

‘ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND RESISTANCE DILEMMAS’ RESOLUTION APPROACHES AND MECHANISMS

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Abstract

Change management initiatives in contemporary organizations face numerous challenges resulting from rigid organizational structures, improper communication of the change vision, and sabotage from various quarters affected by the change initiatives. This paper addresses the phenomenon of change and outlines the dilemmas that often accompany change management initiatives at various stages of implementation. The paper goes ahead to demonstrate that change management is not a bad idea after all. The paper also suggests a way out for resolution of change dilemmas in organizations.

Keywords: Change management, change dilemmas, resistance to change, resolution mechanisms

INTRODUCTION

Charles Darwin once said that it is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. It can therefore be argued that the successful management of change is crucial to any organization in order to survive and succeed in the present highly competitive and continuously evolving business environment.

This paper focuses on the phenomenon of organizational change and the dilemmas that often lead to resistance to change management endeavors in organizations. I will also discuss the models commonly used in overcoming resistance to organizational change.

Defining Change Management

To start with, change can simply be defined as the transition to a new or different situation or state of affairs. It implies the shedding off of the status quo for something new or unusual. According to Burnes (2004) change is an ever-present feature of organizational life, both at an operational and strategic level. There should be no doubt regarding the importance to any organization of its ability to identify where it needs to be in the future, and how to manage the changes required to getting there (Todnem, 2005)

Change management is therefore an important process for organizations in their attempt to reach out to new horizons and new dispensations where they can find more harmony within the environments in which they operate. According to Moran and Brightman (2001), change management is 'the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of its external and internal customers'. Consequently, organizational change cannot be separated from organizational strategy, or vice versa (Burnes, 2004; Rieley and Clarkson, 2001).

Due to the importance of organizational change, its management is becoming a highly required managerial skill (Senior, 2002). In emphasizing this point, Graetz (2000) goes as far as suggesting that against the backdrop of increasing globalization, deregulation, the rapid pace of technological innovation, a growing knowledge workforce and shifting social and demographic trends, few would dispute that the primary task for management today is the leadership of organizational change. As such, any successful organizational change endeavors should enjoy the inspiration and commitment of the topmost echelons of organizational leadership.

THE DILEMMA OF CHANGE

In most cases, change tends to be viewed as an elusive phenomenon. Some have even gone ahead to state that the more things change, the more they remain the same. Since the need for

change is often unpredictable, it tends to be reactive, discontinuous, ad hoc and often triggered by a situation of organizational crisis (Burnes, 2004; De Wit and Meyer, 2005; Luecke, 2003; Nelson, 2003). Although the successful management of change is accepted as a necessity in order to survive and succeed in today's highly competitive and continuously evolving environment, Luecke, (2003); Okumus and Hemmington, (1998); Balogun and Hailey (2004) report a failure rate of around 70 per cent of all change programmes initiated. It may be suggested that this poor success rate indicates a fundamental lack of a valid framework of how to implement and manage organizational change as what is currently available to academics and practitioners is a wide range of contradictory and confusing theories and approaches (Burnes, 2004).

Guimaraes and Armstrong (1998) argue that mostly personal and superficial analyses have been published in the area of change management, and according to Doyle (2002) there is even evidence to suggest that with only a few exceptions, existing practice and theory are mostly supported by unchallenged assumptions about the nature of contemporary organizational change management. Edmonstone (1995) supports this observation when he states that many of the change processes over the last 25 years have been subject to fundamental flaws, preventing the successful management of change.

It is difficult to identify any consensus regarding a framework for organizational change management. However, there seems to be an agreement on two important issues. Firstly, it is agreed that the pace of change has never been greater in the current business environment (Balogun and Hailey, 2004; Burnes, 2004; Carnall, 2003; Kotter, 1996; Luecke, 2003; Moran and Brightman, 2001; Okumus and Hemmington, 1998; Paton and McCalman, 2000; Senior, 2002). Secondly, there is a consensus that change, being triggered by internal or external factors, comes in all shapes, forms and sizes (Balogun and Hailey, 2004; Burnes, 2004; Carnall, 2003; Kotter, 1996; Luecke, 2003), and therefore affects all organizations in all industries.

