HUMAN RESOURCES CHANGE MANAGEMENT - KEY ELEMENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

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Abstract: The most interesting challenge of the managerial life, inevitable for the organizations of today, is changing. The complexity of such an approach forces the managers to deal with the processes whose objectives laws do not allow to be easily discovered, so the organizations must be able to predict the change.

The issues of the organizations and of the organizational development are a topic of great interest, both for the ideologists' field, who have tried to outline the most important aspects that define the organization, and for those directly involved in their operation.

This paper starts from the concept that any organization, which expects to adapt to the external environment and especially to the progress, must accept the changes and must respond to them in a quick and responsible way.

This paper, relying on the numerous examples, proposes various theoretical, rational, methodological and practical approaches, that answer the need for knowledge and that sustain the application of the change process to be a successful one.

Cuvinte cheie: change, organization, management, human resources, culture.

1. Introduction - The recognizing and the understanding of the need for change

No doubt it is much easier to go ahead and to make changes if you are sure that you move toward a better future. Most of the times, however, the need to change is not obvious to everyone, and the employees do not even know why certain things have to be changed.

The optimal solution is that the managers give a personal example, by proving their real attachment to change. They must "set the tone" and share all their faith in a better future. The engine of the change is the vision (R. Newton, 2004, p. 76). Also, the more employees can be involved in eternal realities about customers and competitors, the better they will be aware of the dangers from outside and of the need for the change. The question arises not so much that the reasons of change to be told to the employees, as an incentive to discover the reasons by themselves.

A clear and a deep perception of the need for change by the managers is essential for the change process. The perception of the change is important but not sufficient, and should therefore be supported by a complex of actual activities of the managers. Therefore, one of the most important aspects is the understanding of the need for change, by the organization's staff. This stage is essential, because actually involves the creation of the human resources belief, that the current management system and the current personnel policy are not compatible with market requirements.

The understanding of the need for change involves, moreover, the knowledge that a further management and an execution processes with the oldest structures in the new conditions lead inevitably sooner or later, to organization critical situations (Weiss A., 2006, p.56).

The most common mistake of the managers is to underestimate the impact of the change on employees. The change always involves loss - loss of the past, loss of the routine, loss of the comfort, loss of the relationships. But it can also be a new beginning, if we are willing to accept this. Even that is not welcome; the change can lead to great opportunities for development.

The biggest complaint of the most employees on a change is that they feel rather passive elements, than agents of change. As the change is more imposed from the outside, the more resistance it will face and greater are the chances of being seen as a transformation rather than a favorable threatening.

"The empowering of the employees" is a fashionable concept, and yet, few employees of the company feel that they can really influence on the future (Wallace S., 2007, p. 34).

We suggest as a solution the early consultation and the involvement of the employees, so that the change become their and not only of the senior management. The consultation does not imply to ask the opinion of each employee about every problem, but also does not imply the fact that their views are not taking into account, after the decision was taken. We appreciate that this is rather precise delineation of a "chat-room" and also the willingness to listen to the views of the employees, but within this framework.
2. Planning the change

The change is a complex activity that must be controlled through a comprehensive plan, targeted and flexible. A well-managed initiative for change is administered with a designed and documented plan.

The goal of the planning is to develop a document that describes the tasks to be fulfilled, in order to be made and those responsible for each task.

At the beginning of a change project, certainly we do not know every thing to do, how long each task will take or how people will react to change. No matter how much time would be allocated to plan and to analyze, in each plan of change will be a degree of error and would have no use in trying to keep strictly on a non-viable plan (S. Cook, 2004, p.90). Each change is unique and therefore the plan preparation varies from one situation to another.

