

## Managing Changes in Organisations

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***Abstract :** Change is a certain as well as constant phenomenon at all spheres of the environment. Organisations operate in the environment and they are subject to continuous change. Survival of organisations is not possible in this competitive environment without responding to the need for change. A number of internal and external forces influence change. But introducing, managing and sustaining changes in the organisations are not an easy. A large section of employees tend to resist change. Because it is perceived that people by nature like to maintain the status quo. A number of metaphors are used for making organisational change process a success. In this article, attempts are made to explain change and change management; how to enact changes; leadership model for change management; and metaphors for introducing, implementing and sustaining organisational changes.*

### 1.0 Introduction

Change Management is relatively a new phenomenon in the field of organisational thought. In order to survive in the highly competitive and continuously evolving business environment, successful management of change is crucial to any organisation, irrespective of size, structure and function (By, 2005). As business environments are becoming increasingly competitive and complex, organisations must be alert and flexible to remain competitive. Complacency within an organisation can lead to inertia that will have a negative impact on the productivity of the organisation in the long run. Organisations that do not remain competitive will often begin a gradual downward trend in financial performance and must be revitalised (through changes) for continued survival (Landrum, et al., 2000). It is evident in the relevant literature that the only certainty in this world is the fact that nothing is certain (Plant, 1987). Change is all around, in every aspect of life. It is unavoidable and increasing at an ever-rapid rate (Cornell, 1996). The entire environment as well as the organisations working within it are subject to continuous change. The plants, animals and organisations have to adapt themselves to the changed environment. Failure to adapt properly to the changed scenario has been severely punished with the death or demise of the individual or species (Martin, 2001). It is argued that contemporary organisations are immersed in a virtual cyclone of change as they need to adapt to the ever

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increasing demands of both domestic and global markets. It is not possible for the organisations to avoid or ignore that cyclone of change (Siegal et al. 1996). According to the laws of the nature, every organisation will succumb to the entropic process. By introducing change management, they can arrest the entropic process and thus prolong their existence in the society. It is argued that change is a normal and continuous event in the lives of people and organisations. The concept of 'stability' in management seems unattainable. A variety of internal and external influences cause, trigger and drive change (Morden 1996). Change has been termed as an ever-present feature of organisational life, both at operational and strategic levels. Thus there is no doubt regarding the importance to any organisation of its capability of identification where it needs to be in the future, and how to manage the changes required reaching that target. It is also argued that organisational change and strategy are inseparable (Burnes, 2004; Rieley and Clarkson, 2001). It is observed that change is prevalent all around, in every aspect of life. It is unavoidable and increasing at an ever rapid rate. It has always been there but has generally been much more gradual. Within five decades, the rapid pace of change has been seen in various forms (e.g. changes in the mode of travel from horse drawn carriage to space sheep). Such a rapid pace of change causes conflicts and disruption at organisational and considerable stress for the people involved at personnel levels respectively (Cornell, 1996). Management of now-a-days requires high managerial skill due to the importance of Change Management (Senior, 2002).

## **2.0 What is Change Management?**

Change management has been defined as 'the process of continually renewing the direction, structure, and capabilities of an organisation to serve the ever-changing needs of both the external and internal customers (Moran & Brightman, 2001). It is stated that western economies have suffered severely by a series of economic shocks (Stewart, 1993) and crises (Iacocca, 1986) over the last few decades. Therefore, managers and the field of management have suffered some degree of dislocation (Huczynski, 1993). Responding to such dislocation, managers have turned to consultants and business school academics for advice and for solving those problems which threaten to swamp them. The managers, consultants and many business school academics share the notion that business success requires management attention to the "soft", cultural and humanistic aspects of organisation (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). The

cultural management of organisations requires a new paradigm of management to research the management of change and the management of organisations more generally (Collins 1996). Successful managers in continuously changing organisations have to provide clear responsibility and priorities with extensive communication and freedom to improvise the activities of their respective organisations (Brown & Eisenhardt 1997).