The field of academia is awash with an ever-growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of change and suggesting ways to approach it. However, very little empirical evidence has been provided in support of the different theories and approaches suggested (Guimaraes and Armstrong, 1998). This has further compounded the dilemma of change and how it is approached and resolved in the contemporary business world. The early approaches and theories to organizational change management suggested that organizations could not be effective or improve performance if they were constantly changing (Rieley and Clarkson, 2001). It was argued that people needed routines to be effective and able to improve performance (Luecke, 2003). However, it is now argued that it is of vital importance to organizations that people are able to undergo continuous change (Burnes, 2004; Rieley and Clarkson, 2001).

While Luecke (2003) suggests that a state of continuous change can become a routine in its own right, Leifer (1989) perceives change as a normal and natural response to internal and environmental conditions. Herein lies the risk of treating change initiatives as another formality in the course of business.

Perhaps the biggest dilemma to change lies in the types of change and where and when to apply the different types of change in organizational life. Advocates of discontinuous change argue that this approach is cost-effective as it does not promote a never-ending process of costly change initiatives, and that it creates less turmoil caused by continuous change (Guimaraes and Armstrong, 1998). Nelson (2003) states that change cannot be relied upon to occur at a steady state, rather there are periods of incremental change sandwiched between more violent periods of change which have contributed to the illusion of stability once assumed to be the case. Although the discontinuous approach to change is still employed in recent change initiatives (Duncan et al., 2001) there seems to be a consensus among contemporary authors that the benefits from discontinuous change do not last (Bond, 1999; Grundy, 1993; Holloway, 2002; Love et al., 1998; Taylor and Hirst, 2001). According to Luecke (2003) this approach allows defensive behaviour, complacency, inward focus, and routines, which again creates situations where major reform is frequently required. What is suggested as a better approach to change is a situation where organizations and their people continually monitor, sense and respond to the external and internal environment in small steps as an ongoing process (Luecke, 2003). Therefore, in sharp contrast to discontinuous change, Burnes (2004) identifies continuous change as the ability to change continuously in a fundamental manner to keep up with the fast-moving pace of change.

On the other hand, those advocating for incremental change argue that it is best because it is implemented through successive, limited, and negotiated shifts. Incremental change happens when individual parts of an organization deal increasingly and separately with one problem and one objective at a time (Burnes, 2004). Grundy (1993) suggests dividing incremental change into smooth and bumpy incremental change. By smooth incremental change Grundy (1993) identifies change that evolves slowly in a systematic and predictable way at a constant rate. This type of change is suggested to be exceptional and rare in the current environment and in the future (Senior, 2002). Bumpy incremental change, however, is characterised by periods of relative peacefulness punctuated by acceleration in the pace of change (Grundy, 1993; Holloway, 2002). Burnes' (2004) and Balogun and Hailey's (2004) term for this type of change is punctuated equilibrium.

The difference between Burnes' (2004) understanding of continuous and incremental change is that the former describes departmental, operational, ongoing changes, while the latter

is concerned with organization-wide strategies and the ability to constantly adapt these to the demands of both the external and internal environment. In an attempt to simplify the categories, Luecke (2003) suggests combining continuous and incremental change. However, it can be suggested that this combination makes it difficult to differentiate between departmental and organization-wide approaches to change management.

Change management literature is also dominated by the debate on planned and emergent change (Bamford and Forrester, 2003). Even though there is not one widely accepted, clear and practical approach to organizational change management that explains what changes organizations need to make and how to implement them (Burnes, 2004) the planned approach to organizational change attempts to explain the process that bring about change (Burnes, 1996; Eldrod and Tippett, 2002). Furthermore, the planned approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the different states which an organization will have to go through in order to move from an unsatisfactory state to an identified desired state (Eldrod II and Tippett, 2002).

