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MANAGING CHANGE IS STIMULANT OR TIMIDNESS!!

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Abstract

Man's environment is quite dynamic. This will disturb the equilibrium of his team and force him to make adjustments. Man's response to change depends upon his attitudes and behaviour. Even though people react individually and differently to the changes, they unite through social actions at times in order to make uniform response, like slowdown and walk out. Employees tend to resist change because it upsets their patterns of adjustment and even threatens their security. Their resistance is primarily to the formal and informal social adjustments that they must make rather than to the technical aspects of the change. Hence the management overcomes the resistance to change by altering environment, perceptions and value systems surrounding changes. It also uses group forces to support change.

Change is necessary in all organizations. Man is learning to meet change by being adaptive. His very first breath depends upon his ability to adapt from one environment to another. Alejandro Casona quotes that "each hour has its truth". Each hour is different, offering to man new experiences and experiments. Since man is adaptive and used to change, how is it that in his work environment he tends to resist change.

Work change

Work change is any alteration which may occur in the overall work environment at any given time. Its effect is illustrated in the air-filled balloon. When a finger (change) is pressed against the exterior of the balloon (organization), the contour of the balloon visibly changes at the point of impact. Here the pressure is representing change which has produced deviation at the point of pressure. It is obvious that the entire balloon (organization) is affected and has stretched slightly. The same is applicable to the whole organization which is affected by change in any part of it.

The molecules of air in the balloon represent the company's employees. It is clear that those at the spot of pressure must make drastic adjustments. Though the technical change did not make any direct contact with employees, it does affect them indirectly. Though no one is

fired or hired, the employees are displaced and compelled to adjust to the new location in the balloon. This shows that technological change is not only human relations problem but also a technical problem. The repeated pressure at a given point may unnecessarily weaken the balloon at that point and also similar points in the organization. The pressure and motion create friction and heat. It leads to a rupture in the organization and may collapse the system at any time.

Attitudes Condition Response to Change

Work change is further complicated when it does not result in a direct adjustment. Adjustment is operating through each employee's attitude to produce a response conditioned by his feelings towards the change. The individual, according to his attitude, interprets each changed situation. The way he feels about the change determines how he will respond to it. The attitudes are not the result of chance but they are caused. One of the reasons is personal history of man's biological processes, his background and all his social experiences that is away from his work place. That is what he brings to the work place. The probable second reason is the work environment itself. It reflects that he is a member of a group and is influenced by its codes, patterns and attitudes. Though each person individually

interprets change differently, he shows his attachment to the group by joining with it in some uniform response to the change. Though attitudes are important in determining a response to change, they are slow to change, nebulous and hidden. It is true that people sometimes do not know why they do and say something. They do not know their own feelings.

Social System and Change

The idea of social equilibrium is a dynamic system of motion rather than a static system, and represents a homeostatic tendency to resist pressures and maintain a steady state. The social systems are never perfectly frictionless and never reach an idyllic state of no conflicts and problems. With the passage of time, each social system develops program of action to accommodate change as it occurs. When the change is minor within the scope of the correcting program, adjustment is fairly routine. But when the change is major or unusual, more serious upsets may occur in the organization.

Résistance to Change

The individual in the social system may resist change because of new habit patterns and sacrifices required. This leads people and their social systems often to resist change in the organization. The individual's emotional reasons for resistance to change are economical, personal and social factors. The economical factors are the fear of technological unemployment, reduction in working hours, demotion and reduced wages and fear of acceleration and lower incentive wages. The personal factors are criticism, reduction of skill and personal pride, boredom due to higher specialization, monotony and decreased sense of worthwhileness. The social factors are dislikes for new social adjustments, breaking of present social ties, lower satisfaction due to new social situations, outside interference and lack of participation in setting up the change.

The resistance to change leads to human relations problems rather than technical problems related to change.

Technical Specialists and Change

The management has three avenues available to force the people to accept the organizational change viz.,(i) it is to alter the environment forces which affect employees,(ii) promoting change in order to alter person's perception of the forces that surround him and(iii) building support for change to alter the basic value system of persons involved in the change. The management has to garner support for change. It has to provide necessary pledges to protect the employees from economic loss due to change. Each worker has to feel that he will not suffer due to change. Some manufacturers give guarantee to the workers against reduced earnings. Others offer retraining them at employers' expenses. The seniority rights, promotions and other fringe benefits enjoyed by the workers are safeguarded when a change is made. The Grievances Cell helps the employees to experience a feeling of security. The communication system is also essential for gaining support for change. Even though change will affect only one or two persons in a group, all of them must know about the change in order to maintain group cohesion in the organization. The management tries to maintain a balance between excessive change leading to unstable organization and low morale and negligible change due to static organization. The change requires unlearning old habits and learning new ones. The unlearning is more difficult than new learning for change.

Leadership for change

A capable leadership reinforces a climate of psychological support for change. The leader presents change on the basis of the impersonal requirements of the situation rather than on personal grounds. There must be some impersonal reasons for the change and they

should be adopted. The request for change should be according to the objectives and rules of the organization. An effective leader carefully tries to time his changes to fit the psychological needs of his group.

Union response to Management Change

The management is primarily a change agent in the performance of its function. The union serves more as a restraint on management and protector of security for its member. It frequently acts as the forestaller of change. These functional differences between management and unions may cause conflict between the two about change. Sometimes union supports management by encouraging workers to accept change. Many unions favor improvement in work place through technological change. It will also accept designated change, which is carefully planned to protect the interests of the members. But the management in business and government can introduce change in a way that employees at all levels will easily assimilate and adapt the same. The opposition for change can be reduced to a certain level and the employees can be helped to recognize the need for it to participate in it and to gain from it. The management's responsibility for change is four fold. They are

- 1) Make useful and necessary change through evolution rather than through coercion.
- 2) Recognize the possible effects of change and introduce it with adequate attention to human rights.
- 3) Share the benefits of change with employees and
- 4) Diagnose the problems remaining after the change occurs and treat them carefully.

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