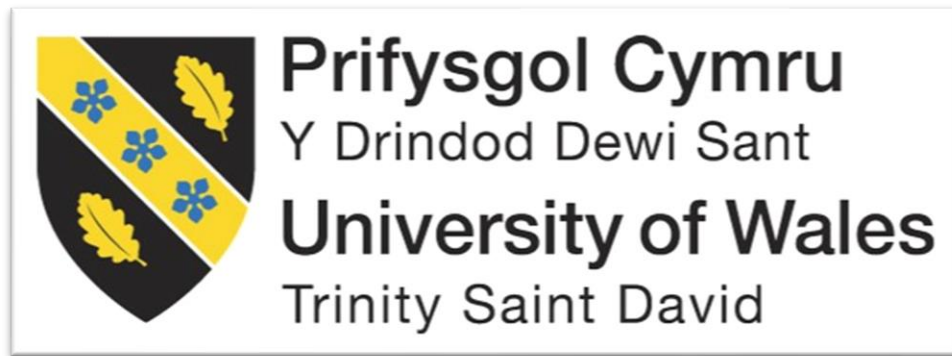




Change Management at Amazon:

Electric Vehicles and Drones

Name: Vikalp Vidish

Student ID: 2218769

Module Code: BMMB7000

Module Name: Change and Stability Management

Submission Date: 04 May 2023

Executive Summary

This report examines how Amazon is incorporating drone delivery and electric vehicles into its business, focusing on the aspects of change and change management that are involved. By utilizing the change management model, it demonstrates the process of implementing effective organizational changes. PESTLE analysis is used to explore the determinants of organizational change, including internal and external factors.

Amazon's change is analysed in terms of typology, stakeholder analysis, and cultural web. The adoption of electric vehicles and delivery drones is categorized as planned and organizational-level changes, driven by Jeff Bezos' commitment to sustainability and climate change. The Cultural Web framework is used to explain how Amazon's power structures, symbols, organizational structures, control systems, and rituals contribute to this change. An analysis of Amazon's change process is conducted using Kurt Lewin's Change Model, which includes phases of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. A number of factors, such as environmental, technological, and economic factors are seen as driving forces behind this change, while challenges and resisting factors, such as the charging infrastructure and regulatory restrictions, are also discussed.

Amazon's effort to implement sustainable changes is commended in the conclusion, highlighting the importance of adjusting to a dynamic environment. Moreover, recommendations are provided to increase the range and efficiency of electric vehicles and drones.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Research Methods	4
2.0 Change & Change Management	4
3.0 Determinants of Organisational Change	5
3.1 PESTLE Analysis	5
4.0 Change Management Models	6
5.0 About Amazon	7
6.0 Change at Amazon	8
6.1 Launch of Electric Vehicles and Delivery Drones	8
6.2 Change Typology	8
6.3 Stakeholder analysis related to Amazon's change	10
6.4 The Cultural Web	11
6.5 Change analysis using Kurt Lewin's Change Model	13
7.0 Conclusion	16
8.0 Recommendations	17
Bibliography	18

List of Figures

Fig 1.....	6
Fig 2.....	9
Fig 3.....	10
Fig 4.....	11

1.0 Introduction

Amazon, founded by Jeff Bezos in 1994, is considered one of the world's most innovative and influential companies. The company started out as an online bookstore, but eventually became a world-wide e-commerce giant, offering a wide range of products and services. Among its major accomplishments are cloud computing with Amazon Web Services (AWS), digital content streaming with Amazon Prime, and hardware devices such as the Kindle.

This report analyses the topic of change and change management, with a specific focus on Amazon's recent transformational changes in adopting electric vehicles and delivery drones. Various articles, books, journals, and websites were examined for the purpose of gathering information for this report. It discusses about change and change management and then proceeds with the topic of internal and external factors driving change and also introduces PESTLE analysis. Following that, the report delves into change management models, which provide guidelines for planning and implementing change in an efficient manner. In addition, it also evaluates the change at Amazon in terms of typology, stakeholder analysis, the cultural web, and Kurt Lewin's Change Model.