The planned approach to change was initiated in 1946 by Lewin (Bamford and Forrester, 2003), who was a theorist, researcher and practitioner in interpersonal, group, intergroup, and community relationships (Eldrod and Tippett, 2002). Lewin (1946) in Burnes, (2004) proposed that before change and new behaviour can be adopted successfully, the previous behaviour has to be discarded. According to Lewin (1952) in Eldrod and Tippett (2002) a successful change project must, therefore, involve the three steps of unfreezing the present level, moving to the new level and refreezing this new level. This model of change recognizes the need to discard old behaviour, structures, processes and culture before successfully adopting new approaches (Bamford and Forrester, 2003).

Even though this three-step model was adopted as a general framework for understanding the process of organisational change, it is rather broad (Eldrod and Tippett, 2002). Several authors have, therefore, developed Lewin's work in an attempt to make it more practical (Bamford and Forrester, 2003). By reviewing more than 30 models of planned change, Bullock and Batten (1985) developed a four-phase model of planned change that splits the process into exploration, planning, action and integration. According to Burnes (2004) this is a highly applicable model for most change situations. The model looks at the processes of change, which describe the methods employed to move an organization from one state to another, and the phases of change, which describe the stages an organization must go through to achieve successful change implementation (Bullock and Batten, 1985).

Although the planned approach to change is long established and held to be highly effective (Bamford and Forrester, 2003; Burnes, 2004), it has come under increasing criticism

since the early 1980s (Kanter et al., 1992; Burnes, 1996). Firstly, it is suggested that the approach's emphasis is on small-scale and incremental change, and it is, therefore, not applicable to situations that require rapid and transformational change (Burnes, 1996, 2004; Senior, 2002).

Secondly, the planned approach is based on the assumptions that organizations operate under constant conditions, and that they can move in a pre-planned manner from one stable state to another (Bamford and Forrester, 2003). These assumptions are, however, questioned by several authors (Burnes, 1996, 2004; Wilson, 1992) who argue that the current fast-changing environment increasingly weakens this theory. Moreover, it is suggested that organizational change is more an open-ended and continuous process than a set of pre-identified set of discrete and self-contained events (Burnes, 1996, 2004). By attempting to lay down timetables, objectives and methods in advance it is suggested that the process of change becomes too dependent on senior managers, who in many instances do not have a full understanding of the consequences of their actions (Wilson, 1992).

Thirdly, the approach of planned change ignores situations where more directive approaches are required. This can be a situation of crisis, which requires major and rapid change, and does not allow scope for widespread consultation or involvement (Burnes, 1996, 2004; Kanter et al., 1992). Finally, the critics argue that the planned approach to change presumes that all stakeholders in a change project are willing and interested in implementing it, and that a common agreement can be reached (Bamford and Forrester, 2003). This presumption clearly ignores organizational politics and conflict, and assumes these can be easily identified and resolved (Burnes, 1996, 2004).

In response to this criticism of the planned approach to organizational change, the emergent approach has gained ground. Rather than seeing change to be top-down driven, the emergent approach tends to see change driven from the bottom up (Bamford and Forrester, 2003; Burnes, 1996, 2004). The approach suggests change to be so rapid that it is impossible for senior managers effectively to identify, plan and implement the necessary organizational responses (Kanter et al., 1992). Therefore, the responsibility for organizational change has to become increasingly devolved (Wilson, 1992).

The emergent approach to change emphasizes that change should not be perceived as a series of linear events within a given period of time, but as a continuous, open-ended process of adaptation to changing circumstances and conditions (Burnes, 1996, 2004; Dawson, 1994). The emergent approach stresses the unpredictable nature of change, and views it as a process that develops through the relationship of a multitude of variables within an organization. Apart from only being a method of changing organizational practices and structures, change is also

perceived as a process of learning (Altman and Iles, 1998; Davidson and De Marco, 1999; Dunphy and Stace, 1993).

