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Change & Stability Management- BMMB7000D

COVID-19 and Change: Breakfast Champion

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Executive Summary

Breakfast Champion, based in Shanghai, China, is a producer, importer, and distributor of western food stuffs specializing in British foods. Due to Covid-19 and its impact on the expat population in China, Breakfast Champion must now look for new ways to grow it revenues. One opportunity comes in the form of brand localisation through sales and marketing actives, to attract the sustainable Chinese consumer market.

The report analyses key change management models and their potential effectiveness if implemented in Breakfast Champions potential change project. Additionally, the report identifies and discusses ways resistance factors associated with the proposed change project. Research was conducted using primary data collected first hand from staff Breakfast Champion staff members and secondary research conducted analysing academic and business-related materials.

After critically analysing Breakfast Champions current situation, and weighing up cultural, social, economic, and skill set limitations, recommendations were made to implement a hybrid version of Kotter's model and the ADKAR model. This is due to east vs west mentality currently adopted within the organization with Breakfast Champions Chinese team opting for collectivism and its western employees favouring individualism.

1. Introduction

The following report analyses key change management models and their potential effectiveness. Additionally, the report identifies and discusses ways resistance factors associated with the proposed change project. Research will be conducted using primary data collected first hand from staff Breakfast Champion staff members and secondary research conducted analysing academic and business-related materials.

Breakfast Champion, based in Shanghai, China, is a producer, importer, and distributor of western food stuffs specializing in British foods (Breakfast Champion, 2022). Due to strict Covid-19 policies enforced in China (The Associated Press, 2022), Breakfast Champions traditional expat consumer base dwindled from 2021-22, leaving the business with a revenue gap of around 60%.

In a previously related presentation, it was established that if Breakfast Champion is to continue trading, new and sustainable revenue streams must be secured. One such opportunity for growth comes in the form of the extremely lucrative local Chinese consumer F&B market which in FY2019 reached $89 billion (Vallery, 2021). In order to penetrate the local market Breakfast Champion should first create then implement a new market strategy that aligns with the wants and needs of the Chinese consumer.

If Breakfast Champion is to successfully implement its new market strategy it must identify and implement change management model/s that fit with the complexed and nuanced cultural, social, and economic limitations both internally and externally. This can ensure results are correctly measured, key change stakeholders are accountable, employee resistance is managed, and a greater return on investment is achieved (Cataplut, 2021).

2. Research Method

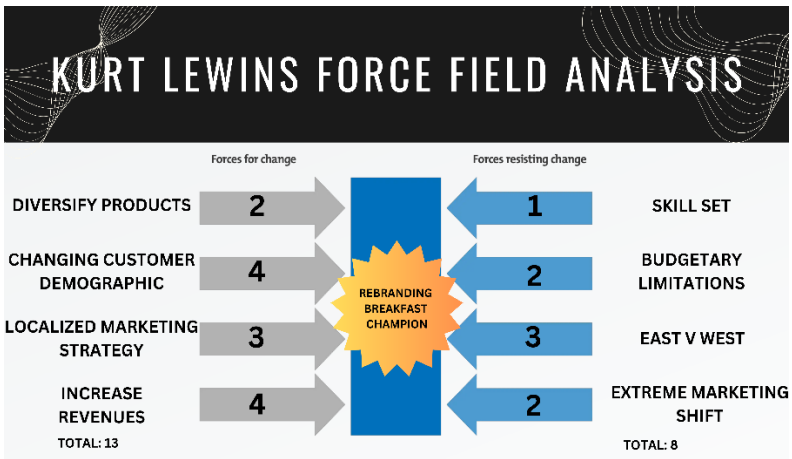
For the report, primary research was conducted in the form of first-hand experience within the day-to-day Breakfast Champion operations. An employee questionnaire was also conducted in which one Chinese employee and one British employee were asked to answer a series of closed and open-ended questions related to Breakfast Champions need for change, the change process, and their thoughts on how the change management process could be facilitated.

