MANAGING THE HR SIDE OF CHANGE
FOR A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS

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Abstract:
In a business content puzzle, change management is the missing piece for a company to survive. Change becomes more and more important nowadays, because of its constant appearance. Because the success of the companies is hard to get, accepting and applying the change is a must. Managing change requires new thinking; only in this way a company can keep its position on the market. The present study is an introduction to principles of change management and to components of the process of transformation. In the end, we present a section which contains research consequences, resulting from application of theoretical concepts into practice.

Keywords:
change, leadership, organizational culture, change management, HR – human resources.

1. Moving forward
The principles for change management are the catalyser for a successful leadership and a great competency for the organisations which applies them. The focus is on the impact and insights of these principles on effective application of change management. The main issues to be analyzed are: the understanding of the need for change; the vision of the change agents; the appearance of resistance when a change occurs; and creating a favourable organizational culture.

Any process of change begins with the understanding of the need for change. In the process of adaptation to organizational change, people are very important (Bold, 2011). But why should we make a change? Because business environment is changing, the market, the customers, the suppliers are changing. The vision regarding the need for change represents the first step of the transformation’ process and includes the concept that the old structure and management process is no longer available to the new conditions, so sooner or later will lead the organization in a critical situation.

The most increasing challenge is change. The perception of appreciation the necessity of change is essential, because involves the transformation of the HR old habits and attitudes and the creation of new beliefs. The change has to be aligned with the strategy and company’s organizational culture, in order to get the expected results (Verboncu, Nicolescu, Popa, Năstase, 2008).
Change agents are represented in 95% of the cases by the managers. Their vision about change is based on the evaluation of their results, the comparison with other companies and with the demand on the market. The manager role is extremely important through his personal example, by proving his real attachment to change. The most important tools needed by a manager who wants to implement a change involve: leadership skills, understanding of the employees’ reaction to change, communication skills, knowledge, techniques for managing resistance and mechanisms for measuring outcomes.

Regarding the appearance of resistance when a change occurs, few primary reasons were identified: impact on current job role – when the opinion about change is similar with a negative impact on working environment or workload; organization’s past performance with change – a successful experience will always influence the decision for change, but a weak one will block it; lack of awareness – employees do not understand why the change has to be done or the nature of it; lack of support and commitment from managers – the importance of change must be first seen on manager’s attitude; job loss – maybe change will affect employment. Some solutions in dealing resistance are: leadership involvement, communication, employees’ involvement, creating awareness of the need for change, sharing both the consequences of the failure and benefits of the success of change (Hiatt, 2006).

In terms of developing a positive culture to change, everyone must realize that there are no quick solutions in creating an internal favourable market to change and for that is needed the entire organizational involvement in the process. Responsiveness to change cannot be created overnight. Creating a culture of change implies the modification in daily working modes and not in just side activities. Before developing a plan for change, it is necessary to create both awareness of the organization on the need to change and receptivity to it. To be a real motivator for change, vision must be shared by everyone. Culture takes what is understandable, rises in the air and makes it untouchable (Năstase&Hotărăș, 2011).

2. Getting started
Considering the statements above, we can specify the most important stages and activities for managing change: in the start-up step it’s needed the acquisition for the change project resources, the creation of the awareness of all organization’ members and the building of the management support; the design level includes the involvement and communication, the development of the sponsorships and the providing of the direct support from the managers during the process of change; the implementation phase, characterised by an alignment of the leadership and management of the resistance, by an engagement between manager and team and by reinforcement and reward actions.

Change management team is an important factor in the equation of change. As brilliant the manager might be, he couldn’t make a step forward without a team. The eligible conditions to be fulfilled for a team to be involved in manager’s vision to change are: increased project knowledge, increased credibility, ease of communication, understanding the new responsibilities and roles, feeling to be part of the change team, benefits of change and access to leadership.

Communication is the attribute of a successful change message. Communication is based on sharing what the change will mean both to the employees and organization, sharing what is changing, explaining the business reasons for why the change is implementing, conveying the impact, both positive and negative in the organization, etc. Most effective methods are: group meetings and presentations, one-on-one coaching sessions and discussions, fight rumours, provide regular communication and true sources of information.

After the change management strategy is defined, the team preparation and the developing of the sponsorship model, the proper manage of change is needed the developing of the change plans and the action for implement the transformations. Once the team has completed the planning process, implementation begins. In common, some plans are
implemented while others are adjusted or created. Also, given that the resistance to change was nearly defeated, the process continues with the change implementation and with the permanent feed-back generated by the modulations factors that actually trigger it. In this stage it is developed an action plan, which should include clear arrangements for the implementation of change. They must be adapted to the specific realities within the organization and facilitate the implementation of all actions that change attracts them. In the implementation phase we must know that not every aspect of the change process goes as planned, so unexpected events must be included. The stage of reinforcement is the one which assets the results of the change management activities and implements corrective action. More, there are several methods which reinforce groups dealing with change: celebration of project success, performance measurement, formal recognition of group contributors and feedback opportunities. So, these instruments are the most effective for determining if employees are engaged in the process of change. In this phase the final step should be the after-reaction review. This is the part of the ongoing, continuous improvement of change management in every organization (Hiatt&Creasey).

