

## EXERCISE 10.2

### Force field analysis

Kurt Lewin's force field analysis is a most useful tool to use for assessing and constructing interventions with respect to organizational political forces. As it is presented in many organization development texts, force field analysis is a technique created by Lewin for problem-solving or managing change. It is based on the assumptions that in every situation there are forces driving change and forces restraining change, and that an emphasis on reducing restraining forces is more effective than increasing driving forces. While a force field might look like what we might do in listing reasons for and against taking an action, it is actually quite different. Reasons for and against are static and rational: they have to be justified. In force field analysis, forces impinging on a situation are listed. Hence, with regard to organizational politics a force field of political driving and restraining forces may provide you with a useful insight into what is going on, and help you construct interventions to reduce restraining forces.

Force field analysis comprises five steps.

Step 1. Describe the change issue and the desired direction of the change.

Step 2. List the political forces driving change and those restraining in a diagram which has the forces in opposition to one another.

Step 3. Give a weighting to the forces – those that are stronger and more powerful than others.

Step 4. Focus on the restraining forces, and assess which of the significant ones that *need* to be worked on, and those which *can* be worked on.

Step 5. Develop plans for reducing these forces.