



# Aligning Change

Guiding Marc O'Polo Employees through the International Change Process

Christina Anton

BACHELOR'S THESIS  
November 2022

Bachelor of Business Administration  
International Business

## **ABSTRACT**

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu  
Tampere University of Applied Sciences  
Bachelor of Business Administration  
International Business

ANTON CHRISTINA:

Aligning Change

Guiding Marc O'Polo Employees through the International Change Process

Bachelor's thesis 83 pages, appendices 5 pages

November 2022

---

Globalization heavily changed the current business landscape. As a result, many firms view internationalization as a future prospect. To seize potential business opportunities, transformation of business processes and organizational culture is required. A frequent reason for the change's failure lies in the misalignment of these two processes. This paper's purpose is the investigation of methods fostering alignment to successfully manage international change at Marc O'Polo. Nine semi-structured interviews with employees from different departments at Marc O'Polo SE were conducted. The research was complemented with a questionnaire distributed to participants. Secondary data, presented in the theoretical framework, supported the primary data.

The analysis of results relies on established pain points and further draws on interviewees' needs regarding supporting mechanisms in the international change process. Established pain points entail a sense of felt insignificance, uncertainty about the processes status and chances of success, stress caused by fast-changing requirements, and missing support systems. To mitigate these points, research shows the need for skill development opportunities, dedicated support persons, social connection and belonging, adapted process and project monitoring, enhanced communication, and an extended awareness about internationalization.

To align change processes and guide employees through internationalization, the design of a holistic change plan is recommended. The recommendations entail a framework built on four pillars advising personnel development managers in the design of apparent methods. The framework focuses on guiding and directing at first, and empowering employees before pushing and pulling them to engage in the change secondly. Lastly, the model considers a desire to actively shape by involving employees in strategy design.

---

Key words: change management, internationalization, personnel development, engagement

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	5
1.1	Internationalization and its relevance to business performance .....	5
1.2	Commissioning company .....	6
1.3	Objective, purpose, and research questions .....	8
1.4	Research approach.....	10
1.5	Thesis outline .....	11
2	MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE .....	12
2.1	Change processes and learning.....	12
2.2	Change management theories .....	16
2.2.1	The 8-step model.....	16
2.2.2	ADKAR model of change.....	19
2.3	Managing resistance to change .....	20
2.4	Personality and change management.....	24
2.5	Synthesis of theories.....	27
3	METHODOLOGY.....	31
3.1	Mixed method study .....	31
3.2	Data collection method.....	33
3.2.1	Qualitative interviews.....	33
3.2.2	Supportive questionnaires .....	36
3.3	Data analysis method.....	37
3.3.1	Qualitative interviews.....	37
3.3.2	Supporting questionnaire.....	39
3.3.3	Synthesis of data collection .....	41
4	RESULTS .....	44
4.1	Description of interview results .....	44
4.1.1	ADKAR .....	45
4.1.2	Established pain points.....	49
4.1.3	Established needs .....	51
4.2	Results from questionnaire .....	53
4.2.1	Data on participants.....	53
4.2.2	Personality and change .....	55
4.3	Summarized results .....	59
4.4	Synthesis of results .....	61
4.4.1	Current pain points in the internationalization process .....	61
4.4.2	An approach to support different personalities in the process of internationalization .....	63

4.4.3 Recommendations to guide Marc O’Polo employees through international change.....	64
5 DISCUSSION .....	69
5.1 Discussion of results .....	69
5.2 Contribution to previous results.....	71
5.3 Practical conclusions.....	72
5.4 Critical evaluation of research design and implementation .....	74
REFERENCES .....	76
APPENDICES.....	79

## 1 INTRODUCTION

“Most companies never expand outside their home markets. What drives the ones that do?” (Benito, G. R. G., Surdu, I. & Greve, H. R. 2021). Researching behavioural theory and internationalization, Benito et al. (2021) revealed frequent decision drivers for international expansion. Among the most prominent factors were poorly executed market research, executives’ desire to enhance their reputation as well as the need to match the competition. These intentions provided, Benito et al. (2021) view most initiatives’ failure as inevitable. Successful change initiatives, on the contrary, consider the organization’s ability to learn and its readiness to change, as well. Therefore, this paper aims at providing people-centred recommendations facilitating successful internationalization for a case company. Placing change management, reluctance to change and personality at the centre of this research, the author contemplates the above-established success factors. (Benito et al. 2021)

### 1.1 Internationalization and its relevance to business performance

Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (n.d.) defines internationalization as “the act of bringing something under the control or protection of two or more nations” (Oxford University Press n.d.). Therefore, the process of internationalization concerns the change from unilateral to multilateral practices in the business context. For businesses this interdependence shows in an ever “increasing integration of economies around the world, particularly through trade and financial flows” (Naldi 2008). Access to previously untapped markets offers firms the potential for new business cases. Considering this change’s potential, one can conclude that globalization profoundly changed the economic landscape. Until the present day, this development continues to present small to medium-sized businesses (SME) with new-found growth potential. (Naldi 2008)

Yet, a recent McKinsey report (2022), aimed at helping SMEs thrive, shows a significant drop in revenue in OECD countries between February 2020 and April 2021. According to this report, 70-80% of SMEs across 32 countries informed a decrease in revenue between 30-50%. Amongst other challenges such as a

struggle to keep up with digitalization, commitments concerning carbon emissions or talent acquisition, strategic internationalization is named as one prominent challenge. The once as an opportunity-considered internationalization process now presents small business owners with unprecedented challenges such as supply chain disruptions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Complementing this report's findings, another study showed that of all small companies electronically selling online, only four per cent conduct international business. (Lin, Rayavarapu, Tadieddine & Yeoh 2022)

Despite current challenges, internationalization continues to prove relevant to business growth. The two main forces responsible for this development concern domestic market saturation and the rise of emerging markets. The conduction of business with foreign partners asks firms to upskill and adapt processes in four areas: strategy, people, cost, and risk. The success of the international expansion, therefore, depends on the ability to change to sustain organizational health. Further, a supporting McKinsey study (2012) suggests the development of a clear direction, a shared objective, as well as the development of capabilities. According to McKinsey, successful internationalization will be rewarded to those who manage to create an agile environment open to change. (Dewhurst, Harris & Heywoo 2012)

## **1.2 Commissioning company**

Founded in 1967, the Marc O'Polo SE is a German fashion retailer headquartered in Stephanskirchen, Germany. The company was founded in Sweden by two Swedes and an American. Werner Böck is the one holding most of the company's shares. Currently employing 2.309 employees, the Marc O'Polo SE delivers five different collections. Most prominent is the Marc O'Polo Modern Casual collection. Other collections are divided into Marc O'Polo Denim, Marc O'Polo Shoes, and Marc O'Polo Accessories. There are also the license collections with bodywear, eyewear, home, junior, and legwear. All lines stand for high-class, contemporary premium modern casual wear. The main customer is aged between 30-50 years old. This target group accounts for a 75% share of sales. Having generated an annual turnover of 592 million in the fiscal year 2021/22, the brand targets

expanding and growing further by following the vision of becoming the “leading modern casual and sustainable lifestyle brand in the global premium segment delivering high quality and innovative products” (Marc O’Polo SE 2022). (Marc O’Polo SE 2022)

Derived from the shared vision, Marc O’Polo’s corporate strategy relies on three main pillars: becoming one of the top three global premium casual lifestyle brands; driving profitable growth; and delivering products that stand for innovation, high quality, sustainability, and a modern casual look. To achieve these goals, the company sees its greatest growth potential in internationalization. Referring to the brand’s current domestic market strength, Marc O’Polo aims at “using -- strength [from the] DACH region to drive forward internationalization” (Marc O’Polo SE 2022). The term DACH is an abbreviation referring to the three German-speaking European countries Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (O’Neill 2021). Currently, Marc O’Polo distributes its products in over 41 countries worldwide sustaining around 2.268 stores and retail partners in total. Further expansion plans concern store openings in the US, Canada, or Denmark. Employees at Marc O’Polo are divided into three groups according to the performed type of work and the location: headquarter, retail national and retail international. While most employees work at the headquarter or in national retail, the Marc O’Polo SE also employs 550 employees working in stores abroad (Marc O’Polo SE n.d.). (Marc O’Polo SE 2022)

Supporting corporate strategy, the board successively derived 17 strategic initiatives (Marc O’Polo SE n.d.). Guided by its vision to “feel the spirit of Marc O’Polo, regardless of where you are”, the strategic initiative HR INTERNATIONAL is one of them (Marc O’Polo SE n.d.). The enclosed objectives are fostering an inclusive culture, developing international skills amongst employees to prepare and up-skill the current employees for the upcoming internationalization, becoming an international employer brand, as well as focussing on international recruiting. Tasked with the support of managers and staff, the personnel development team plays a crucial role in facilitating the successful internationalization process. Support is currently provided by offering training and qualification methods through the Marc O’Polo University, coordination of individual seminars, consultation of team and organizational development measures, and by offering young talent development

programmes, manager development or health club activities. (Marc O'Polo SE n.d.)

Regarding internationalization, the personnel development team offers Marc O'Polo employees language training, intercultural collaboration, and communication workshops as well as brown bag lunch sessions to enhance language skills. Brown Bag Lunches are events facilitating informal training over lunch time (Kenton 2021). To increasingly establish English as the corporate language, company-wide communication is mostly available in both, German, and English. Messages from the CEO are often provided in English with German subtitle. (Marc O'Polo SE n.d.)

### **1.3 Objective, purpose, and research questions**

Internationalization requires the change of business processes, organizational environment, and individual behaviour to adapt to the changed requirements. This paper's objective is to explore how the personnel development team can support and guide Marc O'Polo employees through change caused by the integration of internationalization in corporate strategy. This research thereby contributes to the accomplishment of the strategic initiative HR INTERNATIONAL. The initiative's necessity results from an uncovered individual scepticism and hesitation to support internationalization. However, establishing broad commitment is considered vital for successful change implementation. To align the individual change to the organizational change process by offering support to employees is at the centre of this research.

The main research question was developed considering the paper's objective:

*How can Marc O'Polo employees be guided through the process of internationalization?*

The author further posed two sub research questions to support the main research question:

*What are the current pain points for employees in the internationalization process?*

*How to approach different personalities and support them in the process of internationalization?*

The primary data collection process was designed to facilitate accommodating the posed sub research questions. Gathered data, supported by secondary data, thereby enabled the author to answer to the main research question. The recommendations proposed to the commissioning company consider these answers. The overall purpose of posed recommendations was to enhance international change management by researching experience of current support as well as individual needs. In addition, existing research on change management theories supported the conduction of gathering primary data. Consequently, enhanced international change management was aimed at fostering companywide commitment to internationalization. Therefore, this paper's intent further supports the success of Marc O'Polo's internationalization efforts and thereby drives business success.

The two sub questions were posed to develop an understanding of employees' perception and attitude towards internationalization. The first sub question explored individual employees' pain points caused by the change process. This analysis of the status quo served as a basis to provide solutions for the development of current initiatives. In addition, it provided clues for the design of future initiatives. The second sub research question aimed at establishing individual needs for further support and guidance in the international change process. Special attention was drawn to provide recommendations according to persona and personality type.

## 1.4 Research approach

Applied research aims to provide recommendations to a specific situation. This paper provides recommendations for guiding Marc O'Polo employees through the international change process. Research conducted by the author facilitated the development of recommendations. Acquired expertise provides Marc O'Polo the opportunity to strengthen strategy support and commitment. This helps Marc O'Polo to accomplish its overall objective of mastering internationalization. The primary data was supported by secondary data drawn from academic journals, books, and online articles. (Adams, Khan & Raeside 2014)

Quantitative research methods rely on both, generating and drawing upon numerical data while qualitative methods focus on non-numerical data. These approaches are not to be considered as opposing approaches but rather as ends of a continuum. With emphasis on conducted interviews, this paper strongly relies on qualitative research methods. "To understand the relationship between socially constructed knowledge and possible underlying causal structure, processes and forces" the author complements the qualitative research by integrating the use of quantitative data in form of a questionnaire (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). This so-called mixed method study is therefore characterized by combining the use of quantitative and qualitative studies. The quantitative study will follow the qualitative research. This approach is called sequential exploratory design. (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019)

The qualitative data was collected by conducting nine semi-structured interviews with Marc O'Polo employees. A short questionnaire was provided to each participant at the end of the interview, allowing the author to enhance the study with quantitative data. The author could seize on seven results. Qualitative data from the interviews, as well as from individual questions from the questionnaire, were analysed according to a method developed by Mayring (Mayring 2015). Quantitative data was analysed by relying on charts and graphs. Posed recommendations were based on the conducted analysis.

## 1.5 Thesis outline

The first chapter introduces the reader to the concept of internationalization and its relevance to business performance. The introduction to the research topic is followed with the presentation of the commissioning company. This part identified an openness to change and successful change management as core elements to successful internationalization. After having introduced the reader to the chosen research approach, the theoretical framework is presented. Chosen theories offer insights on change processes and learning, change management theories, management of resistance to change, and personality types' impact on change management. Prior to introducing the reader to the research results in chapter four, chapter three introduces the methodology used. Validity of such as well as a conclusion and an outlook are presented last in the discussion section.

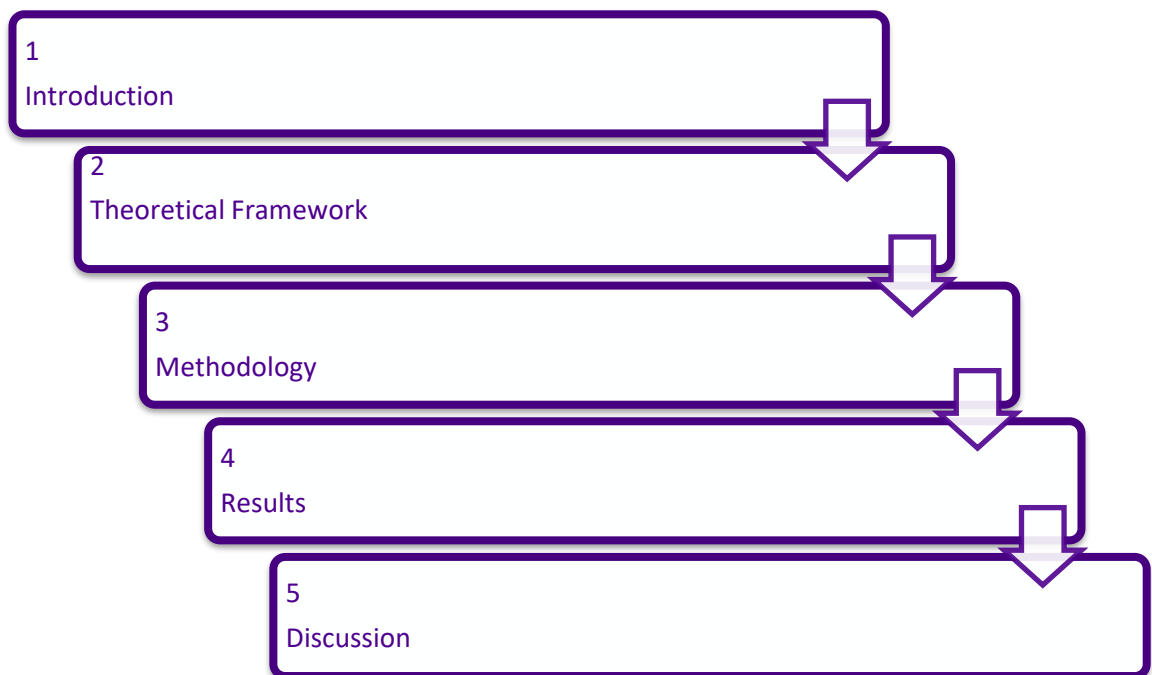


FIGURE 1. Thesis outline.

## **2 MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

Change, regardless of voluntary or inevitable nature, is a complex phenomenon challenging an organization's status quo. Owning this change asks for strong management and relevant measures supporting individuals involved and impacted by it. The prerequisite for a successful implementation is the creation of companywide commitment. The chosen theories presented below all contribute to facilitating successful change. First, emphasis lies on understanding the individual change process. Second, two relevant change management theories and third, theories addressing resistance to former plans are presented. Lastly, the factor personality is taken into consideration.

### **2.1 Change processes and learning**

"[C]hange is simply the alternation of the status quo" (Hodge, Antony, Gales 2003, as cited in Landes & Steiner 2013, 724-750). Yet, most companies show reluctance to perform this seemingly easy transition. Faced with the need to adapt to ever-changing consumer behaviour, talent scarcity or alternations in the supply chain, companies still try to preserve the old status quo if possible. Subsequently, a natural degeneration over time results. Thus, the ability to change gains significant relevance to business success. Contrary to economically motivated approaches focussing on lean management or business process reengineering, social sciences emphasize the human being as a critical factor in moments of change. The capability to foster commitment thereby largely determines a change initiative's success. (Landes & Steiner 2013, 724-750)

For an individual to adapt to a new situation requires a behaviour change frequently. In turn, any behaviour change necessitates "acquiring knowledge through experience" (Buchanan & Huczynski 1985, as cited in Landes & Steiner 2013). This type of learning requires individuals to quit their natural behaviour and leave their comfort zone. Senninger's learning zone model illustrates two possible scenarios resulting from a challenged status quo forcing people out of their comfort zone. Faced with a changing environment, new experiences are made. These expand on individuals' knowledge and enable learning. This

process of learning happens in the growth zone (Figure 2). Senniger's learning model shows a natural limit to individuals' capability to cope with new experiences. Once these limits are exceeded the shift into the panic zone is inevitable. Paralyzed and overwhelmed, individuals stay, similar to the behaviour in the comfort zone, reluctant to change. (Landes & Steiner 2013, 724-750)

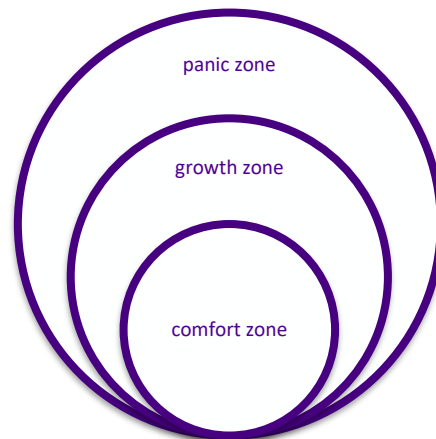


FIGURE 2. Learning zone model (Landes & Steiner 2013, 729).