We suggest the synthesis of the planning process in the next steps, in Table 1, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>The goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The setting of the objective</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The identification of the main components of the activity</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>The identification of the rapid gains1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The setting of the sequencing and of the schedule</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>The identification of the additional resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The planning of the costs and the identification on the benefits</td>
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Adaptation after: Newton R., 2004, p.97

The transformation takes longer than we think (Seddon J., 2008, p.87). It's dangerous to assume that the change will happen overnight. There is an inherent problem. The people need time to go through stages of the change, but the market forces are rarely so generous to allow this time. The timing is everything. You must also create a tension period, in which the change can grow, away from the force of the organization requirements. Before developing a plan for achieving the change, it is preferable to evaluate the organization's capacity and the degree of the readiness for change (Clarke L., 2009, p. 167)

To control the change represents to recognize when it is time to initiate it or, as Australian philosopher A. Cannon said: "Sometimes a moment of maximum prosperity is nothing more than a sign of disaster!" 2

3. The implementation of the change

Given that the resistance to change was defeated, the process will continue with the actual implementation of change 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.

After analyzing the results of several studies we propose the following list of nine steps that can give managers a useful process for making changes:

1. Creating an emergency environment - has a double advantage. For those who might want to resist change, it can convince them it is necessity. And it rouses those who might be neutral (or who simply do not care).
2. Decide what to change - change may be related to major aspects of the business (the strategy, the company structure, the culture, the attitudes and the kills of people) or may be one of smaller size and with limited impact on the organization.
3. Winning the supporters for the change process. Creating a coalition with mentoring role towards the assuming of the commitments – no one can make a change by himself, so the people can be made to understand what the company can and what should improve.
4. Creating and communicating a model of change accepted by the employees - company employees need also a model to bond, a direction on which to focus. Change expert John Kotter says: "The true power of a model is obtained only when the majority of those involved in an enterprise or activity will understand the objectives and the direction the change goes".

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1 The rapid gains consist of simple changes in the processes, in the forms, in the systems, etc.; are those done in a short time of conceptually change and are relevant to the process of change, because they have positive effects by improving human resources and relief work.
2 As the timing is the secret of the quality theater, it is also the secret of the successful transformation. The timing depends on the situation in terms of the receptiveness of the organization to change. The timing depends on the receptivity and on the motivation to change and the ability to achieve the target company.
5. Empowering the employees to make the change – everybody need to be involved, so that the changewill be a successful one.
6. Creating the short-term benefits – the people need to decide if they are going in the desired direction, because they need periodic answers or “short-term benefits”.
7. Consolidating the achievements and making several changes - the challenge is now turning into short-term achievements.
8. The introduction of the new ways to do things in the organizational culture – the change of the organizational culture is a crucial element.
9. Monitoring the development of the process and the adaptation of the change model to the requirements - The change should be monitored and the results should be compared both at the beginning and at the end of the process.

4. The consolidation, the motivation, the communication and the completion of the change

Rarely there is a clear crossing point from which one can say that a change is fully implemented (Tabije D., 2006, p.67).

After the implementation, we must strengthen the change, in order to reach a point where the change is not even considered to be new, but is regarded as a normal way of working.

The essential factor to ensure that change does not break up is the performance management, in the way that the performance management methods must be exactly the same with the objectives 3. The change way of how the exceptional performance of the personnel is managed, motivated and encouraged represents an important part of many changes and may even be an essential component of a transformation.

The communication is essential for the change management and in some cases; the change management is the communication management. (Scott C. and others, 2008, p.181).

The communication is crucial for the preparation and for the development of the progressive enthusiasm for change; represents the change way of how people think and behaves; ensures that the staff will continue to adhere to the change and after implementation.

The communication of the change is a two way process, and equally a matter of listening and gathering information, but also one of passing on the key messages. The effective communication for change begins with the use of informal and unstructured communication that occurs all the time. The effective communication significantly improves the likelihood of success and reduces the risk of change.

If the pace of the change is rapid and continuous, we probably have to invent new methods of communication and also to use a greater extent of the old methods.

The communication is often shrouded in mystery of a special skill that only some people have 4 (Scott C. and others, 2008, p.195).

A good communication requires an agreement between what it is said and body language.

Regarding the completion of the change process, we can affirm that this is a never ending action.

The ending point is never absolutely clear and requires a certain level of consideration. It is not just the end of the time allocated to a project, because the change relates to achieving results, not to the completion of a set of tasks in a plan. Normally, the change needs time to consolidate after the implementation, to lie down and turn into a daily way to work. The completion of the final test is that what was initially perceived as a change.

