

Vision, credibility, and effective communication



Introduction

It is not unusual for employees to approach organisational change with the mentality they inherited from their social-cultural environment. The impetus for instant change is not obvious at all. Behavioural change does not happen because it is suggested, recommended, or enforced by a manager (or anyone else). Change happens because one sees value and personal benefit in making the change. As a result, it is imperative that change agents understand the power they exert in attempting to implement organisational change initiatives. Change agents are catalysts for workplace behavior modification. They devise motivational plans that trigger the inspiration for employees to follow agent directives. Hence, it is not enough for management teams to think of change in terms of organizational requirements. Managers who seek the expertise of change agents are wise in so doing. Expert change agents are knowledgeable in understanding potential road blocks that inhibit employees from making the necessary adaptations to new initiatives. Social and cultural environments contribute towards the complexity of behavior modification. This paper presents a transformation initiative whereby the change agents utilise effective communication as a tool to create a vision and the credibility necessary to inspire voluntary participation in behavioural change.

Creating Vision and Credibility Through Effective Communication

Effective communication is instrumental to the success of organisation change initiatives. When done intentionally well the emotional rewards are satisfactory. But, when it fails to impart the messages necessary to complete

projects the results can be catastrophic (Hunt, 2014). Misunderstandings, antipathy, and a host of other negative emotions could seriously damage business relationships. Good communication contributes towards operational and process efficiencies (Hunt, 2014). Therefore, it follows that the value of using effective communication as a tool can never be over-emphasised or underrated for the impact it makes on successful outcomes.

This paper presents the communication process undertaken by a primary change agent with a twenty manager team. The goal is to develop a change management plan that transitions the organisation from a traditional work-group to a team-based culture. Discussions include the channels of communication, traditional work-groups versus team based organisations, the role of the primary change agent, the communication team, assumptions made, the transition process, change initiative communication, team credibility, faith creation, and answering tough questions. The paper concludes with a recapitulation of the content.

Traditional Working Groups Versus Team Based Organisations

This section distinguishes working groups from team-based organisations. They do not function in the same capacity, hence, the necessity to differentiate them here. Traditional working groups (WG) within organisations function independently. Examples of traditional WGs are accounting and human resource departments or new product divisions. These departments work independent of each other. Work is individualised (Zaharia, Dogaru, & Boaja, 2014).

In contrast, team-based organisations focus on different skills and competencies that come together to meet a common goal. Teams are not limited to functional requirements. Teams use a cross-functional composition to work in a common goal scenario. Individuals do not function independent of the group goals. Everyone working together achieve the goal (Zaharia, Dogaru, & Boaja, 2014).

Primary Change Agent Leadership Role

Buono and Subbiah (2014) suggest that primary change agents (PCA) are effective to the extent that they understand the cultural environment, are able to identify influential key players, and possess the ability to provide mentorship, as well as, positive role modeling. Buono and Subbiah (2014) suggest further that PCAS are influencers. They motivate and inspire change in others. Additionally, PCAS have internal systems knowledge and can troubleshoot problems as they arise.

Buono and Subbiah (2014) propose an example of PCA as someone who is able to identify subtle disturbances that could potentially interfere with change processes. A manager who is perceptive, tactful, and diplomatic is considered an effective PCA. Another example is a manager who understands the business and how it acquires revenue from beginning to end. Still another example is a manager who can create partnerships and alliances throughout the organisation (Tan & Kaufman, 2015).

The Communication Team

Lira, Ripoll, Peiró, and Zornoza (2013) suggest that team popularity has increased within the past decade. They assert further that teams are

effective only to the extent that they can complete project related tasks on time using various modern day technologies, such as, social networks, and computerised mediums. Teams must become efficient in developing effective interpersonal relationships. Lira et al. (2013) recommend that Human Resources facilitate ongoing leadership development training to increase group efficacy and competency.

The communication team serves to facilitate the interactions between management and the workforce. Their plans will include educatory processes that will help the workforce make sense of the transition process. Bolman and Deal (2008) advise on the complexity of organisation change and the ambiguities that are ever present in the communicative process. They recommend that the managers reflect upon their images to become aware of potential erroneous perspectives. They encourage managers to be intuitive and consider that failure is one component of success.

Context Assumptions

Presented here are the assumptions made concerning the PCA. The PCA is experienced in matters of effective organisational change. The PCA understands the communication process. The PCA is competent in leadership roles. Finally, the PCA is very well versed in team dynamics and organisation political processes.