Overall, this report provides valuable insights into change management and explores how Amazon's adoption of electric vehicles and delivery drones represents a significant transformation aligned with its commitment to sustainability and innovation. As Amazon continues to implement and refine these changes, it is expected to contribute to a greener and more efficient delivery system while maintaining its position as a global leader in e-commerce.

1.1 Research Methods

The research methods used in the report include detailed analysis from different sources like books, journals, articles, and websites. The report draws upon various authentic sources and references to support its claims and provide a comprehensive understanding of change management and its application in the context of change at Amazon. The research also includes the use of models such as PESTLE analysis, change typology, stakeholder analysis, Kurt Lewin's change model, and Gerry Johnson's Cultural Web to analyse and explain various aspects of organizational change at Amazon. Additionally, the report utilizes historical data, company information, and news reports to provide a chronological account of Amazon's evolution and its adoption of electric vehicles and delivery drones.

2.0 Change & Change Management

In organizations of all kinds, whether they are governments, schools, or businesses, change is a prominent process. As they are evolving and getting more complicated and dynamic, they continuously strive to change and adjust their activities to the changing environment (Nicotera, 2019). Additionally, in order to survive and prosper, it is important to implement appropriate organizational changes that can be embraced by their employees. Unfortunately, only a few of them are able to make effective organizational changes (Armenakis and Harris, 2009).

A change requires a change management model that can act as a compass and promote or lead change by identifying the accurate procedures and stages to be taken, outlining the numerous elements driving change, or identify the levers needed to be successful in the change management process (Errida and Lotfi, 2021).

Change management can be defined as the process of continuously renewing an organization's direction, capabilities, and structure in response to ever-changing internal and external customer requirements (Todnem, 2005). In most cases, change management aims to improve organizational performance in some way (Clegg and Walsh, 2004).

3.0 Determinants of Organisational Change

Factors that can drive a change in an organization can be external or internal. External factors can be social, legal, political, and economic and internal factors can be finance-related, operation-related or it can be related to the goals of the organization (Colombo and Delmastro, 2002). Despite being internal or external, major factors contributing towards organisational transformation can be classified as factors related to information technology, marketing, finance, and human resources (Burnes, 2009).

3.1 PESTLE Analysis

The PESTLE analysis examines how an organization is influenced by key external factors (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, and Environmental). In strategic decision making, it can be used in a range of different situations to assist senior managers and people professionals (CIPD, 2021b).

Marketers can use this framework to assess whether macroeconomic factors are affecting their organization. An organization can use this step to identify potential threats and weaknesses, which can be used in other marketing frameworks, such as

SWOT analysis, or to gain a better and broader understanding of the overall marketing environment (Cuofano, 2023).

