

Qualities required to be a competent change agent



Change agents are leaders who cut across the organization and its business units without regard to the traditional hierarchy. Directly or indirectly, they implement new processes, train employees on new procedures, and act as role models to demonstrate new and better ways to work. A Change Agent is the direct liaison between the technical project team members and the end users [Gardner, J. W. (1991)]. The Change Agent understands the new business process being implemented and understands the impact of that process to the business.

The role of a change agent is very important in an organization as it is not an easy task to manage a change in an organization. When there is any question arise to change in the organization that means that its need to make a change in a designed and organize fashion. It could be said with the situation of an IT project it has to change the edition of the project and also this edition should be managed properly. A change in the organization or the project could be started within the company or also may be from outside source. [Gardner, J. W. (1994)]. As an example, there is a product which is very popular among the people. But there need a change in the design of this product. [Budd, R. W., Thorp, R. K., & Donohew, L. (1997)]. This is the example where there is a change initiate within the company. At this moment the main concern about this product is that how will the company respond to this change. This type of change is managed by the change management within the organization. Immediate and as well as positive responses to this changes could be possible within the organization.

Change agent:

A change agent is a person whose presence or thought processes cause a change from the traditional way of handling or thinking about a problem

[Jakobson, R. (1990).]. Management consultants are often hired as change agents for corporate organization development retreats.

Role of a change agent:

There are some roles that could be performed by the change agent. Those roles are as follows:

The change agent should develop a definite change goal:

By diagnosing, a change agent should find out the real issues in the organization and propose the exact and clear goal. By analyzing he or she will begin the following task:

There may be some barrier to get the expected result of the organization and that should be found out.

The organization should have ability to make the desired change and this should short out by the change agent.

The expected future of the organization.

The real situation of the organization in the running time.

The opportunities of the changes that are appear in the organization.

There are specific target and dreams of the main stakeholders within the organization. To make a change, the change agent should also find those.

There are some values of the organization.

The problems and the issues which are presented in the organization.

Every organization have some future strategy that how will they operate the organization in next few years. The change agent should also take those in account.

There may be some changes which may be occurred by the external environment there is some impact for this change in the organization and as well as the consumers.

By applying those change agent could able to determine that which type of changes are necessary with in the organization.

The change agent as a facilitator:

The most difficult part of a change agent to make everyone involved in the process of change and make them dedicated to the necessary actions. The change agent should get himself concerned with [Budd, R. W., Thorp, R. K., & Donohew, L. (1997)]:

“ Identifying the key stakeholders of the change”.

“ Involving these stakeholders in the diagnostic process. This means helping them to achieve consensus on the changes the organisation needs to make. When done in a participative process, this helps create ownership for change”.

“ Helping the stakeholders to set clear goals for their change process.”

“ Educating these stakeholders about the changes they want to make and helping them to understand how the changes they’ve selected will impact on the rest of the organisation. (systems thinking.) “

“ Helping the stakeholders to understand how these changes will benefit the company, their division and themselves. This in turn builds commitment to the change. “

“ Helping the stakeholders understand the ‘ costs’ of these changes to the company, their division and to themselves personally.”

the designer

Designing a change process that will achieve specific change goals, is a creative process. This involves:

Observing all the change tools and interventions that are available.

Selecting those specific change tools and discoveries that will help the organization to achieve its change objectives.

Creating additional activities and interventions to fill any gaps.

Reviewing that each intervention supports every other intervention, and that all interventions support the company’s values, strategies and plans.

Arranging and integrating these interventions into one simple, seamless, step by step process.

Deciding on the roles that need to be played to support the process.

The project manager

..” Many different roles are required for a change process to work. Often a change agent will play the role of a project manager and co-ordinate the activities of the different role players. Typical roles in a change process include” [Jakobson, R. (1990).]:

A change steering committee.

The CEO of the company.

The executive team.

Regional coordinators (in large scale changes).

External consultants.

Internal consultants.

Middle managers.

Departmental or divisional change agents.

Communications coordinators.

Change web designers.

Marketing professionals.

Individuals within the company.

The educator

Those involved in managing the change, and those who will be affected by the change, often are surprised by their feelings when confronted by change. Resistance, frustration and confusion of common emotions associated by change [David, F. R. (1994)].

To teach the people about what types of changes are expected in the organization is one of the main duty of the change agent. Those tasks are as follows:

They need to know that how can those types of emotions could be overcome also they have know the others feelings about this changes.

The mental situation people will face when they need to walk under the process of changes.

A change should know the way of overcoming the resistance and they should also help others to do that.

A change agent should be creative to do his / her duty.

They have to make a change process funny and there should be excitement within the changes. A change agent should help others to grow those feelings with them. So that they should not be scared about the change.

A change must face the resistance and a change agent needs to overcome those resistances.

Tools for making your change process successful. A change agent should have necessary tactics to make a change process successful.

The change agent as a marketer:

Sometimes they find it out that this change is only beneficial to the company but not for own self to develop his / her career. They think that this type of change is the additional work for them.

The change agent who have enough skill to create the belief among the employee that the change is necessary for the organization and also for themselves [David, F. R. (1994)].

The employee of the organization will get the feelings that change is worthwhile and enjoyable for them.

They will take the change as the chance to develop their skills and also the opportunities to learn some new skills.

