

Change Management Plan

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Introduction

Business organisations do not perform in traditional ways in recent days. Moreover, some business organisations have been showing excellence in both national and international boundaries. In this case, it will not be effective for the firms to remain constant over the years and business organisations do not do this too. Here, change is a common situation for most businesses and therefore, the workers of the firm also require to change their work capabilities with the change in the workplace. Some of the workers may resist the change rather than support them which can be very much detrimental to the organisation (Okeyo, 2020). In this case, business organisations can support the workers by providing proper training and development opportunities. If the workers are provided with proper development and training opportunities, the workers will be also supportive of the change plans. Different factors can hinder the change of the firms among them organisational culture is one of the most common ones. Here, business organisations cannot be effective in terms of change if the firms cannot manage the organisational culture and ensure good organisational structure, it will be difficult for them to manage change within the organisation (Henry, 2021). This particular report will be contributing information related to Unilever and different other related factors. Here, the current situation of Unilever will be shown, present change initiatives of Unilever will be also described in this report, impacts of different external factors and COVID-19 on the firm will be described, some change models will be shown, the issues related to the implementation of change strategy will be explained, the impacts of culture on change management plans will be also provided and lastly, the future change management plan for Unilever will be shown in this report.

a) Reviewing the present state of the selected company

Unilever, one of the fastest-growing multinational companies has been operating all over the world and supplying daily necessary commodities to houses. This firm has been offering various services to its customers from all over the world. It has been supplying different food products to the customers, it is good at providing home care products to the customers and Unilever is also famous for supplying beauty and personal care products to the customers. This firm has been working since 1929 and currently, it has been operating in different sectors of this business with the support of more than 149,000 workers according to the financial statement of the firm published in 2022. This firm deals with billions of revenues and therefore, the profit of the firm also generates 5illionns (Smith, 2023). By supplying in more than 190 countries, Unilever has become one of the largest and fastest-growing companies that are working in the consumer goods industry.



Figure 1: Some static information about Unilever

Source: (Hamilton & Webster, 2022)

The company has been experiencing huge growth due to different product launches and obtaining customer support. At the same time, the company has been also experiencing different challenges while expanding its business outside the national border. One of the major issues that the company has been dealing with is the impact of the recent pandemic, COVID-19. This has highly disrupted the firm in terms of ensuring a proper supply chain (Sewpersad, 2021). The firm has been failing while connecting with the suppliers of raw materials for making different products and at the same time the firm has been facing different sets of issues in terms of offering the products to the final customers.

Another issue that the firm has been facing is manufacturing operations. Due to COVID-19 some of the workers have left their job and this has disrupted the operation of Unilever. It can barely manage this huge production of the firm and therefore, it is facing issues in tackling the demands of the customers. Again, the firm has been facing issues due to the change in customer behaviour. As the firm has been operating since the 20th century and it has a well-developed and structured operation, it used to provide customers with some traditional consumer products (Changwony & Kyiu, 2022). But after the shift in customer behaviour due to COVID-19, the firm has been facing challenges in meeting new demands and customer preferences.

The firm has been launching different initiatives to ensure CSR and world sustainability. It has been working on hygiene practices since 2020. To ensure the success of this program, Unilever has already launched more than a hundred programs and seminars. Moreover, the firm has been also working to ensure that due to the activity of Unilever, the environment is not affected. For this reason, it has taken an initiative that states that Unilever will have huge packaging which will be reusable (Hamilton & Webster, 2022). The firm has ensured 100% of this initiative within 2025 and therefore, Unilever has been working from the root they have been also supporting the farmers and other distributors of the raw materials of Unilever to work on this project. Moreover, the firm has been also working on changing the current production process to a plant-based production process (Smith, 2023). In making many products in Unilever, the firm uses different types of chemicals and therefore, it has been thinking to reduce the use of chemicals and increase the use of natural plants which will ensure the good health of the consumers and at the same time it will also ensure the sustainability of the business.

b) Involvement /relationship with the selected company

I was connected with Unilever as a member of the sales team of the firm. In one of the workplaces of Unilever, I was connected as a salesperson and contributed to the team. Though Unilever has different positions to work on such as the firm has a marketing department which works for brand management, has sales department which works for customer development and customer management, has logistics department that works for managing different supply chains, it has a research department that works for developing the business products, it has finance and accounting department that works for managing all types of financial activities, it has manufacturing department that works for ensuring proper operation of the firm, it has information technology department that works for managing digital activities and there are some other departments too (Babson, 2022). Among these departments, the sales department is one of the vital departments as this department works for managing customers and increasing the customer base.

I was connected with this department and therefore, I was involved with different activities of Unilever.

c) Outlining of a recent change initiative to investigate for this report.

Unilever has undergone a different set of changes that are making Unilever more popular among the customers of the firm. The changes that Unilever has been focusing on currently are ensuring a sustainable living plan that will be working for making the whole production and supply process of Unilever sustainable and will also ensure environmental protection within 2025 (Yasa & Giantari, 2020). Again, the firm has been also working on restructuring business since 2016 and this has been accomplished in this particular program through restructuring several units of the firm. Moreover, the firm has been also working on digital transformation since 2019 which will lead the firm to obtain a new customer base through online support. As the whole world is connecting through different online activities, in this case, Unilever will be obtaining a new customer base due to digital transformation. Moreover, Unilever has been also working for cultural transformation which will ensure a unique culture within the firm as the firm has been working in more than 190 nations from all over the world. These were some of the change initiatives in whichh Unilever is working (Arruda & Johannsdottir, 2022). Rather than these changes, Unilever has been also working on some other change initiatives.