### 3.0 Transformational Leadership and Organisational Changes

A significant proportion of leadership experts consider transformational leadership style most conducive to make organisational change a success. The four major components of transformational leadership are idealized influence, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation (Hall, et al., 2002). Literature reveals that Transformational leadership is associated with a more flexible leader-follower relationship. It is rather based on trust and commitment than contractual agreements (Jung & Avolio, 1999). It emphasizes organisational changes through new values and alternative visions for the future (Gellis, 2001). Moreover, the necessary behaviours and traits of the transformational leader include empathy, need for power, good rhetorical skills, intelligence, and consideration for others. This type of leadership style inspires or motivates followers, gains commitment followers' commitment, changes attitudes, beliefs, and/or goals of individuals, changes organisational norms, makes subordinates feel they are being treated as individuals, enables them see problems in new ways, communicates and transmits a vision of the organisation (Landrum, et al., 2000). The mentioned behaviours and traits are necessary for initiating and implementing organisational changes. These are much similar to those of charismatic leader (Bass, 1985). Therefore, it is argued that a transformational leader would be a good facilitator of the change management process by promoting the creation of a culture that encourages team-decision making and behavioural control. Moreover, by nurturing followers' personal capacities and abilities, transformational leaders have strong positive influences on followers' motivation and ability to achieve or even surpass goals (Barbuto, 2005). Instead of emphasizing short term rewards i.e. monetary incentives, transformational leaders place much importance on long term rewards such as personal development, advancement, promotion which in the long term will bring about positive changes in the organisations (Eisenbach, et al., 1999).

However, it is argued that charismatic/transformational leaders can fail to implement changes in the organisations. It is believed that charismatic leadership is necessary but not sufficient for strategic change. Such leadership must be accompanied by instrumental leadership (leader behaviours which are instrumental in implementing the change), without which the leader will fail (Nadler and Tushman, 1989). It is true that charismatic leaders may have the qualities necessary for turning around organisations. But it has been shown that charismatic leaders can be damaging to organisations and followers (Hogan et al., 1990). For example, it is noted that charismatic leaders can lead followers into groupthink and cites as an example John F. Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis (Jenis, 1989). Charismatic/transformational leaders have also been accused of being narcissistic (Hogan et al., 1990).

Despite the drawbacks mentioned above, transformational leadership is still considered the most effective style of leadership in making organisational change a success due to its dynamic nature and emphasis on long term development of the concerned organisation (s).

#### **4.0 Types of Change**

It is argued that now-a-days, organisations undergo the following types of changes:

##### **4.1 Adaptive Change**

Adaptive changes are relatively small in scales and can be accommodated without causing major disruption and danger to the organisation. They consist of the thousands of small adaptive movements which absorb and respond to day-to-day events. They balance and integrate operations with the environment where they take place. Such changes may be small in terms of scale but their impact will not necessarily be small for employees or managers. They play a vital role in bringing about and retaining long term changes in the organisations (Martin, 2001).

##### **4.2 Fracturing Change**

Such changes occur within the scale of all organisations. They can cause serious damage to or even destroy the organisation. In fact, they have the strength to fracture or break the organisation (Ibid).

### 4.3 Planned Change

They occur with the direction of the change agent. Planned changes include those events that management intends to introduce and can provide a predetermined response for those. They include organisation's strategic move to capture a major share of the market (Ibid).

### 4.4 Unplanned Change

Such changes are spontaneous in nature. They occur without the direction of the change agent. They represent the unexpected events that arise and the complete elimination of those events from the organisation's environment is not possible (Ibid).

### 5.0 Forces of Change

Forces influencing changes in organisations have been categorised into two groups— internal and external. The internal forces include:

- Need for improving operational cost and efficiency;
- Implementing benchmarking; and
- Changing cultural attitudes and values (Morden, 1996).

The following factors have also been identified as the internal forces of change:

- Efficiency (minimising production cost);
- Fashion (change for the sake of change);
- Control (preferred work practices by the managers); and
- Internal pressure which comes from the stakeholders groups i.e. employees, shareholders, management, consumers etc (Martin, 2001).

External forces include:

- Market competition;
- Technological innovation;
- Re-engineering to implement the changes in the perception of best, most cost- effective, or most appropriate practice;
- Internationalisation, globalisation (changes in the global economy i.e. decline of manufacturing sector in countries like the UK, Germany etc.) and cultural differences;

- Need to manage diversity (in terms of ethnicity, religion and gender);
- Managing in a responsible and ethical manner;
- For managing strategically;
- Changes in competition;
- Changes in demography;
- Changes in consumers' tastes and social attitudes (specially fashion industries);
- Changing attitudes regarding environment; changes in legislation (Morden 1996).
- Besides, the following issues also influence changes in organisation:
  - Rapid product obsolescence (change due to technological development and changing fashion);
  - Knowledge Explosion (internet); and
  - Demographical features (Hellriegel, et al 1989).