To strengthen arguments and conclusions, secondary research was collected using academic peer-reviewed journals, books, business articles, and other relevant materials related to the subject matter. Also, an analysis of forces for and against change was conducted using Lewin’s Force Field. To help map stakeholder power and interest in the change process, a Stakeholder Power Interest Grid was used.

3. Findings

3.1 Results from employee interviews (See appendix 1) & Force Field analysis

A questionnaire was written, and 2 members of the Breakfast Champion team were asked to answer the questions as openly as possible. 7 questions were presented with the intention of gauging responders' belief, appetite, hopes, worries, and expectations the change ahead. Also, to present a culturally rounded outlook, 1 Chinese member and 1 British member were selected.



Cultural, social, and economic change resistance/limitation factors related to Force Field Analysis and questionnaire response.

3.2 East vs west

According to Zhang & Liu (2020), culturally, China vastly differs from the west. For example, China has always emphasized a strong sense of collectivism within its society. Chinese culture demands collective interests, advocates collectivism, and emphasizes unity and cooperation. On the other hand, the pursuit of personal freedom and interests is seen as everyone's right in the West. Western individualism focuses on the individuals and their personality development.

As Breakfast Champion is a multi-cultural organisation with employees from the UK, Ireland, and China this can often lead to cultural differences amongst Breakfast Champions team when pushing forward with tasks and projects. In most cases, its Western team members prefer to think outside of the box and progress with projects individually, but on the other hand its Chinese employees prefer to work together as

a team using well structured project plans that don't allow for changes or adjustments unless necessary.

Shonk (2023) suggests that one common reason for cross-cultural misunderstandings is that humans display a tendency to interpret others' behaviours, values, and beliefs through the lens of one's own culture. Not only do nationalities and countries have nuanced cultural behaviours imbedded in their everyday lives but also through businesses and organizations. Research suggests that cultural misunderstandings contribute greatly when complicating the implementation of numerous change management models such as Kotter's 8 step model and the ADKAR model (Ilyas & Hassan 2015). To give Breakfast Champions change project the best chance of success change managers and stake holders should exercise cultural understanding when working with a diverse team who come from different cultures and nationalities (Reed, 2013).

3.3 Marketing shift

As Breakfast Champion will rebrand its products making them more appealing to Chinese consumers, it must also change its entire marketing strategy. Product marketing strategies are also affected by cultural differences amongst Breakfast Champions team. Generally, Western marketing as with social and cultural traditions focuses on individualism and a consumer-centric approach, Chinese marketing focuses on collectivism by building strong and trusted relationships through "guanxi" (Code Design, no date). Guanxi is a Chinese term meaning relationships; in business, it refers to connections and relationships built over a set period of time, these connections can be leveraged to open new business opportunities and potential consumer markets (James, 2023).

As traditional Chinese marketing focuses on collectivism and Western marketing individualism, Breakfast Champion management must bridge the gap by understanding the 2 cultural differences in consumer behaviour and strike a balance between its traditional Western marketing approach and its new localised rebrand (Zhao, 2021). Culturally intelligent change management models such as Kotter's 8 step model and the ADKAR model show promise when planning and implementing culturally sensitive organizational changes (Ilyas & Hassan 2015).

