Changing the Change as a Source of Value Creation not Being a Root of Employee Stress

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<<< Abstract

Linkages amongst the components of an organisation and their constant and energetic interactions are of elemental importance to management researchers and practitioners. Throughout most sectors of the economy, a sense pervades that the party is over. While for few this appears to be true but for many the party is never over except the change of dimension. In this situation question creeps in the mind of a common man is that 'Can we create a sustainable change'? The answer would obviously be 'not'. One of the dangers the companies fall in this scenario and even in some turnarounds is the near panic over what it will take to keep a team focused and in their seat. Generally speaking, organisations do not change in this way but that has not been fatal to this paradigm. Instead, accepting it without challenge, people rush around trying to find new tricks for making things happen which leads to employee stress. Though all of us have read the theories of economic booms and downturn, none of us were prepared for the change i.e. economic crisis that hit the World in 2008. The question is still unanswered that whether this downturn is a part of the typical economic cycles or was it precipitated by other factors like dearth of corporate governance and compliance. Nevertheless the economic downturn is now a topic of discussion in boardrooms, classrooms, cocktails, gossip groups and even among friends getting together casually but people hardly discussed it as a change. The change which led to suicides by many who lost their jobs, many remained under stress for quite a long time and almost every employee was under stress for some time. The question arises how we can change the change so that it becomes a source of value creation instead of a cause of employee stress? To answer this all the present paper has been attempted which focuses on three key aspects.

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout most sectors of the economy, a sense pervades that the party is over. While for few this appears to be true but for many the party is never over except the change of dimension. In this situation question creeps in the mind of a common man is that 'Can we *create* a sustainable change'? The answer would obviously be 'not'. One of the dangers the companies fall in this scenario and even in some turnarounds is the near panic over what it will take to keep a team focused and in their seat. Generally speaking, organisations do not change in this way but that has not been fatal to this paradigm. Instead, accepting it without challenge, people rush around trying to find new tricks for making things happen which leads to employee stress.

2. MEANING AND DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE

Change encompasses numerous aspects and forms include many concepts. Due to the dynamics and consequences included, it unleashes many varied responses from organisations. There are many handbooks containing theories, models and

blueprints about change, strategic change, management and organisational development at large. It is however, important to take careful note of some aspects pertaining to organisational changes before we focus on what we believe should be factored in on any organization change strategy. "People resist change." This belief is intensely deep-seated in organizational life and is adorned in corporate documents, management textbooks, policy assumptions, executive training materials, consulting reports, and even in societal media outside of organizations. This resistance could be outcome of many fears and under stressful state employees normally resist change. Reason being irrespective of the dimensions and elements of change people play a key role (as is evident from the System Model of Change given by Fugua and Kurpios and adopted by Kreitner and Kinicke: Exhibit-1) right from beginning to end of the process.

Within the organisation context prominently four kinds of change take place i.e. Process Change, System Change, Structural Change and Organisational Change. A business process is a collection of activities that take