According to the advocates of the emergent approach to change, it is the uncertainty of both the external and internal environment that makes this approach more pertinent than the planned approach (Bamford and Forrester, 2003). To cope with the complexity and uncertainty of the environment it is suggested that organizations need to become open learning systems where strategy development and change emerges from the way a company as a whole acquires, interprets and processes information about the environment (Dunphy and Stace, 1993). The approach stresses a promotion of 'extensive and in-depth understanding of strategy, structure, systems, people, style and culture, and how these can function either as sources of inertia that can block change, or alternatively, as levers to encourage an effective change process' (Burnes, 1996).

Furthermore, as Burnes (1996: 13) argues, 'successful change is less dependent on detailed plans and projections than on reaching an understanding of the complexity of the issues concerned and identifying the range of available options. It can therefore be suggested that the emergent approach to change is more concerned with change readiness and facilitating for change than to provide specific pre-planned steps for each change project and initiative.

Although Pettigrew and Whipp (1993) argue that there are no universal rules when it comes to leading and managing change, several advocates of the emergent approach have suggested sequences of actions that organizations should comply with. However, many of these suggestions tend to be rather abstract in nature and difficult to apply (Burnes, 2004). Some authors (Kanter (1989), Kanter et al. (1992), Kotter (1996) and Luecke (2003) offer more practical guidance to organizations and managers.

As the emergent approach to change is relatively new compared to the planned approach, it is argued that it still lacks coherence and a diversity of techniques (Bamford and Forrester, 2003; Wilson, 1992). Another criticism of the emergent approach is that it consists of a rather disparate group of models and approaches that tend to be more united in their skepticism to the planned approach to change than to an agreed alternative (Bamford and Forrester, 2003; Dawson, 1994).

However, according to Burnes (1996) the general applicability and validity of the emergent approach to organizational change depends on whether or not one believes that all organizations operate in dynamic and unpredictable environments to which they constantly have to adapt. If so, Burnes (1996) argues that the emergent model is suitable for all organizations in all situations and at all times. Dunphy and Stace (1993) do not agree with this view and argue that managers and consultants need a model of change that is essentially a 'situational' or

'contingency model', one that indicates how to vary change strategies to achieve 'optimum fit' with the changing environment. They advocate an approach that reflects not only that organizations are operating in ever-changing environments, but also that there is a range of approaches to change. An approach of contingency to change that supports a 'one best way for each' organization approach rather than a 'one best way for all' approach is therefore suggested.

The contingency approach to change is founded on the theory that the structure and the performance of an organization are dependent on the situational variables that it faces (Dunphy and Stace, 1993). No two organizations are alike, and will not necessarily face the same variables (Dunphy and Stace, 1993). However, contingency theory in general has been criticized for the difficulty of relating structure to performance and that the theory assumes that organizations and managers do not have any significant influence and choice over situational variables and structure. (Burnes, 1996) suggests that an organization does not necessarily have to adapt to the external environment, and advocates an approach of choice by suggesting that there is certainly evidence that organizations wishing to maintain or promote a particular managerial style can choose to influence situational variables to achieve this. The point is that rather than having little choice, rather than being forced to change their internal practices to fit in with external variables, organizations can exercise some choice over these issues. From the foregoing, it can be argued that the change dilemma is an ever recurring phenomenon, a puzzle which cannot be easily resolved.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Resistance is a phenomenon that affects the change process, delaying or slowing down its beginning, obstructing or hindering its implementation, and increasing its costs (Ansoff, 1990). It can also be described as any conduct that tries to keep the *status quo*, that is to say, resistance is equivalent to inertia, as the persistence to avoid change (Maurer, 1996; Rumelt, 1995; Zaltman and Duncan, 1977). So, inertia and thus resistance are not negative concepts in general, since change is not inherently beneficial for organizations. Even more, resistance could show change managers certain aspects that are not properly considered in the change process (Waddell and Sohal, 1998).

