Making Things Different: The Role of Catalysts in The Changing Process

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Abstract

Most of the people, every day or every moment are subject to some form of change that are affecting their lives. Whether it be a change in government policies, frequent restructuring of the educational or health system, the appointment of new professionals, or a new job. They are all forms of change that mankind has to face and react. Organizations today face a dynamic and changing environment thus in turn these organizations are left with only two options "Change or Die". This paper will try to focus on the specific forces that are acting as stimulant for change, why people and organizations often resist change, and the role of catalysts in overcoming this resistance.

Catalysts are the changing agents who are responsible for managing change activities. Change agents can be managers or non managers, employees of the organization or outside consultant. This paper will also review various process for managing organizational change and contemporary change issues for today's managers.

Keywords: Catalysts, Change Agents, Planned Change, Resistance.

Introduction

For present day organizations, change is essential for existence and survival. Adaptability has become the new Mantra for organizational survival. Change is concerned with changing status quo or making things different. Sudden changes without any significant effort that occurs in the organization are called unplanned change. On the other side, when organization initiates change activities deliberately and consciously it is called planned change. The purpose of planned change:

1) To enhance the ability of organization to adapt themselves to the changes in the external environment.

2) To improve the skills of employees.

Planned change looks very good as theoretical concept but it is very difficult to apply. The main hindrance is the resistance by the employees .Resistance goes hand in hand with change activities. Sometimes resistance is good, as it provides stability. it leads to thorough analysis of issue and through light on important point that were overlooked earlier. This will give chance to the Management to think again on the issue from the different point of view. Similarly if employees find out that it is good for them they will cooperate with the management.

Change agents are leaders who cut across the organization and its business units without regard to the traditional hierarchy. Often these men and women are freed from day-to-day tasks in order to focus solely on leading and driving change. Directly or indirectly, they implement new processes, train employees on new procedures, and act as role models to demonstrate new and better ways to work. For example, change agents might spend more than 50 percent of their time visiting areas undergoing change, auditing progress, or advising managers on how to improve performance.

Organizations that overlook the importance of an appropriate change agent program risk paying a high cost.

Review of Literature

Irrespective of its nature, change has to be initiated, driven and implemented by someone. This is where catalysts (leaders) fit into the change process. It has been found that organizations that have been successful in coping with change have strong leadership that guides the team through a series of initial steps that set the stage for success (Nadler, 2001). Leaders are responsible for bringing about change in a staged and planned manner.

Dirks (2000) points out that change has to be instigated and it is the leader who instigates the change by his

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vision and persuasion. Nadler, Thies and Nadler (2001) suggest that, for effective change to occur, and in particular cultural change, there is no substitute for the active engagement of the leadership and executive team.

Top leaders must assume the role of chief architect of the change process. Cartwright and Cooper (1993) take this one step further by suggesting that it is important that employees at all levels become involved in the change process. Jung (2001) also views managers as playing key roles in developing, transforming and institutionalizing organizational culture during the change process.

Hatch (2000) suggests that the implementation of any change process often flounders because it is improperly framed by top management. The key to choosing the right approach to change is thus to keep in mind how organizations function. As social systems comprising work, people, formal and informal systems, organizations are inherently resistant to change and designed to neutralize the impact of attempts at change (Chemers, 2001). Leaders play a critical role in selecting and planning appropriate change.

Sources of Resistance

It can be categorized in to two types-

1) Individual Resistance: Habit, Security, Economic Factors, Fear of Unknown, Selective information processing.

2) Organizational Resistance: structural inertia, limited focuses of change, threat to expertise, threat to established power relationships etc.

The following graph is based on initial findings from the 2003 Best Practices in Change Management benchmarking study. This is Prosci's third study in the past six years that investigates best practices in change management. 288 organizations from 51 countries participated in this study. Top reasons for change resistance - 288 companies reporting.

Ability to Change

Participants were asked to rate their organization's ability to change. Figure A shows the distribution of scores on a 1 to 5 scale, with one being the most rigidly opposed to change. Only one fifth of participants rated their organization a 4 or 5, indicating a high level of adaptability to change. More than 40% of participants
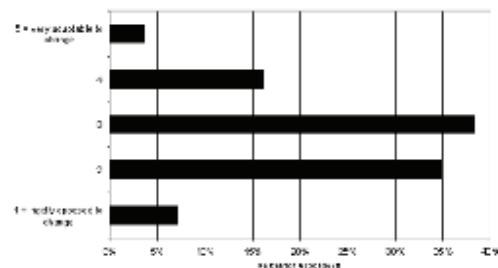

Figure A – Ability to change

rated their organization resistant to change with a score of either 2 or 1.

