

Managing Organizational Change

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Abstract - In this article professor Reddin summarises the reasons why organizations start a change of programme and the major strategies are used to introduce change. He is an organizational change management and the organizer of 3-D theory of effective management which is used by many companies to implement major organizational change. It is now realized that to gain the maximum benefit from an organization, it is necessary to plan its development and use its human resources to best advantage.

I. WHAT IS ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE?

The exciting new management function of managing planned change is beginning to emerge. Organizational change now attracting widespread interest and such terms as change programme and even change agent are becoming common place. The position of manager of organizational development is now appearing more and more organizational chart as management recognizes that the successful introduction of planned change is a key managerial function.

It is increasingly apparent to all that organizational change is a requisite for organizational improvement and that managed change is likely to be more effective than unmanaged change.

Planned organization change started to appear in the late forties in Britain and the USA. The main forces were management interest in the advances of the social sciences, the exciting and productive results of the work of the Tavistock institute of Britain, the impact of the National Training Laboratories and the T-group, and the acceptance of such style models as McGregors Theory X and Y. It seems likely that the current interest will grow, particularly as more senior managers become better acquainted of with the variety of organizational change methods available.

Why Start A Change Programme?

The reasons that organizations get involved in change programmes are a major force in shaping the objectives and methods of the programme. The most common reasons for senior executives to start a change programmes are: Pain. The organization is finding its existing state painful. It may be because of a falling market share executive turn over, decreasing profit, or too much conflict.

Image of potential” Top Management has a clear idea of what the organization might become. This might be expressed in terms of profits, industry position, diversity, size, national role, or in other ways.

Achievement Desire: Top management wants the organization to become better. The attitude is:” if this can do as good we must use it if we want to maximize our opportunities.”Let’s do something. Line or staff wants to appear to be doing something constructive. This reason is likely to lead in the long run, to more, rather than less pain.

II. TWO TRADITIONAL METHODS

Two widely used traditional methods of changing an organization might be called:

- Management turnover
- Legislated change

The method of management turnover is simply to change key people in top management. This method is more likely to be effective if the new top management has a great deal of power, some measure of human relationships skills, and sufficient resources, particularly money for expansion. It helps still more if the new top management has a clear idea of where e it wants the organization to go, an image of potential and if this image is easily transmitted to the managerial force. It is not hard to understand that if all these conditions are present, a significant organizational change could be introduced with high probability of success.

A less effective method of changing an organization is by what might be called legislated change. This is usually in the form an unpopular edict from the top or from outside the organization. Such change is made in more difficult if the organization is currently operating in a reasonably efficient manner, if there were few changes in the past, if the reason for the change is difficult to explain, if the change threatens to seriously disrupt existing social relationships or if the work force see them as semi professional or professional.

Planned Change

While both of these methods will no doubt continue to be used, a third method, which might be called planned change, is beginning to appear. This planned approach goes under many names which can be used interchangeably:

- Planned change.
- Change programme.
- Organizational development.
- Organizational effectiveness programme.

These terms generally indicate a long range programme of change designed to move an organization from one level of effectiveness to higher level of effectiveness and then to stabilize it at the new level. The programme may or may not utilize an

external consultant called a change agent, and may or may not use a management style model such as those developed by Jennings, McGregor, Blake, or Reddin. The usual function of the style model is to make it easier to talk and think about managerial, team, and corporate problems which retard effectiveness. It is sometimes used to provide a utopian model. The programme often starts with some form of management development, then to team development interterm development and then to strengthening the boss-subordinate relationship, often through management by objectives. The key idea is to get managers in the organization itself and to make changes in planned directions.

Two Schools

The two world centers for organizational change are the national Training Laboratories in the USA and the Tavistock Institute in Britain. Virtually all programmes and change agents are associated in some way with one or other of these two schools.

The national training laboratories use what is essentially a psychological approach with the t-Group or its derivatives as the main technique. The t-Group goes under many names, including training group, sensitivity training, development group, group dynamics, and instrumental laboratory. This approach, while concerned with organizational development, in fact appears to concentrate primarily on individual development. The basic assumption if managers as individuals can be made to change, then the organization will change also. Teams are sometimes trained using this individual approach. The team sessions then focus more on interpersonal and emotional problems in the team rather than job structure, responsibility, and the organization of the team. With this psychological approach there is more emphasis on relationships and less on the job and one effectiveness criteria. Most USA change agents are psychologists.