The following assumptions are made within the context of the subject matter contained herein: the Organisation Change Team (OCT; twenty managers) assigned to this project is positive and enthusiastic about this change initiative. They exude a spirit of participation with proactive attitudes. They

view this project from a servant leadership perspective. They expect challenges and understand that every project has unforeseen circumstances that must be addressed ad-hoc (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Transitioning To A Team-Based Environment

Transitioning the cultural environment from that of a working group to a team-based one requires the acknowledgement and acceptance that the external environment has forever changed the way organisations learn new skills (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003). Empirical research on team transition from traditional work groups to teams is lacking. The general consensus is that change is necessary, but implementing a change initiative is challenging. Gardner (2009) suggests that employee resistance and lack of management support top the list of reasons for project failures.

Bolman and Deal (2008) discuss the importance of providing opportunities to learn about emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence as it has been presented by Goleman (1995) indicates the importance of empathy and acknowledging the emotions of others. Goleman posits that emotional intelligence has greater significance than does intellectual abilities. Showing compassion and empathy is instrumental in employee engagement processes (Goleman, 1995).

Idris, Dollard, and Tuckey (2015) propose that organisations can do much in terms of contributing towards employee well-being. They suggest that employers create environments conducive to learning opportunities. Idris et al. (2015) found a strong correlation between safe psychosocial environments and job satisfaction. Idris et al. (2015) suggest that employees

who feel intellectually stimulated are more likely to exude stronger intrinsic motivation stimulus. Such stimulus becomes the driving force that creates inspiration to participate in the change initiative.

Change Initiative Communication Plan

Presentation Style

Nawar (2012) recommends the use of symbols as a form of “ visual education” (p. 61) with the goal to communicate a message in the absence of language. However, the visual elements (photos, videos, and symbols) cannot replace (and should not be used to replace) the verbal component of the communication process. Visuals used in conjunction with language enhance the comprehension process.

Nawar (2012) proposes that audio-visual presentations increase understanding of the subject content. As a result, the leadership team will add video content to their presentations. The suggested theme for the videos will be called “ Excite Your Senses - Go Ahead and Make the Change!” using the Monarch Butterfly as a symbol of transformation. According to the USDA Forest Services, Monarch butterflies are the only butterflies to survive the challenges of migration twice per year (Migration, nd). The objective of this approach is to help set the stage for understanding the challenges that come with change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Channels Of Communication

Berger and Iyengar (2013) suggest that communication in modern day society is multidimensional because of the multiple modalities used to transmit messages. There are social network mediums (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others). There are many email exchanges (Hotmail, Gmail, <https://assignbuster.com/vision-credibility-and-effective-communication/>

Yahoo, and others). There are interactive networks, such as, Tango and Skype. Finally, there is face-to-face interactions.

Berger and Iyengar (2013) studied the various ways in which one message can be constructed using different platforms. They found that written messages provided greater opportunity to improve the communication process because more time is required to write than it is to talk. The studies also showed that conversations contributed to the acceptance of referrals and recommendations. Given the results of the aforementioned research, it follows that the potential of employees voluntarily engaging in behavioural changes increase when managers engage them in conversations as opposed to sending out memos via emails.

Medlin and Green (2014) support the concept that effective management increases the prospect that employees will voluntarily commit their time and intellectual resources for the benefit of the organisation. They conducted a study to propose that positive management interaction with employees resulted in improved performance. They found that employees who felt valued and appreciated were both effective and efficient. One principle that Medlin and Green (2014) found that contributed to increased production was “unity of clarity” (p. 27). This principle aligns with the channels of communication to ensure that effective communication between the management team and employees produce results.

Team Credibility

Vigliotti and Gregory (2013) propose that managers establish credibility by aspiring to become active, show competence, and demonstrate respect

towards others. Managers must create safe environments by maintaining open communication processes. They should be approachable, honest, and of high integrity. They must demonstrate superior active listening skills.

Clarity and simplicity are synonymous (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). Additionally, creativity, authenticity, and credibility precede message crafting (Hatfield, 2012). Hatfield (2012) suggests further that messages must arouse emotional energy if they are to have any effect on the intended audience. Hence, it is imperative that managers dedicate significant time towards drafting their vision statement. The articulated vision must inspire intrinsic motivation in the employees or the risk of failure to engage the workforce becomes imminent (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Hatfield, 2012).

Creating Faith in The Change Effort

LaFasto and Larson (2001) assert that faith in the change effort is created when management practices demonstrate clarity, confidence, and commitment. Empowering teams to make decisions that implement changes faster also creates faith. Management shows faith when they believe that the teams are equipped to handle challenges that arise. Finally, establishing a culture of constant accountability and excellence conation sends a strong message of trust and belief throughout the organisation (LaFasto & Larson, 2001; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Hatfield, 2012).

