Chapter 12
Change Management Serving Knowledge Management and Organizational Development:
Reflections and Review

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ABSTRACT

Changes are considered a challenge to organizations. Seventy percent of organizational initiatives are not completed. Various Change Management approaches have been developed over the years, yet organizations continue to find changes difficult to implement. This applies to all types of change, but the challenge of change is critical in human resources disciplines, specifically those dealing with Knowledge Management and Organizational Development. This chapter connects changes in these two fields and links them to leadership. It examines theories and implementation models of Change Management, starting with classic approaches, through to new models developed in recent years. Based on this examination, a practical approach drawing on components of the reviewed models is proposed. The suggested approach takes into particular consideration the demands of change in Knowledge Management and Organizational Development.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is discussed and researched for centuries, starting with the Greek, and up till the late 20th century with Michael Polanyi's publications discussing knowing as a personal asset (Polanyi, 1958) and tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). Shortly before, we find Peter Drucker first mentioning the term of the "knowledge worker" (Drucker, 1957). However, Knowledge Management, as a discipline, researched and managed in organizations, emerged some 20 years ago.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management covers a large spectrum of knowledge activities within organizations, and between them and related groups of interest. Knowledge retention deals with knowledge continuity and how organizations transfer the experts' knowledge and insights to the next generation (Levy, 2011). Knowledge sharing deals with means of transferring knowledge between people and communities, fostering reuse and minimizing re-invention of the organizational knowledge again and again (Den Hoof & Ridder, 2004). And Knowledge development focuses on models enabling the organizational knowledge growth (and the business growth), starting from debriefing and lessons learned (Milton, 2010), through learning models for development of professional frameworks (Levy, 2008), ending with innovation (Swan etc., 1999).

In 1988, an opinion survey conducted by The Harris Research Center revealed that organizations actually are interested in managing their knowledge. Contra to the conventional wisdom of the time (that is, in 1988), people were not afraid of losing power through sharing. Knowledge, as the survey revealed, was not shared mainly because of a lack of time or because organizations simply didn't know how to go about sharing; they were short on Knowledge Management methodologies (KPMG, 1998). Sharing knowledge mainly depends on the culture of the organization (Ruppel & Harrington, 2001; Al-Alawi etc, 2007). Over time we learned that, in some cases, workers did indeed refuse to share their knowledge due to a fear of losing their power or position. However, this was hardly a major obstacle. In fact, the current technological state of most organizations seems optimal for Knowledge Management. The advanced technologies utilized in most organizations today facilitate the process of Knowledge Management; Knowledge Management methodologies are common knowledge in many organizations (primarily in those which manage their knowledge by hiring a professional, either internal or external). Nevertheless, even today, managing knowledge isn't an easy task. Even in cases where maximum effort was invested, and talented, experienced personnel were assigned the task, success was hardly guaranteed.

In Knowledge Management terms, success can be defined as improving performances as a result of utilizing knowledge preserved, developed, shared and/or made accessible to workers. Improved performance can be derived from enhanced efficiency and/or increased quality of performance. Usually, accessible knowledge assists workers in making better decisions, thereby improving overall performance.

When evaluating the success of a Knowledge Management system assimilated in an organization, we might find evaluating the improvement of business output to be quite a complicated task. Obviously, there are cases in which output is more easily evaluated (e.g. customer service), yet in most cases, evaluation is far from simple. This task is challenging because linking improvement directly to Knowledge Management is not obvious, especially when a variety of alternative factors might be equally responsible for this change. The market is constantly transforming, whether it is our clients, our competitors, or our organization itself; and more than one change is usually taking place in the three aforementioned fields. Hence, differentiating the Knowledge Management factor from the rest is tricky, and it becomes an even harder task when the work process is an ongoing, complex one.

Some organizations measure their success by employing usage of shared documented knowledge as a parameter. This is an obvious mistake: Workers accessing shared knowledge do not ensure success. If the knowledge is not good enough, instructing our workers to use it will not yield improvement. It might possibly even lead to the contrary.

There are many prerequisites for success: Valuable knowledge, well-documented and organized knowledge, easy to use technologies enabling share and access, etc. For the purpose of this chapter, it is

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