one or more kinds of input and creates an output that is of value to the customer (Hammer and Champney, 1995). In fact processes are the well-organized set of activities which are used to generate the outputs in an organisation. Consideration of process way of thinking concentrates on simple task focus wherein each individual activity is viewed in isolation and this phenomenon leads towards a more holistic view of organisational life. If the processes can be managed and designed to operate with enormous efficiencies it will act as motivator for human resources instead of a stressor. A better perspective on process will come by considering the interactions between the people who actually interact with one another to deliver the process. While dwelling upon system, majority people will refer system as sets of procedures. Books on change in organisations often spend chapter after chapter advising on how to change systems but although useful and essential, changing system is unlikely to bring about fundamental change. System change in organisations is often not very systemic. The temptation in system change remains to 'fix' one or other of the systems so that they
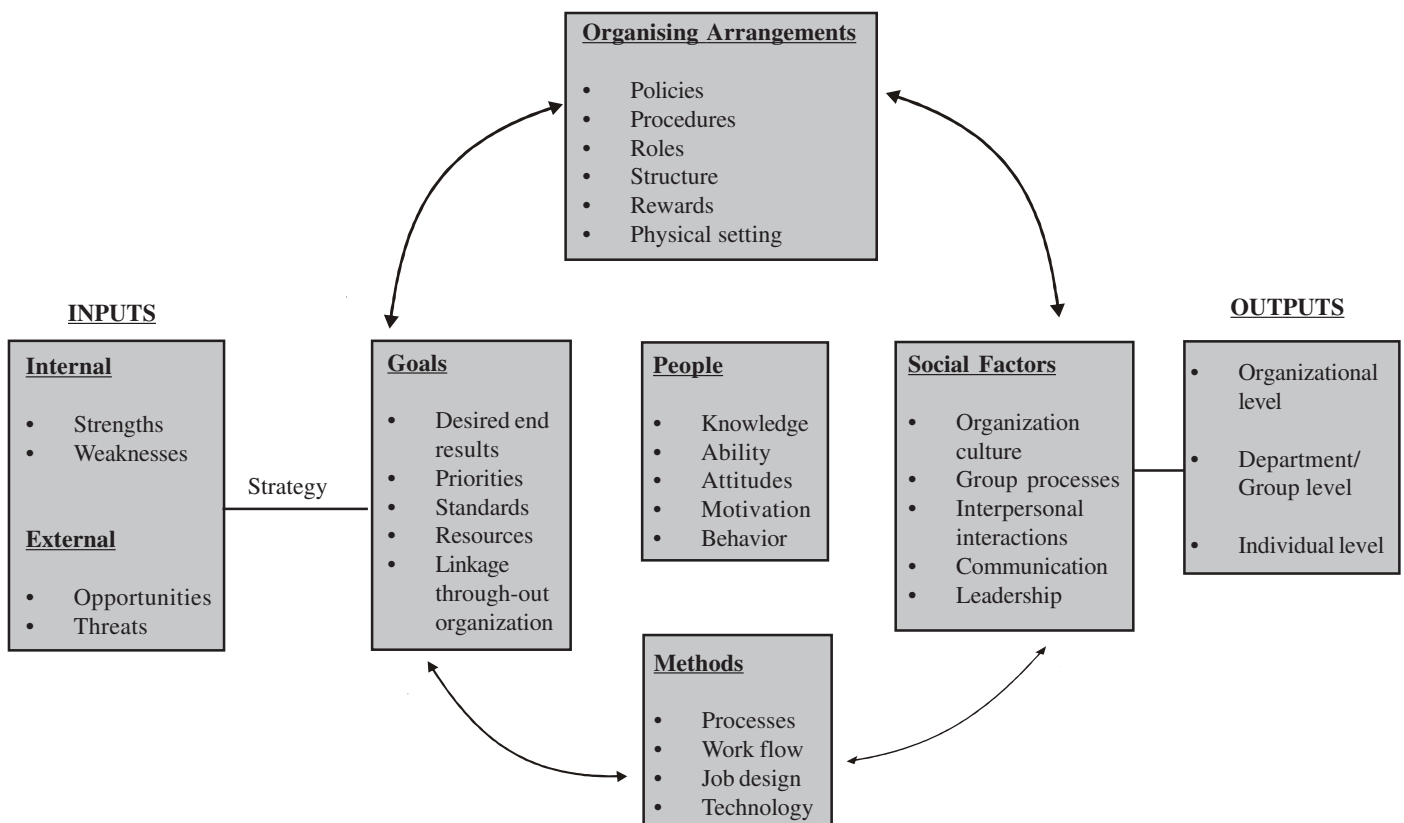

Exhibit-I: Target Elements of Change (Source: Kreitner and Kinicke, 1995 p. 568)

come together in better proposition. Very likely chances are that this temptation should create stress unless one asks *why* this situation was allowed to occur; value creation through real change is unlikely.

2. CHANGING CHANGE FOR VALUE CREATION

Researches have proved that organisational changes are non-linear outcomes of deterministic interactions of parts constituting the whole. In fact an organisation is exemplified by its dominant logic, which is an emergent property created by the ongoing efforts of the organisation to maintain a balance between appropriate strategic orientation and competence. Appropriate strategic orientation is found by aligning the organisation to meet the needs of its external environment. It is foregone that change is inevitable; therefore, it is apparent for the organisation to change the change in the direction of value creation to have competitive advantage. It is true that the only thing constant in business/ life is change. In spite of its significance many a times changes fails due to one reason or the other. Wood (2003) maintained that the following are reasons as to why organisational changes fail:

1. Management following fashionable ideology not suited to their change requirements.
2. Unclear or unrealistic organisational change expectations.
3. Not realising that successful organisational change takes persistent effort over years.
4. Inconsistencies between management's declared organisational change objectives and their change management behaviour and actions - (.)
5. Assuming training employees or reorganising them is the only organisational change they need to carry out.
6. Not changing un-supportive organisational change and development systems-(.)

