MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE
THROUGH EMPLOYEES' ACCOUNTABILITY

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Abstract

An actionable model for managing change through employees' accountability is suggested. Employees' accountabilities adapted to their abilities to make the needed change can serve as an efficient lever for managing change. Ability is characterized by availability and levels of the skills required for making change. Managing change is performed at each phase of an organizational change process by use of assessment, stimulation, and accountability mechanisms. The phases are Preparation, Implementation, and Support. The assessment mechanism provides assessing a change state on each phase by comparison of ability needed for making change with ability of employees involved in the change process. Stimulation conditions adapted to the result of the change state assessment is applied by the stimulation mechanism. The accountability mechanism provides determining measures of employees' accountability for change corresponding with their abilities needed at every phase of the change, building dynamic and skill heterogeneous teams satisfying requirements mutual addition of skills and skill levels of the team members, determining team members' measure mutual accountability adapted to their ability, calculating the coefficient of the team's accountability willingness characterizing its ability for taking and holding accountability for change, and issue of control action to the change process.

Keywords: organizational change, change management, ability, accountability measure, team accountability

INTRODUCTION

Change in an organization is necessary for providing effective performance, competitiveness, and adaptability to external environment. It is a sensitive and complex process affected by driving and restraining forces (Senior & Fleming, 2005; Burke, 2017).

In most cases, the change causes resistance, both at the general level of the organization that has become accustomed to managing in a certain way for years, and individual resistance from employees. There are the following main reasons for employees' resistance to change: unaware of the need for change; lack of needed skills; fear to do more work for the same pay. Resisters represent the largest obstacle to the success of organizational change (Hultman, 2003; Schuler, 2003; Teng & Yazdanifard, 2015).

Overcoming resistance to change assumes first providing: awareness about the need for the change; understanding of how the change will affect the job, role, and accountabilities; acceptance through support and training allowing employees to get skills needed for making change and imagine the post-change phase, which will contribute to the organization in general and to them individually; and taking by them commitments for the changes (Recardo, 2006).

Reinforcement of driving forces of change and weakening of resisting forces can be achieved by managing organizational change (Palmer, Dunford &Buchanan, 2017; Gibbons, 2019). Change management can determine as the process, tools and techniques to manage change to attain the required results (Passenheim, 2010; Hiatt & Creasey, 2012; Hayers, 2018).

Successful change management should provide proper determination of the goal and directions of change based on vision of organizational development, inspire employees for making change, enhance motivation, promote innovational and initiative activity, correctly evaluate and use abilities of employees, contribute to building and organizing effective work of teams, encourage acceptance of personal responsibility for change (Duck, 2001; Cohen, 2005; Cameron & Green, 2015; Sirkin, Keenan, & Jackson, 2015; Sheen, 2019).

The key to success of organizational change is proper assigning of accountability for employees and holding their accountable for making change (Schmitz, 2012; Grenny, 2014; Evans, 2017). First, it is required to determine what can be done and by whom. For this, it is necessary to provide employees opportunity of independent creation of change proposals corresponding with the change directions that are set by managers and participation in implementation and support of peers' proposals in accordance with their desires and abilities. The dynamic nature relationship between abilities and change should be taken into consideration (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2014). Then, accountability for realization of the change proposal can be assigned for employees. It should be aligned with their abilities because only in this case the employees can be truly accountable for realization of the change proposal

efficiently. Ability means possession of skills to realize the change proposal. The managers must have the change management abilities to promote implementation and sustentation of change.

The suggested model is aimed at creation of a framework for the change management process adjusted by the employees' accountability for organizational change. The model can serve as actionable tool for intensification of acceptable and reasonable change in an organization.

RELATED RESEARCH

The most famous change management models are analyzed in this section.

Lewin (1958) suggested a model to initiate radical change in organizations and employees' behavior. The following steps are involved in the change process: unfreeze, change, and refreeze. The first step is directed towards elimination of obstacles to change and driving employees to change. For that, it is necessary create situation of the change shortage, determine required changes, provide support from managers, and guide employees' concerns. The author claimed employees should be motivated to feel the need for change and accept it as a positive force that compatible with individual objections.

