



מכון ויצמן למדע  
WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

# Managing Change in an Academic Environment

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# Outline

1. Organizational changes in general
2. The Academic Environment
3. Implementing changes in academia
4. Examples
5. Summary



# Change

1. Change is good.
2. Change is meant to bring us to a better place.
3. Without changes, life is boring.
4. The world changes constantly. Those who do not change with it, stay behind.
5. Change can bring people together and enhance solidarity.

# ***Principia***

## *The 3 Laws of Motion*

### ***Law I***

Every body continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a right line, unless it is **compelled to change that state** by forces impressed upon it.

### ***Law II***

**The change** of motion is proportional to the **force** impressed;

### ***Law III***

To **every action** there is always opposed an **equal reaction**.



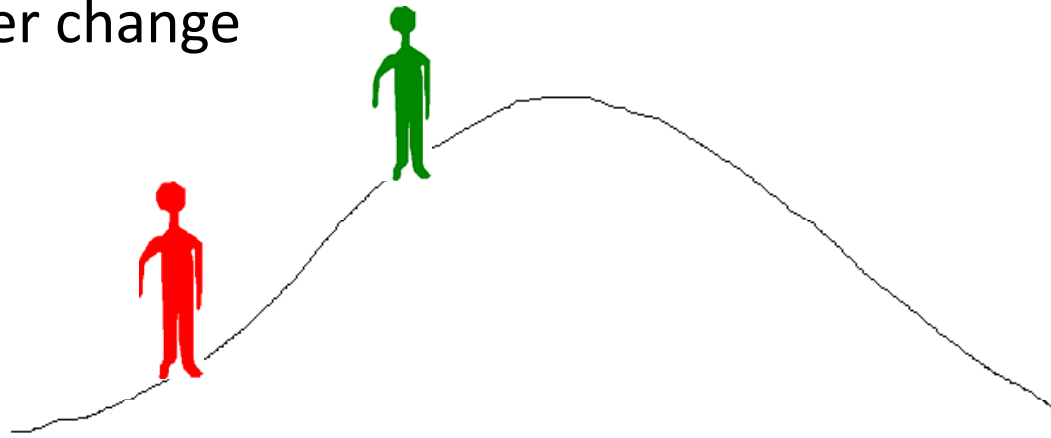
**Isaac Newton**  
(1643 - 1727)

# Changes, Step by Step

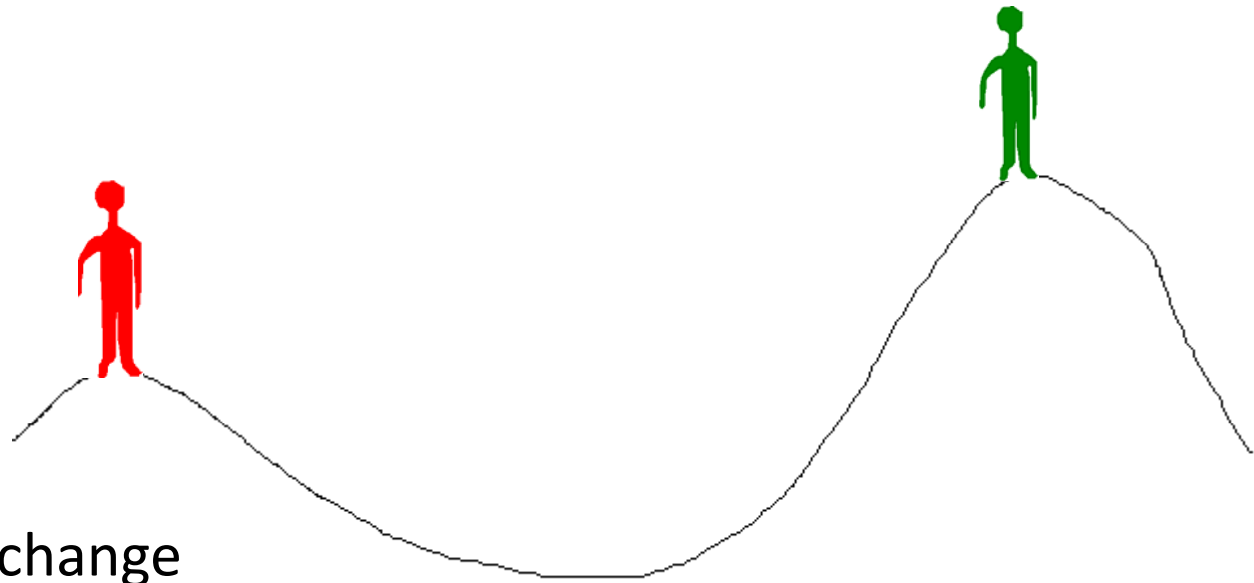
- 1. Realize** that a change is required  
*(reaction or a self initiative)*
- 2. Decide** where to go  
*(alone or with others)*
- 3. Convince** the others to join the journey  
*(explain, create incentives , negotiate or force)*
- 4. Move**



