

Student Name: Vadym Kozlov

Student Number: 1703901

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LEADING AND IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE CHANGE

Module Tutor: Dr Rexon Nting

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Abstract

This study aims to critically analyse the company's recent history, Abbey Cars Ltd, part of the Abbey Cars Group, one of the UK's biggest transportation operators. The report will also provide a detailed description of the impact that the changes in the external environment have on the organisation. The author of this report is an independent consultant, an Abbey Cars ex-employee, who will later suggest the board of directors of the company regarding the development and implementation of the change model more appropriate for Abbey Cars business environment.

Introduction

In this part of the report the author will introduce the subject of the case study, Abbey Cars Ltd. Abbey Cars Ltd is part of the Abbey Cars Group, as has already been reported. Founded in 1968 as a family-run enterprise, this organisation is now one of the nation's largest contract operators for private hire. The organisation uses more than 4,800 people on full part-time and zero-hour contractual terms with its head office in Greenwich and twenty branches within Greater London territory. The company involved in the transportation industry, including private minicab contract, PCO licencing, PCO licenced contract vehicle hire, school, and hospital transportation vehicles. The main opponents and competitors of the company are black cab taxis from London, Uber, ViaVan and Addison Lee. In the next part of the report the author will be scrutinising in detail the current history of Abbey Cars, the company's structure, its organisational culture and leadership style recently used within this organisation. After evaluation of the impact of the external environment on the Abbey Cars, the suitable change model will be created by the author to be recommended later to the company's Board of Directors. During the whole length of this research, the author will be using appropriate literature, paperbacks as well as online resources. This knowledge will be combined with knowledge gained by the author after attending class lectures at the university.

Analysis of the recent history of Abbey Cars

In order to comprehend the recent history of Abbey Cars, the author of this report will start a more detailed analysis of the company's structure, its organisational culture and the type of leadership style currently used in Abbey Cars. The diagram is shown below explains the organisational structure of Abbey Cars with more detailed explanation to follow:

