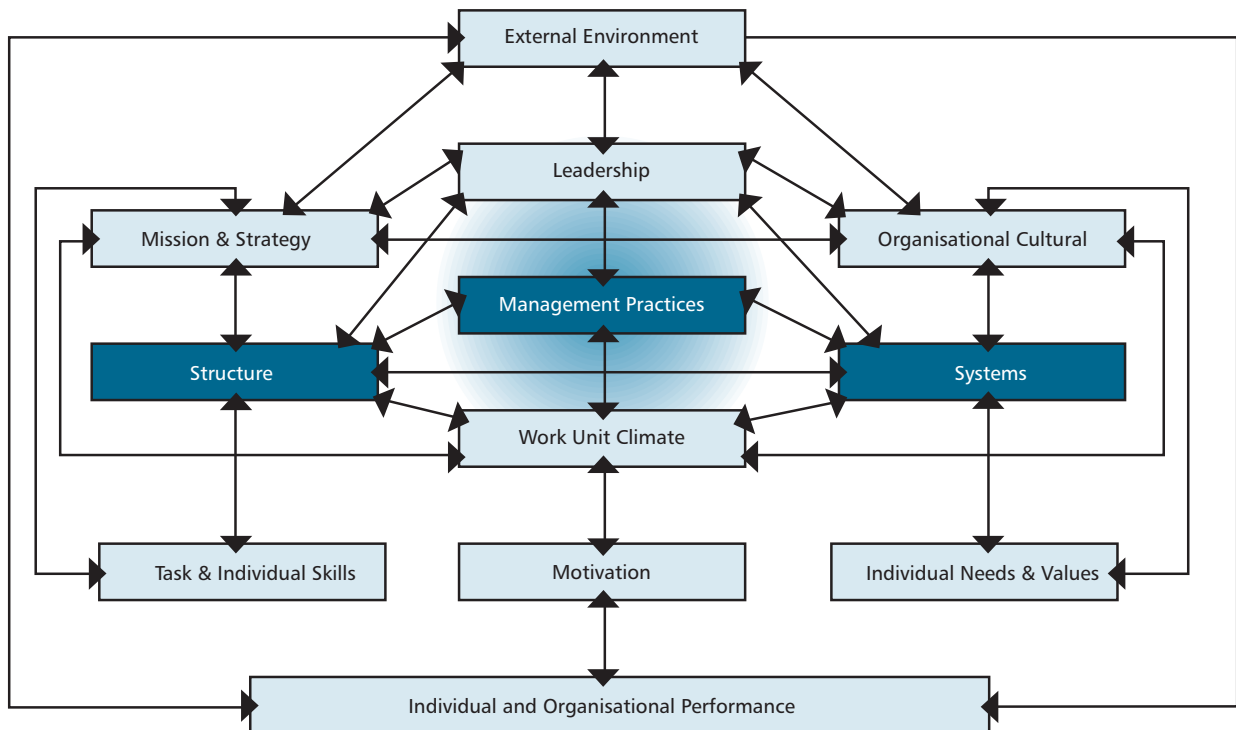
• Together, changes in transformational and transactional factors affect motivation, which in turn impacts on individual and organisational performance

• The model describes 12 organisational variables (incorporating the 7 variables of the 7-S model see 2/2) and the relationships between them. Each of the variables interact and a change in any one of them can eventually impact on the others. This is useful in explaining not only how organisations perform, but also how they can be changed

Internally, the key levers for major organisational change are the transformational factors.

Transactional factors are more relevant when change is about "fine tuning" the organisation.

However, to be effective and sustainable, changes in transformational and transactional factors need to be consistent with each other.



How do I use it?

- Gather data on relevant boxes based on desk research and interviews with key stakeholders throughout the organisation
- Summarise findings in a report for senior staff. This report can then be used as a basis for identifying which boxes relate to which executives

and managers, and can be useful in helping them understand the complex performance and change issues they are trying to manage

- Key questions to include are summarised in the table below:

Dimensions of Model	Key Questions
1. External Environment	What are the key external drivers? How are these likely to impact on the organisation? Does the organisation recognise these?
2. Mission & Strategy	What do top management see as the organisation's mission and strategy? Is there a clear vision and mission statement? What are employees' perceptions of these?
3. Leadership	Who provides overall direction for the organisation? Who are the role models? What is the style of leadership? What are the perspectives of employees?
4. Organisational Culture	What are the overt and covert rules, values, customs and principles that guide organisational behaviour?
5. Structure	How are functions and people arranged in specific areas and levels of responsibility? What are the key decision-making, communication and control relationships?
6. Systems	What are the organisation's policies and procedures, including systems for reward and performance appraisal, management information, HR and resource planning, etc?
7. Management Practices	How do managers use human and material resources to carry out the organisation's strategy? What is their style of management and how do they relate to subordinates?
8. Work Unit Climate	What are the collective impressions, expectations and feelings of staff? What is the nature of relationship with work unit colleagues and those in other work units?
9. Task & Individual Skills	What are the task requirements and individual skills/abilities/knowledge needed for task effectiveness? How appropriate is the organisation's "job-person" match?
10. Individual Needs & Values	What do staff value in their work? What are the psychological factors that would enrich their jobs and increase job satisfaction?
11. Motivation	Do staff feel motivated to take the action necessary to achieve the organisation's strategy? Of factors 1-10, which seem to be impacting most on motivation?
12. Individual & Organisational Performance	What is the level of performance in terms of productivity, customer satisfaction, quality, etc? Which factors are critical for motivation and therefore performance?

Reference: Adapted from Burke W.W. & Litwin G.H. (1992)

A Causal of Organisation Performance and Change in "Journal of Management".