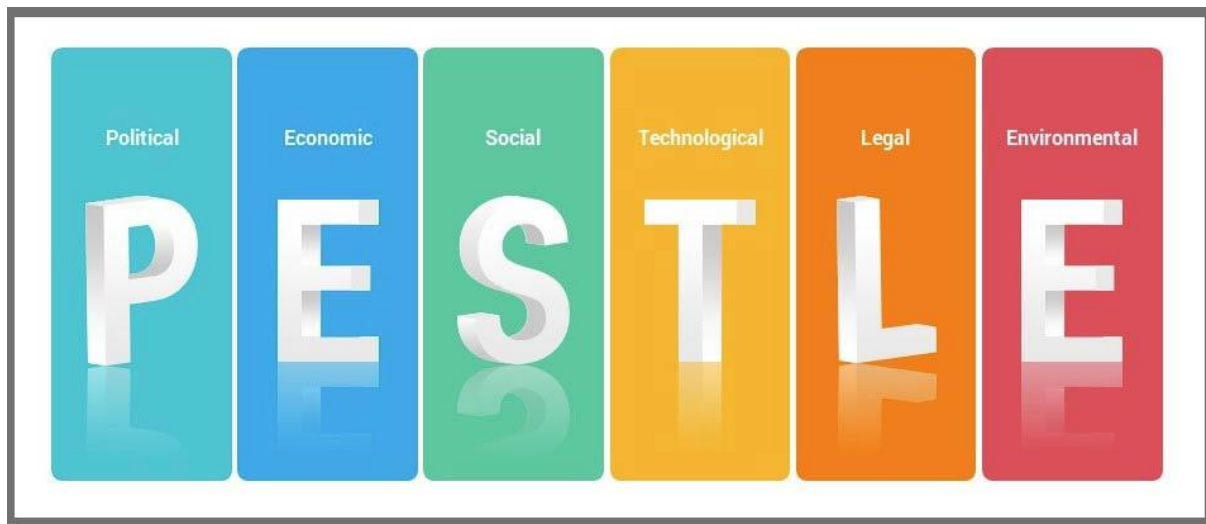


Fig 1: PESTLE Analysis

(Slidesalad, 2023)

4.0 Change Management Models

A change management model provides specific guidelines to help organizations plan and implement change more effectively (Hamdo, 2021). Some of the most popular change management models that are adopted by different companies for proper change execution are as follows:

- ADKAR MODEL
- KURT LEWIN'S CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODEL
- KOTTER'S 8 STEPS CHANGE MANAGEMENT MODEL
- MCKINSEY 7S MODEL

5.0 About Amazon

Jeff Bezos started Amazon on July 5, 1994, as an online store for selling books. Initially, the company operated in Bezos's garage with a unique notification system. When an order was placed, a bell was rung to let the amazon employees know about the order (Hartmans, 2021). Amazon was originally started as a private company, However with Amazon.com it went public in 1997. This decision was taken by Bezos because he realised that private investment is not enough to sustain companies' growth. With this step, it was able to gain a profit of 54 million dollars on the NASDAQ exchange, and in 1998, its revenue reached a value of 600 million dollars (Ukeni, 2022).

In 2003, Amazon launched AWS. It became one of the world's most famous and widely adopted cloud platforms, with hundreds of services that are provided from data centres located all around the world (Amazon, 2022a). The company gained tremendous popularity with the launch of Amazon Prime in 2005. It was initially started as a subscription-based system for quick delivery of goods. In 2007, Amazon launched kindle and began the era of its own product line-up. It was launched as a portable device that was used to read eBooks.

Amazon acquired Zappos in the year 2009 and it was marked as Amazon's first major acquisition. In 2017 Amazon acquired whole foods, indicating a substantial move into the grocery and physical retail sectors (Stern, 2019). In the year 2018, the company launched its first self-service convenience store, named 'Amazon Go', in Seattle, Washington. A customer can walk into the store, select a product, and come out of the store with it without actually standing in line or waiting for the cashier, only

with the help of an app that is linked to the credit card (Ives, Cossick and Adams, 2019).

6.0 Change at Amazon

6.1 Launch of Electric Vehicles and Delivery Drones

In the year 2020, Amazon ordered 100,000 electric delivery vans from Rivian to replace the conventional fossil fuel vans and also launched Prime Air as a new system for delivery using drones (Amazon, 2020). The company has also introduced more than 3,000 custom electric delivery vans across the U.S. and is committed to decarbonizing its delivery fleet (Amazon, 2023a). Within the next five years, Amazon will invest more than €1 billion (£880 million) in electric lorries, vans, and cargo bikes to expand its fleet of delivery vehicles (Butler, 2022).

Amazon has been working on drone delivery for quite some time. At its 2019 re:MARS conference, the company unveiled electric delivery drone that can deliver packages under 5 pounds within a half-hour and fly up to 15 miles (Palmer, 2020).

6.2 Change Typology

In terms of change typology, the adoption of electric vehicles and the launch of delivery drones by Amazon were both planned and organisational-level changes in addition to being transformational in nature.

How it happens – Planned – Emergent – Contingency	Magnitude – Incremental – Transformational – Punctuated equilibrium
Focus – Strategic – Operational	Level – Individual – Team – Organization

Fig 2: Typology of Change

(Hodges and Gill, 2015)

In 2019, with a proper roadmap, the company revealed its plan to have 100,000 electric vehicles on the road by 2030 as a part of its climate pledge (Coyle, 2020). Amazon has invested heavily in electric vehicles and charging infrastructure since then, and in October 2021, the company invested in an EV charging start-up to help it deploy 100,000 electric delivery vehicles by 2030 (Palmer, 2021).