By nature, humans tend to be rather reluctant to change. This natural preference for staying in the comfort zone can be explained by a desire to comply with social norms and standards. For individuals, changing behaviour eventually leads to behaviour misaligning with set standards. Unaware about resulting consequences, individuals experience their sense of security, sense of belonging and sense of predictability endangered. Reluctance to change is rooted in a change's social impact on the individual and the status quo. Negative consequences tend to be experienced stronger than positive outcomes. Therefore, to encourage change, the felt advantages resulting from change must exceed later discomforts. (Landes & Steiner 2013, 724-750)

Exposing individuals to change forces them to execute in a changing environment. Moreover, surviving and adapting to new standards requires behavioural change. The Satir Model (1991) investigates and maps individuals' performance through change over time. By mapping these two key parameters, Satir developed profound insights into individuals' experiences relatedness to change processes. Once a foreign element starts to disrupt and challenge the status quo,

individuals find themselves in a state of chaos. The underlying sentiment is characterized by disbelief, denial, or anger. A new status quo, or changed behaviour, is only established if the individual generates a transforming idea, a way to learn and adapt to the new environment. (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40)

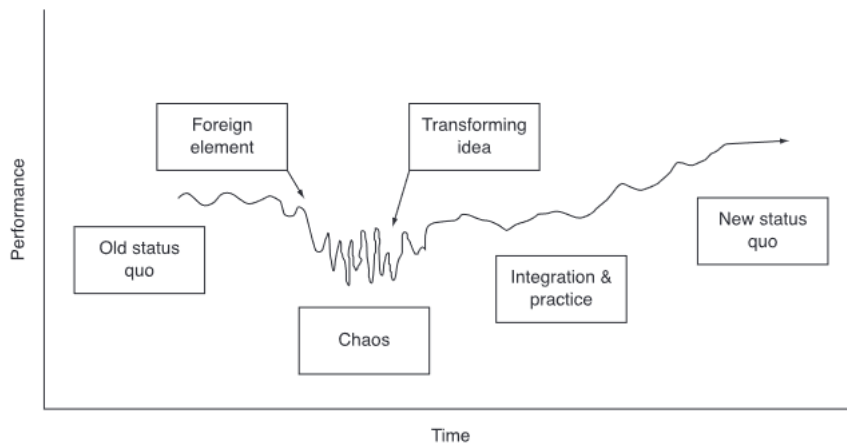


FIGURE 3. Satir's model (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40).

Different individuals have different sets of preferences or styles in the way they learn, change, and establish a new status quo. Yet, when faced with change, the reactions show similarities. On their way from the old to the new status quo, according to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1969), humans experience psychological change. She establishes five stages of internal psychological change: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Denial, for example, is characterized by a total neglect of the introduced change. In this stage, the individual convinces himself of the change's non-existence. This stage eventually develops into anger and feelings of frustration. Finally, by coming to agreement and acceptance with the new reality, change is established. Adam, Hayes, and Hopson (1976) add to these emotions and developed an extended version of the Kubler-Ross Change Curve (Figure 4). (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40)

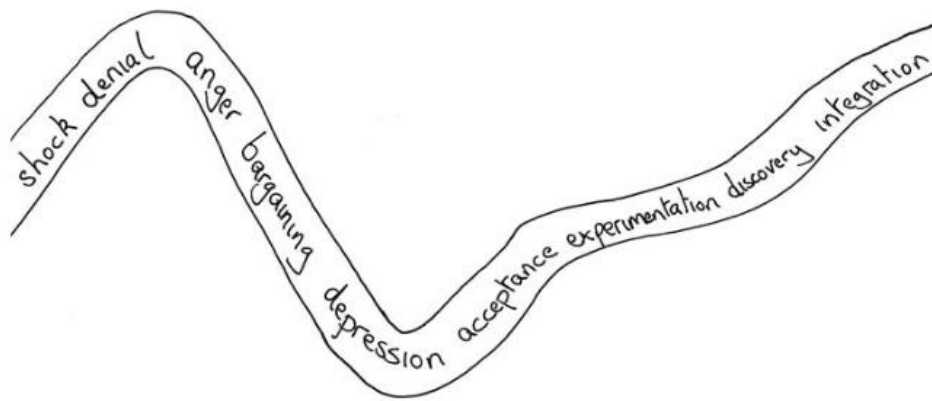


FIGURE 4. Adam, Hayes, and Hopson's (1976) change curve (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40).

Any change introduced in organizations, also affects individuals working in teams. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) researched individuals in groups confronted with challenging situations considering possible synergy effects. In their research, they observed the necessity of undergoing five stages of team development to regain efficiency after being introduced to change. The thereby established process of team development is frequently depicted in a change curve. With time, teams move through forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. These five stages of team change are rather to be considered a fluid than a linear process. Reflecting on individual change in team and organizational change confirms the theories' relevance. (1977, Tuckman and Jensen, as cited in West 2012)



FIGURE 5. Team development stages (West 2012).

A changed situation requires teams to reiterate and consequently places them in the stage of forming. Here, a team's purpose is unclear. This stage is characterized by minor disagreements. With guidance and direction, a team is likely to move on. Arising conflicts or power struggles in the storming phase require coaching and increased clarity of purpose. Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities ease a team's way into agreement and consensus, the norming phase.

Once harmony is established, a team transitions into the performing stage and is now able to focus on goal achievement. The last phase, adjourning, is defined by recognition, and a good feeling about achievements. To best guide employees and teams through this change process, Tuckman and Jensen (1977) highlight the importance of raising awareness about the different phases. Elaborating on stages' existence and impact accordingly eases the transition and maximise team efficiency. (West 2012)

## **2.2 Change management theories**

Change is a process that to succeed requires the management of people involved and impacted by it. Change management theories provide a plan for guiding people through this process. Today, a great variety of change management theories are available. Existing theories can be distinguished according to placed focus and chosen approach to change. Theories selected for this paper, were developed by John Kotter (2002) and Jeffrey M. Hiatt (2006). Both take an individualistic approach to change.

### **2.2.1 The 8-Step Model**

Derived from hundreds of case consultations, Kotter established eight critical steps to successfully leading organizational change. The model highlights the importance of establishing awareness, commitment, and continuity by fostering a shared vision first amongst carefully selected individuals and then during the critical mass. The derived stages, concluding in eight steps are, establishing a sense of urgency; forming a powerful coalition; creating a vision; communicating the vision; empowering others to act on the vision; planning for and creating short-term wins; focussing on improvements and producing more change; and institutionalizing new approaches. Figure 5 presents a visualization of these steps including a further description of each step. (Cameron & Green 2009, 114-116)

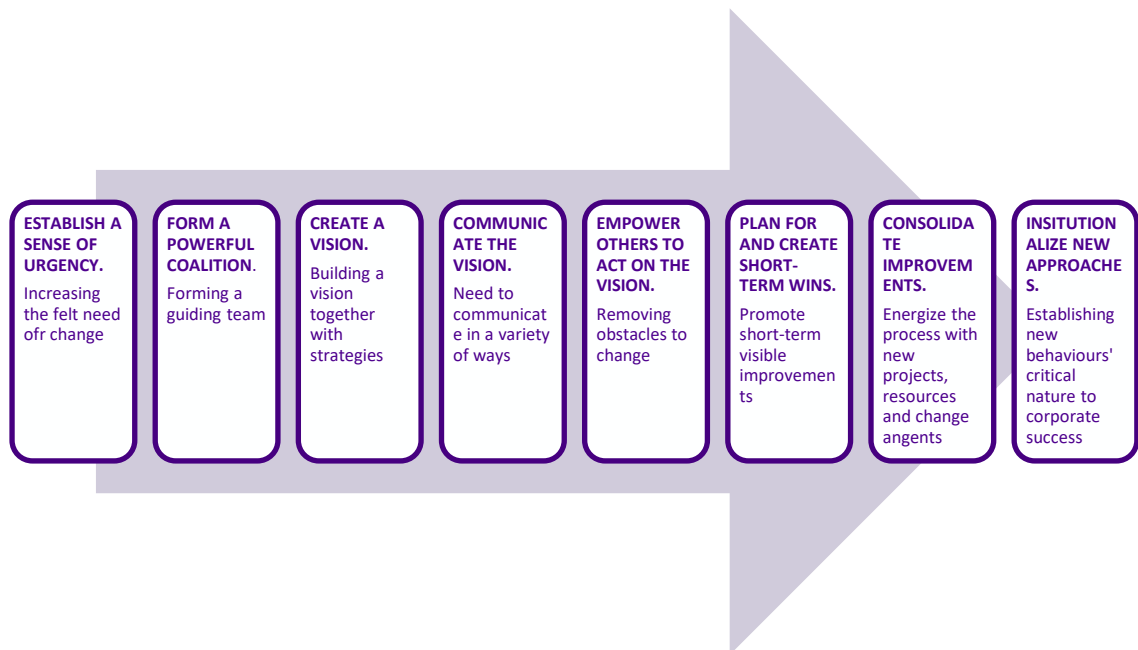


FIGURE 5. 8-Step Model (Cameron & Green 2009, 114-116).

According to Kotter and Cohen (2002), an organization may only succeed in leading change, should all steps be completed. One must not skip steps as well as completing step one is a prerequisite for completing step two and so forth. Kotter and Cohen (2002) determined changing individuals' feelings towards change as the most crucial factor to transforming an organization and to mastering each of the named steps. Changing an organization's structure, culture, or systems is not neglected, however helping employees change their feelings is considered a prerequisite whereas changes in culture, structure or system follow evidently. Their research established two opposing approaches to changing individuals' beliefs: See-Feel-Change and Analysis-Think-Change strategy. While the latter appeals to the rational and aims at changing behaviour due to logical reasoning, the former bases its reasoning on emotions. (Kotter & Cohen 2002)

The See-Feel-Change approach first emphasizes to make the change's cause physically experienceable. Compelling stories, presentations or videos bring about visualizations making the abstract change process at hand easier to comprehend. The developed visualizations frequently stimulate emotions. The second element, therefore, relates to nurturing feelings of passion, faith, trust, pride, or urgency as these feelings tend to reduce emotions hindering change. Once the new belief system is established, change consequently follows as the third and last element. Contrary, the Analysis-Think-Approach believes change to

require an analysis of past change situations and the status quo. The individual reflects upon the made analysis and uses own judgement to consider the suggested change. Kotter and Cohen believe the See-Feel-Change strategy to be the more successful approach for change management. (Kotter & Cohen 2002)

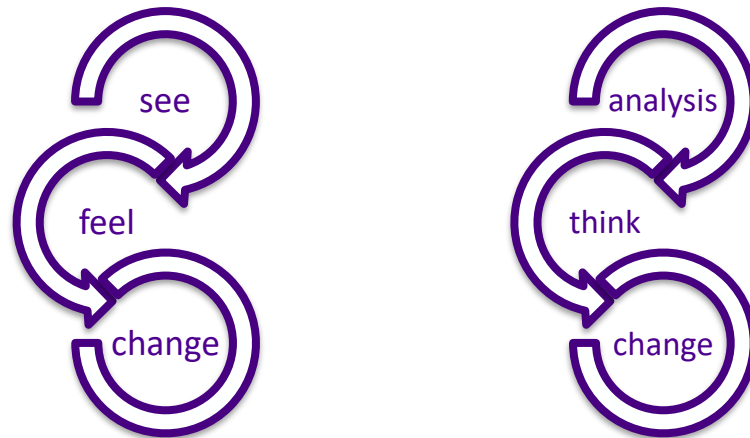


FIGURE 6. Change approaches (Kotter & Cohen 2002).

The See-Feel-Change Approach sees the key to sustainable change in “changing the heart” (Kotter & Cohen 2002). To succeed in all 8 steps outlined by Kotter, change therefore needs to be firstly visible, and then secondly experienceable. The feeling of urgency, for example, is best established by presenting compelling evidence. Enthusiasm and commitment are crucially important to create captivating visions and strategies. Communication in every step must be simple. Tailoring communication to recipients, using multichannel communication as well as increasing the frequency significantly enhances change awareness. Moreover, role models, success stories and promotions empower action and encourage displaying new behaviour. Openly celebrating these short-term wins strengthens and contributes to change. To make the change last, Kotter and Cohen recommend emphasizing the newly developed and desired behaviour already in the onboarding process. Further, they recommend celebrating desired behaviour through promotions or public recognition through hero-like stories as a tool to institute the new norms. (Kotter & Cohen 2002)

To illustrate individuals’ reactions to change Kotter and Rathgeber (2006), use the parabola of a penguin society discovering the existential threat of a melting iceberg. The three characters No-No, Amanda, and Fred are extracted from the

parabola. The characters highlight the aspect of individual personality and group influence on the success of a change initiative. Figure 7 illustrates the selected personalities, their attitude towards change and the influence they have on each other. Change enthusiasts, like Fred, should actively be involved e.g., as a change agent and be selected as members of the guiding team, personas reluctant or sceptical to change should especially be considered in step four onwards. During moments of change, executives are tasked with leading and guiding change. In addition, the parabola emphasized the need to consider different personality types and their attitude towards change throughout the process. Chapter 2.4 will further elaborate on this notion. (Kotter & Rathgeber 2006)

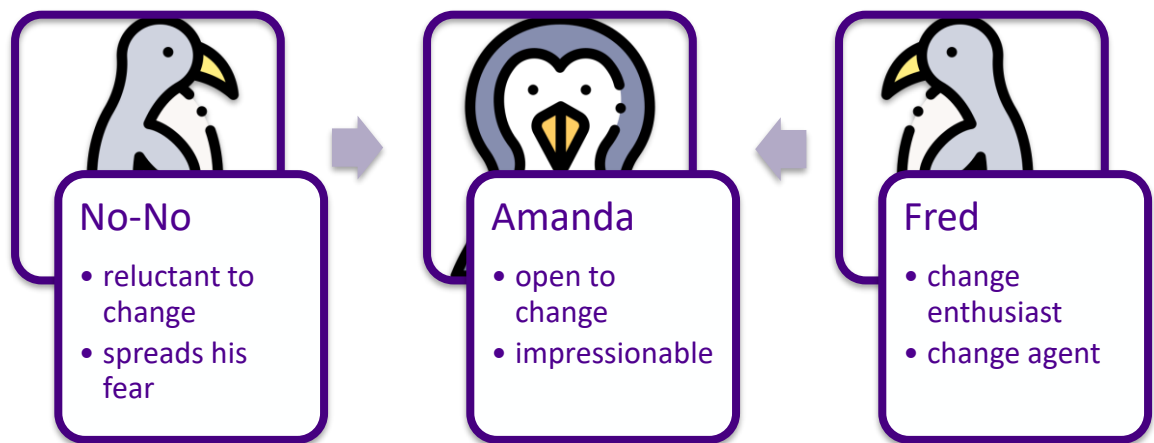


FIGURE 7. Characters from the iceberg is melting (Kotter & Rathgeber 2006; Icon made by Freepik from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)).

### 2.2.2 ADKAR model of change

The ADKAR model (2006), like Kotter's 8-step model, places the individual at the centre of the change process, deprioritizing project management, visions or activities accommodating change. "[S]uccessful change, at its core, is rooted in something much simpler: How to facilitate change with one person" (Hiatt 2006). Successful individual change, in this model, is linked to five core elements forming the acronym ADKAR: awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement. These elements function as building blocks dependent on each on other.

Without first establishing awareness, desire for change can't be achieved. The model relies on communication, sponsorship, training, coaching, and resistance to facilitate transitioning between elements. (Hiatt 2006)

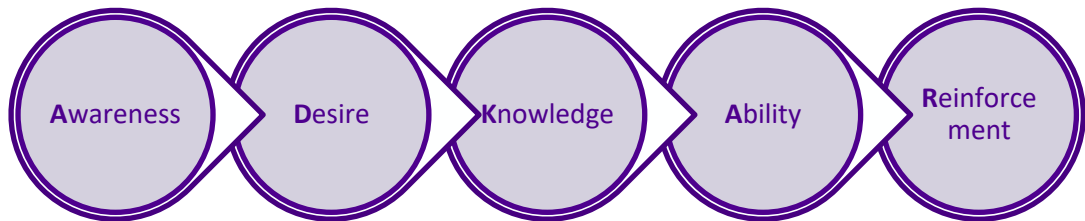


FIGURE 9. ADKAR model (Hiatt 2006).

Awareness is defined as the understanding of a change's nature and its relevance. It is shaped by the individual's viewpoint of the status quo an innovative or adaptive view on challenges, the perception of signs of change, the sender's credibility, as well as the amount of the management withheld information. A change initiative's nature and individual perception of such define its desirability. Another element concerns the development of adequate knowledge and skills about the change, and the new role the individual is about to inherit. Thereby a defining role is played by the availability of resources as well as an individual's learning capacity. To transform knowledge into ability, the capability to implement the desired change, psychological blocks, intellectual capability, and time to learn is to be considered. Moreover, the developed ability must be reinforced to sustain change. Factors contributing to a lasting change concern a reward's relevance to the individual, the absence of negative consequences, and accountability systems to reinforce change. (Hiatt 2006)

### 2.3 Managing resistance to change

According to Landes and Steiner (2013) humans show a strong desire for personal development (Landes & Steiner 2013, 724-750). Despite peoples' urge to self-optimize, research by McKinsey (2016) shows that 70% of all organizational change efforts fail (Basford, T. & Schaninger, B. 2016). While most managers acknowledge the technical side of a change initiative to cause the "measurable modification in the physical routines of the job", the social aspect of change is often neglected (Lawrence, P.R. 1969). Confronting people with change inevitably raises four associated fears: the fear of temporary incompetence, fear of punishment for incompetence, fear of personal identity, and fear of loss of group membership (Cameron & Green 2009, 55-57). Should learning anxieties, characterized by a reluctance to change, be greater than these survival anxieties, behavioural change is put on hold (Berger 2021).

