

Force-Field Analysis (General)

Force-field analysis (similar to S.W.O.T. analysis) is a simple, yet powerful technique, useful at the beginning of a project to define the nature of the beast you are dealing with. It is particularly useful when seeking to develop new Management Systems.

A small group, 6-8, stakeholders is required. Defining the scope of your deliberations is important-Put some boundaries around your discussions.

The process goes something like this-

1 Revise the brainstorming rules

BRAINSTORMING RULES

Say the first thing that pops into your mind

Do not be judgemental of your or others ideas

Contributors do not have to justify their ideas

Do not interrupt the other person

The wilder the idea the better the idea

Do not be constrained by convention

Think out of the square

Quantity not necessarily quality initially

Every person and every idea has equal worth

Build on the ideas put forward by others

Sometimes you may wish to have a fun exercise to practice the brainstorming technique to start with. One exercise I did had a number of OHS professionals one of whom ran a take-away shop as an extra business. We brainstormed how to increase the sales of fish & chips at "Buck's Greasy Spoon" (That was the name the group came up with for the take-away shop, the owner took this in his stride) One of your members may have a hobby or activity they are trying to improve and you can brainstorm how to help them improve. Main thing is light-hearted & not too serious.

2 Brainstorm an objective or objectives for the Management System .

3 Brainstorm the promoting / facilitating forces acting towards the objective

4 Brainstorm the constraining / restraining forces acting against the objective

5 Develop an action plan to boost the facilitating / promoting forces and negate the constraining / restraining forces.

Discussion needs to be recorded on butchers paper, on a recording whiteboard or on the fly with a laptop & data projector. Always have butchers paper and blu-tac available in case the technology fails or the power goes out. One of the outcomes of the above discussion is that you will define a number of the good things you are already doing in the area being considered, in itself, not a bad thing. Always make sure you feedback the results of the discussions to the participants and, once decided, what actions resulted from the discussions.