Moreover, an experimental drone delivery service was announced by Amazon back in 2013 with great fanfare as part of a 60 Minutes feature, and since then the company has gone through more than two dozen drone designs (Snow, 2019). It received the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) permission to begin conducting drone deliveries in August 2020 (Austin, 2021).

6.3 Stakeholder analysis related to Amazon's change

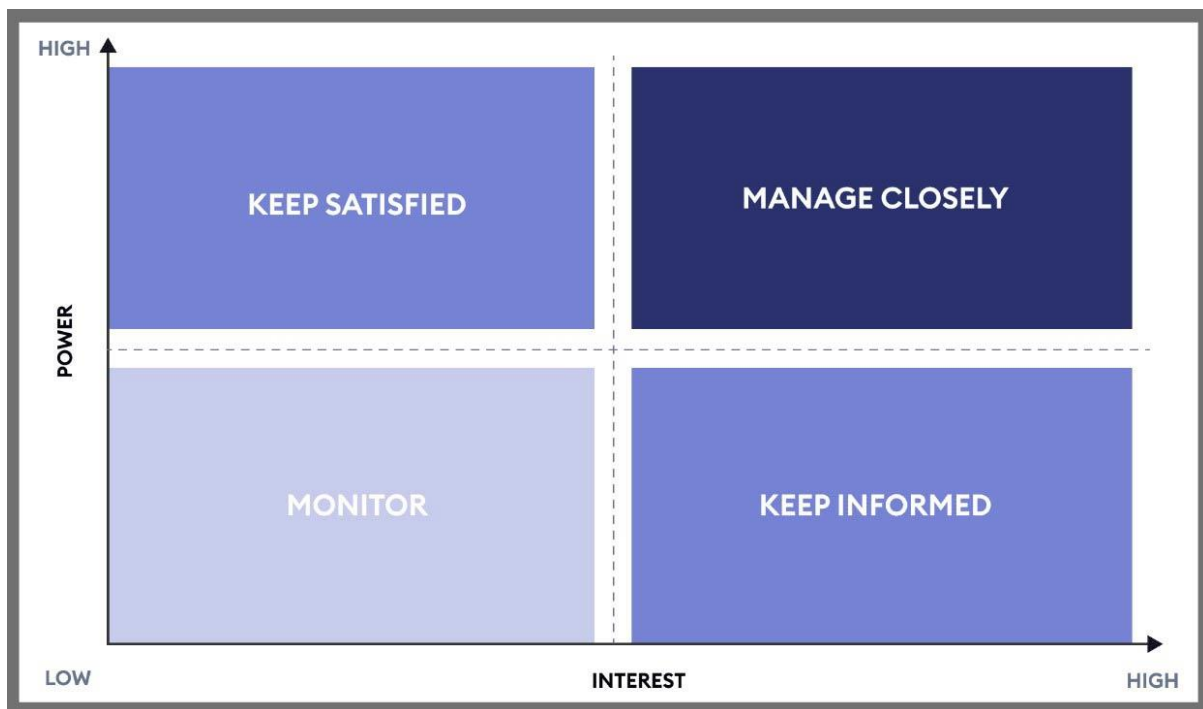


Fig 3: Stakeholder Analysis Grid

(Hoory and Bottorff, 2022)

Stakeholder Analysis Grid is a tool for identifying and prioritizing stakeholders based on their level of power and interest in a project. It is a matrix with four quadrants which helps to organize stakeholders based on their interests and power levels (Hovland, 2005).

In the case of Amazon, Jeff Bezos owns 12.7% of the company with 64,588,418 shares. Andy Jessy, the CEO of Amazon, has 94,729 shares. Among the top institutional investors are mutual funds such as 'The Vanguard Group' with 6.6% ownership and 'BlackRock' with 5.7% ownership (Cuofano, 2023).

