

Chapter 13

Leadership in Change Management

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ABSTRACT

Change is a must for all kinds of organizations. However, most of the change initiatives fail to achieve the desired outcomes. This paradigm makes the change process more complex and frightening in our mindsets. When you make a search at “amazon.com” for the books published (only in English) on “change management” you will see that there are more than 90,000 books on this subject. Are these books not enough to help “managers” learn how to manage change? Of course, we have enough information about how to manage change. However, it is more important to know how to “lead” change. This may be the major reason that most of the organizations fail in change process. This chapter mainly focuses on leader’s roles in change process and gives behavioral directions related with “transition” which effects the success of a change effort more in organizations. The things which should be planned and executed by leaders are examined and formatted with a process based approach.

INTRODUCTION

First, Leaders Should Understand the Meaning of “Change”

A leader should think about the meaning of “change” with different perspectives: What is change? Why do we have to change? When to change? How to change? How to trigger change? The answers may differ from source to source, however, there is one thing that is constant is “change never stops”. Change equates with life, with our own personal, social, mental and physical development and with our ability to learn, to adapt, to play an active role in social and community activities. So, a leader should create his/her own style to adapt himself/herself and his/her organization to continuously changing environment.

“Change” can be broadly defined as “to make something different” or “to start something new, become/make different” (BusinessDictionary.com). However, in the context of organizational change, others have noted that any definition of change is potentially problematic (Kanter et al., 1991; Tichy,

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1983). In a world that change is accepted as inevitable with incredible speed, ambiguity is a constant, organizations that reduce cycle time for production, supply, distribution, innovation etc. are believed to be the most competitive.

Organizational change is defined as “adoption of a new idea or a behavior by an organization” (Sengupta, 2006, 2). Organizational change is primarily structural in character and it is designed to bring about alterations in organizational structure, methods and processes.

Who Starts the Change?

In fact the answer To this questions is easy: Everyone who has commitment in an organization may start (trigger) change. Thus, in order to trigger change in an organization “commitment” is a precondition. ‘Commitment’ can be defined as dedication to a particular course of action (Rathod, 2010, 29). What will be your answer to this question: “Do I show my best to improve business results?” From a simple perspective, if your answer is “yes”, then you are committed to your organization. For a leader, the hardness of this issue -commitment- is to make all employees/followers committed, so that culture of change may easily flourish.

In “Breaking the Code of Change”, Roger Martin (2000) explains that the way things are within an organization, the status quo, is the final result of a series of cascading choices. Everyone in the organization makes choices and takes action on the basis of these choices. Most often, downstream choice occurs (Table 1). Choices made at high levels of the organization, broad abstract choices about the direction of the company, cascade downstream to the bottom. Here, employees make the concrete choices that influence day to day operations (Beer & Nohria, 2000, 458).

It is important to note, however, that the choice cascade may indeed flow upstream. Managers and employees -lower level individuals- immersed in the operation of the organization have the power to encourage the upstream chooser to reconsider or modify the upstream choice. Ideally, the choice cascade should work both ways. Downstream managers should feel comfortable asking upstream managers to reevaluate their choices, and upstream managers should respond positively and revisit the choices. For significant change to take place, leaders need to foster interplay among the different levels of an organization.

Leaders and employees those immersed in the daily operation of the company have the ability to create change within an organization. These individuals often have more insight into customer feedback and expectations. They sustain the daily functioning of the organization and may therefore be in a better place to improve organizational practices. However, directing change upstream can be a tricky process. It requires the driver to be both innovator and change revolutionary. Initially, others may perceive you as

Table 1. Directions of change in an organization

Downstream	Upstream
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most frequent direction of organizational change efforts• Top-down change• From global urgency to local urgency• Reactive managers, employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrequent direction of organizational change efforts• Bottom up or middle up• From local urgency to global urgency• Takes considerable energy, business savvy, influence skills• Proactive managers, employees

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