The hidden faults might damage the organization when the situation is justified (M. Buckingham and others, 2008, p.24). They also lead to a cynicism culture between the personnel.

From a managerial perspective, a change is completed when the set objectives were implemented and an explicit decision to move to something else is taken. The organization objectives evolve and once a goal has been reached, it is the solution to the problem. Management has a limited capacity and can not focus on every measure and on every facet of the organization. Once the objective is achieved, the attention can be focused on the present issue, and search for today solutions. The balance to be found is to ensure that work is completed properly before going to the future tasks. If this is not done, the change will disintegrate.

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3 The official performance management process is the key performance indicators on its use, the performance targets established both for the groups and for the individuals, as well as how the performance is measured, encouraged and rewarded, according to these targets.

4 The "to do" communication part will be divided between several people in the organization, especially on the change team and on the line managers, but communication must also be “managed”.

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5. Case study

To obtain reliable data, we turned to a research on a sample composed of 163 subjects working in companies from Romania. Of the 163 subjects, 60 are managers and the rest are employed. Asked people are aged between 20 and 60 years, 65% of them are men and 35% are women.

The research undertaken concerns: the recognition of the bad signals given by the company and the environment, 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 implementation the change and the identifications of the factors regarding the consolidation, the motivation, the communication and the completion of the change.

Research hypotheses:
1. It is assumed that both of the managers and the personnel are capable to recognize the intern situation of the company and to change the weaknesses into strengths;
2. It is assumed that the people will pass through a difficult process of change, characterized by different reactions;
3. It is assumed that the communication is the successful way to change;
4. It is assumed that the methods of stimulating the sense of dissatisfaction are working and are giving positive results.

In order to form an objective view, was necessary to investigate the views of the managers and of the employees, and for this we applied a total of three questionnaires, which we thought would be representative. Questionnaires aimed at issues facing the personnel and the organizations, which factors generate the change, what factors determine its influence, how they influence organizational culture and the ways of settlement. Thus, following the interpretation of the results from these questionnaires, revealed the following:
- Regarding the people's attitudes towards separation from the past, we proposed a scale from 0 to 10, when 0 is catastrophic, 5 is medium, mediocre and 10 is remarkable.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catastrophic</th>
<th>Mediocre</th>
<th>Remarkable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

Figure no.1. The attitude toward change scale

Both the managers and the employees, have given high marks, stating that they feel they are able to comply and stop immediately the current state. Others are placed at the extreme "catastrophic" scale, feeling unable to agree or make any changes, as insignificant that change might be. But 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 subjects who are oriented towards the approaching of the change and of the "remarkable" element are very effective and result-oriented. The managers who were framed in this sample are swearing on the fact that the leadership is not to maintain the existing situation, but to train the largest coefficient change on the organization so its staff can handle. This attitude is the result of the confidence and the influence urging the people, the events and the achievements of the company's result.
The attitude described above contrasts with the passivity and with the helplessness that characterizes the managers or employees who can not separate from the past. They feel that in an environment characterized by transformation everywhere, have few options. The change can represent the giving up of the attachment to people and to ideas. Most of us have an explained aversion to dispense with all physical or mental support which required acquisition of time, effort and money. It is difficult to separate from the past, but this attitude is a preamble necessary for change. Also, changes may be associated with giving up power. Whether they are managers or employees, less of them are willing to give up the power and their habits. Below is a graph of the changes that the self-esteem suffers when there is a process of transformation.

**Graph 1. The graph regarding the changes that self-esteem suffers**

Most of the people, who are situated in the middle of the scale, accept that we live in a world of change and must adapt to move forward. They realized that the key for a successful transformation are themselves and their attitude.

- Regarding the methods of communication audit, they revealed the following data:

**Figure no. 4. Communication methods**

- 76% of the respondents belong to organizations that match and apply methods of communication. They are applied more or less, depending on the degree of the involvement of the manager or of the staff. But it is important that they apply.

Subjects included in the percentage from above affirm that they support the active and open communication, because they realize this is the antidote to the uncertainty of the change. The business environment is very dynamic; the need for communication support is higher.