McKinsey & Company (2016) developed a model recommending four key activities to encourage change. These initiatives are each aimed at lowering introduced learning anxieties. The activities relate to role modelling, fostering understanding and conviction, developing talent and skills, and reinforcing with formal mechanisms. Starting, as in Figure 8 depicted, at top right corner, change is encouraged by establishing a common understanding of the initiative's underlying reasons. Therefore, the development of a change story is recommended. As people either tend to overestimate or underestimate their ability to change, leadership should deploy mechanisms to investigate their talent and offer personalized development plans. The model further suggests seizing peoples' tendency to mimic emotions, speech, patterns, or moods of peers by deploying role models. By establishing the right incentives reinforcing of desired behaviour is expected to be accomplished. With all four building blocks in place, fear and resistance to change may be overcome. (Basford, T. & Schaninger, B. 2016)



FIGURE 8. The influence model (Basford, T. & Schaninger, B. 2016).

John Berger (2021) takes a different approach to changing peoples' minds by focussing on obstacles to remove rather than methods to encourage or push change. He names five obstacles: reactance, endowment, distance, uncertainty, and corroborating evidence. Reactance refers to the importance of convincing oneself of the change. A change that an individual freely agreed to, is proven to sustain longer than externally motivated change. Besides intended motivation, the natural endowment-effect is to be overcome. The effect explains the status quo's desirability by referring to loss-aversion. Berger (2021) further found distance between the provided information's and own belief's views to influence likelihood to change. Thus, reducing distance and referring to contributes to removing obstacles for change. New realities concluding from change encompass great levels of uncertainty. Providing guidelines, outlook and experience were found to positively encourage individuals to adopt new behaviours. Lastly, providing credibility in form of corroborating evidence supports the removal of obstacles, as well. (Berger 2021)

Managers can support individuals by offering guided choices, relying on questions rather than demands, highlighting a discrepancy between own actions and attitudes as well as understanding people’s concerns and fears regarding the initiative. Further, the endowment-effect is to be overcome. To overcome this bias, the cost of inaction is to be surfaced, as well as the status quo should seem less desirable. To convince people, the distance between the provided information’s and own belief’s views needs to be reduced. Bias is mitigated by first addressing people easy to convince, dividing complex requests into small tasks, and starting by building rapport before addressing the desired change. In addition, the change should be easy to try out. Installing freemiums, reducing the costs up-front or reducing barriers to change will reduce uncertainty and make it easier for people to emerge in the process. To enhance credibility about the change’s necessity and its success, the evidence should be relatable to the target group and presented along the entirety of the whole change process. To address strong attitudes, evidence should be concentrated in one place and targeted accordingly. (Berger 2021)

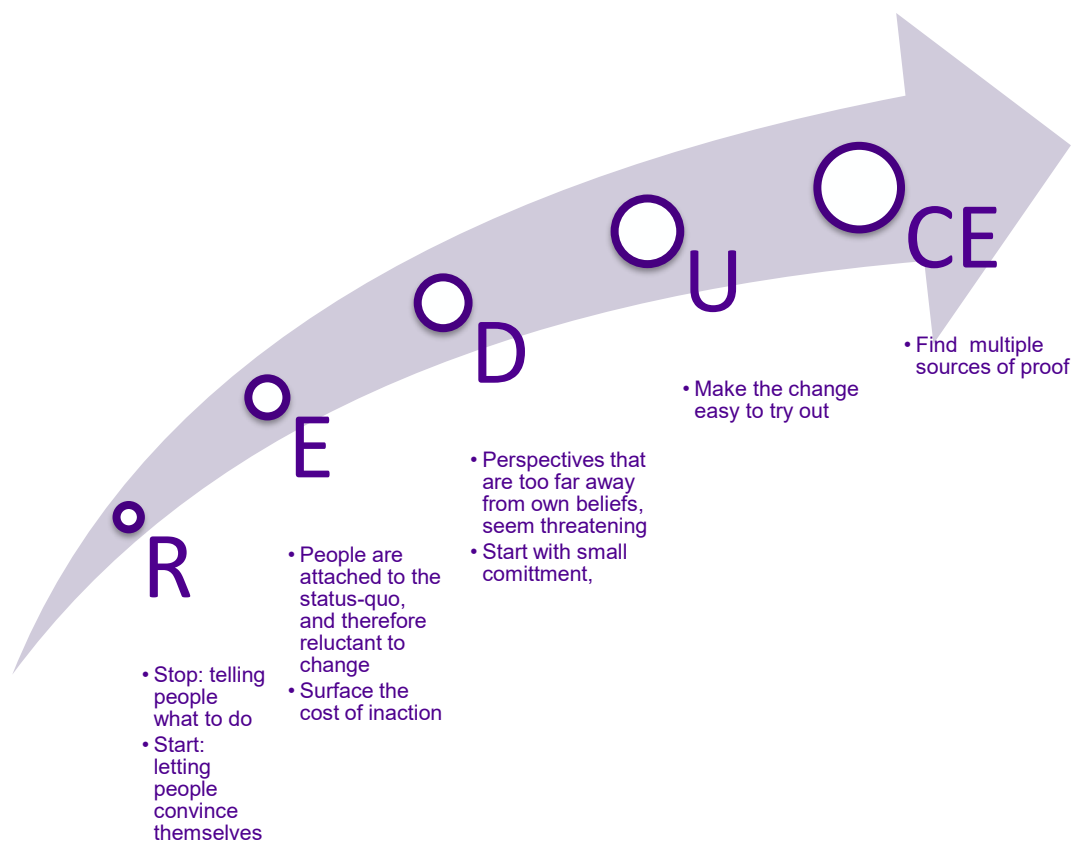


FIGURE 9. REDUCE model (Berger 2021).

## 2.4 Personality and change management

The type of change, the organization's handling of past change initiatives or the organization's prospects, all impact change efforts (Cameron & Green 2009, 50-52). Since 2010, the factor personality gained significant relevance in organizational psychology and human resource management (Landes & Steiner 2013, 139-156). Hence, personality is since considered in change management as "people with different preferences react differently to change, both when they initiate, and when they are on the receiving end of it" (Cameron & Green 2009, 86-87). It is therefore crucial to consider and manage different personality types as there is no commonly accepted objective experience of the change initiative (Cameron & Green 2009, 50-52).

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), developed by Katherine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers, determines, and distinguishes between 16 different personality types. This typology is based on research by C.G. Jung conducted in 1921. By Briggs and Briggs Myers developed types are used to forecast individual behaviour, organisational fit or suitable development paths. Personality tests based on this model, are frequently used in recruitment or training and development. These tests offer a flexible collection of types while avoiding grouping and clustering individuals. The MBTI distinguishes between eight preferences. Within each preference the individual can position himself on a bi-polar continuum, offering further differentiation. The eight preferences result from the individual's answer to each of the following questions. (Landes & Steiner 2013, 139-156)

- Where does the individual draw energy from? (Extraversion or Introversion)
- What does the individual pay attention to & how is data or information received? (Sensing or Intuitive)
- How are decisions made? (Thinking or Feeling)
- What is the individual's preferred lifestyle? (Judging or Perceiving)

Extroverts are energized by the outside world, while the opposite is true for introverts. Thinking individuals base their reasoning on objectivity

while feeling individuals are rather driven by personal values or empathy. Intuitive-driven individuals require reasoning picturing a future vision. Sensing individuals, on the contrary, rather rely on facts that relate to the past. Individuals enjoying a structured and predictable life tend to identify as judging while perceiving individuals tend to be more flexible and spontaneous. To simplify the 16 personality types that conclude from the eight preferences, Briggs and Briggs Myers derived a categorization into four groups. This grouping, as well as further description, focussing on implications concerning change can be seen in the table below. (Cameron & Green 2009, 50-52)

<b>MBTI™ type by Quadrant</b>	<b>IS Thoughtful Realist</b>	<b>IN Thoughtful Innovator</b>
<b>What they are most concerned with</b>	Practicalities	Thoughts, ideas, concepts
<b>How they learn</b>	Pragmatically and by reading and observing	Conceptually by reading, listening and making connections
<b>Where they focus their change efforts</b>	Deciding what should be kept and what needs changing	Generating new ideas and theories
<b>Motto</b>	'If it isn't broke don't fix it'	'Let's think ahead'
<b>MBTI™ type by Quadrant</b>	<b>ES Action Oriented Realist</b>	<b>EN Action Oriented Innovator</b>
<b>What they are most concerned with</b>	Actions	New ways of doing things
<b>How they learn</b>	Actively and by experimentation	Creatively and with others
<b>Where they focus their change efforts</b>	Making things better	Putting new ideas into practice
<b>Motto</b>	'Let's just do it'	'Let's change it'

FIGURE 8. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Cameron & Green 2009, 53).

The four derived categories differentiate between Thoughtful Realists, Thoughtful Innovators, Action Oriented Realists and Action Oriented Innovators. Individual's positioning in this grid, allows predictions on the corresponding attitude towards change. Thoughtful Realists, introverted and sensing, tend to be sceptical

towards change while Thoughtful Innovators, introverted and intuitive, are open and often actively engaged in the change process. Action Oriented individuals, can be divided into Action Oriented Realists, extroverted sensing, and Action Oriented Innovators, extroverted and intuitive. Both groups tend to be driven by an urge to implement change immediately and to move on. While Action Oriented Innovators focus on employing new ideas, Action Oriented Realists rather rely on developing existing ideas. (Cameron & Green 2009, 50-52)

An individual's four preferences are not equally strongly expressed. Research by Briggs and Briggs Myer establishes that people tend to largely act on one dominant preference. For example, an individual with the personality type ESTJ may predominantly rely on the sensing preference whereas another individual with the same type may rely on extraversion. This preferred preference is accompanied by an auxiliary. The auxiliary function balances and supports one's dominant function. The dominant's opponent is an individual's inferior function. An extrovert's dominant factor is noticeable to the outside world, while for introverts it is their auxiliary preference that may be noticed by the environment. Usage of one's inferior function is usually triggered by illness, drug abuse or stress. (The Myers & Briggs Foundation n.d.)

Acting according to one's dominant preference is done frequently and within the comfort zone. Often, it does not require thinking and comes naturally. Executing tasks complementing the dominant function provides individuals with a sense of security. Accordingly, stress can be reduced. Therefore, managers should encourage individuals to rely on their dominant function at work. To ensure quality and yet to accommodate acting according to personality preference, the manager must restructure and recruit to have all four functions present within a team. Employees with an intuitive dominant preference are a likely source of innovation and should therefore be actively involved in the change process. Individuals' inferior function, the preference rarely acted upon, displays an additional source of innovation. Devoting time to help employees develop this factor, may unleash critical skills accelerating the change initiative. (Jessup 2002)

Dependent on the dominant preference, individuals' need for communication and participation differs. While extroverts prefer listening to and talking about upcoming changes, introverts prefer written communication that allows processing new

information privately. Feeling types require communication to contain information about the impact on people whereas individuals with thinking preferences rely on a logical analysis. For sensing individuals, communication should refer to objective facts and a neutral evaluation of the experience. Contrary, for the intuitive type, an emphasis and clear vision of the future are needed. Judging and perceiving attitudes differ in the preferred degree and timing of involvement. An individual primarily acting according to their judging dominant function are likely to show little flexibility and require closure. For the perceiving type, participation and engagement contribute to feel valued and thereby foster commitment reducing stress altogether. (Jessup 2002)

## **2.5 Synthesis of theories**

All previously introduced theories explore the change process at a different depth. At the most superficial level, theories explain the emotions an individual experiences when exposed to change. The theories foster an understanding of change and natural responses to it. Developed insights, can be leveraged for a successful design of the change processes. The in chapter 2.2 introduced change management theories take in chapter 2.1 established emotions into consideration and offer recommendations to different stages in the process. At a deeper level, people tend to instinctively show resistance to change. Research explores this reluctance and provides a framework to manage it accordingly. Change initiatives, at their core, are dependent on the people impacted by them. Therefore, on its deepest level, this paper considers personality types' relatedness to change. The above-discussed different levels can be depicted according to their depth in an iceberg scheme (Figure 9).



FIGURE 9. Iceberg model (Illustration made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com).

To foster an understanding of change, the term itself is thoroughly defined in chapter 2.1. Moreover, the related concept of ‘learning’ is taken into consideration and elaborated in this first chapter. Furthermore, the learning zone model adds to the definition by explaining peoples’ tendency for reluctance to change and defining prerequisites for change. The emotional reaction and psychological change process, explored by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1969), is presented in this chapter, as well. Finally, the Satir model (1991) elaborates on individual performance throughout change over time. (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40)

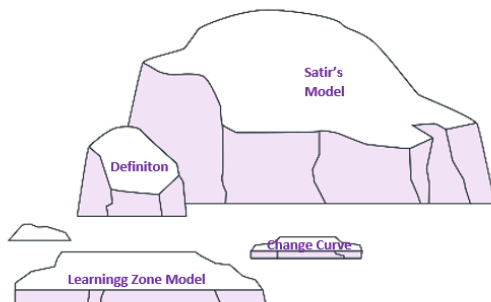


FIGURE 10. Understanding the change process (Icon made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com).

The variety of established emotions at hand requires proper management of such. Therefore, this paper's theoretical frameworks' second chapter presents a selection of change management theories. Change management theories provide a plan to strategically prepare for upcoming change initiatives. The two chosen theories both place the individual at the centre of their approaches. Kotter's 8-Step Model (2002) and the ADKAR Model (2006) thereby complement each other.

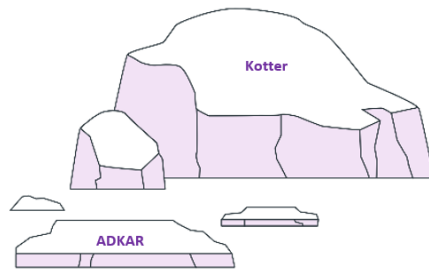


FIGURE 11. Change management theories (Icon made by Freepik from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)).

Each change triggers basic fears, causing resistance to change. Consequently, chapter 2.3. introduces the reader to theories addressing resistance to change. While the Influence Model developed by McKinsey (2016) focuses on removing barriers by emphasizing the benefits of change, Jonah Berger's REDUCE approach (2010) focuses on encouraging individuals to support each other. Both theories support each other while focussing on different aspects of resistance.

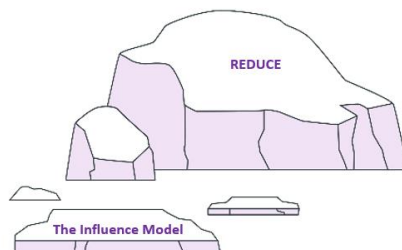


FIGURE 12. Removing roadblocks to change (Icon made by Freepik from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)).

Lastly, chapter 2.4 offers the reader relevant insights on personality types' relevance and impact in moments of change. Individual needs regarding change are taken into consideration by relying on theory developed by Briggs and Briggs Myers. Developed personality types allow concluding preferred methods of communication or degree of involvement. (The Myers & Briggs Foundation n.d.)

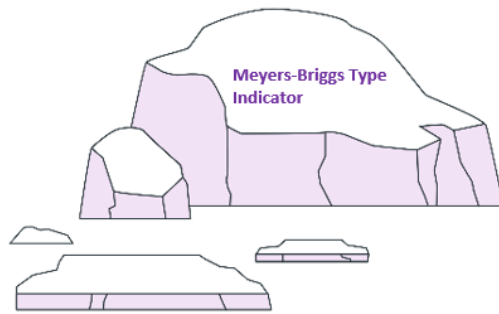


FIGURE 13. Internal forces of change (Icon made by Freepik from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)).

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

To validate, test and expand on the theory introduced in chapter 2, the author chose to complement existing theory with primary data. This chapter introduces the author's research approach. The chosen methodology aims at supporting this paper's objective to provide recommendations for guiding Marc O'Polo employees through the international change process. With a strong emphasis on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews, the author complements the research with a supporting questionnaire.

#### **3.1 Mixed method study**

A chosen research design emphasises a study's purpose. Therefore, reiterating this paper's objective, developing recommendations to guide employees through change, determines the approach. Aimed at developing detailed knowledge of possible pain points as well as at exploring ways to attract employees, the nature of the study was explorative. An explorative study is characterized by this inquisitive nature and a flexible approach to iterations. (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019)

The chosen qualitative method to collect primary data was semi-structured interviews. Its focus lay on obtaining research-relevant interests. The semi-structured interview distinguishes itself from structured interviews by its individualistic and non-standardized nature and from unstructured interviews by its formally constructed interview guide. Consequently, this technique allowed the author sufficient flexibility while offering the opportunity to systematize outcomes. In dealing with this conflict of interest, the researcher must on the one hand deploy skills in managing the quality and on the other hand show interpersonal handling. (Bourgeault, Dingwall & De Vries 2010)

Quantitative data was collected by relying on the analysis of questionnaires. The questionnaires, focussing on assessing participants' needs and preferences regarding communication in moments of change, supported the qualitative study. This approach allowed the author to focus on the individual during the interview,

while additional data on a correlation between communication and personality type was established later. Quantitative research thereby enhances qualitative research. Such an approach is called complementary research. (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019)

Qualitative data from the interviews and the questionnaire were analysed according to an analysis method developed by Mayring (2015). It focuses on ten elements of which four were applied to this paper. These were: determining the analysis' goal, establishing single units of data, categorizing units, and ensuring validity and reliability (Chapter 5). The development of categories was done in an inductive-deductive way; both previously determined and afterwards developed categories were applied. The coding guidelines are available in Chapter 3.3.1. Coded data allowed to answer previously posed research questions. (Mayring 2015)

The initially developed research question *“how can Marc O’Polo employees be guided through the process of internationalization?”* influenced the choice of applicable theories. These, in turn, were used to develop the interview guide as well as the questionnaire. Participants selected for the interview were asked to respond to the questionnaire, too. Consequently, collected data helped to answer the initially posed research question.