Employee Resistance

Participants gave a variety of reasons for resistance by employees and managers. The top-five reasons for employee resistance were:

1. *Lack of Understanding Around The Vision and Need for Change*

Participants indicated that the primary reason for employee resistance was that employees did not understand the vision of this particular change project. Employees did not clearly understand why the change was happening, nor did they have adequate knowledge regarding the change itself.

2. *Comfort with The Status Quo And Fear of The Unknown*

Participants indicated that employees tended to be complacent, or that the current way of doing business had been in place for a long time. The current processes and systems seemed fine to the employees, and they were opposed to the change since it forced them out of their comfort zone. Uncertainty and fear of the new system compounded the desire of employees to continue with the "old way" to which they had grown accustom.

3. *Corporate History and Culture*

The organization's past performance with change projects impacted the employees' support of the current change project. Employees were desensitized to change initiatives, as many had been introduced and failed. The project was seen merely as the "flavor of the month," and employees expected it go away like those in the past.

4. *Opposition to the New Technologies, Requirements and Processes Introduced by the Change*

Many participants felt that some employees resisted

the change because of opposition to the actual change itself. Employees were opposed to changes that increased the performance and process measurement of their work.

5. *Fear of Job Loss*

Employees perceived the business change as a threat to their own job security. Some employees felt that the change would eliminate the need for their job, while others were unsure of their own abilities and skills in the new environment.

Tactics to Overcome Resistance

Six Tactics have been suggested by J.P.Kotter and L.A. Schlesinger for use by the managers:

- Education and communication,
- Participation, Facilitation and support,
- Negotiation,
- Manipulation and Cooptation
- Coercion.

Adkar Model of Change Management

One of the very successful model about change management known as ADKAR model developed by Prosci. This Model has five different stages which must be practiced in order to attain success. Managers can Use the ADKAR Model to determine where they are in the change process and to help create a successful action plan for personal and professional advancement.

These stages are:-

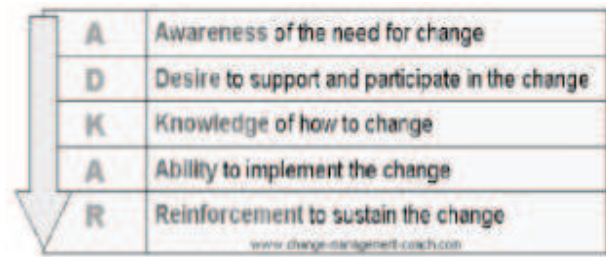Awareness- A person or company must know why a particular change or set of changes are required?

Desire- The person or members of company must have inspiration and desire to take part in the call for change.

Knowledge- It is not enough knowing, why one must change? A person or company must know how to change?

Ability- A person or a company that really wants to change must put into practice new techniques and actions to make the desired changes occur.

Reinforcement- A person or company must be strong enough to cope up with any changes, if not so, and then the person or the organization must have the ability to alter the changes.

Successful adaptation to change is very much crucial

A	Awareness of the need for change
D	Desire to support and participate in the change
K	Knowledge of how to change
A	Ability to implement the change
R	Reinforcement to sustain the change

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within the company, in similar manner as it is crucial in other natural situations. Like animals and plants, people and organizations certainly face the changing conditions that they are unable to control. This is when the need of management of change arises?

Role of Catalysts in Change Management

Researchers have identified a number of roles that Change professionals may perform in change management programs:

1. *Contribute to and influence business strategies:* Identify skills, competencies and knowledge within the organization that can give it a competitive advantage.

2. *Scan the business environment:* Monitor developments in legislation, workplace relations, demographic trends, labour market supply and demand, community attitudes and preferences, etc. Alert senior management to such developments and their likely impact.

3. *Design change projects:* Input includes redesigning organization structure, impact on work teams and team members' roles, workforce planning, training, learning and development and resources allocation.

4. *Develop HR strategies to support change:* Working with line managers to implement and support the changes.

5. *Shape the organization culture:* New values and norms evolve from implementing change, but culture can also be influenced, led and managed in order to reinforce and embed changes. It may be influenced by management style, remuneration and rewards, managing the communications strategy (eg to ensure consistency), workplace relations, learning and development and other HR issues.

6. *Identify employees' concerns and issues:* Notifying them to senior management and taking action to deal with, or at least mitigate, them. For

example, flexible work practices may be considered or changes made to job design/content.

7. *Identify problems:* Diagnosing causes of actual or potential problems with the change process and devising strategies to deal with them.

8. *Monitor changes in employees':* attitudes and needs. And again, taking appropriate action.

9. *Provide feedback and support to both line managers & senior management:* May include coaching of line managers, plus strategies such as workforce and succession planning, identifying potential and performance management.