However, Jeff Bezos, the former CEO of Amazon, is mainly responsible for the change in regards to electric vehicles and drones. He was interested in electric cars and drones for a long time, and in 2013, he announced that Amazon was working on a drone delivery system called Prime Air (Wohlsen, 2014). In addition to this, he also

invested in various electric vehicle companies, including 'Rivian' (Kleinman, 2021). This change is part of 'The Climate Pledge', which is a commitment to reach zero carbon emissions by 2040. The Climate Pledge was co-founded in 2019 by Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac, a purpose-driven organization. Amazon is the first company to sign the pledge (Amazon, 2023b).

6.4 The Cultural Web



Fig 4: Cultural Web

(Davies, 2012)

Cultural webs acknowledge and represent the interdependence of organizational assumptions, political, structural, systemic, routine, and symbolic artifacts associated with day-to-day operation (Johnson, 2000). It serves as a tool for mapping an organization's culture and for seeing and understanding the different influences that affect organizational culture. Both existing and future cultures can be mapped using this method (Leadership Centre, 2019).

Amazon's adoption of electric vehicles and drones, using Gerry Johnson's Cultural Web, can be explained using the following elements:

Power structures: The main stakeholder and former CEO of Amazon, 'Jeff Bezos' has been vocal about his commitment to climate change and sustainability. He has also pledged that Amazon will be carbon neutral by 2040. This shows that there is a strong commitment from the top management to adopt sustainable practices (Amazon, 2023b).

Symbols: The symbolic aspect of this change is that it is a step towards reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable practices in the transportation industry (Weise and Boudette, 2022).

Organizational structures: The company has partnered with Rivian, an American automaker that specializes in electric adventure vehicles and is investing heavily in research and development of electric vehicles and drones (Isidore, 2022).

Control systems: Amazon has implemented control systems such as tracking and monitoring systems to ensure that its electric vehicles are being used effectively and efficiently (Dent, 2022).

Rituals and Routines: Rituals such as training programmes have been implemented by Amazon for its drivers to ensure that they are familiar with the new technology (Amazon, 2020).

It is evident from these elements that Amazon's adoption of electric vehicles and drones is driven by top management's commitment, investment in research and development, and implementation of control systems and rituals.

6.5 Change analysis using Kurt Lewin's Change Model

As per Kurt Lewin's Force Field Analysis model, a successful change requires unfreezing the current situation, moving to a changed or desired state, and then refreezing the change to make it somewhat permanent. This model consists of three stages i.e., Unfreeze, Change and Refreeze (Nyamunda, 2022).

Unfreeze Phase: An additional force is required to disrupt the equilibrium and initiate the change process. This force can be a result of disequilibrium which is either initiated voluntarily in a planned change or might be introduced involuntarily in an unplanned change (Juneja, 2022).

The goal of the unfreeze phase is focused on raising awareness among the people and employees as a change is always accompanied by some kind of resistance. A careful observation is required to be done by the managers which is generally related to organizational structures, processes, people and ways of thinking. This in turn will help in showing the employees why the required change is necessary for the organization in order to gain a competitive advantage in the market and how the change will benefit each employee. Communication is a key aspect of this stage (Scherer, 2022).

In case of Amazon, factors that contributed to the investment of electric delivery vehicles and drones were environmental, technological and economical.

Environmental Aspect: Andy Jassy, CEO of Amazon, stated that investing and migrating to electric vehicles (electric vans, trucks and bikes) will not only help us to move away from fossil fuels but also help in achieving the goal of zero carbon emission (Butler, 2022).

Technological Aspect: No matter how fictional it sounds but matter of fact is that, Amazon is in the process of building electric drones that can deliver a package that weighs under 5 pounds to customers within a time frame of 60 minutes. This will be a part of the “Prime Air” subscription programme (Amazon, 2022b). These drones include industry leading sensing capabilities which will help it to operate almost autonomously with least human intervention.

Economical Aspect: Since Covid Pandemic, Amazon witnessed huge profits due to the boom in online shopping. This led Amazon to invest in the production and acquisition of electric vehicles for delivery. Another major factor for this investment was the rise in the fuel costs that happened because of the war between Ukraine and Russia (Butler, 2022).

The major resisting forces or challenges with EV's includes powering them up which requires installation of several charging stations in addition to, procurement of lithium and other raw materials for the production of batteries (Ohnsman, 2022). In the case of the drone delivery system, they still require humans for their operation and hence are not fully autonomous. Also, a really slow start was observed mainly due to the strict regulations imposed by the ‘Federal Aviation Administration’ (Hollister, 2023).