## **6.0 Response to Change**

It is argued that all the employees do not respond to the change process in the same manner. The response of the employees to change or the mere possibility of change may be categorised into four different forms namely:

### **6.1 Withdrawal**

One option is to behave as though the change were not happening and to continue in the same way as one has always done. This is possible to a certain extent. Complete withdrawal from change process is not possible. However, efforts aimed to ignore change in fact necessitate making one's own changes for avoiding the effects that may be happening all around (Cornell, 1996). Such a negative response to change may bring about the existence of organisations where the nature of the business is volatile (e.g. fashion industries and entertainment).

### **6.2 Resistance**

Direct opposition to the change may be expressed in the forms of sabotage of the change by delaying its implementation, refusal to co-

operate etc. It may also take place in the form of direct action (agitation), forming pressure groups or lobbying parliament (Ibid). In fact resistance to change is almost impossible if it happens in the form of introducing new technology.

### **6.3 Acceptance**

Such response takes place in the form of bowing to the inevitable in a passive manner. Employees accept the organisational change positively but do not perceive the prevailing situation as good as old days. Therefore, such a feeling does result in co-operation with the introduction and implementation of the new system (Ibid). Dynamic organisations have no other alternatives than to accept changes for their own development and sustainability in this competitive global village.

### **6.4 Embrace**

This is an eagerness to be involved in the implementation of the new system, a welcome for change and a positive looking forward to the newly created opportunities in a real sense. It guarantees the successful introduction and smooth functioning of the new system i.e. organisational change (Cornell, 1996).

## **7.0 Why Do People Resist Change?**

Literature reveals that human being by nature prefer to maintain the status quo. It has been argued that the reasons behind people's resistance to change are: Inertia; Preference for stability; Custom and practice; habit and conformity; Inflexible attitudes, structures and practices; Inappropriate organisation culture; Inappropriate leadership or management; Refusal to admit the need for change; Opposition through lobbying, removing persons linked with the proposed change; Using countervailing power; Using ritualised behaviour; Protecting own interest; Perceiving change as a threat to interests like economic, job security, status, prestige; Fearing the unknown; Misunderstanding; Conflicting perceptions regarding changes; and Lack of trust (Morden 1996). Some other reasons behind resistance to change include installed base of thinking; unquestioned and unchallenged conventions and precedents and conventions; and inappropriate identification of opportunities and threats (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994).

## **8.0 Enacting Organisational Change**

Organisational change is a pre-condition to the survival of any organisation. But it is not easy to enact change in an organisation. It is argued that understanding of organisation change varies depending on the logic that is deployed (Ford & Ford 1994). The logic of dialectics identifies conflict or struggle as the basis for change. The conflict between the forces supporting or opposing change are two opposing actions that 'work at each other' until one dominates and the resulting outcome is a synthesis that is distinct but contains elements of the forces for and against change. It is assumed that dissatisfaction with the status quo is necessary before change can occur. In contrast, the logic of trialectics proposes that change occurs through attraction. Changes do not result from 'pushes or pressure to move away from the present situation, but instead result from being 'pulled toward or attracted to different possibilities'. In fact the change package should be presented in such a way and contain such elements so that the employees accept this spontaneously (Eisenbach, et al., 1999).

It is argued that successful managers should possess a number of characteristics that are conducive to organisational change. If given clear responsibility, they can ensure more intensive communication with much liberty in a limited structure with their ability to improvise and thus facilitate learning about future. And finally, the ability to link current projects to the future with predictable intervals and choreographed transition procedures (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997). It is suggested that performance is further enhanced if the rhythm created by the transition process becomes synchronized with the rhythm of change in the environment (Gersick, 1991). Even without dissatisfaction or crisis, it is critical that the leader be a change champion who can assemble and motivate a group with enough power to lead the change effort (Kotter, 1995). It is argued that one considerable strategic advantage available to organisational managers expecting a greater level of success in their efforts in organisational transitions need reliance on a more well-rounded and integrated conception of the general nature of system-wide change within organisations (Siegel, et al., 1995).

It is suggested that changes in organisations should be implemented in the following manner: taking risks; recognising the politics involved; paying attention to detail; staying close to the heart; creating an impression; creating awareness of the crisis; building a new identity, particularly in



the case of mergers; demonstrating the need for change; communicating in a clear and timely manner; developing a vision, charting the roadmap and winning everybody's commitment to it; establishing common shared goals; being visible, credible and responsible as a leader of change; being clear about sanctions, both collective and individual (EMCC, 2004).

