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Capstone Final Draft - St. Laurent

by Connor St. Laurent

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Change Management in Leadership

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Management Integrative Capstone

Abstract:

Change Management in leadership is something that occurs in every industry and every business, regardless of the want or willingness to change within the industry or business. Throughout the years there has been extensive research surrounding change management that has been done to show the best methods and strategies to approaching change within one's management style. In this review, multiple strategies will be explained to gain greater insight on the ever so evident occurrence of change within organizations and what is known thus far. We can assume from the review that there are many different methods and strategies that leaders employ when initiating change; the purpose is to not argue one method is better than the other, rather to compare and contrast methods that have been used in the past or are currently being used today and understand how each may be beneficial or not. Working in the hospitality industry has shown me how evident change can be as we evolve as a working society. Due to this industry I have been personally involved in many organizational changes which has motivated me to understand why change happens and further, to understand the effects it has on the individual as well as the organization. I can conclude from conducting this review that change is necessary which prompts one to be interested in learning the who, when, why and how of change management.

Change Management in Leadership

To understand change management in leadership, a deconstructed approach of the topic proves to provide an accurate depiction of the who, when, why and how. While researching change management I came across a journal that stated “There are literally hundreds of definitions, so if you're looking for just one, be prepared to get frustrated” (Royce, 2018). While there are several, one stuck out in multiple sources. The broad definition of change management provided by Prosci is as follows, "Change management is the process, tools and techniques to manage the people side of change to achieve a required business outcome” (Prosci). In its own way, the definition deconstructs what needs to be analyzed further to understand what goes into organizational change. The process, tools and techniques that the definition lists are exactly what will be analyzed. After reviewing the definition provided by Prosci however, I was motivated to understand the people side of change further before understanding the process. To understand the process further, one can assume to delve further into organizational behavior and how it relates to change.

Organizational Change Theories/Processes:

Behavior is something that is frequently discussed when considering organizational change because the response behavior that is exhibited can have such a great impact on the change. Shawn Cooper speaks about change and behavior by stating that “change occurs by virtue of factors outside a person’s control as well as by factors within the individual himself/herself: momentary impulse, desire or calculated reflection and planning” (Cooper, 2012). One can assume that behavior could change the direction of the managed change meaning there must be a sort of involvement leadership has in managing the constantly changing behavior throughout the change. Cooper elaborates further by stating “this task essentially

involved being able to identify particular areas of concern or difficulty, thinking through how these phenomena are evident currently and how they might appear if they were to be changed, and articulating these changes in some form, usually verbal, as goals or targets for the person's change process". A leader must identify any and all changes in behavior in the form of articulation of changes within each individual. Locating this information led me to a theory that can be an outcome of the strategy or task described by Cooper. This theory is the Attachment Theory. This theory was brought forth by the Journal of Organization Behavior by explaining one personality trait that leaders have to work with when implementing change management tactics in response to behavior change.

Attachment Theory:

The attachment theory explains the response that certain people have towards change whether that be in the workplace or in any aspect of one's life. In the Journal of Organizational Behavior, it was said that "Attachment anxieties are shaped by experiences of unreliable support in caregiving relationships, resulting in a person's negative self-perception and preoccupation with affirmation from other people." (Yip et al., 2018). The attachment theory addresses the population of the society that seeks consistent praise or support for efforts applied towards the overall goal set forth by a leader. While a leader should be capitalizing on all wins achieved by an associate, it can also lead to the outcomes relating to this theory. Yip et al. expand on the attachment theory in describing that "Following the activation of the attachment behavioral system, its deactivation occurs upon receipt of social support. Put differently, receiving support in response to stress results in a feeling of "felt security". A leader can look at this as a positive and a negative. While it is suggested that a leader doesn't form too great of an

attachment to any associate, it is suggested that the leader have a change coalition that supports the overall goal set which initially brought the change on. Yip et al. conclude that the attachment theory has practical implications for job design and organizational support. Change can bring on a sense of attachment from the follower to the leader which can be used in job design and organizational support. Another theory that was explored was the general systems theory, which critiques all of the pieces involved in change.

General Systems Theory:

The general systems theory elaborates on every moving piece in terms of behavior in organizational change. Shawn Cooper states “Objects, components, or elements of a system are the parts of the system and may include any of a wide variety of items such as people, buildings, companies, or parts of a factory, although we will consider the application of systems theory primarily to individuals” (Cooper, 2012). This theory is directly related to the behavior exhibited when the person is forced to expand their actions outside of their comfort zone. In terms of the general systems theory, you must consider attributes, relationships, inputs and outputs, internal processing and leadership. “Attributes refer to the various properties or characteristics of the objects, components or elements within a particular system” (Cooper, 2012). In this case, we are considering the objects and components as individuals within an organization going through change. “Relationships involve the way in which components of any system relate to, or interact with, one another in executing the functions of that system” (Cooper, 2012). For the purpose of this review, we can assume the relationships deployed through the general systems theory are between the leader and the follower. A leader holds a relationship