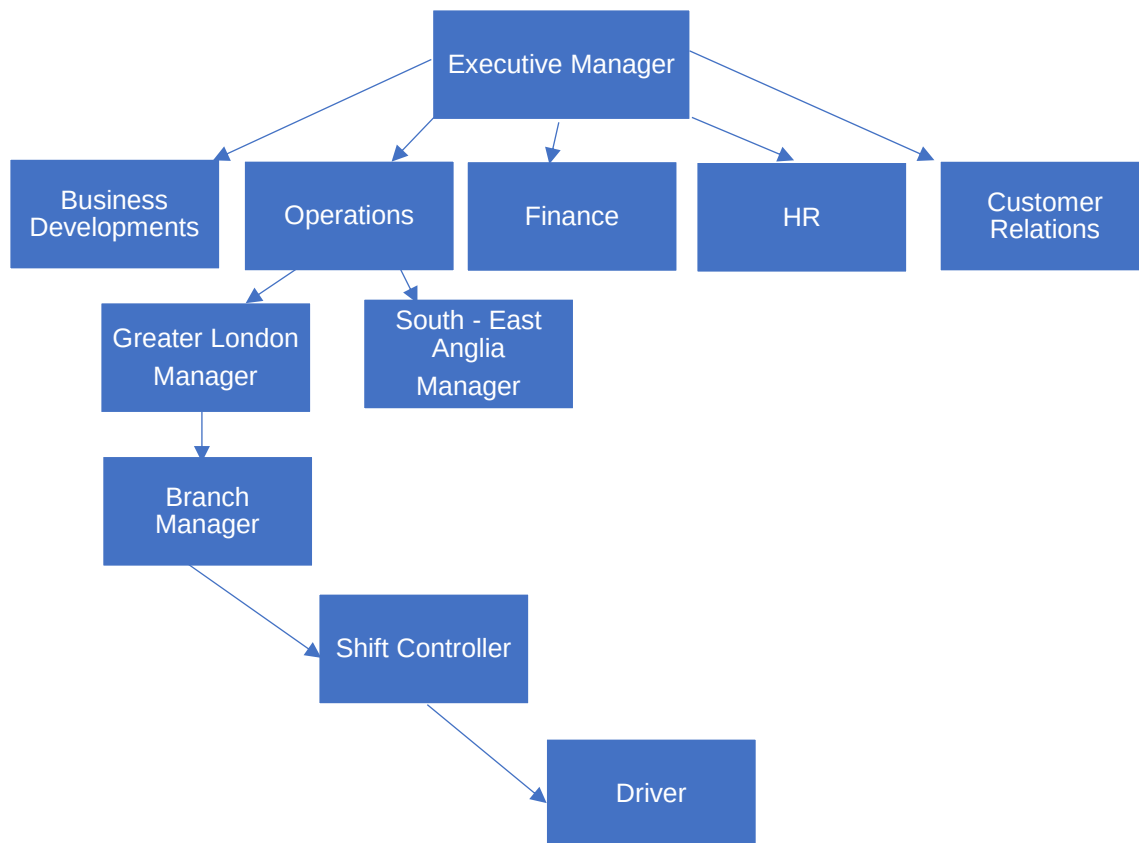


Diagram 1: Organisational structure of Abbey Cars, based on source: (Author's research)

Abbey Cars ' organisational structure can be described as a decentralised style with one head office and minicab offices. Each minicab office is an autonomous franchise, usually licenced to be used by private hire operators. All of these franchises report on payroll, training, health and safety concerns and customer relationships to the head office. As an Abbey Cars former employee, the author is aware of the leadership styles used in this business, particularly in its Heathrow branch, one of the largest branches in the Greater London area. The author began to work as a night shift driver in the Heathrow branch, then he became a shift supervisor, and the branch manager assistant was the final job description. The author would define two types of leadership styles used within Abbey Cars on the basis of his own experience: democratic commonly used in the head office and in some of the branches, and also the cross-cultural form of leadership used in many branches where the staff comes from different ethical and cultural backgrounds. Many Abbey Cars branches, including the branch of Heathrow, are examples of a multicultural working atmosphere. This is related to the location of the branch and the historically developed communities in the Greater London area. 60% of the workforce comes from countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Somalia. Eastern Europe accounted for 25% of the workforce: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Latvia, and the last 20% were born in the United Kingdom, but still come from families with different backgrounds.

Such a diverse working environment has a major influence on the organisational culture of Abbey Cars company, the main elements of which can be shown in the following diagram:



Diagram 2: *Abbey Cars workplace culture main elements*, based on source: (Heathfield, 2018 & Author's research)

Now the more detailed explanation of those elements and their role in forming the workplace culture within the business environment of Abbey Cars:

1. Workplace values: Mind Tools (2018) states of importance to have similar values for people working in the same community or workplace environment. If someone in the team has different values, it could influence and potentially jeopardise the whole teamwork. Being responsible, concentrated on facts, fair, trustworthy, respectful, and consistent with company policies and rules—all these qualities form the ethos of the business, making it distinctive and recognisable. Unfortunately, these standards were not pursued and thoroughly upheld by all workers in the case of the Abbey Cars company. And Heathrow branch is not an exemption.

2. Workplace beliefs: workplace belief systems are the way the employee feels about how their employer treated them, according to Bennett (2009). The questionnaire, similar to that used by the Deloitte (2012) in the study, was used by senior management of Abbey Cars to recognise and classify the workplace values of Abbey Cars. Drivers and controllers from four branches, including Heathrow, were asked questions such as: "My business has a special workplace culture," "I'm happy at work," "I feel respected by management," etc. The outcome was shocking. Less than 50% of the workforce responded positively to some of the survey questions. It revealed that there was a lot of work to be done to transform workplace beliefs in a more positive direction, including strengthening structured coordination between senior management, branch managers, drivers, and shift controllers.

3. Workplace behaviour: according to Berlinsky-Schine (2017), it can be divided into two categories. There is workplace behaviour of the employer and the workplace behaviour of the employee. The conduct that you anticipate from your employees — and your employees expect from you — contributes to the whole culture of the company. It is also an important part of the organisation's performance. Therefore, if there is an issue with workplace conduct within the company, it will affect the

organization's entire workplace culture. In Abbey Cars case, the code of conduct plainly describes acceptable and unacceptable types of behaviour in the workplace. Presented below are few standards of acceptable behaviour among employees of Abbey Cars:

1. Be friendly and supportive to your colleagues and clients.
2. Carry out your duties in an appropriate, competent and fair manner.
3. Conform with the dress code of the company: always dress intelligently and be well-groomed without unnecessary jewellery and tattoos to be visible.
4. Keeping car roadworthy, clean and maintained, have hand towels, water to drink and umbrella in your vehicle under certain weather conditions.