This is the option to the employee to grow their visibility in the organization.

They will find the change as the experience of adventure where everyone will find out their personal skills.

To do this a change agent has to apply some marketing technique within the organization. Those are as follows: [Gardner, J. W. (1991)]:

The change agent should make the proper publicity among the employees.

There should be an environment of contest within the organization.

A change agent should get the help of various media as example theatre.

There should be some prizes based on the theme of change.

There should be some reward and honor for those who participate in the process of change.

The successful participators will treated as a role character in the organization.

Change agent as an Inspiration agent:

A change agent should help others to participate in the chage [Hanakawa, S. I. (1996)]:

A change agent should help everyone to find out the skills they have in them.

Everyone have the dream of the private magnitude. A change agent should help them to get this.

A change agent should give courage to everyone to take the risks to make a change. That should be their magical power of making change.

A change agent should help individual to get out from the resistance to change and make them successful.

Everyone's success how much small that may be, should be celebrated.

A change agent should encourage others.

There may be resistance to changes. A change agent should find out the systems in a creative way.

A change agent should recognize the obstacle that need to change the whole system.

A change agent should identify the success and he / she should share with other employee in the organization to encourage them.

Qualities required to become a complete change agent:

A good agent should have the correct attitude to the resistance. They should have sufficient knowledge to make the changes.

The correct approach towards the changes:

It's not easy to make change. Its need to have good power of keeping own self patience with the changes. The change process is mix with the emotion of annoying and disappointed. A change agent should be determined to get out from those types of situation. A change agent should be faithful towards the change and they should have positive behavior with the projects. They have the necessary skills and knowledge to take the necessary steps to make a change successful.

Mainly the resistance to the change came from the senior management of an organization. They have behaved sensitively to get the support from the senior management. A change agent need to make agreement with everyone in the organization and these types of deals mostly happened with the staffs who are senior in the organization. So a change agent has to behave tactfully with them because if they do not agree with the changes

then the project becomes failed. A change agent should have also political knowledge. This is important because a change agent then able to know any types of ongoing circumstances within the organization carefully.

Proper awareness about the change:

In the sense of the business a change agent must be aware with the current situation of the business and a change agent should have sufficient knowledge in the field of business too. A change agent should have also the managerial skills.

Not only this but also a change agent should have knowledge about the economic situation of the organization that means from where those funds come and how it is expend. They should make it sure that there should be minimum expenditure to bring the changes. A change agent should also aware with the consumer of the organization or the business and those who are closely related with the organization externally and the internally too. A good relation with the employee of the organization is necessary to make the changes successfully so, a change agent should make a good understanding with all the employee of the organization.

The important skills of a change agent:

To handle the situation under the stress a change agent should be expert enough. A change agent must be able to take care of such a condition successfully.

A change agent should have good practical skills and they should able to understand the causes of such type of situation. A change agent should

know the definite goal of the organization and they will work towards those goals and help everyone to reach that goal effectively. They should be able to take all the pressures.

They also need to be able to relate to the resistance of others, study it and make necessary changes if found valid. Communication skills are highly relevant in overcoming resistance.

They should have also the following qualities:

Common sense. And the courage to use it.

Credibility and trust – the ability to work at all levels in the organisation.

Knowledge of change management.

The ability to work with teams of people both inside and outside the organisation. This includes the ability to work with people across all departments.

The ability to do very unstructured work.

Creativity. The ability to custom design processes to meet the goals of the organisation.

Self confidence balanced by humility.

Facilitation skills

Design skills.

Coaching skills.

A love of innovation and new ways of doing things.

A sense of humor and a sense of fun.

A spirit of caring.

The ability to inspire people. To bring out the magic within every individual and every team

How to overcome the resistance as a change agent:

To take advantage of resistance, a “ whole-system” view is required as well as an appreciation for the interconnectedness of diverse symptoms and true “ root-cause” problems. The Theory of Constraints (TOC) and the Thinking Processes that are part of the TOC body of knowledge provide just such a view and a set of powerful tools that can be used to not only address resistance but also use it to enhance the solution beyond the original concept.

The TOC Thinking Processes are logical “ thinking and communication tools” which, while they can be used in standalone situations, together form a coherent problem-solving and change management process. Their generic purpose is to translate intuition into a format that can be discussed rationally, questioned without offense, and modified to more fully reflect the understanding of a situation. They are used for the construction of solutions to problems as well as to facilitate communication, collaboration, and consensus among those that must be involved in its resolution.

Conclusion:

Change is much more than simply the “ vision thing.” Implementing change is inter-related to scanning the environment, making an estimate of the situation, determining what direction the organization needs to take, knowing what the culture of the organization is, how to leverage that culture to help with change, and deciding what actions need to be taken to make the change. Effectively implementing change also is directly related to the leadership style of the organization’s top leaders. Also, as one move through the decision making process, trying to assess the need for change, make sure you ask the questions about opportunity costs. It is important to assess the costs of change as well as the cost of not changing.

A change process is nothing but a condition when its need to solve it. A change may be need because there may be a problem occurred in the organization. A change agent need to aware about the situation and they should help it out to solve the problem. It is their responsibility to make everything in under control in the organization. A successful change agent is he / she who can do it. A change process can be seen as a leaving the present state and entering to a new state through some organized process.