## 9.0 Role of Change Agents: Internal and External

It is argued that the urgency of the role of the change agent role for paving the way for organisational development and transformation has been an important and recurring theme within the change management literature (Doyle, 2002). But the role of the change agent is rather changing than constant. Literature reveals that discontinuous and radical organisational change is extending the notion of the change agents' role beyond the singular, full-time, mandated individual (usually a seconded manager or external consultant) to encompass a more diverse, multi-functional, mixed status "cast of characters" who are now accommodating change responsibilities within their existing operational, professional or technical roles (Buchanan and Storey, 1997). Through the introduction of new structures, cultures and working practices (eg those engaged in total quality management and business process re-engineering) managers and employees are encouraged to "make a difference". Individuals are now being presented with opportunities to innovate and implement change processes in their area of responsibility aimed to increase the levels of productivity, quality and customer service, etc. (Mabey et al., 1998).

There is a difference of opinions among the experts regarding the effectiveness of changes through internal and external change agents. Introducing changes through someone inside the organisation and through external consultants have advantages and disadvantages. A section of writers including Lippitt have supported changes through external change agents. Where as the notion of changes through internal change agents is favoured by Le Compte and others (Scurrah et al., 1971).

It is argued that external change agents are more effective because he/she frees personnel in the organisation to participate in the training process, serves as a stimulus for redefining the situation, provides initiatives in exploring difficult or unknown problem areas, provides continuous support as the change process starts, helps for diagnosing the problems continuously, and provides helpful information, procedures and resources. In brief the arguments for and against organisational changes through internal and external change agents are as follows:

It is stated by a number of writers that significant change depends on the impetus generated by an external agent. Only a skilled external consultant can provide the perspective, detachment and energy needed to effect a true alteration of the existing patterns. On the other hand the advocates for internal change agents argue that the insider (internal change agent) possesses the intimate knowledge of the client system. The external consultants do not have such advantage. Moreover, the insider does not generate suspicion or mistrust like the outsider. The acceptance and credibility of the internal change agent is guaranteed by his/her status in the organisation (Ibid). However, the personal liking and disliking of the internal change agent may be reflected on the change process because he/she has some sort of relation (good or bad) with the concerned personnel, units and machinery of the organisation.

### **10.0 Use of Metaphors for Organisational Change**

The use of metaphors in teaching, coaching and even in the development of organisation studies as a discipline is now well documented (Morgan, 1980; Putman et al., 1996). There is widespread consensus among these authors that metaphors are far more than mere rhetorical devices that embellish speech and writing. Metaphors may reach people in ways unknown to literal language and their use seems to trigger the behavioural changes that a consultant may want in organisations. Further, its use in the organisational development literature has been particularly well recognised through the work of Gareth Morgan (Richardson, 2000). However, despite the considerable popularity, metaphor has also been criticised for providing only partial insight and fostering misrepresentation and misunderstanding (Palmer and Dunford, 1996). Even Morgan, a longstanding supporter of using metaphor concedes that whilst very persuasive, metaphor can block our ability to gain an overall view any organisation or issue (Morgan, 1997). It is also argued that metaphors are instructive and they conceal as well as reveal (Manning, 1992). Despite these shortcomings, the importance of metaphors in bringing about organisational changes cannot be denied.

### **10.1 Lewin's Forcefield Model or Calm Water Metaphor**

According to this model, any situation existing is the outcome of balance between the forces which are acting in the organisation. Some forces drive the organisation towards change and the others try to resist change (Martin 2001). Lewin presents a comprehensive description of change

incorporated into many organisational consultants' and managers' emergent models of organisations in their attempts to understand and direct the process of systemic change. This model elaborates three basic steps needed for making any change process a success. It has been stated that successful change can be planned and requires unfreezing the status quo, changing to a new state, refreezing (strengthening) to make the change permanent (Robbins & Coulter, 2005). The first step involves unfreezing the present level of behaviour. For instance, there may be a series of management training sessions through which the need for change is unanimously revealed. The second step is called movement and involves taking action to change the organisation's social system from its existing level of behaviour or operation to a new level. Finally, the third step is called refreezing. This involves establishing a process that ensures that the new levels of behaviour will remain relatively secure against reversion to prior modes of operation (Siegel, et al 1996). Moreover, this model of change involves consolidation of changes in a new stage of balance. Otherwise, the balance will not be fixed and the organisation may slip back to its earlier position. It is implied that the newly introduced and consolidated change will be the new culture of the organisation (Martin, 2001). A visionary, dynamic, participatory and innovative leadership along with a corps of enthusiastic, skilled and motivated employees are needed for the implementation and sustainability of the change model.