with each person who follow's him/her regardless of whether or not that relationship is direct or indirect. Inputs and Outputs are explained by Cooper... "Inputs to a system are the energies, information or materials received by the system while outputs are those energies, information or products which the system discharges into its environment or to another system" (Cooper, 2012). When considering behavior elicited by organizational change, we can assume the inputs are coming from the individuals going through the change and the outputs are the results shown by the change that has been introduced. Lastly, "Leadership, in human systems, refers to the nature of guidance pro-vided to the system by its leadership, whether this function is vested in a single person or in a group of individuals who are responsible for integrating information about the system and its environment and using this knowledge to promote the continued existence and development of the system" (Cooper, 2012). The general systems theory adopts the idea that the leader is the root of the change. The leader also brings forth the change in behavior in response to the change the organization is seeking to achieve for on reason or another. Adopting the general systems theory when considering organizational change can help you further identify the cause or outcome of the behavior that changes along with the organization. This leads me to my next findings in the *Change: Models and Processes* book written by Shawn Cooper, the normal or bell-shaped curve process.

Normal or Bell-shaped curve process:

The reason the normal or bell-shaped curve process relates to organizational change is because an individual's behavior can typically be judged or understood by them employing the use of this curve process. Cooper explains "The individual can use this perspective to help determine if she or he is similar to others or markedly different from

them, and if change is indicated for the person, and if so, to what degree the individual feels she or he needs to change” (Cooper, 2012). The individual will understand the need for change however, they will examine the true need for change based on the normal or bell-shaped curve process. Typically, this method is utilized in mathematics however, can also be useful in determining the willingness one has to accept or understand the change. This process is balanced with the curve, the individual determines which side of the curve their thoughts remain on which in turn, describes their willingness to the change itself. “This view enables the person to determine whether she or he is still all right or whether his deviation from “normal” is so extreme as to indicate the need for change” (Cooper, 2012). When there is change that is necessary, it is explained that the individuals opinions on the need for change would be deviated from the norm which is why the change is necessary in the first place. The last concept this process takes into consideration is the involvement of many personalities working together to determine where the group falls collectively on the curve to ultimately determine the overall need and retention to the change. “If the individual asks another person—a partner, friend, or health care provider—for their perspective, that other individual may use a reasonable concept of the normal distribution and provide feedback to the person as to where she or he stands with respect to an appropriate referent group, and point out any necessity for change that may be indicated” (Cooper 2012). One thing that seems to be consistent throughout research is that change management leads to collaboration between both the change coalition or the team eliciting the change, and the followers or the ones who are forced to adapt to the change due to the understanding of the need to change. With this said, it leads me to the next process discussed by Shawn Cooper, recurrent patterns.

Recurrent Patterns:

In reviewing recurrent patterns, it was identified that these are the hurdles that leaders have to jump when trying to push organizational change across the finish line. Recurrent patterns can be patterns that individuals are used to that are tough to break. Cooper states “Recurrent, seemingly ritualistic i.e., compulsive, behaviors the person may employ in an effort to control these thoughts commonly involve such things as checking, for example, if one has locked the door or turned off the stove or the lights before leaving the house, since individuals perceive such behaviors as able to at least temporarily reduce the person’s felt anxiety” (Cooper, 2012). While some people lean towards the attachment theory, others consider the recurrent patterns process one that leaders must be aware of when determining the obstacles that need to be addressed when helping the change be successful within the organization. Further, “Once having identified the item of interest and having tracked its occurrence over a week or more, the person may be in a better position to conclude whether the phenomenon does in fact recur regularly (or irregularly but consistently), and if it does to determine if she or he would like to change the persistent behavior, whether by his own efforts, by attempting to utilize particular medication or else by utilizing a psychotherapeutic approach involving exploration of the behavior, delving into its possible origins, and determining strategies that may allow change in the pattern” (Cooper, 2012). In short, the leader needs to identify what patterns each individual may have and how exactly that may deter or distract the individual from the core reason the change is there in the first place. With all of these theories surrounding the followers behavior and willingness to change, you find strategies to be ever so accessible when planning change.

Organizational Change Methods:

Prior to discussing the strategies and methods that can be taken for organizational change, I first want to remind the audience the basics of change in the first place. We should remember it is as follows, “Organizational change refers to the transition of the organization from one state to another” (Lewin, 1951). Organizational Change is strategically achieved through change management in the leadership team. I want to know methods that other leaders have used or currently use that successfully achieve organizational change. In review, I found two methods that encapsulate both sides of change management. I start my exploration of strategies and methods at the top-down approach, supposedly an approach that has been around for a long time.

Top-Down Approach:

The top-down approach is where “Leaders plan the implementation and communicate the changes to the workforce by selling them on the positives and downplaying the negatives” (Cunninghame, 2018). This is an older approach that has the upper executives making decisions for the company or organization and driving change down the organization based off of what they believe is necessary for the organization. It can be said that “In the past, a top-down approach made sense because organizations had mostly vertical structures, with straightforward reporting lines where leaders possessed all the key information” (Cunninghame, 2018). This leads me to believe the top-down approach can be helpful for some organizations that wield a vertical structure however, for organizations that exercise another structure, this approach may not be worth the time it takes to service successfully. The top down approach is one that stems from change led by the top-level executives that feel their way is the best and most needed to successfully change the organization for the better. The next strategy/method that was explored is the

open source change management approach which differs exactly from the top-down approach.

