

Lewin Application Guide

Apply unfreezing, moving, and refreezing to a defined change

Before you begin

Complete the Change Approach and Framework Selection Guide first. Confirm why this framework fits the change and what problem it is expected to solve.

Change summary

Change statement

Business or customer outcome

Affected groups

Main type of change

Incremental or transformational

Planned, emergent, dialogic, or hybrid approach

Main implementation risk

Phase 1: Unfreeze

Prepare the organization to release the current pattern. Lewin views the current state as an equilibrium held by driving and restraining forces.

- Define the current behaviour, process, norm, or routine that must change.
- Identify internal and external drivers creating the need for change.
- List driving forces supporting change and restraining forces maintaining the current state.
- Build a credible case for change, including the risk of inaction.
- Engage affected groups and surface resistance, concerns, and cultural assumptions.

- Clarify what will remain stable to reduce unnecessary uncertainty.

Action	Driving or restraining force	Owner	Due date	Evidence

Phase 2: Move

Introduce and test the new behaviour, process, or way of working. Movement includes learning and adjustment, not only execution.

- Define the desired future state and expected behaviours.
- Break the change into manageable workstreams and phases.
- Provide training, tools, access, time, and support.
- Use pilots and feedback when parts of the solution remain uncertain.
- Remove barriers in policy, process, technology, workload, or decision rights.
- Monitor errors, adoption, customer impact, and emerging resistance.

Action	Affected group	Support required	Owner	Measure

Phase 3: Refreeze

Stabilize the new way so the organization does not return to old routines.

- Update procedures, role expectations, systems, and controls.
- Align measures, recognition, consequences, and manager routines.
- Embed the new practice into onboarding and training.
- Confirm old tools, workarounds, or conflicting processes have been retired.
- Use feedback and performance data to verify the new state is stable.

- Continue reinforcement until the new behaviour becomes normal.

Reinforcement action	System or routine affected	Owner	Review date	Evidence of stability

Measurement and review

Measure	Baseline	Target	Frequency	Owner

Final review questions

- ☐ Does the plan address the main reason this framework was selected?
- ☐ Are actions assigned to named owners?
- ☐ Are barriers, resources, and dependencies visible?
- ☐ Do measures focus on adoption and outcomes, not activity alone?
- ☐ Is there a feedback loop for learning and adjustment?
- ☐ Are leadership actions and communication responsibilities clear?

Leadership style affects how the change is understood and experienced. Refer to the related Business Capsule on leadership styles when it becomes available.