The code of conduct of Abbey Cars also defines other types of improper behaviour, such as:

1. Harassment, sexism, and intimidation.
2. Sabotage and interruption of the production processes or operation of the business.
3. Violence or violence emotional or physical.
4. Aggressive conduct.
5. The violence in the workplace.

In the view of the author, a clear majority of the employees of Abbey Cars complied with the code of conduct regarding behaviour in the workplace. The regular code violations were done by failing to comply with the dress code, not being enough support to co-workers, being late for the shift, lots of issues with dirty or smelly vehicles.

4. Workplace attitudes: Quite important for the organisation's culture. Workers with positive attitudes that make the business expand, profit and prosper. Negative attitude causes the company to struggle, get a bad reputation, and in some cases go out of business. Belcher (2018) states that there are five key attitudes that all companies should pursue to be effective, competitive and successful in their employees:

- ❖ *Respect.*
- ❖ *Enthusiasm.*
- ❖ *Job commitment.*
- ❖ *Being innovative.*
- ❖ *Being helpful.*

Based on the recent survey of four Abbey Cars branches including one in Heathrow, it can be seen that nearly all drivers are supportive and respectful to each other and the customers. For personal reasons, only 10 percent of the participants declined to be of assistance to other drivers, the customer side was not affected at all. Enthusiasm (60%) and commitment to work (60%) on the view of the author that needs improvement. That is about some working hours, some jobs and some directions drivers did not want to do, again for personal or religious reasons. And lastly, being innovative (20 percent): only a small number of people did refer to the need to modernize the current booking system, which is very sluggish sometimes and has been "freezing" for a while. Here is a lot of work to do to increase the understanding

of the workforce about the culture of creativity and innovation within the business environment in which they are engaged.

5. Underlying assumptions: The last element of the workplace culture. Rankin (2017) says the following about underlying assumptions: "Underlying assumptions are the source of values in a culture and what causes actions within the organization". In other words, there are underlying assumptions within any organisation, they are typically "established," but they are not freely reported or addressed. They are consisting of values, thoughts, and feelings, so there is a connection between beliefs and assumptions. Essentially, shifting beliefs will alter the assumptions and vice versa. It can trigger off problems in organisation, indicating the need for change of the management of the company. In the case of Abbey Cars, the author can clearly see the tension between assumptions and beliefs. The rise of negative beliefs caused by destabilizing the company's core values leads to false assumptions, thus corrupting the entire Abbey Cars organisation culture.

Summarised here are the main factors describing the current situation within the business environment of Abbey Cars:

1. *Company's structure:* decentralised.
2. *Leadership style:* democratic (head office), combined with cross-cultural(branches).
3. *Workplace culture:*
 - 3.1. *Workplace values* are not up to the desired standards.
 - 3.2. *Workplace beliefs* certainly in the need for improvement.
 - 3.3. *Workplace behaviour* needs to be worked on through relevant training procedures.
 - 3.4. *Workplace attitude:* workforce job commitment and enthusiasm need to be boosted. The culture of innovation needs to be introduced and explain to the workforce including middle management (branch managers and their assistants). Abbey Cars already introduced Personal Development Plans (PDP) for the new drivers and branch managers, but those plans are not paying a lot of attention to the developing awareness of the culture of innovation. That needs to be changed.
 - 3.5. *Underlying assumptions* will have to be re-established by promoting the company's core values and beliefs through meetings and training sessions.

Based on that summary, gathered by the author and described above, the author can sum up the situation within the company as the critical and in need of implementing one of the change management programs, more suitable for the business environment of Abbey Cars. This task will be completed after analysis of the impact of the external environment changes on the organisation of Abbey Cars. That will make the whole picture is much clearer.