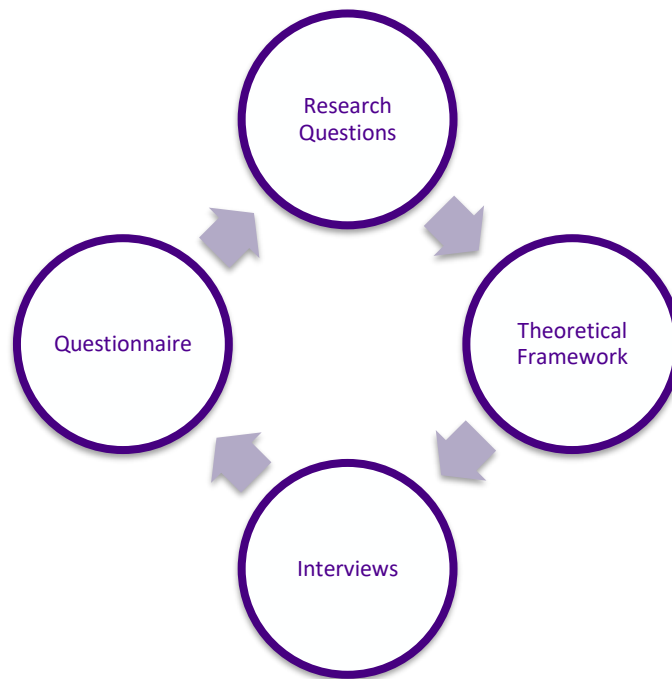


FIGURE 12. Research design.

### 3.2 Data collection method

The process of data collection relied on the selection of suitable participants as well as a thoroughly designed interview guide. A comprehensive questionnaire supported the data collection process. The data was collected in October 2022. All nine participants were employed by the Marc O’Polo SE. A detailed description of the applied collection method is presented below.

#### 3.2.1 Qualitative interviews

For this research, participants with different levels of exposure and engagement to internationalization were interviewed. Exposure thereby refers to the extent to which the interviewee’s job is concerned with internationalization. Engagement indicates the individual’s commitment to internationalization. Suitable participants were selected in careful consideration and consultation with the HR Business Partner and Manager team. This type of sampling is called purposive sampling and it focuses “first, to ensure that all key constituencies of relevance are covered and second, to ensure that within the criteria some diversity is included” (Cassell

2015). To ensure statistical relevance, the author aimed to interview two employees for each of the four resulting categories. This estimation was based on consultation with HR. The final distribution of the nine interviewees into the established categories can be seen in Table 2. (Cassell 2015)

TABLE1. Exposure-Engagement grid.

	<b>Exposure high (EX-H)</b>	<b>Exposure low (EX-L)</b>
<b>Engagement low (EN-L)</b>	EX-H / EN-L	EX-L / EN-L
<b>Engagement high (EN-H)</b>	EX-H / EN-H	EX-L / EN-H

The anonymised list of the selected interviewees is presented below. In addition to information about the position in the exposure-engagement grid, the interviewees' interview ID, workplace, job title and gender are indicated.

TABLE 2. Interviewee list.

Target Group	Inter-view ID	Workplace	Job Title	Gender
EX-H / EN-L	I1	Headquarter	Accountant International	female
EX-H / EN-L	I2	Headquarter	Senior Merchandise Manager	female
EX-H / EN-L	I3	Store Brünn	Store Manager	female
EX-H / EN-H	I4	Headquarter	Coordinator Sales International	female
EX-H / EN-H	I5	Headquarter	Head of Visual Merchandising Operations	female
EX-L / EN-L	I6	Headquarter	Junior Designer Women Outerwear & Leather	female
EX-L / EN-L	I7	Headquarter	Senior Accountant Creditor	female
EX-L / EN-H	I8	Headquarter	Junior Manager Corporate Sustainability & Innovation	female
EX-L / EN-H	I9	Headquarter	HR Business Partner	female

The interviews were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. The author and the participant were the only present attendees at this meeting. The format allowed “access to visual cues” while the researcher could easily record the conversation (Cassell 2015). The author aimed to keep the interviews within the timeframe of 30 minutes. Ensuring efficiency and quality, the interview guide had been sent to participants beforehand. The semi-structured interviews consisted of three phases: an opening segment, a middle segment, and a concluding segment (Galletta & Cross 2013). While moving through these stages the researcher relied on a previously constructed interview guide. The guide entails a list of themes, questions, and comments to open a discussion as well as comments to prompt and close the interview (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). Appendix 1 entails this paper’s interview guide.

Amongst other factors, establishing rapport between the researcher and the participant plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of interviews. Two related factors concern the nature of the researcher's comments as well as the approach to questioning. The researcher must avoid long, double-barrel questions and instead use clearly phrased, open questions addressed in a neutral tone of voice. Posing sensitive or complex questions rather towards the end allows the researcher to first build trust and establish a safe space. This paper, therefore, relied on creating rapport within its first phase (Appendix 1). Elaborating on confidentiality, purpose and progress of the research further contributed to reducing bias and establishing trust. (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019)

Probing as well as follow-up questions may be used to further elaborate on responses gained through open questions (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). A technique applied to pose appropriate questions is the STAR technique. In this paper, the technique was mainly used to probe questions in phase two (Appendix 1). The method relies on three elements: situation and task, action, and results. As these build on each, the author used them consecutively for further probing. The first step is assessing the specific situation. The participants were asked to describe the specific *situation* and *task* performed at a certain point in time. This was followed up with the request to describe concrete *actions* that helped misalign with the situation previously described. Last, the interviewee was asked to elaborate on the *results* and evaluate the actions' effectiveness. (Development Dimensions International, Inc n.d.)

### **3.2.2 Supportive questionnaires**

All nine interviewed participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire as a follow-up to the interview. In designing the questionnaire, the author aimed at a length of about 2-4 minutes. The fixed design of the questionnaire allowed the author to categorize information regarding respondents' preferred method of communication, degree of involvement and underlying reasoning in moments of change. The questionnaire consisted of both, qualitative and quantitative data. When considering the respondents' answers, the collected data is qualitative.

However, once the total focus group is considered, collected data produces numerical data and thereby is quantitative (Saudners, Lewis & Thornhill 2019).

The posed questions were developed according to the introduced theory of the MBTI (1942) as well as complementing research by Jessup (2002). The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2. The questionnaire was composed using Google Forms. To maintain data protection, responses were given anonymously and were not related to the interview.

### **3.3 Data analysis method**

The data analysis relied upon the categorization of data that were further processed according to the sub research question. Established pain points were mapped against initially established benefits of Internationalization. The force field analysis, developed by Kurt Lewin (Lewin 1943, as cited in Landes & Steiner 2013), was used to illustrate these forces of and against change. The initially labelled data enabled standardization as well as helped establish individual factors' gravity. The tool of a heat map analysis was used to assess suitable approaches to supporting employees throughout the international change. It provided a visual representation of the interviewees' needs. The colour scheme helped establish urgency. This chapter presents the categorization of collected data.

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative interviews**

Recorded interviews were transcribed and translated using Microsoft teams. Questions 1-4 in phase two were analysed using a deductive approach, and the remaining questions used an inductive approach. The deductive approach requires an a priori developed code guideline entailing categories derived from theory. The relevant theory applied is the change management theory ADKAR by Hiatt (2006). According to Bortz as cited in Mayring (2015) categories need to be thoroughly defined, exclude one other, and extensively describe the phenomenon. A coding guideline consists of the established categories, their definition,

subsequent examples, and the consequent coding rule. The coding guideline developed for questions 1-4 in the second phase of the interview can be found below.

TABLE 3. Coding guideline for 2<sup>nd</sup> phase questions.

Category	Definition	Example	Rule
<b>An appropriate understanding for the need to internationalize.</b>	All text that demonstrates what the interviewee understands by the term internationalization.	“because costs are getting higher, we need to open up new markets”	Text must contain explanation liked phrases aiming to explain internationalization.
<b>A desire to engage in internationalization.</b>	All text that demonstrates commitment, support, and a positive attitude towards internationalization.	“can appeal to more people and that many more people buy your jackets and like to wear them”	Text must contain positive sentiment regarding internationalization.
<b>Good knowledge and ability to act in an international organization.</b>	Confidence in own ability to act in an international organization, knowledge about available resources to develop skills.	“being goal-oriented and also flexible, linguistic skills, good with people. I've grown into it, it's such a process”	Text must contain expressions illustrating confidence or examples of situations proving ability.
<b>I feel like the right mechanisms are in place to support internationalization.</b>	All text that displays knowledge about mechanisms and a positive evaluation of such.	“Collection training is now also available in different languages”	Text must name methods; Text must contain positive sentiment.

For all other questions, an inductive approach was chosen. Transcribed data were first paraphrased, then generalized and lastly reduced. Individual interviewees' answers were sorted according to the question and analysed to develop categories. The used scheme can be found below.

TABLE 4. Coding guide for 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phase questions.

Target Group	Inter-viewee ID	Question	Paraphrasing	Generalization	Reduction

### 3.3.2 Supporting questionnaire

The numerical data generated with the questionnaire were analysed separately relying on charts and visualization without further requiring a specific method or analysis tool. As recommended by Adams, Hafiz, Khan and Raeside (2014), responses were compiled in Excel. The qualitative data were analysed separately for each response. For each question participants were asked to position themselves on a scale from 1-5. Responses 1-2 and 4-5 were allocated to the corresponding end of the continuum, a position in the middle of the scale with value 3, was rated as neutral. Each response required decoding according to the guideline illustrated below. The guideline was developed according to Jessup (2002) to comply with the MBTI. (Adams, Hafiz, Khan and Raeside 2014)

TABLE 5. Translating questionnaire responses according to MBTI (Jessup 2002).

From the intranet, a mail, or a personal meeting. Sensitive information like this should be discussed privately and I need time to process it.	INTROVERT
I want to listen to the change makers! Hopefully I can talk about upcoming changes with my colleagues afterwards!	EXTROVERT
Facts, Data and logical analysis.	THINKING
Information about the impact on people. How will this change my role, my responsibilities my relationships?	FEELING
Facts that relate to the past. I want to know why the change is happen, why now, and what is wrong with what we are doing now.	SENSING
The future! I am fully onboard and love to see where this is going!	INTUITIVE
Once there is a final decision, I prefer a stable environment.	JUDGING
Already in the process, I don't mind the ambiguity!	PERCEIVING

For each respondent, the personality type was constructed as shown for one exemplary case in TABLE 6.

TABLE 6. Coding guide for the questionnaire.

Survey ID	Responses	cu- mulated	Corresponding type	MBIT
S1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I want to listen to the change makers! Hopefully I can talk about upcoming changes with my colleagues afterwards!</li> <li>Facts, Data, and logical analysis.</li> <li>the future! I am fully onboard and love to see where this is going!</li> <li>Already in the process, I don't mind the ambiguity!</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extrovert</li> <li>Thinking</li> <li>Intuitive</li> <li>Perceiving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ENTP</li> </ul>

### 3.3.3 Synthesis of data collection

To provide holistic recommendations to the commissioner, the collected data were synthesized. Drawing on gained insights from qualitative and quantitative data allowed the other to develop profound insights on how to guide Marc O'Polo employees through the international change process. The two sub research questions answering this main research question were explored by relying on the data analysis tools presented below.

To surface current pain points for Marc O'Polo employees in the internationalization process, this paper's first sub research question, the author relied on the framework of a force field analysis. Developed by Kurt Lewin (1943), the model is used for "diagnosing a situation by looking at both the driving and restraining forces that

influence change in an organization” (Witkin & Altschuld as cited in Heinert & Galindo-Gonzalez 2014). For change to sustain, the driving factors are to outweigh restricting forces. (Witkin & Altschuld as cited in Heinert & Galindo-Gonzalez 2014).

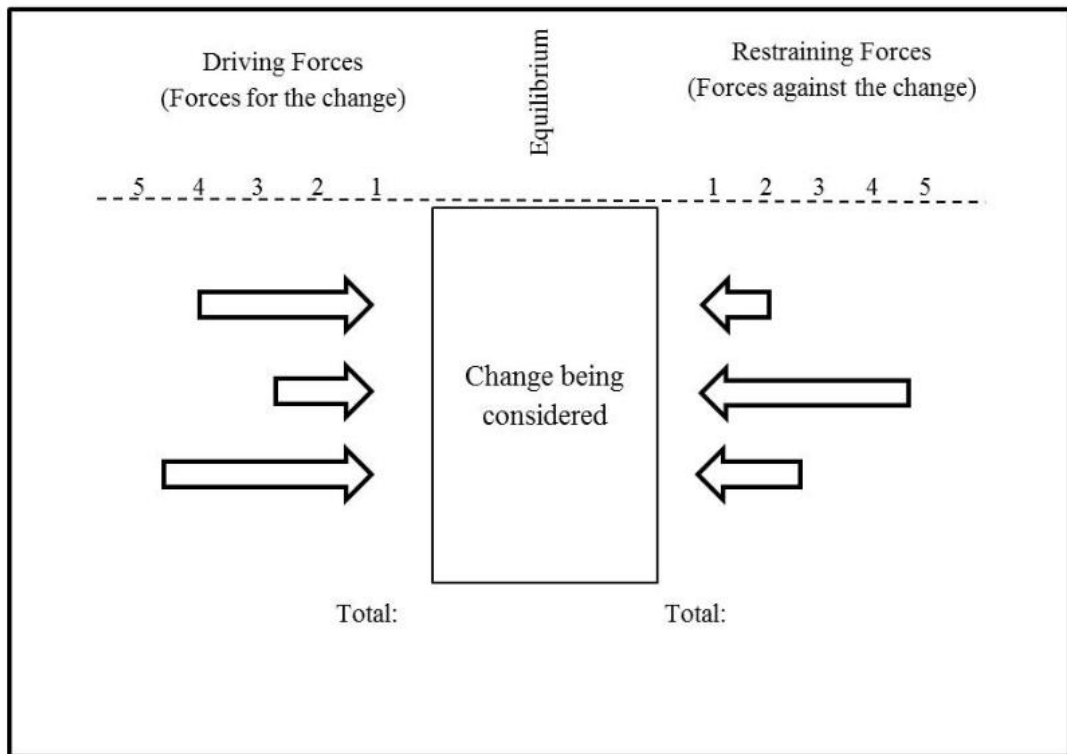


FIGURE 13. Force field analysis (Heinert & Galindo-Gonzalez 2014).

The force field analysis places the desired change in the centre, restraining factors to the right and driving forces on the left (Figure 13). Individual forces are frequently awarded a score indicating their significance. Moreover, a force field analysis' results should always be critically discussed and treated holistically. The by the author conducted primary data serves as a source for restraining factors, in the introduction presented secondary data informs about driving factors. (Heinert & Galindo-Gonzalez 2014)

Primary research conducted by the author generated relevant information on Marc O'Polo's employees' needs regarding support in the process of internationalization. To bundle and visualize these, the author chose the representation model of a Heat Map Analysis. This type of analysis covers all types of data and presents values in a two-dimensional illustration. The colour grading provides the

reader immediate insight on values relevance. A heat map analysis commonly relies on impact and likelihood as its two dimensions to specify data. (Kenton 2022)

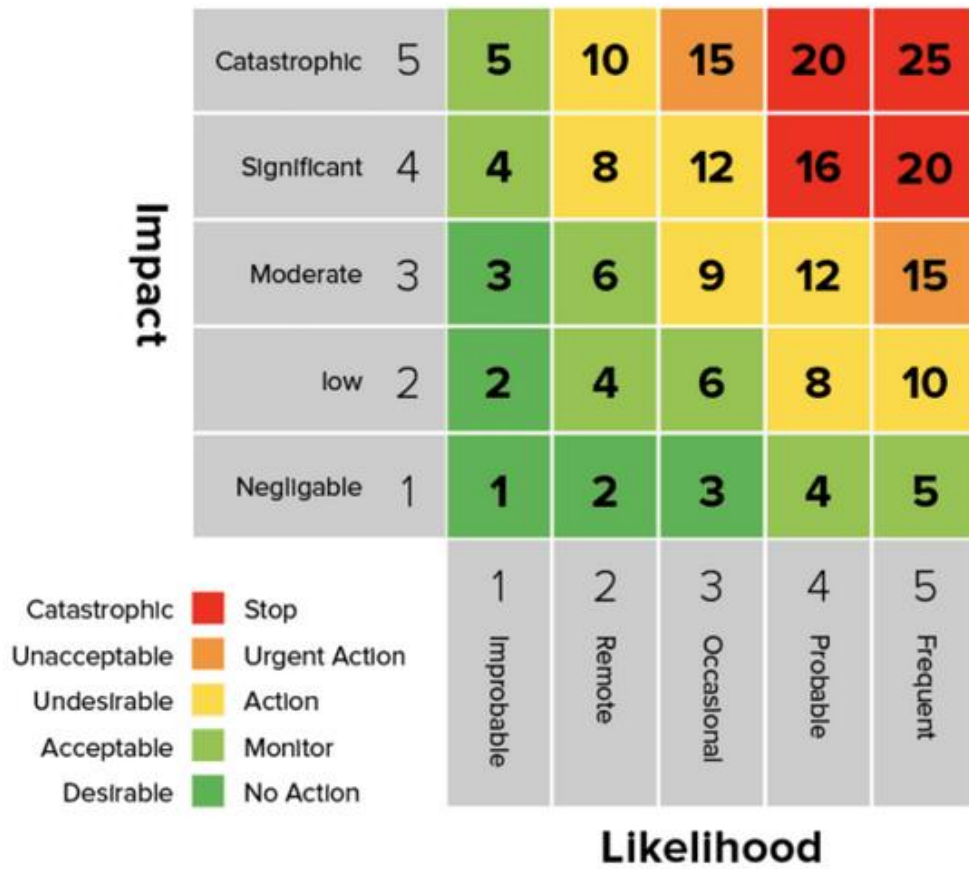


FIGURE 13. Heat map analysis (Balbix 2022).

