

Chapter 5

Organizational Learning to Managing Change: Key Player of Continuous Improvement in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, in our fast moving business world companies have to adapt changes as fast as it is possible to gain advantages among their rivals. At this point, managerial processes become vital for every company and every sector to survive. Firms' adaptation to changing environmental conditions is one of the most important topics in every century. For that reason, companies use several techniques to adapt their processes to changing conditions for gaining advantages in their market. Organizational learning is not a new concept although its importance significantly increased nowadays. This chapter aims to present a research about effects of organizational learning on managing change. For this purpose, organizational learning as a key player of continuous improvement and its key dimensions will be drawn out through this chapter. The result of this chapter will be a set of tools which describe approaches for implementing learning management to get efficient change management.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in our fast moving business world companies have to adapt changes as fast as it is possible to gain advantages among their rivals. At this point, managerial processes become vital for every company and every sector to survive. The underlying reason is, in today's business conditions companies have to sustain not only their operational processes also their managerial processes. For that reason, understanding of how organizations perform is still an important question although there are several studies about it.

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Firms' adaptation to changing environmental conditions is one of the most important topics in every century. For that reason, companies use several techniques to adapt their processes to changing conditions for gaining advantages in their market. Dynamic managerial capabilities are the key mechanism between companies' competencies and changing conditions. It can be defined that dynamic capabilities are the firms' ability to integrate internal and external competences to gain advantages in rapid changes (Vogel and Güttel, 2013). They improve the effectiveness, speed and efficiency of organizational responses to environmental changes (Wilden et. al., 2013).

Deming states that learning encourages innovation activities. So it is not wrong to say that learning ability can stimulate organizational innovation capacity thus maintain a competitive advantage for firms. Sony and Naik (2012) stated that "organizational learning occurs when members use learning to solve a common problem they are facing." Therefore learning organizations have the ability to adapt changes in new situations continuously and modernize themselves according to changing business environment (Sony and Naik, 2012).

Organizational learning is not a new concept although its importance significantly increased nowadays. However, understanding organizational learning dimensions is a hard question. What is more, even if the dimensions were understood clearly, the connection between learning and performance remains unclear. On the other hand, organizational learning has a great influence on business performance. The underlying reason is that organizational learning clarifies vision, purpose, values and organizational behavior which are also called organizational culture, it helps to understand risks and diversity so companies can achieve high level of quality, it is really important for customer relations, energized workforce and innovation etc.

Analyzing organizational learning dimensions can be a hard task in terms of different viewpoints. Serrat (2010) stated that there were seven key dimensions for organizational learning which is one of the main dimensions of business performance. These are (Serrat, 2010);

- Human nature and organizational context
- Learning management systems
- Adaptive and generative learning
- Key functions
- Strategic learning
- Idealism and reality
- Work styles matrices.

In their study, Gronhaug and Stone (2012) stated that organizational learning based on two critic dimension, tools and climate. The underlying reason is these two dimension changes through time and that's why the content of organizational learning is also changes. As organizational learning one of the most important key factor for organic organizations, organizational learning directly becomes a key player for gaining advantages. In old version of organizational learning dimensions, there is a centralized power, batch and queue system, independence. However in new version, there is decentralized power, interdependence and flow. For all organizational learning processes, firm members how to use new tools but experiencing old climates is unacceptable (Gronhaug and Stone, 2012).

This proposed chapter aims to present a research about effects of organizational learning on managing change. For this purpose, organizational learning as a key player of continuous improvement and its key dimensions will be drawn out through this section. The result of this section will be a set of tools which describe approaches for implementing learning management to get efficient change management.

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