John Kotter (1995 & 1996) of Harvard Business School built on Lewin's three steps model to create a more detailed approach for implementing change. Kotter (2002) speaks about the following Eight steps for successful large-scale change.

1 **Increase urgency**-Those who are successful in change begin their work by creating a sense of urgency among relevant people-(.)

2 **Build the guiding team-**With urgency turned up the more successful change agents pull together a guiding team with the credibility, skills, connections, reputations and formal authority required to provide change leadership.

3 **Get the vision right-**The guiding team creates sensible, clear, uplifting visions and sets of strategies.

4 **Communicate for buy-in-Communication** of the vision and strategies comes next-simple heart-felt messages sent through many unclogged channels. Deeds are more important than words. Symbols speak loudly. Repetition is the key

5 **Empower action-**Key obstacles that stop people working on the vision are removed.

6 **Create short-term wins-**Short-term wins provide credibility, resources and momentum to the overall effort.

7 **Do not let up-**Change leaders do not let-up they create wave after wave of change until the vision becomes a reality.

8 **Make change stick**-Change leaders make change stick by nurturing a new culture. Appropriate promotions, skilful orientation and events can make a big difference.

It is true that change may take place at any or all of the three levels i.e. individual, group or organisation. However, interaction effect of different levels suggests that change at any level affects the other levels, and the strength of the effect will depend on the level or source of change. The interaction effect as shown in the Fig.-I brings out that individual level changes have largest effect on group and the organisation as a whole. Therefore, keeping in view the pervasiveness and significance of change and the role of 'change readiness behaviour' in its better management the present study has been proposed to be carried out. The study would endeavour to unfold the role of leading factors in infusing 'change readiness behaviour' amongst the organisational employees.

In view of the above discussion, the following mechanism if adopted systematically can help the organisations in the direction of attaining competitive advantage:

	Source		
	Individual	Group	Organisation
Individual	—	Large	Large
Group	Medium	—	Large
Organisation	Small	Medium	—

Exhibit-II Interaction effects of different levels of organisational change
(Source: Gray and Starke, *Organisational Behaviour*, p. 571)

In view of the above discussion, the following mechanism if adopted systematically can help the organisations in the direction of attaining competitive advantage:

3. FOSTERING ADAPTABILITY

Organizations with low adaptability scores usually have an inward focus and have difficulty responding to customers, competitors, and employees with new ideas. Low adaptability organizations run on inertia, and their past achievements can create barriers for future success. Managers often spend most of their effort responding to departures from standard operating procedures. Top executives in these organizations usually spend their time controlling the organization and managing short-term performance, rather than leading change or thinking long term. A few suggestions as given below can improve the adaptability of any organization.

- Hiring of some external consultant in the key role-(.)
- During the process of change customer visits need to be taken.
- Rewar•   ding the risk taking behavior of employees even with minor failures.
- Setting the targets in terms of percentage revenue.
- Redesigning of organisation around small profit centers.
- Management of time as a critical resource.
- Creating learning forums for visible and valuable things.

4. WINNING LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

Having eagle eyes for early opportunities is just the first part to the excellence equation. We must then exercise our ambition by modeling urgent behaviors, thus hunting ideas for innovation and seizing the magic of the moment. A leader should instill a sense of urgency in the culture. Start building the best practices into the systems and structures, urgency will eventually seep into the culture. Need to identify and implement methods that increase

urgency can build momentum. Soon these urgency practices become "the way we do things around here". Because leading in a crisis is different from leading in good times and equipping organizations to do this is called crisis readiness. For this, the leadership development process and infrastructure needs to be ramped up to cater to scenario uncertainties and risk mitigation mechanism, which assumes much greater significance when times get bad. Successful change follows a basic pattern, starting with creating a sense of urgency. In fact, the biggest challenge leader's face in causing change comes right at the beginning-in creating a strong sense of urgency.