Performing an external environmental scan of Abbey Cars

In this part of the report the author will be examining how changes in the external environment have impacted the company of Abbey Cars. Jessee (2019) says: “While external factors are uncontrollable, they don’t have to be unforeseeable. Here’s how to find them”. What are the factors related to external? Economy, politics, competitors, consumers, and even the environment are all unmanageable factors affecting the performance of an organisation. This is different to internal factors such as personnel, corporate culture, procedures, and finances, normally controlled by the organisation itself. While external factors such as changes in government policy are sometimes unexpected, this does not mean that you are incapable to prepare for them. Creating a framework for conducting an environmental scan is the most efficient way for a business to be flexible and adaptive. An environmental scan is a process where data on potential opportunities and risks are acquired, assessed and understood methodically. It is an instrument for collecting appropriate data about the outside world, market competitors, and your business. PESTEL analysis is one of the most prevalent methods used to perform an environmental scan. This model is an external measurement factor pattern based on six data areas:

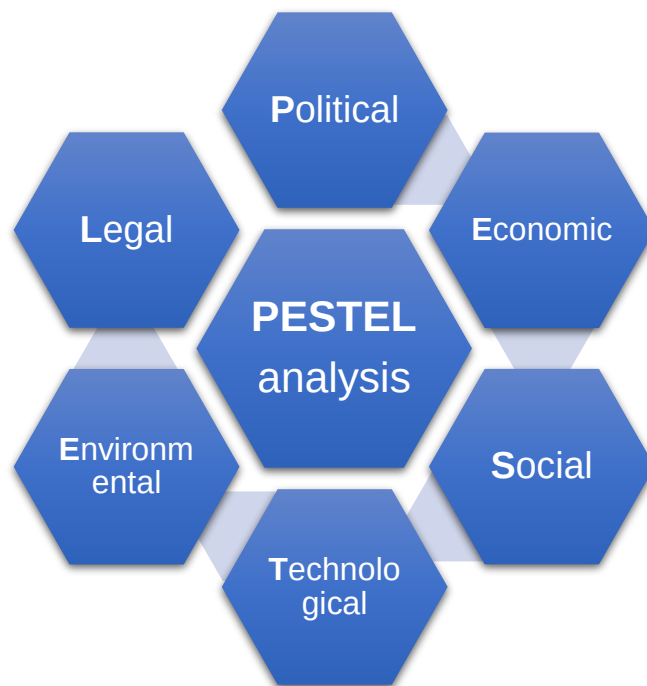


Diagram 3: PESTEL analysis structure, based on source: (Jessee, 2019)

Here is the detailed PESTEL analysis prepared by the author for Abbey Cars study case:

1. Political factors: To what extent a government can affect the economy and therefore affect companies within an industry. It contains policies of the government, political stability, and trade and tax policies. In case of Abbey Cars there are a few political factors to be considered:

- ✓ Political debates on the taxi industry's minimum pay laws.
- ✓ Compliance with the policies of the government.
- ✓ Complying with the laws and policies in general.
- ✓ Bureaucracy.
- ✓ Decreasing or increasing of the tax.
- ✓ Brexit related issues.
- ✓ Trading control.

2. Economic factors: How economic conditions alter supply and demand to have a direct influence on a company. It includes economic growth or recession, debt and inflation rate shifts. In case of Abbey Cars there are following economic factors must be mentioned:

- ✓ Physical or intellectual sharing of assets.
- ✓ Competition from other companies like Uber, Bolt, ViaVan or Addison Lee is rising.
- ✓ Slowing down of economy caused by Brexit uncertainty.

3. Social factors: Adjustments in the socio-cultural market environment that indicate the demands and wishes of consumers. It includes developing trends, demographics and population analytics. Here some social factors which could be applied to the environmental scan of Abbey Cars organisation:

- ✓ Easy access to your ride booking through the app or online.
- ✓ The preference of the customer.
- ✓ Instead of interacting with the dispatcher, the customer selects the pick-up time and payment method through the device (mobile phone or PC).
- ✓ Prices are rising due to high demand times and regions.
- ✓ The attendance of workers is influenced by religious holidays and celebrations.
- ✓ To be able to compete with rivals, customer care standards must be kept high.

4. Technological factors: How a market or sector is adjusting in innovation and development. Certainly, new technologies have had a significant impact on the entire taxi and minicab industry. The case study of Abbey Cars can be extended to a few key technological factors listed below:

- ✓ Widespread awareness of the company products and services due to social media use.
- ✓ The new and improved methods of booking (online, via app).
- ✓ The new booking system requires a constant need to update the handheld devices of the drivers, which can be expensive.
- ✓ The use of mobile payment terminals made the payment process easier, also reduced the amounts of cash carried by drivers and that also reduced crime.

5. Environmental factors: The environmental and ecological aspects that affect the operations or consumer demand of business. In case of Abbey Cars following environmental factors can be mentioned:

- ✓ Growing traffic congestion, as a result longer journeys times and increasing use of fuel.

