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Change Process

Rapid change in technology, communications and information mean that organisation leaders must examine the fundamentals of their organisations.

In *Changing The Essence: The Art of Creating and Leading Fundamental Change in Organisations* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1992)

"It is no longer true that organisations can
1. Control their own destiny
2. Operate in a stable and predictable society."
~ Richard Beckhard & Wendy Pritchard ~

Therefore to have competitive supremacy, increasing profits and maximum control over company's destiny it is essential to innovate, learn quickly and respond quickly.

This must be done by managing change within the organisation. By being aware of the environment and trends outside the organisation and working with those within the organisation who are keen to make change a strategic approach to required change will pay dividends.

"If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change"
~Lampedusa~

Three Elements must be present for change to happen



Organisations must balance whether the need for change, the vision of the future and the initial action outweigh the cost of the change

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Change Management Equation

Cost of Change > Dissatisfaction X Vision X First Steps

Two ways to change:

1. **Incremental Change Strategy**
Taking necessary changes in sequential order.
2. **Fundamental Change Strategy**
The whole organisation and its relationships will simultaneously change.

Organisations need assistance to increase the skills in handling the increasing incidence of change. Indeed many talk about "change on change" and the need for a good manager to be a good change manager is one of the top skills that recruitment organisations emphasise when placing top executives. Indeed, as there are many people in organisations who are resistant to change we need to focus on why this is and how we tackle those people whom are resistant to change in order to move the organisation forward?

Why We Don't Like Change

Loss of control

During times of change we can't define where the control in the organisation lies. Then we begin to personalise our anger over the events that are happening and direct it towards particular people, often our direct managers. Everyone above us becomes a gatekeeper and wherever we turn, others seem to know more than us and are therefore perceived to be more powerful.

We feel the need to control our environment and resist anything we perceive can threaten this control, even if it may bring new opportunities. The effect of this is that we expend more and more energy attempting to control what is closest to us ever more tightly. The world in which we operate in then becomes smaller.

When we feel we are losing control over our environment it can affect different areas that are important to us in our work. Such as how we utilise our skills; opportunities for promotion; job security; job status and job recognition.

When changes are imposed without consultation and we have no opportunity to influence an outcome, our anger may not be overt but will be directed underground causing resentment, conflict and organisational rumour. This can also lead to work related stress and increased sickness absence, a situation that most managers want to avoid.

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Change in Boundaries

When major change occurs there is often confusion over the boundaries of peoples roles. Ground rules will alter and authority tends to shift until the overall change has been achieved.

It is often a time when more risk-orientated individuals make bids for power, whilst the less assertive attempt to hold on to what is familiar. Others will look for management guidance, which is often lacking.

Challenge to our Credibility

When change is introduced and we have to operate in a new way we feel that the work we carried out previously was undervalued and unappreciated.

It is important for us to come to terms with our feelings about the past and under go a form of grieving. Through this process we consolidate what we valued about the past and prepare ourselves to move on and build a new future.

Challenge to our Beliefs

We all have key beliefs in our life, which give meaning to our work and actions. If our work is changed it can sometimes be seen as a threat to our key meanings or beliefs. For example a Nurse may see her role as a carer being threatened by being asked to take on a more managerial style and she may perceive this as a threat to her values.

So what can be done to take account of this resistance in change situations?

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Characteristics of Successful Change Interventions:

- Clear vision of desired end for entire organisation.
- This vision must be integrated into every form of change taking place.
- Integral to the change must be a management commitment to a learning mode - so that learning and doing are equally valued.
- Clear commitment by top leaders to the change by making significant personal investment and an examination of their own effectiveness.

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Diagnosing Change

- Analysis of present reality.
- Assess organisation's capacity to respond to these demands.
- Developing a clear vision of the changed organisation.

Four Step Change Process

There are four stages in preparing people to accept and endorse change:-

1. Creating a Shared Agenda
2. Creating a Common Direction
3. Creating the Capacity for Change
4. Developing Competence for Change

Creating a Shared Agenda

This means finding out what particular ideas or fears about change people have, assessing the organisation's readiness for change (or yet more change!) and isolating those options with which people can most easily identify.

