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RESEARCH SCHOLAR

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

OGUTU JOSEPH ODHIAMBO
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INTRODUCTION

The concept of organizational change is in regard to organizational-wide change as opposed to smaller changes as adding a new person or simply modifying a program. Examples of organizational-wide change might include a change in mission, vision, restructuring operations (right-sizing, expansion, layoffs, etc.) new technologies, mergers, major collaborations, new programs such as Total Quality Management (TQM), re-engineering. Some experts refer to this as 'organizational transformation' - a term which designates a fundamental and radical reorientation in the way the organization operates, McNamara, (2000). From organizational view point, change means changing the business models, strategies, policies, process, Human Resource practices, performance appraisal, Joseph and Pandya, (Wikipedia)

We are in the age of technological breakthrough, right from computerization of the daily office and personal computers, smart-phones, ipads, refrigeration, washing machines, dishwashers, and lawn mower just to mention but a few:

Innovation is not easy; it is not even easy to envision how a new idea can be applied in the future. Innovative-thinking (embracing big ideas) and acting on the ideas – must be on your smarts objective as you drive change through your organization. There is no healthy alternative.

This article is written in response to the concern frequently expressed by senior executives and managers that they do not find enough innovative thinking in their organization, much as they know that rewards for innovative thinking are immense in today's world economy. As the world becomes a global market, the leverage provided by the big idea taken worldwide is enormous. Under these conditions, the idea of evolving into a learning organization emerges as something more than a fashion but a crucial necessity.

BEST PRACTICES FOR TRANSFORMING YOUR ORGANIZATION – AN OVERVIEW

Thinking big and acting new are crucial on the agenda of corporate leaders, whether in Africa, India, Europe or the United States of America.

A number of scholars have contributed to this topic. There are so many reasons not to change, by nature; change is uncomfortable, stressful and threatening. All of us benefit by the wisdom we have accumulated and so, many would prefer *status quo* over change. It is a strong, highly valued characteristic in world class companies. If new ideas are not valued and reaction to failure is essentially punitive there is no point than to create new and big ideas.

McNamara (2000) contends that to carry out a successful change management in an organization, you must involve top management, including the Board and Chief Executive officer (CEO)

A change agent's role is to translate the vision to a realistic plan and implement the plan.

WHY CHANGE MANAGEMENT? - BEST PRACTICE IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Best practices for transforming organizations is a requirement that is desperately needed today; what is in short supply however is the guideline - guideline document in the hands of change agents to enable them reinforce actions relevant to change management.

In thinking big and acting new, this article attempts to:

- Examine the practical values for change management

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- *Propose and bring to the fore the thinking big and acting new as key concepts to achieving best change and,*
- *Examine organizational culture and the management mindset as crucial parameters to organizational transformation*

WHAT PROVOKES AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE?

Change should not be done for the sake of it, McNamara, (2010) - rather, change is a strategy to accomplish some overall goal. Usually, an organizational goal is provoked by some outside driving forces, e.g. substantial cut in funding; address new major markets/clients; need for dramatic increase in productivity; restructuring; change in organizational policy; transition to a new executive can provoke organization-wide change when his new and unique personality pervades the entire organization

HOW ORGANIZATIONAL-WIDE CHANGE IS BEST CARRIED OUT?

- Successful change must involve top management. including the board and chief executive
- A change agent's role is usually to translate the vision to a realistic plan and carry out (or implement) the plan
- Change is usually carried out as a team-wide effort; not one-man-show.
- Communication about the change should be frequent and with all organization members.

To sustain change, the structures of the organization itself should be modified including strategic plans, policies and procedures

CHANGE BEGINS WITH YOU

If you expect change in others and in the culture of your organization, then get ready to change yourself first. Your change is the pivot around which culture change swings. If you keep the work of culture change at arm's length then real, lasting change won't occur. The reason is simple, everyone in your organization is sitting around with their arms folded doing nothing too— just like you.

Organizational culture change is a show up, stand up, so be participative. Culture is not an object or system out there. It is internal. You are the culture and the culture is you. It is a meaning making

process that you and others perform for survival. Sustainable and sustaining change begins and ends with you and your commitment

Of his experience while leading change at Honeywell, Bill George says "When I faced myself in the mirror I realized that Honeywell was changing me more than I was changing Honeywell"; 2003; PP.IV. This is bound to be true. In the process of changing the culture of organization, you will change. You must; you are that much part of the culture.

Organizational culture is so interwoven and quite intimate, so changing it will reveal your vulnerabilities. You cannot manage and control real change the same way you manage a benefits system. Your team cannot fix culture or manipulate like a software system, a business plan, or a budget. You can try to "fix" or manipulate it. But those efforts mainly, account for dismal failure of so many change efforts. People do not like being manipulated like a part in the machine. They prefer to be engaged.

HOW TO HANDLE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE?

The best approach to address resistance to change is through:

- *Increased and sustained communication and education e.g. the leader should meet with all managers and staff to explain and give reasons for change, how it will be executed and where additional information can be gotten*
- *A change plan should be developed and communicated.*
- *Forums should be held for organization members to express their ideas for the plan and they should be able to express their concerns and frustrations as well*

CONCLUSION

Typically there will be strong resistance to change, however good and attractive practices the change agent may propose, people are afraid of the unknown. Many people think things are already just fine and do not see the need for change. As it were, however, they say, learn, change or fall behind, so we have no better alternative but to embrace positive change and transformation which is, by far, the best option for organizations-Thinking Big acting new. ○



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