Human Resource Development and Change Management

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Introduction

The Change Management Guide you are now holding is intended as a resource for incoming faculty members or other interested parties at academic institutions but may also be of use in various business settings. This guide is intended as a roadmap for planning, organizing, initiating, promoting and confirming change such as the introduction of new technologies, approaches, ideas and processes. Change is an important part of ensuring the continued viability and success of any institution but is often difficult to accomplish. Change (especially large-scale change) can seem threatening, and individuals (or groups) are inherently resistant to change regardless of potential benefits. The following sections will introduce readers to the topic of change management, including some useful terminology, a framework for thinking about the process, key considerations, potential challenges and suggested responses.

Terminology

The following definitions are offered as a starting point for understanding the various elements of change management. These ideas and concepts

will become clearer as readers proceed through the subsequent sections.

Adopters — the individuals or groups who recognize the benefits of the target change and take steps toward implementation

Change — introduction and implementation of hard and/or soft solutions to problems that are a break from the past (including breaks of all sizes)

Change Agent — the champion of change who is responsible for promoting diffusion through to full implementation and follow up

Diffusion — the spread of the target change through the organization toward full-scale adoption and implementation

Gatekeepers — individuals who control access to potential sponsors, adopters or resources

Innovators — select few who recognize the benefits of change early on and are quick to test the waters of change

Laggards — late adopters, including individuals who are over cautious, skeptical or lacking in initiative (in some cases equal to resistors)

Opinion Leaders — influential individuals who hope to cash in on the benefits of early adoption and avoid the cost of late adoption

Resistors — individuals or groups who stick persistently to the status quo

Sponsor — influential party that has the power or influence to promote diffusion and offers to support the cause of change

Change Management Framework

The simplified framework in Figure 1 is offered as an aid for conceptualizing change and the change management process.

The central column outlines the main phases of the change management process. This process is roughly linear in nature, but may include some

Fig. 1 Framework for Change Management

Considerations	Phases	Activities/Strategies
-Context	**Pre-Introduction**	-Information gathering
-Scope of Change	⇩	-Identify key players
-Complexity of Change	**Introduction**	-Identify potential problems
-Human Element	⇩	-Keep it super simple (KISS)
-Environment for Change	**Advertisement**	-Highlight problem
-Potential Sponsors	⇩	-Offer solution
-Kinds of Adopters	**Demonstration**	-Help visualize solution
-Existing Networks	⇩	-Suggest action
-Resources	**Trial Implementation**	-Gather support (sponsorship)
-Limitations	⇩	-Utilize networks
-Advantages/Disadvantages of	**Facilitation**	-Answer questions
Change	⇩	-Offer support/encouragement
-Advantages/ Disadvantages	**Trouble-Shooting**	-Identify problems
of No Change	⇩	-Make adjustments
-Resistors	**Implementation**	-Attention to detail
-Reduced momentum	⇩	-Continued nurturing
	Follow Up	-Analysis/Evaluation
		-Continued communication

overlap as the change agent makes adjustments to accommodate individuals at different stages of adoption. Adoption stages (awareness, self-concern, mental tryout, hands-on trial, adoption) and strategies were proposed by Diane Dormant (Appendix 1), who advises strongly against skipping stages, changing the order of the stages, and hurrying through the stages (Dormant, 1986). This advise is echoed by Kotter (1995) who outlines eight stages that a successful change process goes through (Appendix 2).

The left-hand column of Figure 1 includes some of the key considerations in the change management process. We will discuss each of these con-siderations in the following section, but suffice it to say here that change agents have several things to balance and think about during each phase of

the change management effort.

Activities and strategies listed in the right-hand column are specific things that the change agent can be doing as the project cycles through the stages/phases. We can also include here strategies such as management presentations, testimonials, demonstrations, prototypes and pilot tests as described by Garland (1995).

Key Considerations

In this section, we address each of the considerations listed in the above framework (Fig. 1).

Context—Change agents need to be keenly aware of the various contextual issues and how the context can help promote or hinder adoption.

Scope of Change—The amount of time and effort required to affect change will likely depend on the extent of the target change. Relatively small changes may not have the same requirements as large-scale change efforts, but will still require progress through each phase and vigilant attention to detail.

Complexity of Change—Complex changes will usually require more effort, time and resources. At the same time, preparations and follow up will likely be more involved.

Human Element—The road to change will be smoother if the change agent keeps in mind that they are dealing with individual needs, problems, concerns, temperaments, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and emotions. People have various needs (see, for example, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs) which must be addressed and will be more inclined to adopt a change if they are involved in initiating, modifying or implementing that change.

Environment for Change—Different organizations also have unique sets of circumstances, including explicit and implicit attitudes toward change. This can also be referred to as climate for change.

Potential Sponsors—Effective and continued implementation of change will require powerful and/or influential allies to help along and maintain diffusion. The sponsor should have a good understanding of the target change and be a committed and vocal advocate.

Kinds of Adopters—Related to the human element, individuals will adopt at different rates and levels of enthusiasm. Roughly speaking, there are early adopters, majority adopters and late adopters. The consideration here is how to employee the help of early adopters and push or pull along others.

Existing Networks—Diffusion of change can be promoted or hindered by formal and informal networks of individuals. Change agents can utilize these networks in their diffusion efforts and need to be aware of potential resistance that might breed through these networks.

Resources—Another consideration is what resources (financial, material and human) are available to the change agent and others involved in diffusing the proposed change. Even when the resources are available, there may be questions regarding allotment.