3.4 Budgetary limitations

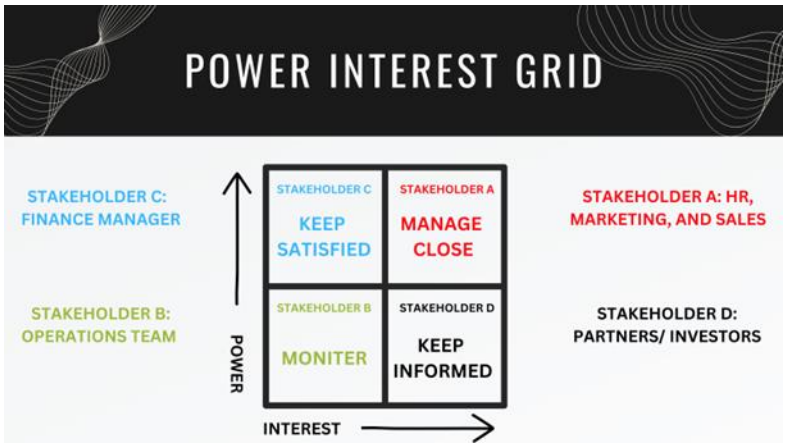
With Breakfast Champions small business size, reduced revenue streams, and limited cashflow comes budgetary limitations. Applying change management models takes time, patients, and resources. According to research conducted by Prosci (no date), primary cost factors of change management include resources (people), training, communications, travel, time, and other materials. Additionally, there are

secondary components to take into consideration. These include, consultant fees, general expenses, event costs such as workshops and training venues, as well as reinforcement and recognition programs.

As change management approaches its application using knowledge, skills, tools, and resources to deal with change, it is vital that Breakfast Champion has the adequate financial resources to initiate, implement, and facilitate change management models (SHRM, no date).

3.5 Power Interest Grid

Mendelow (1991), suggests analysing stakeholder groups based on their power and interest. Indicating that it may seem some stakeholders possess more power and influence than others according to rank or department, this is not always the case. Put simply, stakeholders can hold all the power but very little interest and vice-versa.



3.6 Stakeholder Analysis

The power interest grid shows that due to the rebranding and marketing nature of the proposed change, key stakeholders with the highest level of both power and interest are those in HR, marketing, and sales (Stakeholder A). This group of stakeholders should be managed closely throughout the course of the project (Reddi, 2023).

Due to its funding capabilities and control over a key component of success (financial resources), the finance manager and team also hold a high level of power in the change project (Stakeholder C). Though they do show an interest regarding the return on investment and cashflow consequences the project may present, a reduced level of interest in the workings of the project is very much plausible.

Keeping the finance department satisfied throughout the course of change project can secure much needed financial resources (Boer et al, no date).

The operations team are shown to have a low level of power and interest (Stakeholder B). As the change projects immediate focus is on sales and marketing activities, the operations team may feel they have no role to play. If Breakfast Champions localized marketing push is successful it will result in greater order numbers, and more labour for the operations team in the form of packing and distribution. The operations team should be closely monitored without loading them with too much information. That said, the team should be ready for sudden increased workload (Guthrie, 2021).

As the Breakfast Champion partners/investors are not involved in the business operations, their level of power in the project is not immediate (Stakeholder D). Their level of interest is high, therefore change project plans must be submitted for approval and information fed to them regularly. This can help to uncover any areas that have could be adjusted (Mendelow,1991).

4. Case Analysis

4.1 Selected key change models

Two change models have been selected for analysis, Kotter's 8 step model and The ADKAR model. Due to their easy-to-follow framework, low cost, and relatively modern approach, both models show promise when used in small sized business (Forbes Council, 2022). Models will be analysed based on the primary and secondary research data and the corresponding theories proposed by Kotter (2012) & Hiatt (2006).

4.2 Kotter's 8 Step Model

Kotter (2012) put forward a change model designed to manage changes within businesses and organizations. To do this, he analysed 100 companies and their behaviour then suggested 8 steps that can increase their chances of success when changes are made. The theory consists of 8 parts, that when used correctly can facilitate an investigation in whether change management can be implemented at an organization.

Create a sense of urgency.

Kotter (2012) suggests that creating a sense of urgency must be prominent and complacency must be kept to a minimum. Both Cherry and Will amplified the urgency for change through their belief that the change could have a positive impact on the organisation. For a greater chance of success the change to be taken seriously by all stakeholders Rabinowitz (2023). Kotter & Cohen (2002) also argue that 75% of employees wanting the change leads to a critical mass. Although in theory this has been achieved, the Breakfast Champion management should develop this further to enhance motivation.