The second step dedicated development and implementation of the changes. Success of this step depends on involvement of employees in change process, developing relationship between the change agent (the person who initiates the change) and the persons who participate in change; organizing effective teamwork, and delegating responsibilities to subordinates.

The third step oriented to providing work in the changed organizational environment, making change unrecoverable, and keeping the new behavior of employees. Thereby, the change agents and participants of change should remain active involved in support of change.

Peters & Waterman (2006) developed the McKinsey 7- steps model enabling to reveal the limitations in an organization and determine where changes are the most needed. The model includes seven elements affecting making change in an organization. The elements are strategy, structure, systems, shared values, style, staff, and skills. According with these elements, it is assumed analyzing: a change goal and directions of its attaining; how the organization is structured and how the structure complexity influence on effectiveness of required changes; the core systems in an organization and their use; organizational culture; the management and leadership style existing in the organization; the staff quality; availability of employees' skills required for making change.

Kotter (2012) presented eight step model for promotion of making change. The model shapes coherent performance of the following steps: engender the need of the required change through motivation, form leading teams, create a strategic vision and initiatives, involve employees for providing support and commitment to achieve the vision, enable action by removing barriers to change, demonstrate progress of changes, sustain acceleration by monitoring and measuring change progress, and establish change. Cohen (2005) suggested a practical framework for implementing each step of Kotter's model and a three-phase approach to guiding change. The phases are creating a climate for change, engaging and enabling the whole organization, and implementing and sustaining change.

Hiatt (2006) developed the ADKAR (awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement) model which represents flexible framework for change management processes with focus on employees. The model assumes: providing employees' understanding of the need for change through awareness; inspiring desire to participate in making and supporting the changes; analyzing of employees' knowledge how to make the changes; checking employees' abilities while applying their skills and behaviors for making the changes; realizing reinforcement by support of the changes through use of incentives and rewards.

Bridges (1991) suggested a transition (slow improvement) model aimed at promotion of internal willingness of employees go through change. The model enables adaptation of employees to changes by taking into consideration their emotions and response. Transition is realized by three stages guided the employee through the changes. The stages are ending, losing, and letting go; the neutral zone; and the new beginning. The first stage assumes guiding employees through the feeling related with the change and explaining how their knowledge and skills will use for performance of the new activities. The second stage connected with building the bridge between the old and the new. It requires to provide overcoming resistance to change and organize teams' productive work. The third stage consists in enhancing accepted changes by rewarding the teams' members.

The analysis of the above models allows concluding an actionable model for managing organizational change by use of accountability as management tool was not created. Such model should have flexibility enabling customization for making different evolutionary changes. Furthermore, it should engender an organizational environment which contributes to overcoming resistance for change and making change efficiently. The environment should provide: employees' awareness about the goal and directions of change; motivated involvement of employees in change process; employees' independence in creation of change proposals and participation in realization of peers' proposals in accordance with their desires and abilities; measurement of employees' accountability through aligning with their abilities for making

change; ability guided building dynamic teams aimed at attaining teams' accountability willingness for the change realization; and adaptability of employees' accountability for making change.

THE MODEL OF MANAGING CHANGE THROUGH EMPLOYEES' ACCOUNTABILITY

The organizational change process can be represented by consistent realization of the phases: Preparation, Implementation, and Support of change. Managing change is performed at each change phase. Employees' accountability adapted to their ability can serve as an efficient lever for managing change. Ability to make the needed change is characterized by availability of the required skills and their levels.

Managing change is realized by consistent work of assessment, stimulation, and accountability mechanisms. At first, the assessment mechanism provides assessing change state for each phase by comparison of ability of the employees involved in the change process with ability needed for change performance. An employee's ability and a change-relevant ability means total level of an employee' skills and a change-relevant skills, relatively. Then, suitable stimulation conditions is produced by the stimulation mechanism.

