

Organizational Change Management in a Strategic Perspective

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The change management is currently recognized as one of the main factors governing a company's success. Due to that perspective, the purpose of this work is to exemplify strategies that allow organizations to define change actions avoiding problems, trauma and dissatisfaction in the employees. The work developed is characterized as active, explorative and descriptive using the case study as its research strategy. Data gathering was performed in an organization during its preparation to receive the change – performed in a planned, authorized and documented manner – which successfully implemented the Enterprise Resource Planning – ERP, achieving significant result for the company in terms of processes enhancement and quality, besides establishing the sustainability positioning.

INTRODUCTION

The division of work has evidenced positive and negative points. Upon arrival of machinery and factories, each member of the family started to play a different role, women and children were employed to operate the machines while men were dedicated to heavy services (Cruz, 2009).

The human life experienced deep changes, manual production gave place to mass production; rural society was replaced by the urban one and Humanism bowed down to Rationalism – affecting the entire system of values and beliefs (Morgan, 1986).

Although every organization wishes to, at least, survive the uncertainties of such a competitive marketplace, beyond survival they also intend to grow, place themselves ahead of competition, conquer stability for their business and reduce, as far as possible, their vulnerability (Mandelli, Lucas, Viveiros, 2003). And in order to have it realized as planned, the organizations must be ready to receive the changes, otherwise they will not be surviving in the market.

The approach of a subject matter like the Organizational Change in a Strategic Perspective is nowadays extremely important, as the researched subject is precisely the reality that the organizations in general have been facing.

The corporate world has been changing in a speedy manner and, many times, surprisingly as well. Everywhere, huge efforts are dedicated to understand better the organizations and help them adapt to the new outlooks (Wood Jr., 2009).

The factors influencing the organizational change include nature of the work, competition, globalization, government, laws, new industries, financial market, technology, market trend, arrival of information society and the uncertainty of the future (Morris, Bainbridge, 1996), (Freire, 2000).

The companies capable of effectively reacting to the changes, in a positive manner, become more dynamic, adaptable and proactive towards the new scenarios being presented.

Information technology is the vehicle used by the organization to comply with its declared mission and to reach its targets. As technology is quickly changing, the organizations and the managers face the challenge of keeping the pace with those changes and, meanwhile, sustaining the institutional balance. That is a point for discontinuity (Robbins, 2005).

It is not so easy anymore to predict the future based on the past, therefore, it is very hard for the organizations to manage changes in information technology based on the historical performance indicators. In addition to that challenge, there is the fact that there are many other factors acting as conductors for organizational change besides the actual changes in technology, such as the social and political trends and the competition dynamics. In the core of all that, there is the need for management aimed at controlling the change factors inside the organization.

But in order to have efficient and conscious change, management of the necessary strategic resources is essential and determinant to achieve minimally level of comfort over the process.

To reach the intended success, the companies have to use well-structured change management, counting with strategies that prepare them for change, avoiding problems, traumas and dissatisfaction for the process players (personnel).

In this new reality faced, there is no more room for the companies to continue with the thinking by simple forms, ready to use success formulas or home recipes. The organization must be analyzed in a deep and integrating manner, aiming to handle change in an intelligent and well-planned form.

In the path to implement the change, companies face several obstacles: paralyzing bureaucracy, provincial policies, low level of trust, lack of team work, lack of leadership in intermediate management, human fear for the unknown – the new, the different (Kotter, 1999).

And, in order not to have disappointing and terrifying efforts dedicated to perform the changes, resulting into wasted resources, it will be necessary to use strategies that prepare the organizations for the change.

But, how can change be observed through strategic perspective, engaging the individuals involved in the process, as experience has been showing that change in the organizations has been generating reasons for internal competition, instead of mutual cooperation?

Therefore, the scope of this work is related to change management in the process of implementing the Enterprise Resource Planning - ERP.

THEORETICAL GROUNDS

According to Mandelli, Lucas, Viveiros et al. (2003), change means breaking the existing, moving from one to another role.

Change management is a quick process to control the life cycle of all the changes (strategic, operational) in an IT environment (Sullivan, 2008). One purpose of the change management is to coordinate and plan changes, mitigating the negative impacts of change in the production environment, keeping integrity of the system. The change management scope includes all sorts of changes, strategic and operational. Each organization should define the changes covered by this process.

The purpose of the change management is to standardize methods and procedures to handle the change inside the organization, in an effort to reduce change impact on the service quality and daily operations of the organization. It includes incorporation of methods and practices that were identified as the best practices.

The best practice can be defined as a set of techniques and methods that always result into superior results when compared to other techniques and methods (BusinessDictionary.com). The change must result into improvement of the organization daily functions (Sullivan, 2008).

The change can trigger two mechanisms, the first one being the identification of a new model and, in fact, it requires an analysis by the point of view of the others, enabling an action according to standards that are different from your own. The second one is scrutinizing of the scenario, consisting of the search for information that can add concepts to the learning in order to redefine which was previously conceived as an ideal model.

The third phase, the one of stabilization of the actual changes and interconnection to the organization's operational and ordinary processes, is crucial to assure that no retreat to the initial phase is verified. There are two different mechanisms associated: the personal refreezing and the relational refreezing.

However, the resistance to change can be increased by feelings, pains such as fear, uncertainty, distrust, discomfort and intolerance for the individual (or group) as it causes a perception that the space in the organization is experiencing changes and that it is necessary to break paradigms. And when transcended to the personal level, resistance can cause several physiological (anxiety, irritability, stress, insomnia, etc.) and psychological (poor attention, anguish, forgetting, distraction, etc.) reactions.

The key to reduce resistance is to take it to a healthy threshold and to guarantee that changes can be seen as beneficial through active action of the elements towards building of the new structuring (Huse, 1996).