It is often claimed that the stability and predictability of this metaphor can not be sustained. Moreover, disruptions in the status quo (equilibrium) are not temporary and they are not followed by a return to calm waters (Robbins & Coulter, 2005).

## **10.2 McKinsey's 'Seven S Framework'**

The model was originally developed by 'McKinsey Consulting Firm' in 1979. The persons involved were Richard Pascale, Anthony Athos, Robert Waterman and Tom Peters (Martin 2001). The seven Ss are Strategy, Structure, Systems, Staff, Style, Skills, and Shared values and culture. All the seven elements are interrelated as well as inter-dependant. These factors are the determinants of organisational success. The organisational structure, irrespective of organic or mechanistic, must fit the style of management (directive or democratic), the shared values of organisation members (toward collaboration and innovation) and the staff (people's ability). The organisation's strategy (market focus) must be

congruent with the skills of the organisation (unique organisational abilities) in order to achieve success. The systems introduced by the organisation (reward, control) must take into consideration the type and characteristics of the people as well as being compatible with the way people are grouped together by the structure of the organisation. Any change in any of these seven Ss will have impact and affect on the rest six Ss (Tosi, et al. 1994). In order to make such a change programme a success, a responsive, dynamic, visionary leadership and a group of motivated employees who welcome change is a must.

### **10.3 White Water Metaphor**

The 'White Water Metaphor' Model of Change Management was developed by P. Vail. It consists of seven interrelated and inter dependant stages to bring about changes in the organisations. The stages are recognition to the need of change; establishment of goals for the change; diagnoses of relevant variables; selection of appropriate change techniques; planning for implementation of change; actual implementation; evaluation and follow up. It is consistent with an ever changing world that is increasingly dominated by information, ideas and knowledge (Hamel, 2001). Successful implementation of this model needs continuous manoeuvring in uninterrupted and uncertain rapids. Responding quickly to the changing conditions and incredible flexibility is a must for making this model a success. Overly structured and less responsive organisations are not likely to survive. In this era of highly competitive industry, companies need to be prepared for any possibility. Any organisation, treating change as the occasional disturbance in an otherwise calm and stable world runs a great risk. Organisation's ability to respond to the needs for change is one of the decisive factors for its survival. The business world is undergoing rapid changes now-a-days. Managers must be ready to manage the changes facing their organisations or work areas efficiently and effectively (Robbins & Coulter, 2005).

### **11.0 Conclusion**

Managing organisational changes consist of a set of complex as well as interrelated activities. Both the change agent and the employees have to remain vigilant to implement and sustain changes in the organisation. The change agent has to reconfigure the roles, responsibilities, structures, outputs, processes, systems, technology or other resources of the concerned organisation (Buchanan and Badham, 1999). The change

processes have to combat a number of negative features. It is argued that the mostly accepted change management models are inadequate to describe the diversity of approaches actually used by organisations (Dunphy & Stace, 1993).

It is stated that managers feel frustrated when the organisation do not respond to elaborately organised plans for changes, where there is a gap between decision and action (Tichy, 1983). In order to overcome resistance to change, the manager should come close to the workers. Liberal exchange of knowledge, building trust and recognition of the diversity in values, preferences and interests play a vital role to make change process a success (Saka, 2003). But in practice, most of the managers ignore the complex and diverse nature of reality (Ackoff, 1993). Moreover, they do not pretend to be objective and try to justify their conclusions by citing lack of time, information and complex nature of the situation (Senge et al., 1999). On the other hand, the role of employees is not beyond question. A significant proportion of the employees allegedly remain reluctant to change process and perceive it as the sole responsibility of the manager.

Compared with the past, organisations have become much more complex now-a-days. Effective management of change can arrest the entropic process (extinction) and thus prolong the existence of organisations in this era of competition. None of the theories are absolutely right or wrong. The effectiveness of theories largely depends upon the nature of the organisations and the capability of the managers to implement change successfully. The willingness of the employees to accept organisational change plays a vital role in this regard. The existing and emerging management techniques and technological innovations have made the development even existence of organisations much tougher than ever. Therefore, all the forward looking organisations should strive for implementing sustainable changes for the sake of survival and excellence in this global village of tough competition.

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