## **4 RESULTS**

In the design of this paper's research, the author considered the gathering of primary and secondary data of adequate relevance to this topic. Consequently, chapter 2 introduces the reader to the theoretical framework. The primary data collection was chosen to complement presented literature. Accordingly, the chosen structure and content guided the research approach and design. The research's data collection consisted of qualitative interviews followed by a questionnaire. The author interviewed nine employees at Marc O'Polo and distributed the survey to all participants. Out of nine interviewees, seven responded to the questionnaire. The primary data collection's results are described, interpreted, and synthesized in the following. Finally, recommendations to the commissioner are presented.

### **4.1 Description of interview results**

The results from the nine qualitative interviews are presented below. The interviewees, all Marc O'Polo employees themselves, were selected to represent different departments. However, the limited participant number did not allow a representation of every department. The study's diversity was enhanced by ensuring to select participants with different engagement and exposure to internationalization. Detailed participant information can be found in Table 2. In the following, a general assessment of the interviewees' perception of the international change process is presented. The assessment relied on the ADKAR model developed by Hiatt (2006). Moreover, the conduction of interviews allowed the author to develop an understanding on pain points as well as on interviewees' needs to act in an international organization. The developed results are discussed below. In presenting these results, the author considered the grouping of interviewees as introduced in Table 1.

### 4.1.1 ADKAR

The ADKAR model of change (Hiatt 2006) offers researchers a variety of applications. The author utilized the model to assess the ongoing international change process at Marc O'Polo. Results showcase gaps, and barrier points as well as insights facilitating the removal of observed obstacles. Prior to focussing on the individual dimensions, interviewees were asked to iterate on their understanding of internationalization as well as their touchpoints. Consequently, this chapter first presents participants' view on internationalization. Second, interviewees' awareness, desire, knowledge, and ability concerning internationalization is reported. Lastly, this chapter discusses current and desired reinforcement methods.

Interviewees with neither great exposure nor engagement primarily associated foreign stores with internationalization. Engaging in internationalization, for them, means creating a product that is sold worldwide. These interviewees considered increasing brand visibility as one of the greatest drivers of internationalization. Despite little exposure to internationalization, a group of interviewees (EX-L & EN-H) actively engages in internationalization. They defined internationalization through diverse teams, united by English as a shared language. One interviewee (EX-L & EN-H) associated "Internationalization or globalization with growth". Furthermore, these interviewees addressed sustainability considerations in their understanding of internationalization. Sustainability, in this context, referred to the long-term benefits resulting from internationalization as well as environmental issues. Interviewees found these aspects missing in current plans. Contrary, the group of interviewees on the opposing spectrum (EX-H & EN-L), viewed internationalization to mainly serve the purpose of securing future profit. These interviewees stated internationalization to reduce the dependence on the home market. In addition, a developed sense of increased financial security was mentioned. This group noticed difficulties in international expansion, as well. Fully exposed and engaged to internationalization, interviewees (EX-H & EN-H) elaborated on the importance of a holistic understanding of internationalization. Here, interviewees mentioned internationalization's impact on their daily business, and a consequently increased workload. Yet, they also stressed the excitement for new store openings and international encounters.

Questioning participants on their awareness of the need to internationalize, interviewees (EX-L & EN-L) referred to the firm's goal of generating a net profit of one billion. One interviewee associated "internationalization as the tool" to achieve this goal. Moreover, interviewees saw tapping into new markets, as well as seizing cheap production as decisive pull factors. For these interviewees, the decision to commit to internationalization is driven by a desire to preserve the status quo. Moreover, one interviewee expressed that she understood the reasons for internationalization, yet "regardless -- only felt like [she] knew 50% where the journey is going". Other interviewees (EX-H & EN-L) also justified internationalization with the opportunity to increase revenue, match the competition and tap into new markets. Yet, this group additionally stressed resulting risks. It was stated that internationalization would generate enormous costs without potentially ever generating profit. "I view it as critical" one interviewee expressed promptly. On the contrary, other interviewees (EX-L & EN-H) expressed enthusiasm as they viewed internationalization to generate new growth potential. For them, internationalization complements the brand's vision of becoming a premium casual lifestyle brand. For interviewees, both exposed and engaged to internationalization, the need to pursue this strategy is deeply rooted in the firm's history as well as its Swedish origin. In this context, interviewees frequently quoted Werner Böck (N.d.). He intended to encourage people to change by stressing that "if you want everything to stay the way it is, you have to change things all the time!" (Böck n.d.). Concluding on interviewees' awareness, it became eminent that interviewees possessed considerate awareness of the business reasons while lacking direction and understanding of long-term benefits and strategy.

Considering benefits resulting from internationalization, interviewees (EX-L & EN-L) predominantly referred to financial stability. Furthermore, these interviewees stated to value the resulting sense of financial security. However, concerns reducing desirability were mentioned, too. These concerned the speed and the quality of internationalization, as well as the resulting workload. Other interviewees' (EX-L & EN-H) explained their desire to support internationalization with confidence in the management. The respondents' attitude might be summarized by one interviewee's quote: "we will manage this crisis as we have mastered past crises". International change is consequently expected to be managed as well as past transformations. Here, interviewees referred to the good handling of the

COVID-19 pandemic. Interviewees less engaged, yet exposed to internationalization, viewed support to internationalization as support to the firm. One interviewee even referred to Marc O'Polo as a second family. She continued by explaining that this sense of belongingness was her only motivation to commit to the change. Most interviewees that showed strong excitement about international encounters were categorised as EX-H & EN-H. According to them, internationalization enriches the firm as diverse colleagues have different points of view and potentially new perspectives on arising issues. Being directly involved with internationalization, they expressed challenges, as well. Amongst these were language barriers, sustainability concerns, and inefficient processes.

According to one interviewee, a representative of EN-L & EN-L, there are "no current initiatives or training initiatives that suitably support employees". During the research process, the author further identified this group's shortcomings in knowledge regarding internationalization. Interviewees stated to receive relevant information not at all or on very short notice. Lacking clear directions, these participants are not able to act confidently in an international environment. They consequently considered internationalization as a chaotic initiative. Language, as EX-H & EN-L categorized interviewees expressed, was named on the one hand as the most prominent skill to obtain. On the other hand, these interviewees expressed a strong hesitation to talk English despite developed capabilities e.g., through offered language training. Interviewees stated applying acquired skills to be difficult and to require great effort. One interviewee also stated that she found it more difficult to inform her international than national colleagues on the same topic. Moreover, this group found the acquisition of knowledge via the intranet to be unorganised and again involving great effort. Interviewees (EX-L & EN-H) found personal encounters with international co-workers necessary to develop a mutual understanding. Consequently, the need to develop a global mindset characterized by an open culture and new ways of thinking surfaced. Interviewees' (EX-H & EN-H) ability to act in the international organization is further strongly dependent on support in legal and administrative issues. Most expressed that, concerning this matter, they do not know where to get help and are left to autodidact. To manage in the international environment, this group expressed the need to develop flexibility and goal orientation. The elaborated-on knowledge, needed to engage in internationalization, can be divided into three categories: language

skills, interpersonal skills, and administrative skills. In general, interviewees expressed confidence and strong competence in managing diverse teams, interacting with international co-workers and intercultural collaboration. Existing training or events such as Brown Bag Lunches or an Intercultural Competence Webinar were infrequently mentioned. To obtain knowledge about all three areas including relevant resources, participants mainly relied on the intranet Confluence.

Asked how internal processes support internationalization, one interviewee (EX-L & EN-L) responded “not at all”. Other interviewees from the same group suggested implementing milestones, enhancing communication, and involving employees early on as alternative and new reinforcement methods. Currently, established processes overwhelm this group of participants and therefore rather undermine than reinforce internationalization. Interviewees, exposed yet not engaged, added another dimension. For them, common values such as politeness, helpfulness, and a shared sense of identity, encourage commitment to internationalization. They expressed their behaviour to be reinforced by role models or managers. Team events were mentioned to further contribute positively to building confidence to act in the international organization. Interviewees (EX-L & EN-H) found it important to challenge individuals less engaged to leave their comfort zone. It was suggested to foster diversity by actively creating international encounters. Moreover, this group stated to require personalized messages or information from change makers. For them, having a face to relate to, and possibly ask questions to, contributes to reinforcing internationally minded behaviour. One interviewee (EX-H & EN-H) stated “Marc O’Polo [to be] a German company with past struggles to adapt to the new size. These struggles are still visible in poorly functioning processes”. This groups’ interviewees reported a necessity in optimizing practices by unifying national and international processes. Interviewees stated these processes to concern most business areas, ranging from logistics to legal. A general misalignment between the actual international expansion, overall organizational growth and the firm’s internal readiness for internationalization was observed by the author.

### 4.1.2 Established pain points

The first part of the interviews focussed on the establishment of an environment characterized by trust and comfort. In the second part of the interview, interviewees' perception of the international change processes was iterated. This section's focus lay on respondents' negative associations and experiences regarding internationalization. As a result, the author was able to establish insights on experienced pain points. In addition, discernments drawn from the ADKAR-Model (Chapter 4.1.1.) were taken into consideration. Surfaced pain points were categorized into personal, group and systematic barriers. The research surfaced a lack of a common language connecting employees on group level, lacking responsibility and expertise on personal level, and short-term communication on process level.

Interviewees with little exposure and engagement (EX-L & EN-L) stated to experience short-term communication focussing on necessary details only. One interviewee asked herself "why does this change need to be implemented and why now?". Further, respondents elaborated on narrow communication restricting them to develop a thorough understanding of the global goal. Moreover, short-term communication was stated to cause an increase in workload and stress to cope with the new workload. In addition, interviewees expressed a lack of management support. Interviewees expressed uncertainty about internationalization as they fear losing the old status quo. Previously mentioned short-term and untransparent communication were stated to enhance these feelings. Internationalization, therefore, challenges these individuals' tasks, roles, and standing in the organization. To foster commitment amongst this group of employees, these fears are to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, interviewees addressed growing anonymity as a pain point resulting from the process. "You simply don't know the people at the Campus anymore", mentioned one interviewee and further highlighted that the sense of belonging and unity decreased.

Pain points hindering interviewees already exposed to internationalization to actively engage, concerned new standards and requirements to adapt to. Interviewees (EX-H & EN-L) expressed dissatisfaction to for example adapt to new intercultural or linguistic standards. To speak English requires interviewees to leave

their comfort zone and is currently only done when necessary. Communication with international colleagues is therefore often kept to a minimum. In this context, one interviewee referred to cultural differences, as well. The absence of a shared sense of identity and group values were identified as further obstacles. An additional pain point addressed by this group of employees was the return of invest. Financially speaking, interviewees were neither certain about the international expansions' success nor did they feel that their opinion was regarded in the process. Furthermore, interviewees reported competitors distributing bonus pay-outs or other benefits to their employees. As interviewees perceived to financially miss out in comparison to competitors, commitment for internationalization deteriorates.

Interviewees, EX-L & EN-H, observed and reported on a trend inflicted by internationalization. According to this group, the organizational environment is increasingly characterized by a sense of disconnection between groups of employees. One interviewee further elaborated on this: "we work well in our small teams. But exchange rarely exceeds these borders. Sometimes it even feels like we work against rather than with each other". Moreover, interviewees reported on the absence of a common language to enhance this development. Participants viewed the deficient touchpoints between employees as obstacles, as face-to-face contact, for them, portrays an opportunity to reduce bias and create community. Further aspects mentioned concerned the strategy's quality. Interviewees viewed the absence of sustainability considerations, and of product ownership as failure to comply with core values. The absence of norms and set guidelines was expressed to reduce ownership of processes, products, and the brand in the international context. Therefore, according to interviewees, responsibility and quality assurance in this matter, is handed to third-party providers.

For interviewees (EX-H & EN-H) uncertainty about legal, compliance and administrative issues regarding international business results mark the main pain points. "If I have a question regarding administrative issues for my international employees, I do not know whom to contact. I do not even know and don't think there is a contact person that has the required expertise." Furthermore, this group expressed frustration about long and unnecessarily complicated processes. Needing to permanently deal with frequently changing requirements, high

workload, adjustments to the strategy and little guidance, this group reported on arising mental health issues. Should Marc O'Polo fail to provide support, these interviewees stated to view themselves risked at having burnouts. In addition, untransparent and short-term communication were mentioned as further pain points. One interviewee openly posed the question "why do I not receive the information I need?".

### **4.1.3 Established needs**

Having gained insights into pain points experienced by interviewees in the international change process, the author challenged the interviewees by asking them to suggest improvements. Further, participants' needs were assessed and are presented below. First, the focus lies on individual needs and what the interviewee himself can do to reduce pain points. Second, interviewees' elaboration on expectations of their co-workers and lastly of their managers' support is presented.

Interviewees (EX-L & EN-L) expressed the longing for tailored communication. They expressed a desire to obtain relevant information well in advance and when possible, in person. In addition, the desire to become actively involved surfaced. To do so, interviewees stated to need an understand of their impact and contribution to the whole initiative. To succeed, this group requires a predictable environment. It was mentioned to be of high importance that common values and an open culture are cultivated. Respondents asked their managers to understand that "not everyone is keen on internationalization [and that in fact] some employees do not care about it all". Here, the need for leadership intervention emerged. Interviewees required their managers to set clear goals, define milestones, elaborate on immediate implications, and communicate transparently. Regularity and a step-by-step roll-out were of importance to all interviewees.

To encourage full commitment to internationalization, interviewees (EX-H & EN-L) stated to require new stability. For them, internationalization has disrupted the status-quo without providing them an opportunity to rebuild stability and safety. Interviewees mentioned tasks complementing the own skillset, as well as time to

adapt to the new requirements to mitigate pain points. Several participants mentioned a gap in values, interests and attitudes between teams, departments, and countries. This gap has become especially eminent between old employees, having experienced the transition from a small family-owned to an international company, and new employees considering internationalization as given. Co-workers acting as role models were named as a possible mitigating factor as “it helps to see the faces working on the change and being able to ask questions”. Building on and utilizing this shared understanding, interviewees further stressed the need to develop common values and culture. This group needs the management to listen to individual needs, to facilitate social encounters, and to gradually implement change.

Interviewees, EX-L & EN-H, mentioned the need to develop a global mindset. One interviewee thereby expressed the need to foster a common understanding of internationalization. She asked to “not only think of internationalization in terms of internationalization” but to consider all areas of sustainable growth: human, social, economic, and environmental. In addition, this group referred to the importance of reducing bias by facilitating cultural exchange. The need to increase the approachability of individuals directly exposed to change, emerged, as well. Developing this extended definition and understanding of internationalization, according to interviewees, needs from HR provided training, communication, and exposure. Instated initiatives should, according to respondents, focus on creating a global understanding of the change. These interviewees need their managers to provide support in moments of change.

Already exposed and engaged to internationalization, needs addressed by respondents (EX-H & EN-H) primarily focussed on process optimization. Interviewees stated to require clear goals, more concrete and well in advance defined milestones. To closer monitor individual international expansion concerned projects, the need for regular catchups emerged. One interviewee suggested to engage in more agile project management. On group level, interviewees expressed the need to foster mutual understanding to create a feeling of belongingness. Interviewees stated to need their managers provide the relevant tools. In addition, this group held their manager responsible for facilitating open communication.

## **4.2 Results from questionnaire**

The qualitative study presented in chapter 4.1 was enhanced by data collected with a short questionnaire. The questionnaire (Appendix 2) entailed a list of four questions addressing personality type and resulting preferences affecting change communication. The collected data thereby offers a source of qualitative and quantitative data. All nine interviewees were asked to complete the questionnaire. In total, seven interviewees completed the questionnaire. No biographic data was tracked. This helped to maintain with the commissioning company agreed upon data privacy as it restricted identification of responses. The results are presented in the following chapters.

### **4.2.1 Data on participants**

The distributed questionnaire provides the study with quantitative data. Collected quantitative data allows further elaboration on participants' preferences. The participants, based on identified preferences, were grouped into the following four categories established by Briggs and Briggs Myers: Thoughtful Innovators, Thoughtful Realists, Action-Oriented Innovators, and Action-Oriented Realists (Cameron & Green 2009, 50-52). The categories rely on in Chapter 2.4 introduced individual preferences regarding approach (introversion; extraversion), information (sensing; intuitive), decision-making (thinking; feeling), and structure (judging; perceiving). For the grouping relevant preferences are introversion and extraversion as well as sensing and intuitive.

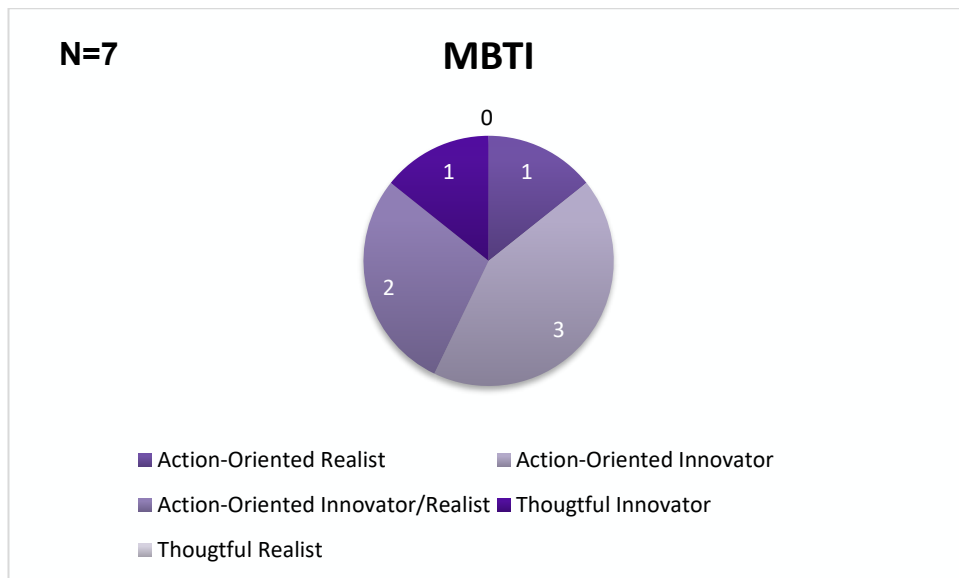


FIGURE 14. MBTI.