There are several approaches and concepts related to change, some of them focusing the organizational structure, others focusing the process itself, the required speed, the human behavior, the company's history, among others, but, irrespective of the focus, it is common sense that change has become fundamental, notwithstanding the motive, whether it is aimed for costs saving, improvement of products and services quality, increased productivity, etc., change implies existence of strategies that enable management that supports the excessive change and assures its effectiveness.

However, in order to tailor a culture that enables change, it is first necessary to decipher the one existing in the organization. A way to discover the type is by bringing out the basic presuppositions, which assumed specific standard is referred to as the cultural paradigm. For that, it is necessary to investigate some categories (Schein apud Fleury and Fischer, 1996):

Being aware of the culture existing in the organization allows creation of an engine capable of controlling its operation, simplifying the understanding between the company and the stakeholder in the sense of an understanding being defined between what one wishes and expects from the other (Nora, 2009).

The term 'process' is also closely linked to the reengineering movement, in this aspect, although "not being very proud of the way used by many companies to perform their reengineering" (Davenport, 2002, p. 132).

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research, as it seeks, by observing procedures, strategies and applications of the Change Management, as well as by knowledge reflected in the theory, to make pragmatic interpretation of those phenomena and assign them meanings in inductive manner.

This study is aimed at providing more familiarity with the bibliography and material facts through contact with the researched company, by means of a questionnaire answered by people who had practical experiences with the surveyed problem, it is also aimed at exposing the characteristics of the balance sheet methodologies currently used, in order to enable us classify it as exploratory and descriptive.

The same research can be simultaneously framed into several categories, to the extent that it observes the requisites inherent to each type, as the types of research presented in the several categories are not exhaustive (Silva, 2003).

The method used in this study was the Inductive one which, by essence, goes from the particular to the universal. Through the use of books and articles renowned by the academic community and also by observing specific and relevant situation experienced by the researched company, the work tried to extract generalizations for the researched problem.

This study has adopted, with the purpose of performing random research, the non-probability sample type. At random, 20 stakeholders of Demiton - Comércio de Produtos Esportivos Ltda. Company were selected, male and female genders, within the age range from 25 to 53 years old and who had contact with the implementation Project of the Enterprise Resource Planning - ERP.

According to the technique elected for this research, the case study, the option made was to use questionnaire for data gathering, using it in the most adequate possible manner aiming to achieve the best possible results to meet the purposes of the research.

This text was prepared in wording understandable to the informant and accessible for the understanding of the studied population. Formulation of questions must avoid the possibility of doubtful interpretation, or yet of suggesting or inducing the answer. Ideally, each question should be focused on only one matter, which shall be analyzed by the informant. The questionnaire has to contain only questions related to the research objectives (Young, Lundberg, 1998).

To best use the potential of the case study, besides the standard answer options ("Totally", "Partially" and "Not applicable") the "justification" field was also used so that the informant could describe the reason for his/her answer.

ERP IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

The company Demiton established a partnership with the global leader in systems for supply of new integrated management applications. The contract included a consulting company, the largest IT Latin-American company, who was the integrator of the technological solution.

Implementation of the Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) was intended at significantly contributing for integration of the company's processes, enabling promptness to attain strategic data and effectively assisting the company's managers in the decision making process.

In order to successfully implement the relevant project, the methodology suggested by the contracted consulting company was applied.

RESEARCH RESULTS

To measure efficacy of the adopted methodology, as well the strategies used by Demiton Company in the implementation project of the ERP, a questionnaire was randomly applied for the company's stakeholders.

From the twenty (20) questionnaires distributed, fifteen (15) were returned, which represented approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the sample universe, characterizing sampling average deemed to be normal, according to the Case Study adopted technique.

The sample handling method was based on descriptive measures. All the content was investigated and the results presented below were achieved (See Table 1).

TABLE 1
SYNTHESIS OF RESULTS

QUESTIONS	AGREEMENT		
	TOTAL	PARTIAL	NOT APPLICABLE
Contracting of Consulting Company	93%	7%	0%
Adopted Strategy	80%	20%	0%
Communication Strategy	67%	33%	0%
Impacts Strategy	66%	27%	7%
Training Strategy	73%	27%	0%
Processes	87%	13%	0%
Change Management	77%	27%	0%

CONCLUSION

The achieved results matched the problematic of the research and the purpose of the work. The research clarified the theory about Change Management in a Strategic Perspective through case study that provided practical examples about how to manage a change, also encompassing the issue of human resources engagement and the matter of cooperation among the individuals concerned in the process.

Based on the results achieved by the research, it has become evident that the strategies adopted by the company to implement the new technology, primarily to temporarily create a Change Management area, mitigated risks and errors, conquered collaboration and engagement of the concerned individuals, being extremely important for the study's success.

As this was a qualitative research and working limited to one case study that, although being very expressive in the researched universe, it does not allow reaching a definitive conclusion, but only indications and recommendations.

On the other hand, it has provided empiric basis which, added to the theoretical ground, can be used as example to other companies.

The case study evidenced the company's concern to apply best management practices, which is the case of Change Management streamlined with the worldwide trend of the companies intending to survive in the current market.

The future of information technology management will present additional challenges to the managers, moreover with challenges in safety matters.

Vulnerability in access to the identities of clients who perform online deals and in the green computing matters, are in the thoughts of the entire technology area and users as well. Both will mean the need to dedicate great attention to the way of guaranteeing transactions with the clients. It requires more capacity from the technology professionals to implement the necessary safety required to protect their clients' basis and stimulating them to have greener computer habits. For the organizations, that means budget planning project which includes professional development for the information technology personnel, which may be the subject for future studies.

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