Finally, the accountability mechanism provides determining accountability measure corresponding with the employees' ability required for every phase of the change process, building teams, determining team members' measure mutual accountability adapted to their ability, and teams' accountability willingness for change, and the issue of control actions on the change process. The change management process is presented by Figure 1.
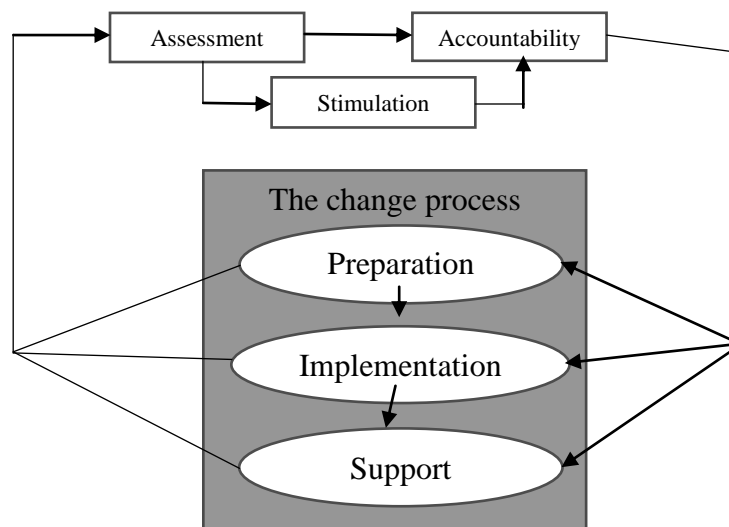

Figure 1. The change management process

The suggested model creates framework for managing change through employees' accountability adapted to each phase of organizational change. The model assumes consistent realization of the components: managing change preparation, managing change implementation, and managing change support.

The managing change preparation component

The objective of this component is to create an appropriate organizational environment for preparation of change proposals, guide proposal preparation, and establish proposal-relevant measure of accountability. Creation of the appropriate environment by managers, who is change initiators, includes determination of a change goal, setting the change directions corresponding with the goal, formulation of conditions stimulating employees to participate in preparation of organizational change, informing employees about the goal, the directions, and the conditions, and asking the employees to prepare the change proposals.

The employees, intending to be change agents and play leading role in change, prepare change proposals relatively the determined directions. Managers assess the prepared proposals. As a result of assessment, the proposal- relevant skills (skills corresponding with its substantial specificity), and skill levels are determined. A skill level is set from 1 to 3. A set skills required for realization of all proposals are received by union of the proposals-relevant skills. Proposal- relevant ability for each created change proposal is also calculated. It is sum of proposal-relevant skill levels.

Example 1:

There are D_1 and D_2 change directions. The prepared change proposals relatively these directions are p_1, p_2, and p_3, p_4, accordingly. Results of the proposals' assessment are represented by Table 1. Intersection of a row and a column contains a skill level required for realization of a proposal. Thus, skills associated with p_1 proposal are k_1, k_2, and k_4. Levels of these skills are 1, 3, and 3, relatively. Thus, p_1 proposal-relevant ability, calculated by summation of the skill levels, is 7.

Table 1. The assessment of prepared proposals for change

The change directions	The change proposals	The proposal-relevant skills						The proposal-relevant ability
		k_1	k_2	k_4	k_5	k_7	k_8	
D_1	p_1	1	3	3				7
	p_2	2		3	3			8
D_2	p_3				2	3	2	7
	p_4			2		3	3	8

If there is lack of proposals for some direction, managers use the stimulation mechanism to engage employees in preparation of change proposals.

A change-agent should take personal accountability for preparation of a proposal. A proposal-relevant measure of accountability is set equal a proposal-relevant ability.

Example 2:

The p_1 proposal-relevant measure of accountability for it preparation equals 7 because p_1-relevant ability is 7 (Table1). Similarly, the proposal-relevant measure of accountability for p_2, p_3, and p_4 proposals is 8, 7, and 8, relatively.

The managing change implementation component

The objective of this component is providing efficient managing implementation of the change proposals through teams' accountability willingness.

Implementation of the change proposals requires additional skills caused by specificity of this change phase. Moreover, rating implementation of the proposals should be set.

The order of the proposals' implementation for each change direction is set according to the proposals-relevant abilities. The proposal with more proposal-relevant ability in the change direction has priority for implementation. Thereby, the order of implementation of the proposals relatively each direction is set. If there is no possibility of simultaneous implementation of proposals from different direction, the proposal with the most proposal-relevant ability becomes a priority for implementation.

Example 3:

Skills k_3 and k_6 are added to the skills corresponding with the prepared proposals. The assessment of the skills required for implementation of the change proposals is represented by Table 2.