Sources of resistance to organizational change

Sources of resistance to organizational change can be categorized into two; those that affect change at the formulation or initial stages and those that affect the change at the final or the implementation stage.

Sources of resistance at the formulation stage

Various sources of resistance are present at the formulation stage. The first set of sources has to do with the perception of its need, so a wrong initial perception is the first barrier to change. This could be due to distorted perception, interpretation barriers or vague strategic priorities. It includes: (a) myopia, or inability of the company to look into the future with clarity (Barr *et al.*, 1992; Krüger, 1996; Rumelt, 1995); (b) denial or refusal to accept any information that is not expected or desired (Barr *et al.*, 1992; Rumelt, 1995; Starbuck *et al.*, 1978); (c) perpetuation of ideas, meaning the tendency to go on with the present thoughts although the situation has changed (Barr *et al.*, 1992; Krüger, 1996; Rumelt, 1995; Zeffane, 1996); (d) implicit assumptions, which are not discussed due to its implicit character and therefore distort reality (Starbuck, Greve and Hedberg, 1978); (e) communication barriers, that lead to information distortion or misinterpretations (Hutt *et al.*, 1995); and (f) organizational silence, which limits the information flow with individuals who do not express their thoughts, meaning that decisions are made without all the necessary information (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Nemeth, 1997).

The second set of sources of resistance at the formulation stage has to do with a low motivation for change. It has five fundamental sources: (a) direct costs of change (Rumelt, 1995); (b) cannibalization costs, that is to say, change that brings success to a product but at the same time brings losses to others, so it requires some sort of sacrifice (Rumelt, 1995); (c) cross subsidy comforts, because the need for a change is compensated through the high rents obtained without change with another different factor, so that there is no real motivation for change (Rumelt, 1995); (d) past failures, which leave a pessimistic image for future changes (Lorenzo, 2000); and (e) different interests among employees and management, or lack of motivation of employees who value change results less than managers value them (Waddell and Sohal, 1998).

The third set of sources of resistance at the formulation stage has to do with the lack of a creative response. There are three main reasons that diminish the creativeness in the search for appropriate change strategies: (a) fast and complex environmental changes, which do not allow a proper situation analysis (Ansoff, 1990; Rumelt, 1995); (b) reactive mind-set, resignation, or tendency to believe that obstacles are inevitable (Rumelt, 1995); and (c) inadequate strategic vision or lack of clear commitment of top management to changes (Rumelt, 1995; Waddell and Sohal, 1998).

Sources of resistance at the implementation stage

Implementation is the critical step between the decision to change and the regular use of it at the organization (Klein and Sorra, 1996). In this stage, two more resistance groups can be

found. The first of them deals with political and cultural deadlocks to change. It consists of: (a) implementation climate and relation between change values and organizational values, considering that a strong implementation climate when the values' relation is negative will result in resistance and opposition to change (Klein and Sorra, 1996; Schalk *et al.*, 1998); (b) departmental politics or resistance from those departments that will suffer with the change implementation (Beer and Eisenstat, 1996; Beer *et al.*, 1990; Rumelt, 1995); (c) incommensurable beliefs, or strong and definitive disagreement among groups about the nature of the problem and its consequent alternative solutions (Klein and Sorra, 1996; Rumelt, 1995; Zeffane, 1996); (d) deep rooted values and emotional loyalty (Krüger, 1996; Nemeth, 1997; Strebel, 1994); and (e) forgetfulness of the social dimension of changes (Lawrence, 1954; Schalk *et al.*, 1998).