1<sup>st</sup> order change



2<sup>nd</sup> order change



## Convincing:

1. Change Agents
2. Steering committee
3. Emphasize benefits of the move, or demonstrate that there is no choice.
4. Positive messages.
5. Rewards and incentives.
6. Leave small pockets of resistance behind – they will join later.
7. Ensure quick wins after the move

# The Academic Environment

3 very different sectors.





# The Academic Environment

1. Old structures.
2. Old traditions.



A culture that does not welcome changes



## **In an Academic Environment..**

- Change Agents from all relevant sectors are required.
- Mind the different interests of the 3 sectors.
- Academic freedom is Taboo.
- Incentives work better than force.
- Longer “Convincing step”.



Don't **JUST DO IT.**

# Example I

## Public Tenders Law

1. 2nd order change in the purchasing system
2. Over a year of slower purchasing.
3. Costly process, requires management attention.
4. Touches the Academic sector in marginal but sensitive spots.
5. Conflicting interests of Academics and the Administration.

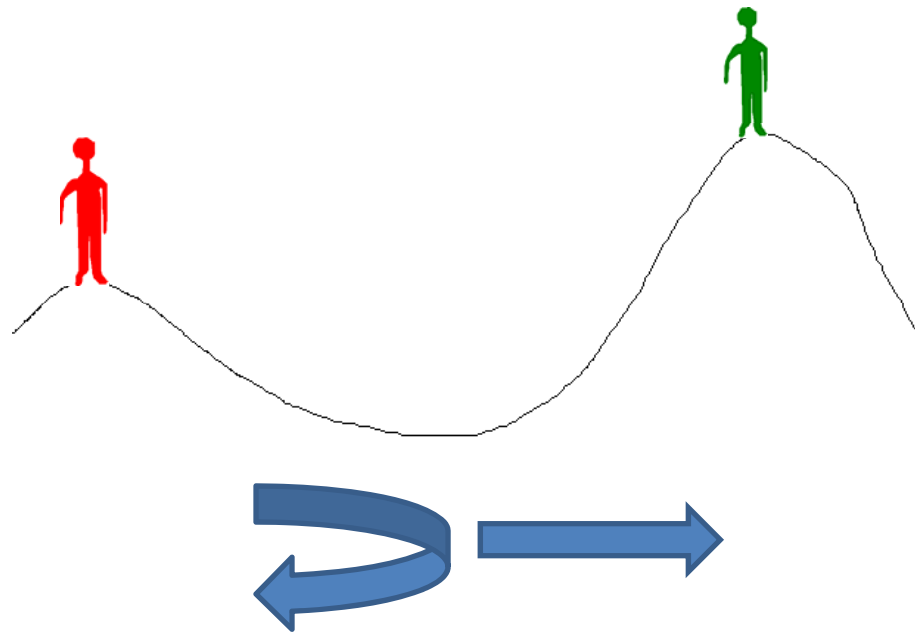
## Public Tenders Law

1. A steering committee worked for a year and governed the process. Senior academics did not engage.
2. Academics ignored seminars and presentations on the subject.
3. In some specific tenders conflicts rose between “freedom” and “good business practice”.
4. In specific tenders, compromises were made to comply with wishes of the Academic sector and the tenders law.
5. Not over yet.

## Example II

### Replacing an old e-mail system

4 years ago a 2<sup>nd</sup> order change failed.



# Replacing an old e-mail system

A second attempt is happening now.

1. Long testing period to ensure technical success.
2. Large number of Change Agents in all sectors.
3. Intensive communication and support.
4. Creation of positive atmosphere around the move.
5. **Incentives:** smart phones that only work with the new e-mail system.
6. Pockets of resistance will move last.



# Summary

1. Implementing changes in an academic environment is 3 times harder. Each sector requires a special treatment.
2. There are a few TABOOS in academic sector, which are not to be changed.
3. Don't just do it. Ensure a critical mass of "convinced" in each relevant sector before the move.
4. Cultivate a culture of change, celebrate successful changes.



# Thank You



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