

# Converting into a Platform: Linking Bourdieu's Social Capital to Readiness for Change

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## Abstract

When a Russian transportation company decided to convert into a platform for customers and hauliers to increase its efficiency and to win back market shares, it was confronted with high levels of middle management resistance. The firm operated regional business units throughout Russia, and many of them have gotten used to a very high degree of freedom in doing business. This paper studies the reasons for this resistance and how the company succeeded in overcoming it. The research framework through which we analyze the case of the sample company grounds in the work of French sociologist Bourdieu: All actors hold a certain position in a social sphere, “located in peripheral social positions are more likely to initiate change that diverges from existing practice, but lack the power to be able to drive that change” (Lockett et al., 2014). In general, the separation between the personal and the social is still under-researched as various scholars identify a lack of empirical studies that discuss both the context and the individual (Coghlan, 1993; Oreg, 2006; Oreg & Goldenberg, 2015; Bagrationi & Thurner, 2020). We took the interviews with head of the change management team throughout the change process. He was asked specifically what his view was on the change process and how he explained the stark resistance that the company experienced. These interviews lasted around 45 minutes to one hour. We present the eight cases and analyze them in the light of Bourdieu's social capital.

**Keywords:** digitalization; digital platforms; employee resistance; innovation; organizational change