10. *Manage communications:* While both senior management and (particularly) line managers need to have regular communication with employees, it is often the role of HR to coordinate and manage the communications strategy. This includes providing detailed information to line managers and responding quickly when they refer concerns raised by employees.

Managers and Change Agent Should

• Educate the employees about the reasons for change

• Demonstrate the employees that you have a stake in them

• Describe the phases of the change and what employees can expect

• Answer questions many employees are unwilling to ask

• Give employees the tools to deal with change both personally and professionally

The following are some of the roles leaders may play as they drive change in organization.

The Sponsor

Leaders act as advocates for the change at their level in the organization. They are representatives who keep the change in front of their peers, the "higher-ups." A Sponsor is the person who won't let the change initiative die from lack of attention, and is willing to use their political capital to make the change happen. The Sponsor is the champion.

The Role Model

Leaders of change must be willing to go first. They demonstrate the behaviors and attitudes that are expected of everyone else. Employees watch leaders for consistency between words and actions to see if they should believe the change is really going to happen. The Role Model is self-aware and deliberate.

The Decision-Maker

As managers, leaders usually control resources such as people, budgets, and equipment, and thus have the authority to make decisions that affect the initiative. They have the ability to say "yes" or "no" to the project moving forward within the span of their control. During change, leaders must leverage their decision-making authority and choose the options that will support the initiative. The Decision-Maker is decisive and sets priorities that support change.

The Voice

Leaders are the face and the voice of change. They communicate often to share information, keep people updated and offer encouragement. When employees hear multiple messages in the organization, the one they listen to the most is their immediate boss. Leaders balance interpreting the change message to be relevant for their reports while still matching the overall message. The Voice is transparent and consistent.

The Motivator

Leaders provide the motivation to change. They create a sense of urgency and importance about the change, and show commitment and passion about getting things done. They offer recognition to those who are participating and doing well. Leaders realize that change can be difficult, and understand the need for people to be motivated to step out of their comfort zone. The Motivator is energetic and empathetic.

The Enforcer

With their authority, leaders hold people in the organization accountable for the change. They uphold agreements and make sure others do the same. They don't let people get away with not changing, and work to understand the underlying reasons so they can remove obstacles. Leaders follow through on delivering consequences when people don't do their part. The Enforcer is exacting and fair.

Effective leaders recognize that change cannot happen unless they fulfill the roles that only those in authority can. Enlist their support and clarify the roles you need them to fill in their areas and in different situations.

Help leaders in your organization see the importance of the unique part they play in change.

Specific task of change management and change planning within the companies is suitable for those who demonstrate significant experience of developing & managing organizational change program including issue analysis, strategy, and impact assessment & planning. They must provide evidence of facilitating leadership & learning programs & hold an extensive understanding of the fundamental components required for the effective & efficient running of an organization.

Career Prospects:- Change Agents have Several Prospects as:

- Analysts
- Consultants
- Senior Consultants
- Project and Client Managers
- Directors and Partners

Required Personality Traits

- Good Communication Skills
- Leadership Qualities
- Level Headed
- Ability to work under pressure
- Agile & Prompt

Conclusion

It has been seen that the management professionals are not always having the appropriate skills to lead change management and are not keenly included within the change procedure. However, many of such concerns that are identified concern of the 'people aspects' of change. In such cases human resource management department should take the steps for it and manage it, to have healthy consequences of the change. To achieve this there is a need of proper skills. The change management response should be adaptive.

The key elements of the successful change management are plan for long term in broad manner, establish proper communication methods to enable fast review and good decision from the managers, empower people to have decision at local operational level, avoid unnecessary changes and time consuming procedures, encourage people to adapt the changes by proper training and telling its benefits and respect people's feelings and optimize the IT systems to facilitate for valuable information management.

Recommendations

In theory we have some models which says that one can have be flexible for his way to respond the change but such models are not very practical when it comes to the consequences of changes. e.g. capability to share knowledge and to work efficiently, it may have impact on effectiveness of communication or individual commitment, which itself has implications for change effectiveness.

The individual development and training plays the important role in change management process. The human resource involvement in the individual development plays significant role. Following are some important responsibilities of change agents team towards the employees, which has significance during the change process:

* Participation at the early phase in the project group.

* Get used to negotiating and connecting across various individuals.

* Understanding individuals concerns to look forward to problems.

* Develop good medium of message to reach a variety of groups.

* Serving people deal with change, performance management and motivation.

* Advising project managers in skills available within the organization – examining skills gaps, training requirements and new working observations etc.

* Harmonizing out the contracted/temporary goals with broader tactical needs.

* Evaluating the impact of change in one department and its influence on another part of the organization.

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