Amongst all respondents, the most prominent group was Action-Oriented Innovator, accounting for 42.9%. This group is most concerned with actions and focusses on making things better. Action-Oriented Realists, as well as Thoughtful Innovators, were equally strongly represented accounting for each 14.2%. Both groups thereby held the smallest share. Action-Oriented individuals with both realist and innovator preference amounted to a total of 28.6%. None of the respondents qualified for the category of Thoughtful Realist.

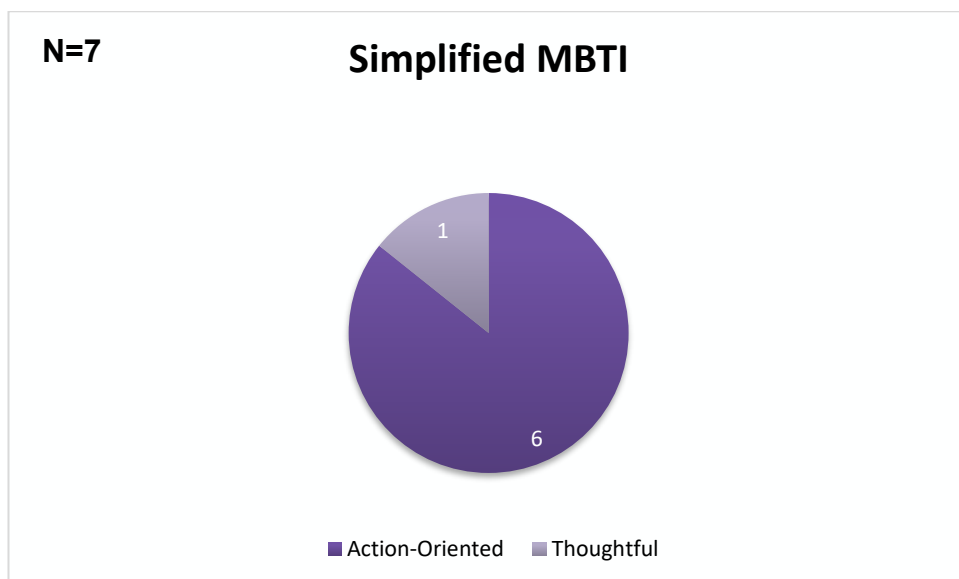


FIGURE 15. Simplified MBTI.

The author decided on reducing the four groups into the two groups of Action-Oriented and Thoughtful individuals. This grouping allowed a more generalist approach to the results. From all participants, 85% of respondents attribute themselves as Action-Oriented. Action-Oriented allows association with a hands-on mentality and an eagerness to actively engage. The minority of respondents, accounting for 14.3%, are positioned as Thoughtful individuals. This group is characterized by general caution and carefulness regarding the change. Despite this initial reluctance, Thoughtful individuals may still be engaged and contributing to the change. (The Meyers & Briggs Foundation n.d)

#### **4.2.2 Personality and change**

The author collected qualitative data to assess participants positioning regarding the four discussed preferences (extraversion, introversion; thinking, feeling; sensing, intuition; judging, and perceiving). The questions were derived based on the MBTI. In question design, the author considered part this paper's second sub research question "*[h]ow to approach different personalities and support them in the process of internationalization?*", as well as theory by Jessup (2002) focusing on applying psychological type to organizational change. For each question, respondents positioned themselves on a scale from one to five. While a positioning between one and two as well as between four and five was related to a clear positioning for one preference, three was considered as indecisive.

The first preference concerned respondents' orientation in life by assessing if they "prefer to focus on the outer or the inner world" (The Meyers & Briggs Foundation n.d). Accordingly, participants were asked if they would rather receive information in person e.g., through a meeting, or impersonal via mail allowing consumption in private. The majority of 85.7 %, having chosen an in-person approach, consequently, draw their energy only from the outside world. Thereby most respondents qualify as extroverted. According to Meyers and research by Jung, extroverted individuals engage promptly, and spend little time questioning the objective, required change, or possible outcomes. In moments of change, extroverts need to listen to and talk about the upcoming change.

14.3% of respondents preferred impersonal communication regarding the upcoming change. This method of communication, e.g., via mail or Intranet allows private consumption as well as it allows time to process the information. In addition to this reservedness and preference for solitude, introverts tend to require a clear idea before moving into action. Accordingly, written information that allows being studied in private provides introverts with a sense of security and helps build an understanding of what is about to happen.

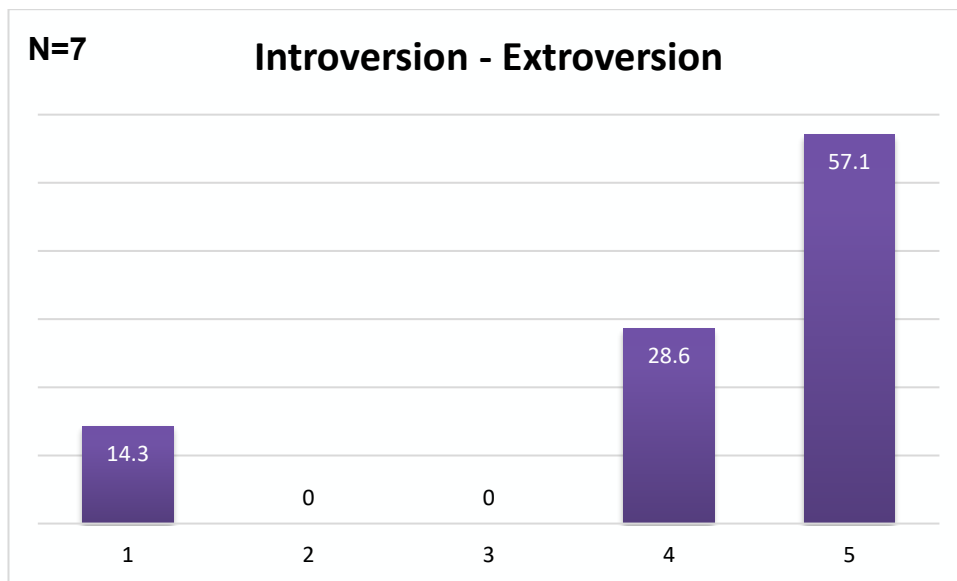


FIGURE 16. Introversion – Extroversion.

Individuals' answer to the question of whether they "prefer to focus on the basic information" or "prefer to interpret and add meaning" to information determines their position on the scale from sensing to intuition. To assess this positioning the author questioned the respondents by presenting two different scenarios. In the first scenario, individuals are provided with the information that a change is necessary as, without it, the company won't survive. The focus lies on what is actual, present, and real. Contrary, in the second scenario, the focus lies on the meaning and information provided on the positive future the change will cause. 57.1% of respondents preferred the second scenario and show an intuitive preference. Individuals with an intuitive preference tend to focus on the big picture, are interested in new possibilities, and prefer symbols or metaphors to comprehend changed circumstances. Information provided should emphasize a future vision.

Sensing individuals, on the contrary, rely on information experienceable with the five senses. In this study, 14.3% of respondents inherit the sensing preference. Accordingly, these individuals place their attention on the physical reality and are concerned with information focussing on the presence. Here, strong emphasis consequently lies on objective facts. When introducing change, sensing individuals should be provided specific details first enabling them to then develop an understanding of the big picture second. This process is supported by providing opportunities and examples to implement change.

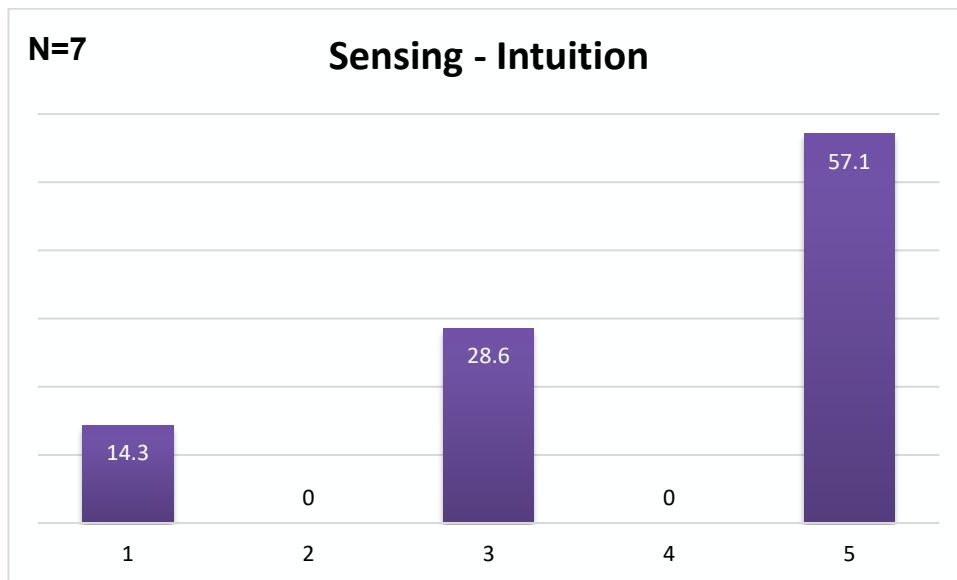


FIGURE 17. Sensing – Intuition.

The author posed the third question to assess preferences in decision making. A distinct differentiation is made between individuals preferring logic and consistency versus individuals referring to people and special circumstances. Individuals preferring logic and consistency will find themselves on the thinking side of the spectrum while individuals preferring to focus on people who are positioned on the other end as feeling. In the survey, the author phrased the question as follows: “If you were faced with an upcoming change initiative, what would you like to know first?”. 42.9% of participants responded that they preferred to know how the change impacts the daily business for themselves and their colleagues, if they had to change, or if their roles stayed the same. Management should

therefore consider that, for these individuals, being tactful, avoiding telling the hard truth, and maintaining harmony is the top priority. Communication should therefore focus on the impact change will cause on individuals.

Another 42.9% place more emphasis on logical explanations and solutions. These individuals prefer to understand the pros and cons, avoid inconsistencies by considering the decision independent from the messenger, and thereby avoid bias. Providing a logical analysis that eases decision-making for thinking individuals helps to foster their commitment to the change initiative.

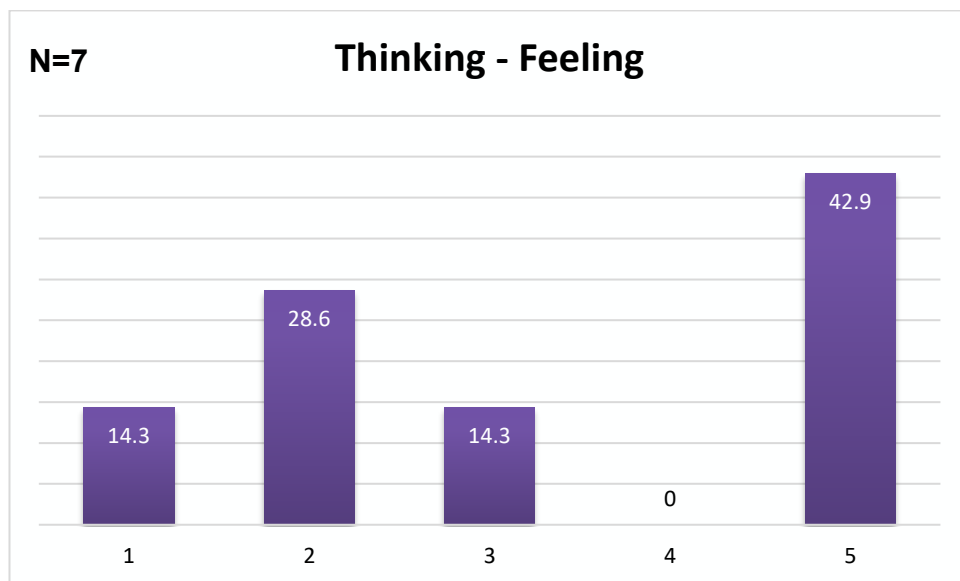


FIGURE 18. Thinking – Feeling.

An individual's positioning "in dealing with the outside world" refers to a preference in a structure that varies from "getting things decided to stay open to new information" (The Meyers & Briggs Foundation n.d.). Judging individuals prefer structure, details, and organization whereas perceiving individuals tend to be more flexible, adaptable, and less focused on organization. It is to be considered that these preferences merely concern the interaction with other individuals and unsurfaced character traits may differ. 57.1% of respondents answered that they were eager to actively participate in the design and implementation of the change initiative before final decisions are made. Driven by a spontaneous burst of energy, and a desire to understand and adapt to the changing environment, these individuals are positioned as perceiving. A successful communication should

occur before a final decision allowing perceiving individuals to contribute and shape the initiative.

Attributed as “structured and detailed” judging individuals prefer an organized, detailed and decided environment (The Meyers & Briggs Foundation n.d.). 28.6% of survey respondents express initial hesitation and reluctance when a change is introduced. Only once a final decision is made do these individuals feel comfortable acting under changed circumstances. Uncertain circumstances, such as those experienced during change initiatives, challenge judging individuals who aim to have everything under control.

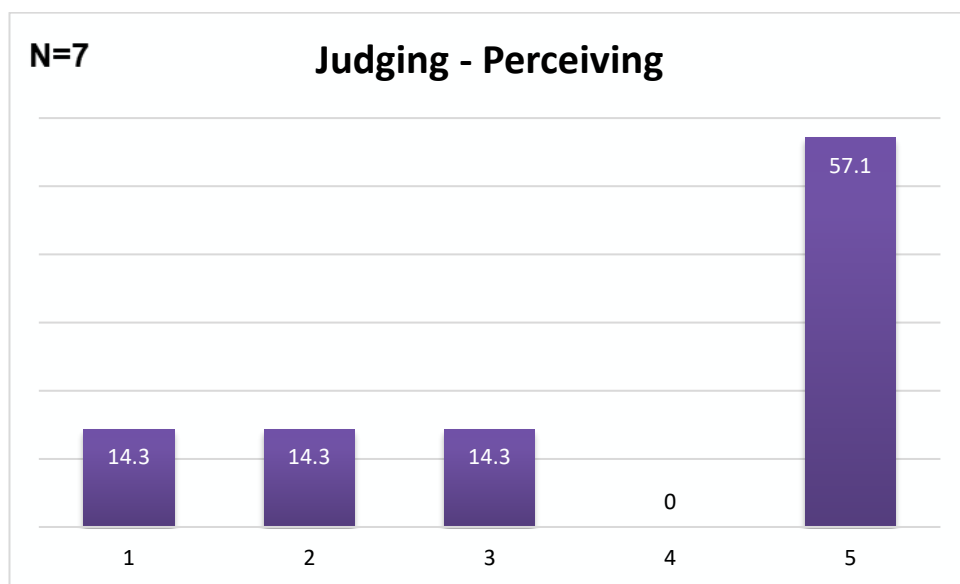


FIGURE 19. Judging – Perceiving.

### 4.3 Summarized results

Throughout the qualitative and quantitative data collection process the author developed a set of key findings. During the interviews participants particularly highlighted the need of fostering a global mindset. This premise is supported by data from the survey indicating one-third of participants being judging, hence less flexible and adaptable. Having established fostering a global mindset as the main premise, all further findings are viewed as interdependent building blocks:

- Personify the change
- Consider the desire to engage and shape
- Contemplate all aspects of sustainability in the design of internationalization
- Utilize strong communication

To close the gap between the change initiative as designed by the management and its practical execution, interviewees value personal contact. Survey data supports this observation with 85.7% of respondents preferring an in-person approach over an impersonal approach in communication. Interviewees addressed the need for responsible contact persons per country, peers as role models and more information from the change makers, “the people behind the internationalization”.

Decisions at Marc O’Polo, according to interviewees, are made by “the men at the top”. In the context of internationalization, e.g., purchase for international stores, is done from the headquarters with little input from the international staff. The interviews highlighted interviewees’ desire to be heard, individual needs to be considered and expertise to be taken into consideration. Interviewees expressed interest in sharing knowledge yet did not feel their own opinion regarded. The conducted survey confirms this impression. 85% of survey respondents being attributed as action oriented inherit a strong desire to contribute to the change. Most interviewees regarded internationalization as a tool to increase profit and thus sustain business relevance. Enhancing brand visibility or tapping on new customer segments were considered secondary benefits. One interviewee highlighted by expressing that “revenue isn’t profit” that internationalization yields high costs, as well. The respondent further added that a sustainable long-term strategy seems to be missing. Moreover, another interviewee addressed the need to shift from profit and expansion-centred growth to sustainable growth. Apart from the elaborated on financial sustainability, environmental and social sustainability were mentioned.

With an ever-growing company size, employees observed growing anonymity, as well. Interviewees having personally experienced this transition notice a gap in values, interests, and needs between old and new employees. Other

interviewees observe this gap even between teams, departments, or countries. The lack of shared values is complemented by interviewees experiencing a lack of direction regarding internationalization. Currently, change communication in the internationalization process, according to interviewees, places a strong emphasis on hard facts such as the number and date of store openings. Interviewees express the need for a compelling story, more transparency and communication well in advance. One interviewee added, “we need to develop a common language”.