Open Source Change Management

The purpose of the open source change management plan is to create a sense of involvement with all of the associates that are a part of the organization that is going through the change. Author Charles Cunninghame explains that the open source change management strategy is “A co-created change strategy – engaging the workforce as active participants in making decisions” (Cunninghame, 2018). This strategy involves the members that will be associated in the change so that the impact on behavior is less drastic making it supposedly easier for the members of the change coalition to successfully carry out the change. This method also helps members going through the change a way to communicate their feelings towards the process. Cunninghame elaborates further by stating they have “Communications that ‘ask and talk’ instead of ‘sell and tell’ – enabling employees to discuss their questions and anxieties and giving them personally relevant answers” (Cunninghame, 2018). This allows members to communicate their feelings respectively to the change coalition which in turn helps the coalition determine what opportunities they may have to push the change across the finish line. Another source states “Today, work in universities is less task-based and more self-directed, which also entails an ability to self-direct and self-motivate” (Makikangas et al., 2019). This supports the open source change management method in elevating the involvement the organizational change has on each individual internally. This supports the idea of self-motivation rather than that of a leader. While the motivation may not come directly from the leader, the impression that the leader gives off can elicit the motivation within an individual going through an organizational change.

Lastly, we must observe strategies within the following methods that can assist in successfully producing change.

Organizational Change Strategies:

With a mission of change in place, regardless of the method you take, it is said to be expected that certain strategies are in place to successfully execute the change. The first strategy that the change coalition can follow is that of providing executive support. “Executive support helps employees at all levels of the organization need to see, hear and feel that this activity is of significant relevance: to the executive, the organization as a whole; and that the executive fully supports the efforts of all those involved in the initiative” (Royce, 2018). By having the support of executives during a time of change, individuals feel more comfortable and supported, going back to the theories addressed previously. Having a sense of support can be helpful in completing change within an organization. The next strategy that is worth employing is establishing a clear vision. “An organization's vision (desired future) and mission can be viewed as its "why": why we exist, why we do what we do, why we care” (Royce, 2018). If you are going to have people follow you, it must be made clear why the change is necessary and how it will ultimately improve the way in which the organization plans to show that. Next is planning, anything that anticipates success, has some sort of plan to as how to get there. Planning is “A well laid-out change management plan, including strong implementation management (particularly relating to stakeholder involvement) and incorporating proven methodologies, tools and techniques will go a long way to ensuring a successful change initiative” (Royce, 2018). If there is no plan, the followers have nothing to follow. With that being said, without a plan, there is nothing to follow along with which ultimately will steer the group away from the overall goal and direction that the change originally anticipated having. Change management leadership is

the next strategy that is helpful in employing in the form of a change coalition as discussed previously in this review. A change coalition is also leadership that will lead the change. It is “Active guidance, encouragement and support to meet aligned interim goals and milestones are crucial” (Royce, 2018). The ongoing guidance is needed to reel in some of the behavior that may stray from the expected during the change. In order to have strong change management, a team must yield good communication. Communication is key. “Clear and transparent communication of all change related activities and their results is another very crucial component of any change initiative that affects all those involved” (Royce, 2018). Without clear and transparent communication, you could have multiple people working towards different goals simultaneously which can lead to an overall misunderstanding of the need for change. This is poor change management. Along with communication, there is a need for employee engagement to maintain interest in the change as discussed by author Paul Royce. “Employees at all levels must understand how they fit into the future of the organization and how crucial their participation in the change initiative actually is” (Royce, 2018). In my personal experience, succession plans serve as a very good way of helping employees understand how they fit into the future of the organization which ultimately leads to employee retention which is crucial throughout an organizational change. The last strategy discussed by Royce is accountability. One thing that any change leader must be consistent with according to Royce is accountability. Paul Royce states “The leader and key change participants, whether from staff groups or outside the organization (managers or "experts"), must be held accountable throughout the process to keep on track, aligned and motivated” (Royce, 2018). Just like with anything in business, there are repercussions. The same goes with change management, identify actions that are not aligned with the organizations goal and hold the individual accountable for that respectively.

Conclusions and Future Study:

While there are several methods and strategies discussed in this review, I found that everywhere you look, there is another leader who has utilized a different method or strategy that he or she thought worked the best. All that we can do is read and absorb the content we wish to operate from when it comes down to our own ways of managing change. At the end of the day, there are several techniques that can all successfully manage change, I think that each individual can employ different methods or strategies for each situation that elicits change in their personal and professional lives. Further study should be done on which methods or strategies work best in which situation or industry so it is easier for someone seeking a more specific set of feedback. Our society is constantly changing and in turn that causes organizations to follow suit and change in response, being aware of how to manage change will only set the average person up for a much easier trip through change.

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