Change Phase: During this phase, the actual change implementation takes place.

However, most people struggle to accept the new reality, mainly due to uncertainty and fear. A lot of learning, mainly about the processes and behaviours, is required in addition to proper planning, communication with the employees, and training (Memon, 2021). It is extremely important to remind the employees how this change will benefit them as well as the organization till the completion of this phase (Pawar and Charak, 2017).

Amazon has already deployed more than 1000 electric delivery vans and installed several charging stations in order to power these EV's.

Training of workers and employees is one of the most important aspects behind any successful change. Amazon has created virtual reality sets where drivers can try and make themselves comfortable with these electric vans (Meisenzahl, 2022).

As of now the drone delivery has started and is limited to 3 to 4 miles from the drone launch sites in California and Texas. Current model of Amazon drone is MK 27-2 (Hollister, 2023).

Refreeze Phase: This is the final stage of Lewin's change model. In this phase the transformed process and the new behaviours become the new norms of the organization. In addition to this the modified goals and structure of the organization are adopted and will be re-frozen. The objective here is to stabilize the group at a new quasi-stationary equilibrium in order to ensure that the new behaviours are comparatively safe from regression (Sarayreh, Khudair and Barakat, 2013).

The use of electric vehicles for deliveries is becoming the new norm for the delivery of goods in Amazon. The plan moving ahead is to order one lakh electric vehicles

from Rivian in order to reach to reach zero carbon emission by the year 2040 (Amazon, 2022c).

One of the most important factors that is contributing to the smooth implementation and execution of this change is the low charging cost as compared to the cost of conventional fossil fuel (Garrido, 2020).

In addition to this, amazon drone delivery system is becoming more safer and autonomous day by day requiring less human intervention. The drone is now loaded with technologies like- improved obstacle detection using enhanced perception system and ability to fly even if one of the six motors fails during the flight (Hollister, 2023).

7.0 Conclusion

Amazon, initially an online bookstore, has undergone massive growth and diversification. The company went public in 1997, launched AWS in 2003, and gained popularity with Kindle and Amazon Prime. With Whole Foods and Amazon Go stores, it has also ventured into physical retail.

In recent years, Amazon has introduced some transformational changes, which include the launch of delivery drones and the adoption of electric vehicles. These changes align with Amazon's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and sustainability. The company has invested in research and development, partnered with Rivian to produce electric vehicles, and obtained FAA permission for drone deliveries.

In conclusion, for effective change management, it is important for organizations to adapt to a dynamic environment. Amazon's adoption of delivery drones and electric vehicles represents a transformative change aligned with sustainability goals. The company has taken significant steps in order to implement these changes, including research and development, training programmes, partnerships, and a commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

8.0 Recommendations

Although electric vehicles and drones seem to be the future of delivery, there are a few drawbacks and limitations that Amazon needs to overcome in order to make them more effective and efficient. These drawbacks are mainly related to the range and charging time of the EVs and drones. Below are a few recommendations to overcome these challenges.

The company should work on increasing the range of its electric delivery van, which is limited to 120–150 miles. This will help the company make long-range and multiple deliveries before stopping for a charge. Ford E-Transit, an electric van by Ford, was selected as the 2022 electric van of the year by AutoExpress, UK, due to its maximum range of up to 196 miles on a single charge (Crooks, 2023). Amazon can achieve similar range in their vans either by merging with companies like Tesla or Ford or by implementing similar technologies like a considerably larger battery and a more efficient electric motor. Similar changes are recommended for drones in order to increase their range and efficiency.

Another recommendation is to install Level 3 charging stations for charging electric vehicles. Amazon is currently using level 2 charging stations, which take 12 hours to

fully charge the delivery vans. This, in turn, reduces the efficiency of the vehicles, as they can only be used for 12 hours in a day. Level 3, being the fastest type of charging, can charge the vehicles quickly as it uses high-voltage DC current. This can tremendously increase the running time of electric vans, making them much more efficient.

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