Form a powerful coalition

Forming a coalition consisting of key stakeholders allows the Breakfast Champion management to push its change agenda through effective project related power and authority Kanter & Hayirli (2022). By referring to power and authority Kanter and Hayirli are suggesting that expertise, experience, and greater relationships with employees can ease the change period. As stated in a previous section of the report, cultural differences are a key resistance to factor. As key change stakeholders come from both sides of the cultural divide this adds much needed contextual diversity. Allowing for a range of views and perspectives, aiding the coalition in its project goals (Teras et al, 2021).

Create a vision for change

Creating a vision that not only outlines Breakfast Champions change goals but shows the final change destination is vital to guiding key stakeholders and employees (Kotter, 2012). In Breakfast Champions case, not only does the vision need to show feasibility, but desirability amongst its culturally different team. Key stakeholders and management must show that Breakfast Champions future state will be better than the present, showing employees that the future is a desirable place to go (Tanner, 2022). For this step to be successful, Breakfast Champions change vision should promote culturally exclusive methods and goals.

Communicate the vision

Based on Cherry and Wills responses to the questions, thus far, communication has happened at management level or on a team-by-team basis. Although top-down communication can be seen as effective (Muzquiz, 2023), it may not have to desired effect due to Breakfast Champions close nit team environment, allowing for fewer collaborative opportunities amongst teams (Team Asana, 2021). In hindsight this may favour a more Chinese based approach regarding collectivism but allow

western cultured staff to think outside of the box helping employees to grow into the project.

Removing obstacles

Kaushik (2021) argues that there are 3 common resistance factors linked to organizational change, lack of communication, understanding, and accountability. These can lead to change obstacles. According to Gartner (no date), over half of all organizational change projects fail because of a lack of clarity regarding change processes and goals. Change obstacles more nuanced to Breakfast Champions situation come in the form of financial and cultural limitations. For example, to overcome possible financial change barriers, Breakfast Champions leadership must present a desirable financial model that promotes positive ROI (Michigan State University, 2021). As stated previously, striking a balance between eastern and western cultural norms can only be achieved through sound, easy to understand communication at all levels of the project.

Create short term wins

Currently, Breakfast Champion has no systems in place to create rewards or moral boosting moments for short term wins and achievements. This will need to change if the organization is to motivate key stakeholders and employees involved in the change process (Tanner, 2022). A short-term win refers to an organizational improvement that is clearly visible and relates to the change process. They can be used to demonstrate team progress and build momentum (Abbas, 2023). Breakfast Champion should set short term wins throughout the change process and create team rewards each step of the way, this could enhance the project's success by openly sharing and celebrating progress (Amabile & Kramer, 2011).

Build on the change

From the questionnaire answers it was established that both Cherry and Will believed the coming change was for the greater good, this was also reflected in their opinions of the teams they work in. If successful change is implemented, however small it may be, it is vital that it is maintained and built upon (Johnston et al. 2017).

Make the change stick

As Breakfast Champions change success depends on several factors such as cultural, economic, and employee buy in, making the changes stick relies heavily on its initial success and results (Ramos, 2016). If stakeholders and employees can see the benefits of change it could become part of the company culture. Success change can be seen as part of Breakfast Champions fabric, giving employees a sense of normality surrounding change and its benefits (Shurrab and Zec, 2013).

4.3 ADKAR Change Model

The ADKAR change model was developed by Jeff Hiatt after studying change patterns in over 700 organizations. In theory, the model in based on an understanding of individual change and how it is a must when successfully implementing organizational change (Prosci, no date).