- ✓ The need for environmentally friendly vehicles such as hybrid or electric cars reflected in new tough laws on pollution-related issues.
- ✓ Additional costs involving the disposal of old and not-roadworthy vehicles.

6. Legal factors: The existing judicial provisions or conditions in the country where the company operates. It includes requirements for health and safety, labour laws, and customer relations rules. In the case of Abbey Cars a few legal factors must be considered:

- ✓ The need to abide by all relevant laws and regulations.
- ✓ Possible claims and even lawsuits from consumers who are not satisfied with the level of customer service received.

Developing a change model, integrating strategic change issues within Abbey Cars

The author should build a change management model or program in this part of the report, which is more suitable for Abbey Cars company's business climate. Businessballs (2019) notes that John P Kotter, a Harvard Business School professor, and prominent theorist and author on organisational change management, first developed one of the most effective change models. The highly regarded book by Kotter "Leading Change" (1995) present a useful model for understanding and handling change. Managing change is the responsibility of the organisation's managers and executives-they have to navigate the change in a way that workers can tolerate it. The manager has a duty to promote and encourage change, in particular, to recognize the situation from an objective point of view and then to help people identify motivations, objectives, and how to respond positively to their own circumstances and abilities. Presented below table is the adaptation of Kotter's 8-step model specifically tailored for the use in Abbey Cars case study, with more detailed explanations to follow:

1. <i>Creating</i> a sense of urgency within the Abbey Cars organisation.	<i>De-freezing</i> existing culture.
2. <i>Establishing</i> a powerful coalition.	
3. <i>Developing</i> a change vision and approach.	
4. <i>Communicating</i> the vision for a change.	
5. <i>Removing</i> barriers and obstacles.	<i>Making</i> the change happen.
6. <i>Creating</i> short-term accomplishments.	
7. <i>Holding</i> and <i>keeping</i> the change building.	
8. <i>Anchoring</i> the corporate culture changes.	<i>Re-freezing</i> the new culture.

Table 1: Kotter's 8-step change model adapted for the company of Abbey Cars, based on source: (Accipio, 2018 & Author's research)

Now the more detailed explanation of each step of the change model and its implication to the case of Abbey Cars proposed by the author as an independent consultant:

1. *Creating a sense of urgency within the Abbey Cars organisation:*

- 1.1. Creating an environment inside Abbey Cars where people are aware of the organization's existing problems. The author's article on the company's current position is one such initiative.
- 1.2. Build the forum with all senior and middle management involved in Abbey Cars headquarters to discuss all potential issues and solutions.
- 1.3. The change must receive the support of at least 75% of the management of the company, strongly recommended by Kotter.

2. *Establishing a powerful coalition:*

- 2.1. The main task here is to build a team of people from various areas of the business with different skills and abilities. This will improve the expected changes effectiveness.
- 2.2. In the case of Abbey Cars research, the team should include all members of departments and some managers of branches, including one from Heathrow.
- 2.3. The author will suggest setting up dedicated WhatsApp and Facebook groups to work more efficiently with the community members.
- 2.4. That is right. This will also be important to organise the schedule of daily meetings between the group members.

3. *Developing a change vision and approach:*

- 3.1. It is imperative to create a vision and approach that is easy to understand for all members of the change team.
- 3.2. Besides being simple and understandable, to have the maximum effect, the vision also needs to be inspiring.
- 3.3. The vision and strategy must also be specific to Abbey Cars defined business environment.

4. *Communicating the vision for a change:*

- 4.1. Direct communication between members of the change group is crucial.
- 4.2. Strong communication links also need to be formed between the change group and the senior management of the company to keep them up to date on the progress of the change.

5. *Removing barriers and obstacles:*

- 5.1. Identify potential obstacles and barriers.
- 5.2. Establishing ways to overcome potential obstacles and barriers.
- 5.3. During the change process, the team members must be able to overcome barriers and obstacles that appear. The group leader will need strong leadership skills.

6. *Creating short-term accomplishments:*

- 6.1. Through generating some short-term accomplishments, it is necessary to show the benefits of the new process.
- 6.2. Develop the necessary support and acknowledgment for the most successful team members.

7. Holding and keeping the change building:

- 7.1. Kotter (2012) states that sustaining and cementing the change is important long after it is accomplished.
- 7.2. Continue to set targets and evaluate what could be best done to improve continuously.