#### **4.4 Synthesis of results**

Drawing on in chapter 4.3. established key takeaways, this part places developed insights in a broader context. Before answering the main research question by providing recommendations to the commissioning company, the two sub research questions are addressed. Both sub research questions rely on visualization tools to specify and process primary data. Based on primary and secondary research, the author developed a set of relevant recommendations for the commissioner. Last, recommendations are presented to the reader.

##### **4.4.1 Current pain points in the internationalization process**

The author initially posed the sub research question “*[w]hat are the current pain points for employees in the internationalization process?*”. In the research process developed thorough understanding of perceived pain points contributed to answering the main research question, thus guiding Marc O’Polo employees through the international change process (Chapter 4.4.3). Framing qualitative and quantitative data, the author referred to secondary data, as well. While primary data mainly served as a source for the current pain points, established research provided context by highlighting benefits. Theory-derived advantages were complemented with insights drawn from qualitative interviews. Here, especially the first segment of the interview, focussing on awareness and desirability, was considered.

Summarized, interviewees perceived great uncertainty about their tasks and changed requirements, about goals and strategy concerning internationalization, and about supporting processes. Resulting pain points are a sense of insignificance resulting from growing anonymity and company size; unease about the success of the initiative caused by untransparent communication; stress to respond to fast-changing requests, tasks, or requirements; a feeling of being overwhelmed due to the need to autodidact and missing support systems; fatigue triggered by an increased workload.

Secondary and primary data, both, establish similar key trends revealing benefits for employees to support internationalization. These are a possibility to grow profit and maxims returns by diversifying the sourcing process or by distributing to more countries; to secure sustainable growth by establishing a safety net of foreign markets to balance possible crises in the domestic market; to increase brand visibility and desirability.

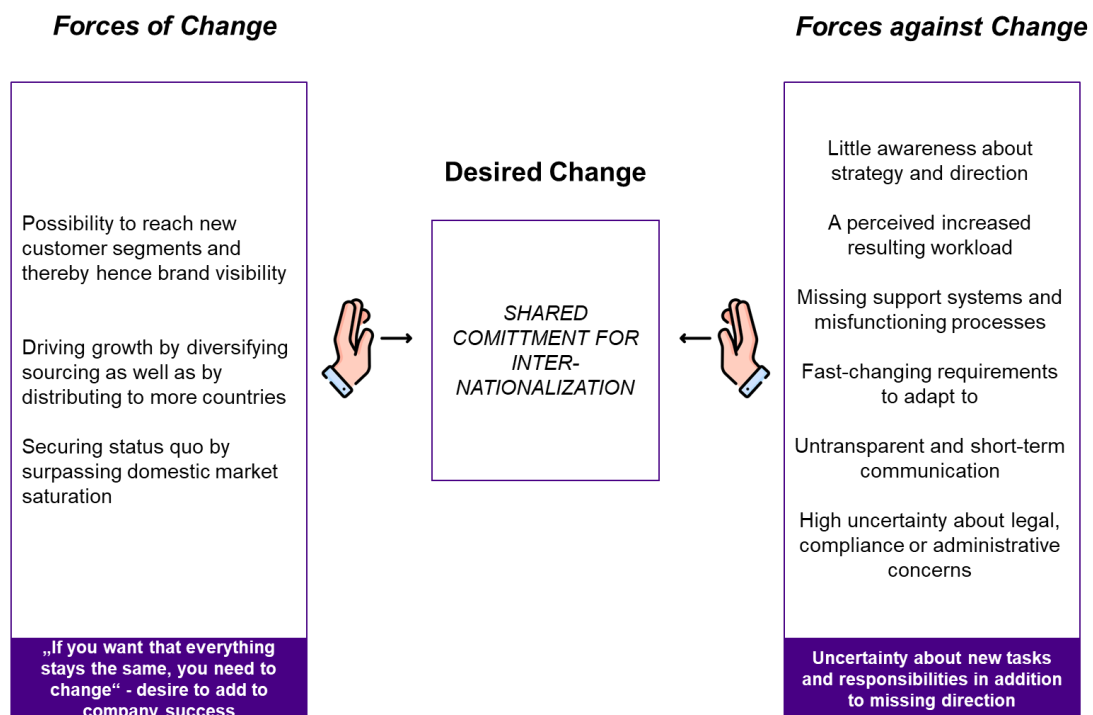


FIGURE 20. Force field analysis (Icon made by Freepik from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)).

Placing the desired state at the centre, the author decided to visualize these pain points and the opposing benefits using a force field analysis (Chapter 3.3.3). To

reach the desired state of a shared commitment to internationalization, forces of change need to outweigh the forces against change, hence the uncovered pain points. The analysis thereby brings obstacles to change to awareness and places them in a broader context.

#### **4.4.2 An approach to support different personalities in the process of internationalization**

To provide relevant recommendations to the commissioner on guiding Marc O'Polo employees through international change, the author introduced a second sub research question. It was researched "*[h]ow different personalities at Marc O'Polo can be approached and supported in the process of internationalization*". The research mainly relied on conducted interviews and survey results. Collected data from interviews established needed support thereby focussing on answering the second part of the research question. Complementing qualitative research, interviewees were provided with a questionnaire that elaborated further on personality types and a suitable approach.

Global needs that became eminent during the research process concerned the development of new linguistic skills and required expertise in administrative areas to ease practical execution; support in developing these skills as well as in monitoring progress; the need to feel valued and recognized by making the own impact experienceable; the feeling of belonging and group identity facilitated by a common language and social encounters; the longing for passive participation and involvement through relatable role models, reassurance from leadership and encouragement from change agents as well as to consider social responsibility and sustainability.

Taking respondents' personalities into consideration, preferences regarding communication and involvement surfaced. A general set of guidelines on how to approach participants was derived from these preferences. These guidelines involve a desire for detailed communication about the upcoming change in person; a preference for providing information in relation to the bigger picture; for

focussing on both, logical analysis, and practical implications in the change communication and for providing possibilities to engage prior to final decisions.

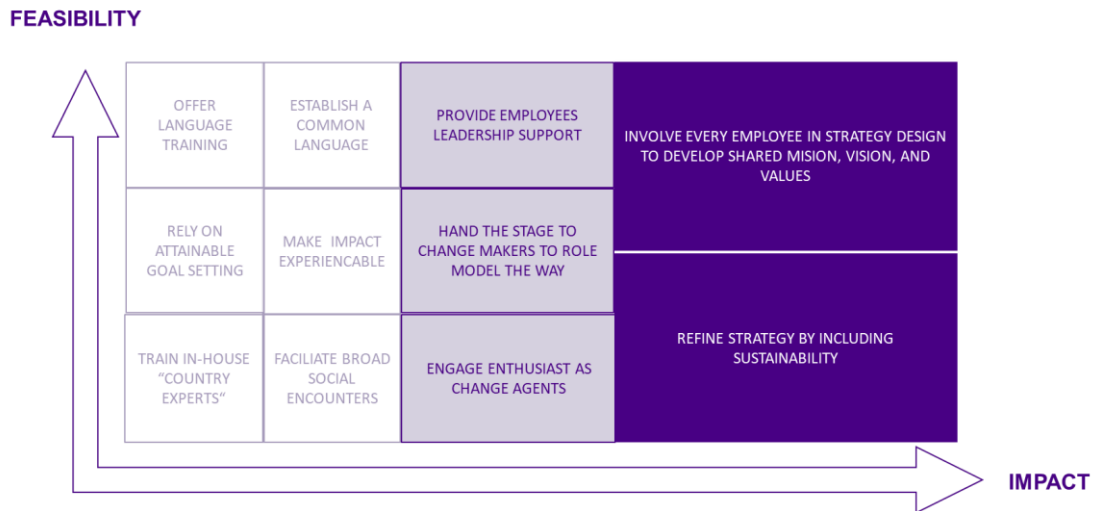


FIGURE 21. Heat map analysis.

Enhancing the accessibility of results, the author chose to visualize the above-presented data in a heat map analysis (Chapter 3.3.3). Developed insights on needed support and suitable approach were placed in a matrix and sorted according to feasibility and impact. The colour grading, from light to dark, thereby indicates the author's expected impact of needs on the success of the internationalization process. An element's height provides the commissioner with an estimate of feasibility. Feasibility, here, considers the financial investment as well as project size and scope.

#### 4.4.3 Recommendations to guide Marc O'Polo employees through international change

The following chapter proposes recommendations for guiding Marc O'Polo employees through international change. This part thereby presents data developed by the conduction of qualitative and quantitative research and verified by established theory. The gained knowledge answers the main research question, and thus supports this paper's aims and objectives. The recommendations rely on four pillars derived from this paper's theoretical framework. Chapter 2 introduces

the theoretical framework and frames its theories in an iceberg model. Chosen theories focus on understanding change processes, developing a change plan, preparing for roadblocks, and considering internal forces of change. This chapter proposes a set of recommendations addressing each pillar individually. The synthesis of recommendations is visualized in Figure 17. Change, as seen by the author, is regarded as an ongoing process. Therefore, the presented results are to be considered interdependent.

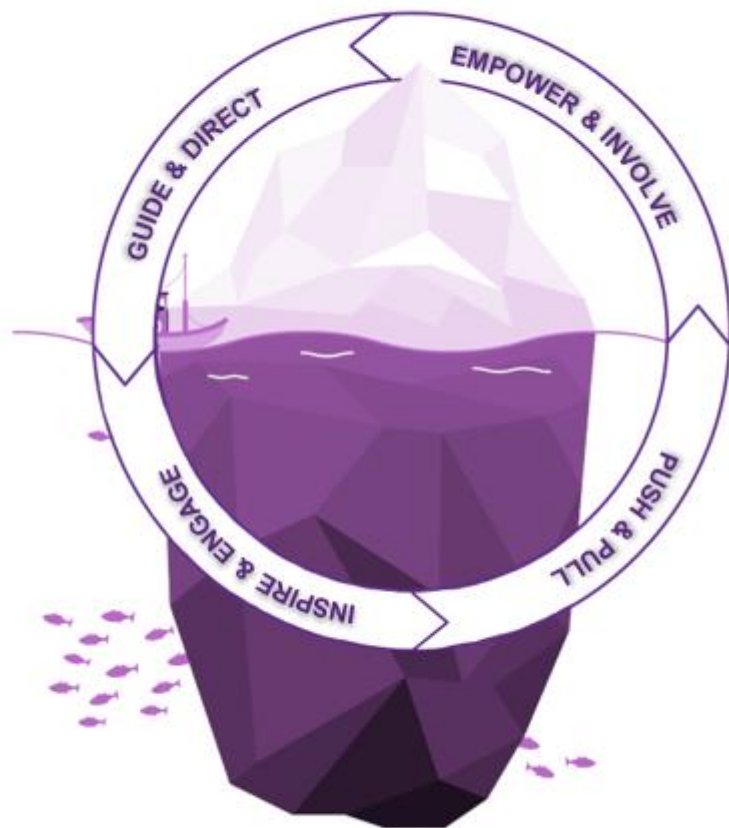


FIGURE 22. Extended iceberg model (Icon made by Freepik from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)).

The first recommendation, aimed at guiding Marc O’Polo employees through international change, builds on **guiding and directing** employees to support them in their change processes. Once a change or foreign element is presented, individuals experience psychological change (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40). Psychological change is characterized by shifting through different emotional stages

from shock, denial, and anger to experimentation, discovery, and integration (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40). Individual change, triggered in this case by external circumstances, challenges established team structures, as well (West 2012). A performing team may consequently find itself, once again, in the forming stage (West 2012). Research conducted by the author confirms these theories. Interviewees expressed uncertainty about roles and responsibilities as well as about strategy, direction, and purpose. As many do not know where to find needed information or whom to contact, feelings of insecurity and stress emerge. Surfaced needs concern the establishment of designated contact persons, competence training such as language training, and transparent communication. To mitigate these pain points and cater for needs, the author suggests implementing a Confluence Space, a site in the Marc O'Polo Intranet. Here, contact persons including newly introduced change agents, change makers or facilitators are listed. It may further include information about accessible resources to develop needed skills and expertise, both for personal and professional means. The Confluence Space guides and directs them through uncertainty by providing a knowledge platform.

The key terms **inspire and engage** body the second recommendation. These terms address the needed commitment and support for any change initiative. John Kotter developed an 8-step model that provides a plan accommodating to these needs and thus facilitating successful change (Cameron & Green 2009, 114-116). In 2002, Kotter and Cohen established changing the individual's heart as the key to transformation (Kotter & Cohen 2002). According to their theory, any change plan should therefore first, make the change visible and second, experienceable. Currently, according to primary data, there is no broad commitment to internationalization at Marc O'Polo. Interviewees report growing anonymity, a trend of working in silos minimizing collaboration between units, as well as an indifferent attitude towards internationalization. For interviewees, the sum of pain points seems to outweigh its benefits. Expressed needs concern a longing for social encounters and rebuilding a sense of community. The author suggests the commissioning company to create experiences for employees. These could take the form of international theme weeks, an international buddy program or international store visit days. It is considered important to deploy these experiences

along the entire employee life cycle, starting with the onboarding process and incorporating international encounters in everyday life.

The two opposing forces, **pushing, and pulling**, are at the core of the third recommendation. In the theoretical framework, the author introduced two approaches to preparing for roadblocks hindering change. The influence model, developed by McKinsey (2016) suggests relying on mechanisms pushing or encouraging the individual employee to engage. Proposed methods include role modeling, fostering an understanding, developing talent and skills, and reinforcing with formal mechanisms. Considering the individual psychological change process, the author moreover chose to integrate John Berger's reduce-framework. Aligned with its objective to remove obstacles to individual change, the framework encourages people to persuade themselves of the change, acknowledges the loss of the current status quo and focuses on making the change feasible. During the research process, the author uncovered a need for encouragement as well as support. Interviewees reported indifference and disinterest in internationalization trending amongst Marc O'Polo employees. Leadership, according to one interviewee, does not actively encourage an international mindset. Therefore, the author suggests the integration of a new category in the bi-annually conducted talent reviews at Marc O'Polo. By integrating internationalization into a formal process, all dimensions of the influence model would be covered. According to the theory, having all four building blocks in place facilitates successful change. To ensure employee satisfaction, the author recommends considering the REDUCE framework in the design of the talent review's internationalization part. Thereby derived responsibilities concern surfacing the cost of inaction, asking for and starting with a small commitment, making it easy for the employee to try the change, and providing multiple sources of proof. The goal should be that employees persuade themselves to commit to internationalization.

The two terms "**empower**" and "**involve**" characterize the last recommendation. These keywords respond to individual and personality type-inflicted needs, preferences, and attitudes. As of 2010, personality is a central part of human resources and change management. According to theory, an organization's past handling of crisis' impacts employees' perception of a current change initiative (Cameron & Green 2009, 50-52). Not only do different personality types have

different needs, but the perception of the change at hand varies, as well. Personality categories resulting from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, allow predictions on preferred communication, focus of information, content, and delivery mode. The author concluded a general strong action orientation from the questionnaire. Respondents expressed a strong desire to contribute and engage prior to final decisions. Throughout the entire research process uncovered pain points and needs such as a desire for more transparent communication or a more holistic approach to internationalization support this observation. Thus, it is recommended to involve every employee in the design of guidelines on guiding Marc O'Polo employees through international change. The author suggests drawing on resources such as the lean strategy board (Appendix 3). The board offers space to reflect on current challenges, objectives, key results, future aspirations, suggested initiatives, mission, vision, focus during implementation and principles of execution. The author advises the commissioning company to plan team workshops for the creation of these canvasses. Apparent trends and similarities between teams' canvases are to be considered in strategy design.

## 5 DISCUSSION

The following chapters summarize this paper's research results. Moreover, the discussion adds by presenting a new angle on developed results and recommendations, as well as it refers to initially developed research questions. Research results are compared to this paper's literature review. Thereby theory is expanded and a contribution to previous research is accomplished. Adding value for the commissioning company, practical conclusions are drawn towards the end of this chapter. This paper concludes by evaluating its research design and implementation.

### 5.1 Discussion of results

The Marc O'Polo SE, as this paper's commissioning company, identified internationalization as their main strategic focus for shaping the future. In the introduction, the author presented distinct drivers for internationalization as well as their relevance to business success. Moreover, the light was shed on critical points concerning the nature of strategic refocussing and concluding change initiatives. Successful change was found to depend on an organization's ability to learn and transform. Current pain points hindering employees' ability to change, as well as a suggested approach to support employees in the internationalization process were presented in the results chapter. Recommendations to guiding Marc O'Polo employees through the change process were derived drawing on developed knowledge resulting from these two sub research questions.

The developed and in chapter 4.4.3 presented framework aims at supporting the strategic initiative HR INTERNATIONAL. Its focus lies on making employees "feel the MO'P spirit, regardless of where you are" (Marc O'Polo SE n.d.). This statement addresses the creation of a shared identity independent from the physical location. With progressing international expansion, Marc O'Polo evidently identified a misalignment between operational and individual change progress. This thesis' purpose was to develop recommendations fostering alignment and offering suggestions for personnel development managers to utilize when implementing measures supporting individuals throughout the change process. The

proposed framework aims at enhancing existing change management concerning internationalization. This report's results enable the facilitation of a company-wide commitment to internationalization. Deciding to adapt current change management provides the commissioning company with an opportunity to seize business prospects.

To understand the chosen methodology, the author reflected on existing research and relevant shortcomings. Marc O'Polo employees' attitudes towards internationalization were, up to this point, not considered in previous research yet of significance to this paper. Relying on a mixed-method study of explorative nature allowed the author thoroughly investigate employees' needs and pain points with sufficient flexibility. Semi-structured interviews provided valuable personal insights on the topic. The interview guide focussed on obtaining information regarding general awareness, desire, knowledge and ability, and reinforcement measures concerning internationalization. The study was enhanced and complemented by a short questionnaire focussing on the factor of personality. The fixed design enabled the author to enrich the results with systemized outcomes. Separating research themes into two different methodological approaches allowed the author to fully engage in each individual interview process and concentrate on new findings. The afterwards to interviewees distributed questionnaire enabled the author's perception of independent insights and thereby enhanced reliability.