The Tavistock institute on the other hand uses what is essentially a sociological approach with the change agent client relationships as a main technique. The change agent is sometimes that rare consultant with training in several behavioral fields including psychology, psychoanalysis, social psychology and sociology, or a sociologist with an interest in application, or even a psychiatrist or psychoanalyst. The change agent usually works closely with the organization in for a few months and helps it make the change it wants. The Tavistock School appears to deal directly with key issues and strongest variables in organizational change. Most UK change agents are sociologists.

III. ORGANISATIOANAL EFFECTIVENESS PROGRAMMES

Broadly based programme of organizational change have many distinct elements. These serve to differentiate them sharply from narrower programmes which are essentially equivalent to management development.

The key elements are:

All, or practically all, managers become involved in some form of training activity such as the managerial effectiveness seminar which serves to acquaint a manager with his current behavior and with an ideal pattern of managerial behavior.

A management style model, such as the 3-D theory, of effective management is used to provide a useful conceptual framework. The 3-D model, for instance, uses effectiveness as its third dimension and by having four more effective styles, suggests that style flexibility is the route to effectiveness.

One or more, but preferably all, of this guide the programme:

A manager of organizational development

A senior managerial task force.

An external change agent.

- Management teams of boss and subordinate are trained together as a unit with a few to increasing their effectiveness.
- If not already in operation, management by objectives is introduced.
- The top executive teams attend a corporate strategy laboratory at which they give intensive consideration to organizational design, objectives, and philosophy.
- Organization sub-Parts meet to work through their problems. I.e. staffline, HQ- field, research-production, sales-production.
- Multi –level meetings are held at which several layers of management discuss corporate objectives.
- The working level unionized or not, is involved in some form of activity. This is done in order to enlist their ideas and their support for the objectives of the change programme.
- While results appear early, the programme usually runs for more than a year before all changes are successfully implemented.

IV. OBJECTIVES

While most programmes have more than one objective, the specific objectives of some recent business and government programmes with which the author has been associated have been:

1. To move decision levels downward (and sometime upward)
2. To integrate divisional objectives.
3. To remove a layer of management.
4. To centralize operational planning
5. To commit the work force to corporate objectives.
6. To ensure smooth integration in a merger.
7. To introduce management by objectives.
8. To increase organization flexibility.
9. To make a company marketing oriented.

Some change programmes have sound, but far less precise, behavioral objectives, each open to many interpretations. Typical of these objectives are:

1. To introduce participative management
2. To produce a theory Y-organization.

V. THE FROZEN ORGANISATION

One of the important uses of a change programme is to change a frozen organization into a flexible organization.

Frozen organizations are easy to identify. Change is so difficult to introduce that many managers have stopped trying. Managers tend to stay, and prefer to stay, in one job and one division for years. Promotion is on seniority. The rule book is enormous. Past practice is the safe guideline to follow. Innovation and creativity are regarded as mavericks and are suppressed.

The fully flexible organization however is the one most likely to grow profitable. New brands are introduced as soon as they are needed, the organization structure is changed as required, and resistance to change is limited or only moderate.

Criteria for individual and organizational health are the same: for both, health is a capacity to make effective adjustments to a changing environment and , where possible, to make appropriate changes in the environment.

VI. A PROBLEM

One of the biggest problems in organization change today is faddishness; the desire to have the latest style. Many managers , to use a management training analogy, have watched north America go through J-courses case method , incident process, T-groups, role playing ,the wheel, and the power spectrum. At any one time, one of these is the rage and the value of others often ignored. This occurs in organizational change as well. The competent manager of organization development must understand all approaches and recognize that all have value at some time, at some place, for some purpose.

Another problem is that some think that all organizations should be treated the same way so that no diagnosis of either problems or true needs is made. The assumption is that all organizations are at the identical stage of development and all, therefore need identical treatment. If the treatment is wrong, this can turn out to be little more than exhortation and manipulation.

VII. SELECTING A PROGRAMME

The success of an organizational effectiveness programme depends on the appropriateness of the technique used and the commitment of senior organizational members to it. An organization is wise to investigate several methods, conduct a pilot study with, perhaps, two of them and then make a commitment to a single approach. It should select the one programme on the basis of criteria previously established and those that may evolve as the investigation and the programme proceed.

Some of the best criteria are:

- Profit potential
- -cost and time scale
- Proven results elsewhere
- Availability of skilled resource people
- Applicability of programme to the particular company
- Flexibility in application.

VIII. REFERENCES

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