The information is power, it means control, the understanding of the reasons which make the change necessary and it is the antidote of the fear. The open communication is the expressing of the doubts about the change and what is even more important, to understand and to produce the change.

- 24% of the respondents considered that the methods of communication are less, hardly or not used at all within their organizations. The individual and group communication, the formal and informal processes are necessary to be continuously evaluated and improved. The official channels of communication are needed to avoid the mistakes and to make sure that everyone knows what to do.
Moreover, after understanding the need for communication and implementation, it is useful to realize that because of the pace of change, which is quickly and continuously, probably the invention of new methods of communication will be required.

But the communication of the change is more than its distribution to lower levels of the organization. The free exchange of ideas within the organization is favorable for the creativity and for the change.

The conclusion is that any method of communication is an effective and an efficient tool that facilitates the change, helps the increasing of the productivity and translates into positive results for both human resources and the organization itself.

- Regarding the methods for stimulating the sense of dissatisfaction, they revealed the following data:

![Reactions to change](image)

- 40% of the organizations are able to "unfreeze" the old attitudes, to move to the transformation. The open style of management and the involving all the staff works. These are the organizations that have the best results. The expressing of the anger on the situation is one of the elements that create the dynamic change.

This involves the stimulation of the critical attitude, of the open discussion and of the expression of divergent opinions or even the production of a crisis. The open style draws upon dissatisfaction and stimulates the change. The challenging situation and the violation of the innovation is a prerequisite and require the hiring on a different path, chosen by everyone else. The comfortable detachment from our past can force us to renounce thought patterns and become receptive to the possibility of the transformation.

- 38% of the organizations require partial consideration for the indicators of the organizational assessment, in terms of stimulating the sense of the dissatisfaction. For example, these organizations can facilitate the change management style, but the organization has no mechanisms to indicate the activity of the competitors and of the external threats. Or, the appointments should be done permanent, which have as a result the expressing of the grievances and the diagnosing of the problems, but the employees are never put in new roles or in situations that might stimulate them. Often the employees simply do not understand or do not give credence, when management says that there are problems, especially if the company has a history of success. The intense communication and the training are needed for the message of change to be received. Also, employees must be convinced that if they are not learning something new, they will fail.

- 22% of the organizations need to establish the methods to stimulate the feeling of discontent, because it is missing. In these organizations, there is no evaluation system. The anger and the frustration are motivating factors for change; without these factors a significant transformation is not possible. Creating fertile ground for change is critical to stimulate the expression of the past and of the present, by determining the active discontent and if necessary, by producing a crisis. It also requires a constant supervision of the change process to ensure that attitudes that remain flexible enough to induce forward and not regress to old behaviors after the immediate threat has disappeared.

5. Conclusions

The reached conclusion is that there is no alternative: we must transform or otherwise we disappear. We can not ignore reality so we must adjust our thinking, we must revisit the old ideas and we must reinvent ourselves. The effective approach to change has become an essential element of competitive advantage. It's easy to properly analyze the external environment and still fail because you can not change the best employees in an enough fast rate, so as to take advantage of market opportunities.
The transformation will be achieved only if the status of the existing discontent is manifested widely. The communication is the antidote to the uncertainty of the change. The lack of communication is the most frequently reason cited of the failure for the change programs. The top-down transformation is not viable. The early involvement is needed from the bottom up. It takes many communication mechanisms applied simultaneously.

However, the top-down process required simply does not work. The change which starts from the hierarchical pyramid is the only guarantee for the irreversibility of the process. An organization can not fully be transformed, unless the manager adheres to the change and supports it. In other words, the initiative from the top to down is essential, but must be limited to tracing the general path the company should go on. The timing of change is essential and transformation always takes longer than we think.

The investigations have allowed us to make the conclusion that change is not a goal, but a way of adapting of the organizations to the new conditions, in order to maintain or improve the competitiveness, the performance and the effectiveness. The main change, but the most difficult to achieve, is the attitude and mentality of the people. The real tipping point or threshold of real change in business 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.

References