Table 2. The change proposals assessment

The change directions	The change proposals	The change proposals-relevant skills								The proposal-relevant ability
		k_1	k_2	k_3	k_4	k_5	k_6	k_7	k_8	
D_1	p_1	1	3	2	3					9
	p_2	2		2	3	3				10
D_2	p_3					2	1	3	2	8
	p_4				2		3	3	3	11

According data from Table 2, the order of implementation of proposals associated with D_1 and D_2 change direction is $<p_2, p_1>$ and $<p_4, p_3>$, relatively. The most priority proposal for implementation is p_4 proposal since p_4- relevant ability is the most.

Usually the proposal-creators have not enough abilities required for implementation of the proposals. So, the assessed proposals and stimulating conditions are suggested for consideration within organization so that to involve suitable employees in the change process as collaborators in implementation of the proposals.

Potential implementers of the change proposals are choose by managers from the employees desiring to participate in implementation of the change proposals. The employees analyze the suggested proposals and chose proposals in implementation of which they would like to participate.

At first, the managers assess abilities of the change agents and the employees desiring to participate in implementation of the proposals. The employees' abilities are assessed relatively the proposals-relevant skills.

Example 4:

Results assessment of the employees' abilities are represented by Table 3. The employees' skills are aligned with change proposals-relevant skills. Intersection of a row and a column contains a level of a skill which the employee has. Thus, e_1 employee has skills k_2, k_3, k_6, and k_8.

Table 3. Assessment of the employees' abilities

The employees	The change proposals-relevant skills							
	k_1	k_2	k_3	k_4	k_5	k_6	k_7	k_8
e_1		2	2			3		1
e_2	2					1		
e_3	1				1	3		
e_4				2	2	2		
e_5				2			2	
e_6			1				2	3
e_7						2		2
e_8	2							

Then, individual skills are compared with the change proposal-relevant skills. A potential implementer should have at least one skill corresponding with change proposal-relevant skill. A change agent must be an implementer of the prepared by him or her proposal. Moreover, a change agent can participate in implementation proposals associated with other change directions. As a result of skill comparison, potential implementers of the change proposals are revealed.

Example 5:

The potential implementers of change proposals p_1, p_2, p_3, and p_4 are determined on the basis of data represented in Table 4. Integrated data from Table 2 and Table 3 are represented in this table. The change proposal names, nomenclature of skills required for implementation of each proposal, and skill levels are contained in upper part of the Table 4. The employees' abilities are presented in basic part of the Table 4. The e_1, e_2, e_3, and e_4 employees are the change-agents of the proposals p_1, p_2, p_3, and p_4, relatively.

Table 4. The employees and proposals-relevant abilities for change implementation

The employees	p_1				p_2				p_3				p_4			
	k_1	k_2	k_3	k_4	k_1	k_3	k_4	k_5	k_5	k_6	k_7	k_8	k_4	k_6	k_7	k_8
	1	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	2	3	3	3

The employees	The change proposals-relevant skills needed for implementation							
	k_1	k_2	k_3	k_4	k_5	k_6	k_7	k_8
e_1		2	2			3		1
e_2	2					1		
e_3	1				1	3		
e_4				2	2			
e_5				2			1	
e_6			1				2	3
e_7						2		2
e_8	2							

Comparison of p_1 proposal- relevant skills with employees' relevant skills allows forming potential implementers of this proposal. They are e_1, e_3, e_5, and e_8. Really, employee e_1 is p_1 proposal's change agent having k_2 and k_3 skills needed for implementation of p_1 proposal. The e_3, e_5, and e_8 employees have skills k_1 and k_4, relatively. Union of these employees' skills corresponds with p_1 proposal- relevant skills. Similarly, the groups of potential implementers of the proposals p_2, p_3, and p_4 are <e_2, e_4, e_6>, < e_3, e_5, e_1, e_7>, and <e_4, e_2, e_6>, relatively.

The managers jointly with the change-agent examine the groups of potential implementers. Examination is aimed at forming a team for implementation of the change proposal. One heterogeneous team should be formed for implementation of the proposal. Heterogeneity of a team is characterized by difference of the team members' skills.