Awareness

Based on the replies from Cherry and Will critical questions were answered to establish that the need for change, its nature and the consequences of failure were all understood. This was also reflected in their opinions of Breakfast Champions teams although this can not be stated as proven or fact at this stage. Balluck et al, (2020), argue that for true change awareness effective, targeted communications must take place at all levels of the organization. If team leaders can effectively communicate Breakfast Champion situation, it could lead to less resistance to its change.

Desire

As key change stakeholders are onboard with the change, they must work to create desire amongst the reminder of individual employees. This can only be achieved if employees individually understand the change as communicated in step 1 (Millar Productivity, 2013). Culturally speaking, change project communication could be more effective if it was delivered on a case-by-case basis by a key change stakeholder with culturally nuanced backgrounds related to Chinese of western methods.

Knowledge

Referring to the force field analysis, skillset is seen as one of the biggest resistance factors in the Breakfast Champions change. Providing clear and decisive education and training at all stages of the change will contribute positively to its success (Errida & Lotfi). The more knowledge passed onto individuals the better equipped they will be to deal with the upcoming change in both its present and future state (Lucid Chart, no date).

Ability

Monitoring progress as individuals implement change will give stakeholders an opportunity to provide constructive feedback and praise (Rittenhouse, 2015). Breakfast Champions change stakeholders should act as mentors during this stage. (Johnston et al, 2017) argue that organizations are successful at change implementation foster a leadership style that sets goals with clear accountability. If managers and employees must introduce a culture of time, effort, and attention amongst each other to see the results of their investment (Behson, 2022).

Reinforcement

By sustaining change Breakfast Champion can build on that change and move forward as a collective. Again, feedback is vital to the reinforcement stage of the model. Leo (2021), suggests that as it takes a while for a change to become the norm, change leaders must use reinforcement tactics to preserve the change. In Breakfast Champions case, the can be achieved through regular team meetings, individual employee assessments, and by recognizing and rewarding change advocates.

5. Conclusion

The need for change is evident, but Breakfast Champion must decide the best course of action. For success, each phase of the change models suggested must be fully followed to its end. Stakeholders must show direction when implementing the change program. By aligning on a team and individual basis, they can overcome the limitations described in the report.

Although the limitations analysed in the report should be taken seriously, both models show promise when overcoming and successfully implementing change

within the organisation. From the interviews conducted, there is a clear sense of understanding and motivation amongst the Breakfast Champion management/ stakeholders. For the project to truly work these qualities must be imbedded into the company culture.

Additionally, finance and other key resources are needed to progress with the project. For this to happen, the accounts team must also see positive outcomes. New marketing strategies can take much needed time and resources away from other aspects of the business. Projecting a clear and effective message from the top down will also play a key role in the development of the organisation. The project can be conducted on a team and individual basis with stakeholder acting as the glue to hold it all together.

6. Recommendations

Based on the research findings the following recommendations have been made.

Shonhe, (2019) argues that when used together Kotter's model the ADKAR model can provide a rounded change management solution. When used in tandem, the models can provide a comprehensive and aligned firm work for change at organisational and individual levels.

Using the models as a hybrid change solution would allow Breakfast Champion opportunities to prepare employees both individually and as a team. As the ADKAR model acts as a gateway to prepare employees on an individual level, it could act as an antidote when dealing with cultural, skillset, and financial difficulties that have been identified as limitations in the report (Prosci, no date). Meanwhile, Kotter's Model could be used to create a much-needed sense of urgency, communicate the change vision, empower and reward people for their efforts and monitor the change process allowing for adjustments along the way (LinkedIn, no date).

Lazuardi, et al 2021, argue that when combined, the ADKAR and Kotter models show promise in both complexed and more simple change situations. Though there are shortcomings associated with both models, they can facilitate a 2-pronged method to deal with the challenges Breakfast Champions faces in its change journey.

Along with the 2-pronged model approach it is also vital that the Power Interest Grid is continuously analysed and used to the Breakfast Champion leaderships advantage. Doing so can keep key stakeholder onboard with the changes which in turn will provide much needed lobbying towards those under their control (Usifo, 2022).