5. CONTINUOUS INNOVATION

It is believed that innovation is the key to achieve competitive advantage, delivers results by generating growth. Innovation is not the result of imposing specific processes and disciplines, but is an inherently human activity that requires a broad understanding of how people think and behave. Leaders play a critical role in guiding innovation. Innovative leadership seeks quick alignment and efficient execution. Innovative leaders ask people to look at problem from different perspectives, take unfamiliar positions, identify and test their assumptions, and take risks. Such leaders make room for experimentation, mistakes, and failures while requiring focus and discipline. Now the question is how can leadership prepare for and tackle foreseen or unforeseen crisis situations? One of the business leaders mentioned: "This is not the time to be dumbstruck into inaction like a deer in face of sudden headlights in the middle of the night. This is not the time to continue to do what we were doing earlier." Ref so we are saying that the leadership competencies need to deal with a crisis situation needed to deal with a crisis situation are different and need to be re-defined? The answer is no. What we are saying is that while the competencies remain the same, the context and manner in which they are applied need to undergo a dramatic revision which requires different kinds of leadership skills. It's largely a function of timing and rhythm.

6. WISDOM MANAGEMENT

It is a planned and systematic process for managing how people use and supply their knowledge and skills in ways that benefit the organization. It refers

to processes designed to ensure ROI in developing people. For that, the development needs of the organization and its people should be defined. Then the best means of giving people the required knowledge, skills, and experience should be determined. Next step is to translate the development initiative into behaviors that impact performance. And finally focus more on delivering the behaviors and results and less on activities. Without being aware of it, we will soon find ourselves immersed in a technological cycle in which machines will be making the decisions. But their "truth" will not have taken into account individuals, but merely the most powerful group: organisations. The symbolic world will contain records of the real world which will not be backed by one of the parts affected, that of the person. The conflict will be inevitable and will not improve organisational performance. Because working with your back to reality and truth, even when this represents an agreement between criteria, can only bring disadvantages and with no benefits. So, we must prepare ourselves to start a new management cycle where we can enhance the value of knowledge driven towards the common good. In other words, an agreement between criteria regarding ethical and moral codes that makes us act with wisdom. A praxis which does not only look out for the benefit of businesses but beyond it transcends in a quest to discover benefits for the individual, society and the world. Wisdom management should be the frontier, where technology will align itself with man and his virtue. Knowledge should be used to improve the world and not dominate it. Knowledge and goodness should take us to the era of wisdom to transform change into value.

7.   ACTION LEARNING

In building leadership pipelines, many leaders spend much money providing leadership education to select high potentials. Most of the efforts don't give participants the chance to try out their new skills within a safe environment at work. Without a chance to use what was learned, the investment in an individual's education may be wasted if it makes no difference in the achievement of personal and organizational goals. Action learning projects ensure that what is learnt gets put to use. However, this aims to further develop an explicit learning culture, which uses a range of learning opportunities; requires a degree of conscious effort; provides language

and methods which allows discrimination and distinction to enhance practice; and develops an environment conducive to change. As a whole Action Learning includes:

- Continuous cycle of review, plan, act, and review, etc.
- Majority of learning is either on-the-job or directly related to work practice.
- Any 'traditional' training should be strongly linked to action learning through careful contracting and follow-up of training.
- Other techniques used include:
- Purposeful conversations (which take the presenter to a next step);
- Coaching (peer, growth model of supervision);
- Complaints to action (mobilising the energy of complaints); and
- Action Learning groups (a group of key people who meet regularly to review progress, outcomes and provide project direction).
- Other on-the-job learning opportunities like creative use of notice boards to post strategic plans, issues pin up board, local resource library, Internet, presentations at staff meetings, enhanced workplace consultative support, supervision etc.)

8.   CONCLUSION

In the world of continuous change, changing the change for value creation has become a biggest challenge. Many-a-times the change is resisted for the sake of resistance without knowing the end result of the change and that resistance may fall in any of the dimensions of change. But today's organisations are full of working and innovative people. Their efforts coupled with organisational will and proper use of the strategies mentioned above can definitely play a decisive role in transforming change into value to gain the competitive advantage. Having gone through various approaches of leadership, we can say that identifying critical leadership competencies, creating a context for leadership development, coaching manager to take up leadership positions and providing honest feedback is one of the key actions HR departments can undertake to make their role more strategic and contribute effectively to giving a corporations its winning edge.

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