Qualitative and quantitative research conducted by the author identified preferences for guiding Marc O'Polo employees through the international change process. For interviewees, transparent communication was of high significance. Most participants currently felt unaware of the overall strategy. Short-term communication was mentioned as an indicator of insufficiently planned and thought-through expansions. Participants desire to engage in internationalization is further impacted by concerns regarding their ability to adapt to these fast-changing requirements. Moreover, established processes seem to further hinder and slow international engagement. The need to consider all aspects of sustainability in strategy emerged throughout the research process, as well. Another important learning was the need to personify the change. Interviewees considered it important to have dedicated contact persons, know who is responsible for the

strategy design, and whom to address any personal questions. Relevant data from the questionnaire adds to these findings by suggesting involving employees, providing communication in person, and addressing the change's impact on employees.

Concluding the, by research uncovered, pain points and individual needs, the author expected to find stronger attitudes regarding the research topic. Respondents were questioned which aspects of their daily life were affected by internationalization. Despite an intention to respond, most struggled to answer. Given answers elaborated on a very limited level of touchpoints and infrequent direct exposure. These findings are in line with the interviewees' observation that collaboration and exchange in small teams work well. However, communication and interaction rarely exceed these borders. This pattern might consequently explain a rather unconcerned attitude towards internationalization.

## **5.2 Contribution to previous results**

The transition to an international fashion retailer has required the Marc O'Polo SE to perform changes in form of corporation, business structure and internal processes. The success of such a change initiative is determined by the efficiency of the established change management (Benito et al. 2021). Therefore, this paper's literature review focuses on change management-related theories. Change management itself is a mature and extensively researched field of study. Reflecting on this report's objective, the author chose to focus on theories placing the individual at the centre. In the following, the selection of chosen theories, their relevance to conducted research, as well as the research's contribution to these theories is discussed. Further, developed recommendations are presented.

The choice of theories integrated into this paper's theoretical framework is justified with the intent to assess multiple layers of change. The author chose to visualize the selected layers in an iceberg model. Referring to the main research question, to establish a plan guiding Marc O'Polo employees through change, all layers must be considered. Citing the Kubler-Ross Change curve (1969), the author acknowledges individual feelings resulting from moments of change and their

impact on the perception of change (Cameron & Green 2009, 32-40). Kotter and Cohen further suggest the creation of experiences to encourage behaviour change (Kotter & Cohen 2002). In addressing eventual resistance to change, two opposing theories are considered and by research confirmed. Therefore, mechanisms to encourage change, as well as mechanisms focussing on removing obstacles are of considerable relevance. At the most personal level, the author considered the interviewees' personality types. Research and methodology to assess the concluding type are based on the MBTI (The Myers & Briggs Foundation n.d.).

The introduced iceberg model was extended with secondary research results confirming and expanding on existing knowledge. Four main pillars form the result of this synthesis of primary and secondary data. First, recommendations cater for interviewees' need for predictability and stability, in line with feelings uncovered in the Kubler-Ross change curve (1969). Employees could for instance be provided with a sense of direction and guidance by having relevant resources in a designated knowledge space. Second, the addressed desire for human interaction confirms Kotter and Cohen's approach to creating experiences to change behaviour. Here, the creation of a memorable experience e.g., through an international buddy program is suggested. Theories on managing resistance to change by McKinsey (2016) and John Berger (2021) were challenged by merging both aspects in the recommendations section. Developed recommendations suggest implementing formal mechanisms and their soft execution according to Berger. An example would be the integration of internationalization in talent management. Instead of pushing employees to develop a global mindset, these discussions were to be used as a time to provide personalized support. The research established the interviewees' strong desire to shape and contribute to the international strategy design. Theory, in this case, suggests seizing employees' potential as an additional source of innovation and motivation for less-engaged individuals. A resulting recommendation addresses this desire and refers to distributing strategy canvases.

### **5.3 Practical conclusions**

This paper's broader intent aimed at fulfilling the HR INTERNATIONAL initiative which, amongst other objectives, focuses on supporting employees in the internationalization process. The report's introduction presents current activities installed to accomplish set objectives. The research process confirms their need and thereby justifies their existence. However, interviewees' identified pain points challenge the current offering's implementation methods. Most interviewees were unaware of the offered training or if aware rarely participated. Returning to the theoretical frameworks offers a potential explanation for this discrepancy. Language courses, intercultural competence training and brown bag lunches offer the employee the opportunity to engage in skill development. These are, according to theory, elements primarily used in the management of resistance. The current training measures thereby show a shortcoming in supporting employees in the remaining four levels of change. While employees still benefit from the offering, the author concludes a more diverse offering being more efficient. (Chapter 4.4.3).

The four pillars of change guide & direct; inspire & engage; push & pull; empower & involve serve personnel development managers as guidelines in the design of supporting measures and training. To consider all levels of change, starting by understanding the change process itself plays thereby a crucial role. Each element is thereby to be considered equally important and current as individuals move through the change process at a different speed. According to this framework developed recommendations depend on conducted interviews and on by interviewees' filled questionnaire results. The very limited amount of interview partners restricts a generalization of results. Chosen methods of data collection and analysis, regardless of quantity, allow valuable conclusions. Interviewees with different levels of exposure and engagement to internationalization provided a general picture of the current attitude regarding internationalization. The author is therefore confident, that the proposed recommendations are of value to the commissioning company.

Concluding the practical application of developed recommendations, the author emphasises the use of the four pillars to guide Marc O'Polo employees through international change. The pillars serve as reference structuring and guiding the designing of personnel development measures. Further, the holistic design of the

recommendations considering employee experience on multiple levels offers the application of the framework in future research, too. Moreover, the author sees a potential to apply the four pillars in other current change initiatives, as well. Possible areas concern the ongoing SAP transformation or the development of a broad sustainability awareness. To validate this hypothesis the author suggests building on this research by targeting an expanded group of employees with an adapted interview guide.

#### **5.4 Critical evaluation of research design and implementation**

This study's design is evaluated by an assessment of its reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the consistency of research and therefore to its replicability. A reliable study may still contain constant measurement errors, thus reliability on its own is an insufficient measurement tool. It is therefore crucial to assess the collected data's credibility, as well. Validity evaluates a study's results after the data collection. In the following, both parameters are reiterated. This chapter concludes by presenting future research opportunities resulting from this paper's limitations. (Weathington, Cunningham & Pittenger 2012)

The author reflected on this paper's degree of reliability by examining distinct factors influencing research consistency to suggest by Weathington et al. (2012). These errors concern instrument errors, participant variability, researcher variability, and environmental reliability. In the case of this research, instrument errors are held to a minimum by relying on Microsoft teams to conduct the face-to-face interviews as well as google forms to gather survey answers. Both tools are frequently used tools at the participants' workplace and thereby guarantee confidence in handling technology. Implicated by the diverse target group, participant variability affects this paper's research more severely. Interviews were conducted during participants' working hours. Interviewees may have been tired, stressed, or distracted by incoming mail to varying degrees. To mitigate this risk, the author let participants suggest a preferred meeting time. As for the author herself, researcher variability is given to some extent. Provided the interview period's length of two weeks, the author's questioning skills developed steadily. Therefore, inconsistency in recording and gathering data may have concluded. Guaranteeing

similar conditions, the author tried to keep each interview at a similar length, as well as during working hours and weekdays. Concluding by considering the topicality, the research can be considered reliable as attitudes and perceptions are not subject to fast change. (Weathington et al. 2012)

A study's accuracy depends on its handling of face-, content-, predictive-, and construct validity. Evaluating the author's analysis and conclusions according to these parameters allows predictions on its validity. To establish face validity, the author relied on the one side on the interview guide. The introductory part iterates on the study's purpose and thereby supports the participant's perception of the researcher's credibility. As the survey was distributed to interview participants only, no further introduction was considered. The interview guide as well as the questionnaire's content were reviewed by the Personnel Development Team's group manager. Therefore, content validity is considered given. During the interview process and the completing questionnaire, the author was able to establish pain points, needs, as well as preferences in communication regarding internationalization. Despite the limited participant number, the developed knowledge allows predictions on overall preferred support mechanisms throughout the internationalization process. Established construct validity further supports this claim. Interview data, questionnaire results, and theory all support and complement each other increasing the study's validity. (Weathington et al. 2012)

Building on this research, the author suggests further research on key terms and pillars' gravity to enhance validity. One of these terms concerned the longing for human interaction, despite increasing anonymity and minimal interaction outside the team's borders. A possible resulting future research topic could investigate the opportunity to enhance collaboration and processes between units. This paper's key findings, to actively involve, guide, push and pull, and empower are factors to be considered in research independent of its field. Finally, researching the proposed actions' impact on personnel development is suggested.

## REFERENCES

- Admas, J., Khan, H. T. A. & Raeside, R. 2014. Research Methods for Business and Social Science Students. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Balbix. 2022. Risk Heat Map – A Powerful Visualization Tool. Read on 02.11.2022. <https://www.balbix.com/insights/cyber-risk-heat-map/>
- Basford, T. & Schaninger, B. 2016. The four building blocks of change. McKinsey Quarterly. Read on 29.09.2022. <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-four-building-blocks--of-change>
- Benito, G. R. G., Surdu, I. & Greve, H. R. 2021. Why companies internationalize. Released on 06.05.2021. Read on 01.10.2022. <https://www.bi.edu/research/business-review/articles/2021/05/why-companies-internationalize/>
- Berger, J. 2021. The The Catalyst: How to Change Anyone’s Mind. New York: Simon & Schuster Ltd.
- Böck, W. Chairman of the Supervisory Board and majority shareholder of Marc O’Polo. N.d. Interview. Marc O’Polo SE.
- Bourgeault, I., Dingwall, R. & De Vries, R. 2010. The SAGE handbook of qualitative methods in health research. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Cameron, E. & Green, M. 2009. Making Sense of Change Management. 2nd edition. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Cassell, C. 2015. Conducting Research Interviews for Business and Management Students. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Development Dimensions International, Inc. N.d. STAR Method. Read on 30.09.2022. <https://www.ddiworld.com/solutions/behavioral-interviewing/star-method>
- Dewhurst, M., Harris, J. & Heywoo, S. 2012. Next-generation global organizations. McKinsey & Company. Read on 17.9.2022 [https://www.mckinsey.com/~/\\_media/mckinsey/dotcom/client\\_service/Organization/PDFs/Next\\_generation\\_global\\_organizations.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~/_media/mckinsey/dotcom/client_service/Organization/PDFs/Next_generation_global_organizations.ashx)
- Freepik. N.d. Read on 12.11.2022. [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com)
- Galletta, A. & Cross, W. E. 2013. Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond : From Research Design to Analysis and Publication. New York: University Press.
- Heinert, S. and Galindo-Gonzalez, S. 2014. Making decisions using Force Field Analysis. Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida.

Hiatt, J. M. 2006. ADKAR: A model for change in business, government, and our community. 1st edition. Loveland: Prosci Learning Center Publications.

Jessup, C. M. 2002. Applying psychological type and "gifts differing" to organizational change management. Journal of organizational change management 15 (5), 502-511. Read on 23.09.2022.

Kenton, W. 2022. Heatmap. Read on 02.11.2022. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/heatmap.asp>

Kenton, W. 2021. Brown Bag Meeting. Read on 19.10.2022. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brown-bag-meeting.asp>

Kotter, J. & Cohen, D. S. 2002. The Heart of Change. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

Kotter, J. & Rathgeber, H. 2006. Our Iceberg Is Melting. New York: Saint Martin's Press.

Landes, M. & Steiner, E. 2013. Psychologie der Wirtschaft. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Lawrence, P.R. 1969. How to Deal With Resistance to Change. Harvard Business Review. Read on 29.09.2022. <https://hbr.org/1969/01/how-to-deal-with-resistance-to-change>

Lin, D., Rayavarapu, S. N., Tadieddine, K. & Yeoh, R. 2022. Beyond financials: Helping small and medium-size enterprises thrive. McKinsey & Company. Read on 17.9.2022. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/beyond-financials-helping-small-and-medium-size-enterprises-thrive>

Marc O'Polo SE. N.d. WIKI. [Intranet]. Read on 01.10.1022.

Marc O'Polo SE. 2022. OUR COMPANY. Read on 01.10.2022. <https://company.marc-o-polo.com/en/company>

Me & Company GmbH. N.d. Lean Strategy Board: Strategie und Ziele für agile Teams. Read on 12.11.2022. <https://www.me-company.de/ressourcen/lean-strategy-board/>

Naldi, L. 2008. Growth through Internationalization : A Knowledge Perspective on SMEs. JIBS Dissertation Series 47. Read on 17.9.2022. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277751927\\_Growth\\_through\\_Internationalization\\_A\\_Knowledge\\_Perspective\\_on\\_SMEs](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277751927_Growth_through_Internationalization_A_Knowledge_Perspective_on_SMEs)

O'Neill. 2021. DACH countries - Statistics & Facts. Read on 01.11.2022. [https://www.statista.com/topics/4623/dach-countries/#topicHeader\\_wrapper](https://www.statista.com/topics/4623/dach-countries/#topicHeader_wrapper)

Oxford University Press. N.d. Definition of internationalization noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Read on 1.9.2022. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/internationalization>

Saudners, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2019. Research Methods for Business Students. 8th edition. London: Pearson Education.

Mayring, P. 2015. Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken. 12th edition. Weinheim: Beltz.

The Meyers & Briggs Foundation. N.d. Understanding MBTI Type Dynamics. Read on 23.09.2022. <https://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/understanding-mbti-type-dynamics/>

Weathington, B. L., Cunningham, C. J. L. & Pittenger, D. J. 2012. Understanding business research. 1st edition. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

West, M.A. 2012. Effective Teamwork. 3rd edition. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Interview Guide

#### Phase 1 - Opening segment

1 (3)

Introduction of researcher, interviewee, and research topic.

1. Establishing a level of comfort (Introduction of researcher, re- search topic, progress in research, use of collected data, data protection & anonymity)
2. Determining biographical data (age, profession, physical work- place, time employed with Marc O’Polo)
3. Promoting towards research topic:
  - What does internationalization mean to you?
  - Where do you get in touch with internationalization?

#### Phase 2 – Middle Segment

Placing questions of greater significance to investigate the understanding of the international change process, barrier points in the change plan as well as individ- ual roadblocks. The ADKAR model is applied to assess the change process and identify possible obstacles. Promoting questions are used following the STAR interview technique. Considering the format of the semi-structured interview, these questions might be oblivious.

1. Imagine you were Maxi Böck, CEO Marc O’Polo: how would you explain the Marc O’Polo’s intention to internationalize and the re- sulting organizational change to your employees? (awareness)

*S: Why is the change necessary?*

*T: What is your goal?*

*A: What are the actions you are gonna take?*

*R: What is the result you desire?*

2. What is your perception of Marc O'Polo's handling of past change initiatives? If no one experienced, personal change may be referred to. (desire)

*S: Can you describe any specific change situation?*

*T: What goal were you working towards?*

*A: What was your contribution?*

*R: What did you accomplish?*

3. Do you feel ready for working in a multinational firm? (knowledge & ability)

*S: Can you describe how internationalization changes your role and responsibilities?*

*T: What goal are you working towards?*

*A: What tasks, regarding internationalization, are you working on?*

*R: What did you accomplish so far that helps internationalization?*

4. Imagine working in a fully internationalized Marc O'Polo. What has helped you succeed and sustain behaviour? (reinforcement)

*S: Can you describe a situation in which you received positive feedback for your behaviour regarding internationalization?*

*T: What goal were you working towards?*

*A: What actions did you take to address the situation?*

*R: What did you accomplish?*

### **Phase 3 – Concluding Segment**

Before moving to closure, the research might relate to earlier stages, explore contradictions, and seize the opportunity to ask for additional thoughts. In this stage, more abstract questions will be posed.

1. Looking at the process of internationalization at Marc O'Polo at its entirety, which aspects challenge you?  
  
*What are pain points regarding current activities that are aimed at facilitating the internationalization process?*  
*Where do you currently see pain points that hinder employees from supporting internationalization?*  
*Where do you see possible pain points for employees in the future regarding internationalization?*  
*Do you think management of Marc O'Polo has taken correct steps in their effort to internationalise the company?*
  
2. What do you need to fully emerge yourself in the process of internationalization?  
  
*How they feel about different characters at Marc O'Polo and their needs to engage in internationalization?*  
*How could one's personality be taken into account in the change process?"*
  
3. How do you suggest to best guide employees through the process of internationalization at Marc O'Polo?
  
4. Thank you, closure, and link to voluntary questionnaire.

## Appendix 2. Questionnaire

### Guiding Marc O'Polo employees through international change


The purpose of this questionnaire is to map individual preferences in communication during the international change process. It takes around 2 - 4 minutes to complete this survey.

All information is given anonymously and used only for the purposes of developing Marc O'Polo's change management.

This survey is a collaboration between the Marc O'Polo AG and Tampere University of Applied Sciences. The parties get no monetary recompensation for doing this survey.

---

Image title



---

Where do you prefer to get your information from?

1   2   3   4   5

<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">From the intranet, a mail or a personal meeting. Sensitive information like this should be discussed privately and I need time to process it.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">I want to listen to the change makers! Hopefully I can talk about upcoming changes with my colleagues afterwards!</p>
---	---	---

---

When some tries to explain the underlying reasons for change, I prefer..

1   2   3   4   5

<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Facts, Data and logical analysis.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Information about the impact on people. How will this change my role, my responsibilities my relationships?</p>
---	---	---

---

The change communication, in my opinion should focus on..

1   2   3   4   5

<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">facts that relate to the past. I want to know why the change is happen, why now, and what is wrong with what we are doing now.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">the future! I am fully onboard and love to see where this is going!</p>
--	---	---

---

When do you want to be involved?

1   2   3   4   5

<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Once there is a final decision, I prefer a stable environment.</p>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Already in the process, I don't mind the ambiguity!</p>
--	---	---