The second group of sources of resistance associated with the implementation stage has to do with (a) leadership inaction, sometimes because leaders are afraid of uncertainty, sometimes for fear of changing the *status quo* (Beer and Eisenstat, 1996; Burdett, 1999; Hutt *et al.*, 1995; Kanter, 1989; Krüger, 1996; Maurer, 1996; Rumelt, 1995); (b) embedded routines (Hannan and Freeman, 1984; Rumelt, 1995; Starbuck *et al.*, 1978); (c) collective action problems, specially dealing with the difficulty to decide who is going to move first or how to deal with free-riders (Rumelt, 1995); (d) lack of the necessary capabilities to implement change – capabilities gap – (Rumelt, 1995); and (e) cynicism (Maurer, 1996; Reichers, Wanous and Austin, 1997).

Is resistance to change a bad idea?

It has been demonstrated that change recipients' reactions (resistance) to change are not necessarily dysfunctional obstacles or liabilities to successful change. On the contrary, recipient reactions can have value for the existence, engagement, and strength of a change, serving as an asset and a resource in its implementation and successful accomplishment (Knowles & Linn, 2004b).

Resistance is one possible form of engagement with change (acceptance and ambivalence being others (Piderit, 2000) and may, in some cases, reflect a higher level of commitment than acceptance, because some resistance is thoughtful. Treating resistance as "irrational" presumes that it violates normative standards of decision making by being the result of an unthoughtful, unconsidered, and uninformed choice between acceptance/compliance and resistance (Brunsson, 1986). However, as in the case of attitude change, there are thoughtful as well as nonthoughtful mechanisms for both acceptance and resistance (Wegener *et al.*, 2004).

Attitudes based on high levels of information processing (i.e., thoughtful attitudes), on the one hand, are more likely to generate scrutiny and well-considered counterarguments and, thus, to be less susceptible to persuasion than attitudes based on lower levels (Wegener et al., 2004). As a result, changes in these attitudes represent a significant “win” (conversion) for change agents that can give them highly committed and motivated partners over the duration of change (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003; Kotter, 1995). Unthoughtful acceptance, on the other hand, although it provides immediate agreement and support, can erode as change progresses, undermining its long-term viability (Duck, 2001).

Reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) proposes that people resist externally imposed changes that threaten freedoms important to them, indicating a potentially higher level of psychological involvement and commitment among people who are demonstrating “resistance” than those appearing to accept the changes. Change recipients who are highly committed to the success of the organization but who disagree with a proposed change because it threatens something of value to them may engage in the change process by expressing their concerns. Such expressions are particularly likely from recipients who are high in organizational identity and psychological ownership (Dirks, Cummings, & Pierce, 1996; Eccles et al., 1992). Where recipients have a stake in what happens to “their” organization, process, or group, they may raise objections or questions or may engage in other “resistive” behaviors as a function of an authentic commitment to and concern for the organization’s viability or success.

Resistance can also be used to engage people in change through paradoxical interventions (Tormala & Petty, 2004; Watzlawick, 1990) in which agents specify a target for the resistance, thereby constraining, controlling, and using the energies of resistance to help promote a given change. Quite literally, change agents instruct change recipients not to engage in the very thing that is wanted. For example, insomniacs may be advised to stay awake or dieters to stop dieting. By resisting the instruction, change recipients move in the direction of the desired outcome - sleep and weight loss. Kavanagh (2004) has contended that the development of open source software was the result of a paradoxical intervention in which software developers were told not to develop such software.

Change agents can use resistance as feedback on recipient engagement by listening keenly to comments, complaints, and criticisms for cues to adjust the pace, scope, or sequencing of change and/or its implementation. Thus, rather than dismissing recipient scrutiny as irrational and acceptance as rational, change agents can use resistance as an indicator of recipient engagement and a valuable source of feedback for improving the process and conduct of change (Amason, 1996; Schweiger, Sandberg, & Rechner, 1989). In fact, agents may want to

consider the absence of resistance as a sign of disengagement and a harbinger of future problems resulting from unthinking acceptance (Wegener et al., 2004).