To summarize and conclude, both change models used as a hybrid solution would be recommended in Breakfast Champions situation. Also, the monitor and sustain

stakeholder interest and engagement in the project, the Power Interest Grid is recommended and a vital tool.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Respondent 1

Ms Cherry Wang: Operations Manager

Reports to: Andrew Brown CEO

Question 1: Which department do you work with?

Answer 1: I work with the regional operations team.

Question 2: Do you believe organizational change is good for Breakfast Champion and why?

Answer 2: I do believe it is good, if the business is to recover from the negative effect of Covid-19 we must look for new opportunities to grow.

Question 3: Have you been informed of and fully understand the changes ahead?

Answer 3: Yes, I have full knowledge of the changes ahead and the new strategy for localisation. I am awaiting details on the next steps.

Question 4: Regarding the change, do you feel a sense of urgency in yourself and those around you?

Answer 4: In myself yes, I understand the need for change is pressing and necessary. The greater Breakfast Champion family, I also believe they understand that change needs to happen fast, this is based on conversations with team members from various departments.

Question 5: In your opinion, are the companies' goals are aligned with localized market requirements?

Answer 5: At the moment, I don't think the goals are fully aligned with localized marketing and sales techniques. For alignment we must think like Chinese people and design our change strategy around that concept.

Question 6: Do you foresee any challenges with the change?

Answer 6: I do, many. First, we need to understand the wants and needs of the local customer, as we are more experienced in western sales and marketing techniques this will need some work. Also, once we have a plan it is important that we stick to it and don't change it too much. Thirdly, financially we aren't in great shape, we must use our investments wisely. Also later, if successful, the change could bring more orders, this is something our operations team should be ready for, as we have downsized that team we may need to recruit and re-train new team members.

Question 7: Does the organization have the right talent to make the change successful?

Answer 7: Some departments are stronger than others. We have a talented team, but we may lack the skills and resources to make the most of our opportunities.

Respondent 2

Mr Will Shipton: Marketing Manager

Reports to: Andrew Brown CEO

Question 1: Which department do you work with?

Answer 1: I oversee the marketing department.

Question 2: Do you believe organizational change is good for Breakfast Champion and why?

Answer 2: Yes, we need to get back on track, so any change that has a positive impact on Breakfast Champion is a good thing in my opinion.

Question 3: Have you been informed of and fully understand the changes ahead?

Answer 3: From my understanding the change comes in the form of a marketing and branding shift that focuses on the local consumer market. There have been discussions on a team-by-team basis, but nothing has been put forward collectively.

Question 4: Regarding the change, do you feel a sense of urgency in yourself and those around you?

Answer 4: There is a feeling amongst myself and my team that change must happen in order to save jobs and push forward. The sooner we get going the better chance we have. The other departments I can not speak for but there is a feeling or urgency in the air.

Question 5: In your opinion, are the companies' goals are aligned with localized market requirements?

Answer 5: As a western marketer I am not actually sure, as far as the marketing team are concerned, we are ready to go to work and learn as individuals and as a team. As the Chinese consumer market is a complexed one, we may need to adapt as individuals and by pulling together our skills and talents.

Question 6: Do you foresee any challenges with the change?

Answer 6: As with any change, there will be challenges. From a marketer's standpoint, myself and the UK and Irish side of the team are diving into the unknown. One on one guidance that I can bring to my team is essential. Another key challenge for my team is the budget, as from what I have gathered, Chinese marketing and branding is KOL and online advertiser heavy. This requires connections in the right places and most importantly, money.

Question 7: Does the organization have the right talent to make the change successful?

Answer 7: We do like to think of ourselves as a talented bunch, but I feel that sometimes western and eastern norms can clash slowing things down and causing friction. I know the management have their hands full with this daily.