Answering Tough Questions

Kotter and Cohen (2003) suggest that all change efforts engender questions intended to alleviate anxiety. Management can and should prepare answers

for the tough questions. However, the best practice in answering questions comes from being sincere and honest.

Fusco, O'Riordan and Palmer (2015) encourage leaders to remain authentic. Managers can do this by expressing a strong sense of self-awareness and confidence by way of their actions. Open communication, information sharing, and honesty in one's interpersonal relations increase the possibility that the tough questions will be perceived as inquisitive and welcomed..

Jones (2013) advises managers to refrain from distorting or manipulating the facts of impending changes if they intend to gain the trust and respect of their employees.

Conclusion

This paper introduced an organisation change initiative that involved the transitioning from a traditional work-group to a modern day team-based culture. Discussions involved the transition process, the role of the primary change agent, the communication team, change initiative communication plan, team credibility, creating faith in the change effort, and answering tough questions. Context assumptions were made to provide the understanding that major change initiatives cannot be undertaken by inexperienced managers.

References

Berger, J., & Iyengar, R. (2013). Communication channels and word of mouth: How the medium shapes the message. *Journal Of Consumer Research*, 40(3), 567-579. doi: 10. 1086/671345.

Bolman, L. G. & Deal, T. E. (2008). Reframing organizations... Fourth edition. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Buono, A. F., & Subbiah, K. (2014). Internal Consultants as Change Agents: Roles, Responsibilities and Organizational Change Capacity. *Organization Development Journal*, 32(2), 35-53.

Fusco, T., O'Riordan, S., & Palmer, S. (2015). Authentic Leaders are... Conscious, Competent, Confident, and Congruent: A Grounded Theory of Group Coaching and Authentic Leadership Development. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 10(2), 131-148.

Gardner, P. J. (2009). Organizational change: All we want is better projects—why so difficult? *AACE International Transactions*. 3. 1-3. 25.

Goleman, D. (2015). Emotional intelligence. Retrieved from <http://www.danielgoleman.info/topics/emotional-intelligence/>

Hatfield, C. (2012). Crafting your story using personal narrative. *Training Journal*, 45-47.

Hunt, K. (2014). Communicating with the practice team. *Practice Nurse*, 44(10), 36-40.

Idris, M. A., Dollard, M. F., & Tuckey, M. R. (2015). Psychosocial safety climate as a management tool for employee engagement and performance: A multilevel analysis. *International Journal of Stress Management* 22(2), 183-206. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038986>

Jones, R. (2013). ' Never stop learning and never stop asking tough questions'. *Public Relations Tactics*, 20(9), 17.

Katzenbach, J. R. & Smith, D. K. (2003). *The wisdom of teams*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Kotter, J. P. & Cohen, D. S. (2002). *The heart of change: Real-life stories of how people change their organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

LaFasto, F. & Larson, C. (2001). *When teams work best*. Sage Publications Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA.

Lira, E. M., Ripoll, P., Peiró, J. M., & Zornoza, A. M. (2013). The role of information and communication technologies in the relationship between group potency and group maintenance outcomes: a longitudinal study. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 32(2), 147-155. doi: 10.1080/0144929X.2011.630421.

Medlin, B. & Green, K. W. (2014). Impact of management basics on employee engagement. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 13(2), 21-35.

Migration and overwintering (nd). USDA Forest Service. Retrieved from http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/Monarch_Butterfly/migration/index.shtml

Nawar, H. (2012). Multicultural transposition: From alphabets to pictographs, towards semantographic communication. *Technoetic Arts: A Journal Of Speculative Research*, 10(1), 59-68. doi: 10.1386/tear.10.1.59_1.

<https://assignbuster.com/vision-credibility-and-effective-communication/>

Tan, A. & Kaufman, U. H. (2015). Making good change agents: Attitude, knowledge, skills. Retrieved from <http://www.isixsigma.com/implementation/change-management-implementation/making-good-change-agents-attitude-knowledge-skills/>

Vigliotti, D., & Gregory, J. L. (2013). Review of Credibility: How leaders gain and lose it, why people demand it (2nd ed.). *Journal Of Leadership Studies*, 7(2), 62-63. doi: 10.1002/jls.21283.

Zaharia, V., Dogaru, M., & Boaja, D. (2014). Working group versus team work. *Knowledge Horizons. Economics*, 6(4), 146-149. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1669>