Limitations—Change agents also need to be aware of the various hard and soft limitations. They can work to reduce these limitations or look for ways to work around them.

Advantages/Disadvantages of Change—This and the following consideration should be well thought out by the change agent in the early stages of the process. Potential sponsors, opinion leaders, gatekeepers and adopters will weigh the advantages and disadvantages of adoption. Change agents can offer assistance (and build trust) in this area by preparing and presenting

information on both sides.

Advantages/Disadvantages of No Change—Potential adopters and other related parties will likely (or should) weigh comparative benefits and shortcomings of no action as well. These considerations may not be as apparent to the concerned parties and should thus be highlighted by the change agent.

Resistors—Certain individuals may oppose change and use their energy and resources to deter change or simply drag their feet. This resistance may be a problem of personal character or the result of past experience with change efforts. Regardless of the cause, it will be helpful to identify potential resistors and address their concerns. These individuals will likely require more of the change agent's attention.

Reduced momentum—Because of the extended periods of time involved in change, the project may slow down and even stop all together. Change agents need to find ways to keep the ball rolling and reduce the chances of backsliding.

Potential Challenges and Suggested Responses

Garland (1995) classifies major barriers faced by change agents as people, cost and infrastructure issues. We offer the following added observations as an extension on each of these issues.

People issues

In addition to the inherent resistance to change, change agents will be faced with the challenge of communicating their vision of change to individuals who have various strengths and limitations. People also have demands on their time, energy and resources. To "win" people over, change

agents will need to get their message across clearly and succinctly. The additional time spent preparing the presentation of ideas or plans will save time and frustration later.

Also, in addition to the main sponsor(s), successful change efforts will likely require a group of influential, knowledgeable and respected proponents. Kotter (1995) refers to this team as a guiding coalition, while Duck (1998) proposes a transition management team (TMT) which actually "commit all their time and energy to managing the change process." This of course may not always be feasible, but readers should recognize the importance of a unified front.

To ensure "buy in" by the masses, change agents can consider the concept of personal compacts proposed by Strebel (1998). According to the author, personal compacts are stated and implied mutual agreements between individuals and organizations that include three major dimensions: formal, psychological and social. Change agents can evaluate the viability of these personal compacts in their own context and pinpoint potential problems.

Cost issues

Garland (1995) advises taking a "life cycle cost-benefit approach" to overcome these issues. In the context of change management, this would entail calculating the total cost of implementing the change and comparing that against other alternatives as well as maintaining the status quo. As mentioned above, potential adopters (especially resistors) need to be made aware of the potential cost of not adopting.

Infrastructure issues

Introducing change on an incremental basis as proposed by Garland (1995) may be required and it would be helpful to recognize this in the early stages of the change effort. As with the cost issues above, it may be necessary to highlight the cost of not changing.

This short list of potential challenges is far from comprehensive. In the end, change agents will need to remain flexible and creative in their response to challenges. The largest challenge may be balancing between the nurturing the creative vision and dealing with stark realities.

Conclusion

Having come this far, readers will recognize that affecting change is a complex undertaking. Appendix 3 (Useful Quotes) is offered as short list of inspirational insights, advise and cautions.

Bibliography

Together with the references below, this bibliography provides a good starting point for further reading on the topic of change management.

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Appendix 1: Adopter stages and change agent strategies (adapted from Dormant, 1986)

Adopter Stages (signs)	Change Agent Strategies (activities)
AWARENESS (passive, lack of information, lack of interest, lack of opinion)	ADVERTISERS (get attention, keep introductions brief, exude positive attitude, appeal to needs)
SELF-CONCERN (active, express self-concern as related to target change, asks questions related to this concern)	COUNSELOR (identify concerns, answer questions, provide relevant and reliable information)
MENTAL TRYOUT (active, inquires about implementation in own situation)	DEMONSTRATOR (provide examples, promote discussion with satisfied early adopters, demonstrate use)
HANDS-ON-TRIAL (active, learning how-to, has opinions/concerns about own use)	INSTRUCTOR (train in skills, share knowledge, provide feedback, provide reinforcement/support)
ADOPTION (active, inquires about details of implementation, integrates change into work routine)	TECHNICAL ASSISTANT (maintain contact, advertise follow-up resources, provide support, identify and provide rewards)

Appendix 2 - Eight stages of a successful change process (Kotter, 1995).

The eight stages are:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
2. Forming a powerful guiding coalition
3. Creating a vision
4. Communicating the vision
5. Empowering others to act on the vision
6. Planning for and creating short-term wins
7. Consolidating improvements and producing still more change

8. Institutionalizing new approaches

Appendix 3—Useful Quotes

This short list of quotes is included as a representative sampling of collective wisdom on change management.

Your best strategy may be to know the probable objections and concerns, to be ready to acknowledge them, and to respect those who are direct enough to point them out (Dormant, 1986).

Although all individuals must go through the same stages of adoption, they do so at different rates (Dormant, 1986).

Managing change is like balancing a mobile (Duck, 1998).

Managing change means managing the conversation between the people leading the change effort and those who are expected to implement the new strategies, managing the organizational context in which change can occur, and managing the emotional connections that are essential for any transformation (Duck, 1998).

The instructional technologist serves as a conduit and puts one group in contact with another to further the diffusion of the innovation (Garland, 1995).

The more people are familiar with a new instructional technology, the more likely is its use in an organization (Garland, 1995).

Without a coherent and sensible vision, a change effort dissolves into a list of confusing and incompatible projects (Kotter, 1995).