8. Anchoring the corporate culture changes:

- 8.1. The changes should be part of the Abbey Cars organisation's core.
- 8.2. Encouraging new employees to accept the changes and rewarding people who support the change will all help promote the change to the core of the Abbey Cars company.

Step 1 to 4 will be a de-freezing existing culture within the company of Abbey Cars, steps 5 to 7 will be making changes happening and securing the achievements during the process of changing and step 8 will be re-freezing the new culture and making it part of the company's core.

The next very important question related to the change process is how the management of this process will be interacting with the leadership style existing within the company of Abbey Cars. In his book "A Force for Change: Why Leadership Differs from Management," Kotter (1990) explains why management and leadership vary from each other and identifies three major sub-processes as points of difference. In the table below they are described as follows:

<i>Management</i>	<i>Leadership</i>
1. Planning and accounting.	1. Forming direction.
2. Organising and staffing.	2. Supporting people.
3. Controlling and problem solving.	3. Encouraging and inspiring.

Table 2: Management vs. Leadership, based on source: (Kotter, 1990)

Based on the information already obtained by the author during the work on this report and relevant research of library and internet resources the author was able to establish 5 main differences between roles of managers and leaders which could be used in the case study of Abbey Cars. They are presented in the table shown below:

<i>Managers</i>	<i>Leaders</i>
1. The <i>goals</i> for the change program team will be set by Abbey Cars management.	1. The change team leader must set the <i>vision</i> and make sure it becomes true.
2. The company's management must <i>track</i> and <i>evaluate</i> the change team's work.	2. The change team leader will use brains with the heart and be more <i>passionate</i> about the assignment, it will also be helpful to use the sixth sense.
3. Abbey Cars management must <i>assign</i> tasks to the change team.	3. The group leader should promote <i>creativity</i> and ensure that the entire team is involved in the process of brainstorming.
4. In this situation, the company's management will need to turn to the <i>autocratic</i> leadership style.	4. The team leader will need to use the <i>charismatic</i> style of leadership.

5. Abbey Cars management will <i>supervise</i> the team's work.	5. The team leader is going to <i>coach</i> the team. They will receive all the necessary guidance for the change program vision.
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Table 3: Roles of management and leaders in the case study of Abbey Cars, based on source: (Kotter, 1990 & Author's research)

It can be seen from the table shown above the management of Abbey Cars and the change group leader (or leaders) will be doing completely different tasks during the completion of a change management program. However, their cooperation in this matter is vital. Should one of the sides starting to fail on their responsibilities the whole process could be jeopardised or even fail.

Assessment of the effect of organisational culture on the program of change management

The author will examine now how the current organisational culture inside the Abbey Cars business environment will impact the planned change management plan. According to UK Essays (2018) for change to occur, cultural changes are necessary, as these two cannot be divided. Good relationship between the culture of company and the method of managing change often helps change progress to become a success. Many corporate structures are creating barriers to change implementation, so they need to address those resistant to change. Most managers and leaders are unwilling to make changes because they are afraid of failure. One of the Abbey Cars change program's objectives is to change the company's organisational culture and save it as part of the core of organisation. So, it will be likely that the improvements will not be welcomed by all the company's employees. It is even possible to build up resistance within Abbey Cars management. That is why it is so critical that the change plan is supported by at least 75% of management, and Kotter (1995) also confirms this. In this case, the Abbey Cars senior management's shift of leadership style from normally democratic to autocratic is imperative to create the force change needed for the change process to be effective. All that combined with setting up realistic goals, assigning tasks, control of all the stages and constant supervision will bring the desired result.

Conclusion

In this report, the author presented and analysed the study case of Abbey Cars as the chosen organisation. The author researched the company's recent history, including analysis of Abbey Cars structure, organisational culture and types of leadership. After that, the author performed an environmental scan of Abbey Cars organisation using the method of PESTEL analysis. Based on all the received data the author has become able to identify and recommend the best suitable for change management, which was completed. At the end of the report, the author examined the roles of managers and leaders in the change management process and assessed organisational culture impact on the program of change management. During the

completion of the report, the author used the resources of the university's library, online resources and the knowledge gained after attending classes at university. The author hopes that this report will give a clear understanding of the subject of leading and implementing workplace change applied to the chosen organisation.

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