

Culture, Change and Organisational Design

Schein (1983) defines “organisational culture” as a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to think, and feel in relation to those problems”.

According to Brown (2011) high performing companies have strong cultures. Key factors linked to improving a culture as presented by Brown is listed below;

- Creating a Vision for the Future
- Developing a Model for Change
- Rewarding Changes

Another dimension to organisation change is the way this change occurs, how quickly, what changes, decision making, communication and any resistance encountered.

Brown (2011) states that culture consists of shared values, beliefs and behavioural norms which is as a consequence from managerial and organisation.

For change to happen successful managers have to ensure they provide employees with clear responsibilities as well as autonomy and freedom, ability to link current projects to the future and also the opportunity to test a wide variety of low cost probes as discussed in Thomas G. Cummings, Christopher G. Worley (2009). They further go on to state that certain activities represent key aspects to allow for effective change management as noted below;

Activities Contributing to Effective Change Management

MOTIVATING CHANGE

- Creating Readiness for Change; Overcoming Resistance to Change

CREATING A VISION

- Describing the Core Ideology; Constructing the Envisioned Future

DEVELOPING POLITICAL SUPPORT

- Assessing Change Agent Power; Identifying Key Stakeholders; Influencing Stakeholders

MANAGING THE TRANSITION

- Activity planning; Commitment Planning; Managements Structure

SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

- Providing Resources for Change, Building a Support System for Change Agents
- Develop new competencies and skills
- Re-enforcing new behaviours
- Staying the course

The second activity above specifically talks to that of creating a vision. Generally this vision is the values and purpose of the company they envisage for the future. This activity also creates motivation and commitment in achieving this shared vision if it is bought into.

Key factors essential to cultural change as outlined in Brown (2011:88-89) is listed below:

- An understanding of the old culture
- Encourage change in the employees
- Use outstanding units as the model for change, in other words take those units and used them as role models for the model for

change

- Allow employees to find their own approach and don't impose cultural change
- Lead with a vision
- Large Scale change takes time, small steps at a time
- Top management must live the new culture

Further to this Brown (2011:35) goes onto discuss the five stages of organisation development.

Stage 1: Anticipate need for change

Stage 2: Develop the Practitioner Client Relationship

Stage 3: The Diagnostic Phase

Stage 4: Action Plan, Strategies and Techniques

Stage 5: Self-Renewal, Monitor and Stabilise

- Stage one should be proactive and not reactive and is probably identified by a key manager who sees the need for change
- Stage two is the OD entering the system. Here he will create trust, have transparent communication and responsibility will be shared
- Stage three is the gathering of information
- Stage four is a series of interventions
- Stage five is similar to Kurt Lewins, Unfreeze, Movement and Refreeze.

Discussion

The change process needs to involve everyone in the culture change programme which embraces a shared vision, shared beliefs. Employees are motivated by the fact they have a real role to play in the change process. This gives them responsibility and they feel they have a part to play in solving business problems.

Management need to provide meaning, direction and clarity with their new Culture and it had to come from the top.

Cultural change is made possible by creating a new vision together with a set of guiding values and behaviours.

By effectively communicating change in culture through a detailed programme, introducing new ideas in a participative approach alleviates miscommunication and uncertainty. Below documents a typical plan / roadmap:

- Needs and assessment measurement
- Management workshops
- Union Workshops
- Management and Union Workshops
- Supervisor Workshops
- Pilot Workshops
- Selection and Training of Internal Facilitators
- Two Day workshops for all employees

This example ensures everyone is onboard moving toward a common goal.

J.S. Oakland, S.J. Tanner, (2007) go on to discuss that many change initiatives fail and this is why a company requires a roadmap / plan to as best document possible deviations and to be aware and plan for contingencies.

There are also many models a company can look at such as;

- Kurt Lewin's Planned Change Model (Unfreezing, Movement, Refreezing)
- Action Research Model
- Positive Model

Brown (2011:2) implied that successful firms will share the below characteristics:

- Speed of service delivery
- Quality Conscious
- Employee Involvement

- Customer Orientated
- Smaller

CONCLUSION

Excellent leadership and management approaches can create personal mechanisms for the employees to buy into the value system and vision and mission. Leadership themselves must model this cultural change buy in. Leadership must motivate the employees and encouraged them to look beyond themselves but toward the common purpose and vision of the company.

By empowering employees, giving them accountability and responsibility and opportunities for career paths enables a high quality product/service that is efficient and exceeds client quality satisfaction.

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