In addition, resistance is a form of conflict. And since conflict has been found to strengthen and improve not only the quality of decisions but also participants' commitments to the implementation of those decisions (Amason, 1996), it stands to reason that resistance can provide a similar strengthening value during change. This is particularly likely where resistance is authentic rather than contrived or artificially generated through the use of such strategies as dialectical inquiry or devil's advocacy (Nemeth, Brown, & Rogers, 2001; Nemeth, Connell, Rogers, & Brown, 2001; Schulz-Hardt et al., 2002).

It can therefore be concluded that resistance to change is not a bad idea after all. It provides room for dialogue on the need for the change and its effects on 'stakeholders'. Once agreement is reached on the process and such other elements of the said change, commitment and support is obtained hence success of the change initiative.

RESOLUTION OF THE CHANGE DILEMMA

The concept of change management is familiar in most organizations today but how they manage change (and how successful they are at it) varies enormously depending on the nature of the business, the change and the people involved. Organizations that handle change well appear to thrive, while those that do not may struggle to survive. A key part of this depends on how far people within the organization understand and deal with the change process.

One of the cornerstone models for understanding organizational change was developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1950s, and is still used today. His model involves three processes which are: Unfreeze – Change – Refreeze. Lewin, a physicist as well as social scientist, explained organizational change using the analogy of changing the shape of a block of ice, i.e. unfreezing a large cube of ice to change it and reform it into a cone of ice.

By recognizing these three distinct stages of change, organizations can plan to implement the change required. According to this model, change begins by creating the motivation to change (unfreeze) as it is necessary to change existing attitudes towards working practices and prepare the ground. Communication about the proposed change is vital at this stage if people are to understand and support it. The movement through the change process requires effective communications and empowerment of people to embrace new ways of working and learn new values, attitudes and behaviours. Problems are identified and action plans developed to enable in implementation.

Maximum flexibility is needed in the planning and implementation of the change. The process ends when the organization returns to a sense of stability (refreeze) and the benefits of

the change are realized, which is necessary for creating the confidence from which to embark on the next inevitable change. Praise, rewards and other reinforcement by managers are required on an individual level and more effective performance at an organizational level. Not until the change has become incorporated into the culture can it be said to be frozen. Kotter (1996) captures Lewin's three stage model better in his eight stage model as presented in the table below:

Table 1. Kotter's Eight Stage Model

Step	Name	Description
1	Establishing a sense of urgency	Help others see the need for change and they will be convinced of the importance of acting immediately
2	Creating the guiding coalition	Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort. Encourage the group to work as a team
3	Developing a change vision	Create a vision to help direct the change effort Develop strategies for achieving that vision
4	Communicating the vision for buy-in	Make sure as many as possible understand and accept the vision and the strategy
5	Empowering broad-based action	Remove obstacles to change, change systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision Encourage risk-taking and non-traditional ideas and activities
6	Generating short-term wins	Plan for achievements that can easily be made visible Follow-through with those achievements and recognize and reward employees who were involved
7	Never letting up	Use increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that are not aligned to the vision Hire, promote, and develop employees who can implement vision Reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes, and change agents
8	Incorporating changes into the culture	Articulate connections between new behaviors and organizational success Develop means to ensure leadership development and succession

Kotter's steps are based on a solid foundation of communication, empowerment, and focus. Following the change, it is important to embed new approaches so that people do not revert to old habits. Monitoring, feedback, and intervention are necessary for a period after the changes have occurred.

CONCLUSION

Change management is therefore an important process for organizations in their attempt to reach out to new horizons and new dispensations where they can find more harmony within the environments in which they operate. Against the backdrop of increasing globalization,

deregulation, the rapid pace of technological innovation, a growing knowledge workforce and shifting social and demographic trends, few would dispute that the primary task for management today is the leadership of organizational change. As such, any successful organizational change endeavors should enjoy the inspiration and commitment of the topmost echelons of organizational leadership.

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