The assessment is performed with taken into consideration of the next requirements: the fixed number of team members; mutual addition of skills and skill levels of the team members; suitability of the team members needed for organizing productive collaboration while the change proposal implementation.

Example 6:

Team members' number is set equal to 3. First and third group of potential implementers of the proposals p_1 and p_3 contains each four employees. Thus, one employee should be excluded from each group. Analysis of skills and their levels of employees from first group shows that e_3 and e_8 employees have the same skill k_1. Moreover, skill $k_1$level of e_8 employee is 2. It is more than skill $k_1$level of e_3 employee is equal to1. And suitability of e_8 employee to e_1 and e_5 employees of this group is better than suitability of e_3 employee. Hence, e_3 employee is removed. As a result, the members of the first team are e_1, e_8, and e_5.

Similar analysis of employees from third group allows to give preference e_7 employee over e_1 employee. As a result, the members of the third team are e_3, e_5, and e_7.

Second and fourth groups of potential implementers are satisfied aforementioned requirements and therefore they become teams. So, the members of second and fourth teams are $<e_2, e_4, e_6>$ and $<e_4, e_2, e_6>$, relatively.

Measure of team members' mutual accountability for change proposal implementation is set equal to a team' s ability, since taking and holding accountability depend on ability of a team.

Example 7:

The measures of mutual accountability of members' first, second, third, and forth teams for implementation of corresponding proposals for change are equal to the teams' abilities calculated on the basis data about employees' abilities (Table 4). Thus, the measures of mutual accountability of members' first, second, third, and forth teams are 8, 8, 7, and 8, relatively.

A coefficient characterizing a team's accountability willingness for implementation of a change proposal is determined by formula:

$$\mu_i = M_{ti} / M_{pi} \qquad (1)$$

where

μ_i is the coefficient of a team's accountability willingness for implementation of i-proposal, i=1, …, n

M_{ti} is the measure of team members' mutual accountability for implementation of i-proposal

M_{Pi} is i-proposal relevant measure of accountability. It is aligned with i-proposal relevant ability.

If the coefficient is equal to 1, a team has complete accountability willingness for implementation of a proposal. It means that the maximum efficiency of taking and holding accountability is provided by full conformity of a team ability with a proposal-relevant ability.

If the coefficient is less 1, it means, that some team members have lower level of the skills compared with the proposals-relevant skills and thus, a team has insufficient accountability willingness for implementation of corresponding change proposal. It causes poor quality of a

proposal's implementation. Improvement of the situation is provided by using the stimulation mechanism.

Example 8:

The proposal-relevant measures of accountability for implementation of p_1, p_2, p_3, and p_4 proposals are 9, 10, 8, and 11, relatively (Example 3). The measures of mutual accountability of members of first, second, third, and forth teams are 8, 8, 7, and 8, relatively (Example 7). Thus, the coefficients of accountability willingness of the teams' members for implementation of the proposals calculated by formula (1) are 0.9, 0.8, 0.8, and 0.7, relatively.

According to the calculated coefficients, none of the teams has complete accountability willingness for implementation of corresponding proposals. It causes the need to raise levels skills of the teams' members by using the stimulation mechanism. Namely, the level of k_2 skill of e_1 employee from t_1 team; the levels of k_4, and k_5 skills of e_4 employee from t_2 team; the levels of k_5 and k_7 skills of e_3 and e_5 employee, relatively, from t_3 team; and the levels of k_2 and k_7 skills of e_2 and e_6 employee, relatively, from t_4 team (Table 4).

The managing change support component

The objective of this component is managing change proposals support through teams' accountability willingness.

Managing change proposals support assumes determination of the proposals-relevant abilities needed for support, stimulation of employees' participation in process of support, revealing employees having skills needed for support, assessment of abilities of employees desiring to support of the change proposals, forming teams for change proposals support by rebuilding the implementation teams, calculation of the coefficient of teams' accountability willingness to support, and evaluation of the change proposals support state.

Example 9:

The proposals-relevant and employees abilities needed for change support is represented by the Table 5. The change proposal names, nomenclature of skills required for support of each proposal, and skill levels are contained in upper part of this table. The e_1, e_2, e_3, and e_4 employees are, as before, the change-agents of the proposals p_1, p_2, p_3, and p_4, relatively.