3. Benchmarking results
To obtain reliable data, we turned to a research on a sample composed of 183 subjects working in companies from Romania. Of the 183 subjects, 60 are managers and the rest are employed. Asked people are aged between 20 and 60 years, 55% of them are men and 45% are women. We used a questionnaire with 50 questions about the topics discussed above. The research undertaken concerns: the recognition of the bad signals given by the company and the environment; the extent to which managers and employees are willing to accept the existence of the changes, to fight with the resistance; the identification of the needs of the company towards stability, balance, performance; the development a plan for change, which includes the responsibilities, the tasks and the people responsible; the process of change implementation and the identification of the factors regarding consolidation, motivation, communication and completion of the change.

- regarding the understanding of the need for change, we determined the following results: on a scale from 0 to 10, divided in 3 parts – from 1-3, 4-6, 7-10, 21% from the ones who answered consider that they feel able to change immediately, to comply and stop the current state. Others – 16% are placed at the extreme scale, feeling catastrophic and unable to agree or make any changes, as insignificant that change might be. But 63%, namely most of the people, are somewhere between the extremities, being able to give up some aspects, while others do not change. It is also clear that as the number of successful experiences of transformation was greatly, the employees are more apt to separate from the past. The companies need to involve managers in both internal and external environment (Constantinescu et al, 2010).

![Figure no. 1. The understanding of the need for change](image-url)
- regarding the importance of the managers as change agents, the results show that 1% of the participants think that the manager's role is not important, 12% affirm that he has a responsibility to moderate the process of change, while 87% concern manager’s attributions as a yardstick to guide change. The last ones consider the growing importance of the manager involvement role as an effort for a successful change.

![Figure no. 2. The importance of manager’s role in the change process](image)

- After changing experiences, each person can tell if resistance could have been avoided. Thus, most respondents recognized more or less, as appropriate, that resistance could be prevented and the change could be accepted and implemented more easily. It is noted that the resistance opposition tends can be avoided, in order to obtain results in less time. If resistance factors do not weigh less than favorable change factors, the transformation will not occur. It will not be stimulated by any means.

![Figure no. 3. Level of resistance’ avoidance](image)

- regarding the organizational culture, after analyzing the answers, the following conclusions were outlined: 35% think that in their organizations there is a favorable culture for change; 25% manifest a strong reaction against change, while 40% consider that organization culture has a moderate capacity for change.

![Figure no. 4. Organizational culture attitude toward change](image)
regarding the use of communication, 49% of the respondents belong to organizations that match and apply methods of communication; 12% of the respondents considered that the methods of communication are less or not used at all within their organizations; and 39% think that the communication has a medium level in their organization – while some information is clearly transmitted, others are fragmentized. Any method of communication is an effective tool that facilitates the change, helps the increasing of the productivity and translates into positive results for both human resources and the organization itself.

For the successful communication to be secured into the lower levels, it must be done frequently, slowly and directly, promoting even at this stage bilateral exchange of views – element of the creation of early involvement. Good communication can help prepare people for change and mitigate any negative reaction. One of the roles of the communication staff is to sell the benefits of change, but the communication should not be used to try to convince staff that change is in their interest when it fact, really isn’t. Personnel are likely to react badly when they feel they were misled and in the future they will not believe what managers will say.

**Figure no. 5. Use of communication**

regarding the most effective ways to reinforce change at the group level, the results showed that 26% participants prefer tangible rewards, while 23% of them align change compliance to individual performance goals; 18% of participants indicated that it is important to celebrate successes, 17% appreciate personal conversation because encourages the attitude for change and 16% are satisfied with a feedback, which gives opportunities to offer input.

**Figure no. 6. Reinforcement methods**
4. Conclusions
The analyze allowed us to make the conclusion that change is not a goal, but a way of adapting organizations to the market and its new conditions, in order to increase competitiveness, performance and effectiveness. The main and the most difficult to achieve is the attitude and mentality of the people. The real solution to business change is to motivate the people and to change their affiliation. Without this step is highly unlikely that the economic, social and management solutions will come alive and will give effective results in the business. The mechanisms to change the organizational culture are in correlation with the organization stages of life (Năstase, 2008).

The greatest contributors to change success are: an active and visible sponsorship, a frequent and open communication around the need for change, a structured change management approach, a dedicated resources and funding for change management and employees’ engagement and participation to the whole process of transformations.

The research had also obstacles in applying the change management. The main ones are: ineffective change sponsorship from the managers, resistance to the change from employees, insufficient change management resources and funding, ineffective communication and poor change project.

We can say as a conclusion of this article, that the change management is more an attitude than a set of techniques and tools, so that successful businesses in many areas of activity are strongly influenced by the ability to exploit moments of transformation.

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