Chapter 13
Leading, Managing, and Facilitating Organizational Change

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on organizational change and development and how leadership behavior impacts upon the delivery of the desired change, in terms of implementation, effectiveness, and performance. The reflective perspective seeks to explore learning insights gained via business and academic approaches within transformational change programs in two dimensions: first, the author's PhD research project investigated leadership behavioral approaches designed to deliver organizational change and increased engagement and performance; and second, the author's involvement as a business consultant and executive coach, acting for private sector companies on transformational change programs designed to deliver strategic change to drive increases in efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. The purpose of this chapter is to inform professionals involved in organizational change and development within their own or their client organizations and facilitate learning to help better understand the potential of leadership behavior in delivering successful organizational change strategies.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides different perspectives through the multiple lens of academic researcher, HR practitioner and business consultant and supports the argument for evidence-based organizational change and development (EBOCD) practice. The assertion by Hamlin and Stewart (2011) that HRD has the potential to facilitate organizational change supports earlier examples of Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners, such as training and learning consultants operating as organizational change consultants (Phillips & Shaw, 1989). The author experienced this dual perspective in his role as an internal HR practitioner and later as an external HR consultant supporting HR practitioners undertaking similar multi-perspective roles.

The period covered spans from 2002 to 2018 encompassing the author's career journey as an HR executive/practitioner, PhD researcher and independent business consultant/coach. The insights gained benefitted from internal 'insider' and external 'outsider' reference points which provided both challenge and opportunity. The author has contextualized these findings within two time-based periods. Firstly, a view compiled from the author's PhD research project, conducted as a sole researcher and based on a single company case study over a six year period (2002 to 2008). This case study investigated how strategic leadership approaches impacted upon organizational culture including employee engagement and performance. Secondly, from a broader perspective which considers the author's involvement as an independent business consultant and executive coach from 2008 onwards acting as a change agent for private sector companies, including large multinationals, on transformational programs. In this role the author facilitated the delivery of programs designed to deliver high performance through organizational change, increased efficiency and greater effectiveness.

The central threads from the two perspectives are considered and key insights developed with the aim of informing CEOs, HR practitioners, senior leaders and business consultants involved in EBOCD within their own or their client organizations and, in so doing, help to deliver successful organizational change strategies in the future.

BACKGROUND

The business environment has changed dramatically in recent years. Whilst commercial change drivers are often created by political and economic imperatives, both local and global, this is not always the case. The need for change is often related to more mundane change factors, such as an organization's strategic positioning in its own market sector, the emergence of a 'maverick' business leader into a market place or the failure of internal talent management processes which fail to deliver a 'conveyor belt' of talented individuals. The introduction of a new product or service by a competitor may also require a strategic response whether this be an aggressive or collaborative approach. The strategic types of organizations identified by Miles and Snow (1978), that is *prospector, defender*, *analyzer* and *reactor,* remain broadly relevant in today's marketplace although there appears to be a much more fuzzy view some forty years on from their conception, with many organizations adopting multiple strategic approaches, particularly across inter-group boundaries.

Against a background of political, economic and market forces, organizational leaders are grappling with implementing change strategies designed to realign their business model to continually changing circumstances. Leadership teams now require an outstanding capability for juggling multiple priorities as they strive to continuously update their key strategic focus, the shape of which will be driven by differences in geography, industry sector, market place and corporate strategy. Leadership agility and resilience are *de rigeur* terms in global board rooms (Joiner & Josephs, 2006). Yet, several years after the global recession of 2008, the leading CEOs in financial services remain heavily focused on their last critical strategic challenge of regulation and governance. Will this rear view strategic perspective end in another financial meltdown for different reasons? Across the board, irrespective of industry, the biggest change challenges continue to relate to technology, people and communications (Swaim, 2010). The differentiating factor in recent times is an unrelenting increase in the pace and exponential nature of change.

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