Stimulation of employees to participate in process of support causes revealing e_7, e_8, and e_9 employees having k_9 and k_{10} skills are critical for support of change. Assessments of abilities of employees desiring to support of the proposals are presented in basic part of the Table 5.

Table 5. The proposals-relevant and employees abilities for change support

The employees	p_1				p_2				p_3				p_4			
	k_1	k_2	k_9	k_4	k_1	k_9	k_4	k_5	k_5	k_{10}	k_7	k_8	k_4	k_{10}	k_7	k_8
	1	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	3
	The change proposals-relevant skills needed for support															
	k_1		k_2		k_9		k_4		k_5		k_{10}		k_7		k_8	
e_1	1		2										1		1	
e_2	2															
e_3	1								1							
e_4							2		2							
e_5							2						1			
e_6											2				3	
e_7											2				2	
e_8			2		1											
e_9					2						1					

Matching of the employees' skills and the proposals-relevant skills allows forming teams for change proposals support according to the above requirements. It is resulted by rebuilding the implementation teams.

Example 10:

The formed teams for support of the change proposals are $t_1 = < e_1, e_9, e_5 >$, $t_2 = < e_2, e_8, e_4 >$, $t_3 = < e_3, e_9, e_6 >$, and $t_4 = < e_4, e_7, e_6 >$.

The teams' formation allows calculation of the coefficient of teams' accountability willingness to support change associated with the change agents' proposals. It is performed by using the formula (1). For this, the proposal-relevant measures of accountability and the measures of team members' mutual accountability for change proposal support should be determined.

The proposal-relevant measures of accountability are set equal to the proposals-relevant abilities. The measures of team members' mutual accountability are set equal to a team' s ability, since taking and holding accountability for change support depend on the teams' abilities.

Since the state of the change proposal support depends on the team' holding accountability, its evaluation can be performed by examination of coefficient of accountability willingness of the team' members. The coefficient is calculated by formula (1). The team has insufficient accountability willingness for support of the change proposal, if the coefficient is less 1. It causes the need of additional management efforts for increasing the team members' mutual accountability and thereby improvement of the state of change support.

Example 11:

According data from Table 5, the proposal-relevant measure of accountability for support p_1, p_2, p_3, and p_4 proposals is 10. The measures of mutual accountability of the members of first, second, third, and forth teams for support of the proposals are 7, 7, 7, and 9, relatively. Then, coefficients of the teams' accountability willingness for support of p_1, p_2, p_3, and p_4 proposals are 0.7, 0.7, 0.7, and 0.9. Each team has the coefficient less 1. Hence, the managers should take actions for increasing mutual accountability of the members each from the teams.

CONCLUSION

The suggested model serves as framework for managing an organizational change process at Preparation, Implementation, and Support phases. The distinctive features of the model are flexibility enabling customization for making different evolutionary changes; use of accountability as means for managing change; an organizational environment providing awareness about the change goal and directions, stimulation of employees for making change, employees' independence in creation of change proposals and participation in realization of peers' proposals in accordance with their desires and abilities, and adaptability of employees' accountability for change.

Specificity of the model consists in realizing change management by consistent applying of assessment, stimulation and accountability mechanisms; introduction of ability as total score of levels of skills for characteristic of change proposals and employees; aligning accountability with ability; building dynamic and skill heterogeneous teams for making change; creating the coefficient of a team's accountability willingness characterizing necessity and sufficiency of team members' mutual accountability.

Use of the proposed model will provide a number of advantages. Driving force of employees' accountability sustained by proper organized work of assessment and stimulation mechanisms will contribute to effectiveness of managing change. Informing employees about the goal and the directions of change, and employees' stimulation adapted to their change activity will provide motivated involvement of employees in change process. Skill guided building dynamic teams will allow accepting reasonable mutual accountability for making change by team members. Quantitative assessment of a team's accountability willingness will efficiently head the change process. Forming the organizational environment favoring effective participation of the employees in change process will facilitate overcoming resistance to change. All this will make the organizational change not a source of threat and risk but a lever to growth of the organization and the employees.

The model will serve as basis for further creation of the system for managing organizational change through employees' accountability.

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