But it is essential to take into account the organisations memories, norms and values. It is also necessary to have commitment and enthusiasm from Top Management although sometimes this is still not generated down the line and change could cause aggravation.

Enrolling the Commitment of Other Key Players

1. Chief Executives must display congruent behaviour with immediate colleagues.
2. Some do not change until they identify change as their own.
3. Performance reviews send strong messages.
4. Review organisations objectives to ensure there is a learning component.

The outcome of this process is a shared agenda.

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Creating a Shared Agenda

Mapping the impact of change

Result

An assessment of: the implications and consequences of change
potential winners and losers
who are the promoters, resisters and the indifferent.

Assessing organisational readiness

Result

Shows organisational strengths and weaknesses.
Indicates priorities for strengthening the ability to respond

Agreeing the agenda

Result

Creates common perceptions and understandings of the aims of change.
Indicates what the benefits will be and when they will arise

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Creating a Common Direction

Most change involves a three-stage process of "unfreezing", changing and "re-freezing" into a new shape or direction.

No matter how enthusiastic people may be about the aims of change, the process is inevitably uncomfortable. As delays occur frustrations will grow; as the change becomes reality some of the earlier optimism will fade and give place to a sense of disappointment for some. Effort has to be put into sorting out the problems that, with hindsight, we now realise should have been foreseen all along. Most important of all, change brings discontinuity. The organisational maps people use to get things done become useless, disjointed or only usable in parts.

It is crucial, therefore, in preparing people for change, to provide them with two resources, which will help them through the process:

- Information about where the change is heading so they have a clear sense of direction.
- A 'route map' of the change programme so that they can tell where they are at a given time.

The outcome of this process is the creation of a common direction.

Creating a vision of the future

Result

A common understanding of the organisation's key purpose and how the change will advance this.

Learning from experience

Making the change process tangible

Result

Indicators of progress can be created so that people know what is happening, why, and how this fits into the change process.

People become committed to change because they know what they are committing themselves to.

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Creating the Capacity for Change

Most organisations, in the past have been designed for stability rather than change. Structures were created to ensure that regular, routine work got done consistently and that minimum disruption occurred. In the world today with constant change being normal a different approach is required. Change requires different organisational processes. Major change or a period of sustained change requires the creation of specific arrangements to help people cope with change and its effects.

The outcome of this process is enabling the capacity for change.

Creating helpful mechanisms

Result

Accurate and timely information about change and the way people are responding to it - the way it is affecting people.

Assertive and positive interaction between 'change agents' and managers and staff affected by change.

The creation of a climate supportive of change.

Clarifying and developing roles

Result

People know what is expected of them and can contribute to the change process.

Devolution of responsibility and shared effort.

Using temporary organisational structures

Result

Efficiency in the management of change.

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Developing Competence

People need specific abilities to handle change. Conversely change will alter the competence they are expected to have in their work roles.

In developing people's competence there are two potential benefits, namely;

- it helps people to manage change
- they will find it easier to adapt to the effects of change on their jobs.

The advantage of this process is the development of appropriate levels of competence to enable individuals to manage change.

Defining and agreeing competence requirements

Result

A common view of what is expected of people in terms of performance standards and the abilities needed to achieve the standards.

A definition of what is quality performance

Matching people and jobs

Result

Realistic jobs and the deployment of people according to what they are good at.

Providing learning opportunities

Result

People demonstrating competence and developing the 'learning to learn' skills needed to adapt to the future.

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Action Plan

What Needs Changing

- YES NO -The Structure, policies, practices, attitudes?
- YES NO -The People?
- YES NO -The decision-making?
- YES NO -The rewards people get?

Who are the key stakeholders?

- YES NO -Are they ready for this change?
- YES NO -Are they capable of driving the change?

Who will take key roles?

- YES NO -Is it clear who is doing what, when?

Have you allocated resources?

- YES NO -How much money?
- YES NO -How much time?
- YES NO -How many people?

Where is your organisation in the process?

~ Shelly Rubinstein ~