A recent change initiative that has been taken by Unilever and which will be focused on in the report is that the firm is making its production and supply process simpler by ensuring a more category-focused business (Nickell, 2021). This initiative has been taken since 2022. Though the firm has been working with different categorical products before 2022 most of the products of the firm are made and supplied in units and therefore, it was difficult for the firm to obtain the highest efficiency and meet the customer demands. In this case, the firm has been working on more category-focused operations. Unilever has been working with different categorical products and among them, some of the common categories are personal care products, home care products, foods and beverage products, oral care products, beauty and skin care products and some other categories (Spicher, 2021). Due to focusing on categorical products, the firm has ensured higher efficiency in operation, and it has obtained success in managing proper supply chains too. Unilever has made different supply chain initiatives for different categorical products and therefore, all the demands of the customers are fulfilled based on the product categories they desired for.

d) Providing the recent history of the organisation and exploring different impacts of changes in the external environment including COVID-19 on the organisation.

Business organisations change over time to obtain market success and protect against different challenges. Change is a common nature of business, and it ensures higher efficiency, lower risk and organisational success. Therefore, it is necessary to manage change for the business. At the same time, the business environment can also change even when the business remains constant and does not change over time (Arruda & Johannsdottir, 2022). These changes can have a significant impact on the business operations. It can significantly impact businesses positively and negatively too. Therefore, analysing the environmental change is necessary for businesses including Unilever to sustain themselves in the marketplace.

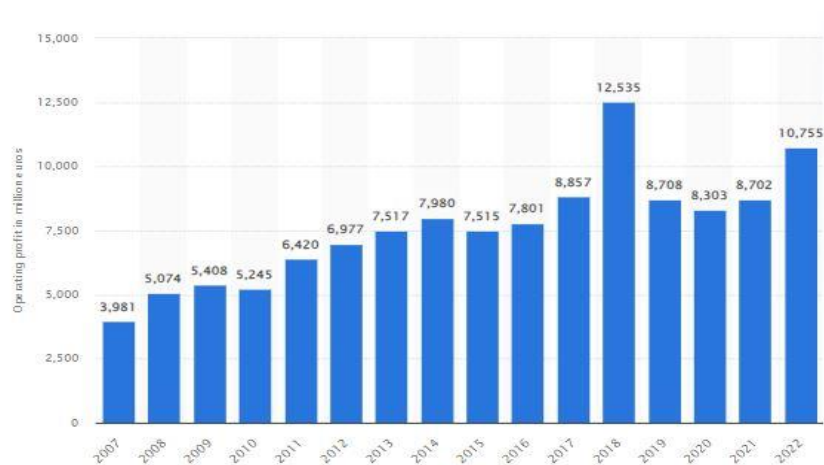


Figure 2: Drop in operating profits of Unilever during COVID-19

Source: (Solomon, 2022)

Recent history of the organisation

Unilever has been working successfully for almost a century. This organisation has faced different success events and at the same time, the firm has witnessed some of the challenges too. In recent times, Unilever has been working on different programs and change initiatives (Nicolas, 2020). Some of them have been included here-

Sustainable Living Plan: Unilever has been working for ensuring sustainability in its business activities since a long ago (Adeola, 2021). In 2010, this firm has taken the initiative to reduce the footprint of the firm in the environment and ensure proper sustainability. Therefore, the firm has worked on programs that will ensure sustainability and as a result, the firm has successfully obtained an emission of 50% greenhouse effects made by the firm. Moreover, the firm has taken the initiative to ensure sustainability in terms of ensuring the packaging of the products and within 2025 the firm will successfully ensure 100% reusable packaging.

Organisational Restructuring: Unilever has been working for restructuring the business from a very early stage of the business and as a result, the firm has taken several initiatives in terms of ensuring innovative ideas. As a major restructuring initiative, Unilever has planned to separate the food and personal care products into separate divisions (William, 2021). This initiative has improved the productivity of Unilever in both food and personal care products. Moreover, in 2017 Unilever also ensured a restructuring initiative that ensured the safety actions of the firm when the firm will face a reduction in sales compared to the expected sales.

Digital Transformation: The world has been turning to digital gateways. Business organisations have been obtaining success in digital platform and as a result, the firms are also increasing their presence on digital platforms as the number of customers are increasing in online media. Therefore, in 2017, Unilever has taken the initiative to go online and sell its products to customers through online media (Franklin, 2021). This initiative has been taken by entering into a partnership with Alibaba which is a Chinese company. The firm has been also taking initiatives in going online at field levels too.

Cultural Transformation: Unilever works with several workers and therefore, the organisation has gone on a cultural transformation. According to the CEO of Unilever, the workers of the firm must align with the corporate culture of the firm that will focus more on risk and experiments. The firm has been pushing the workers to be more innovative and ensure a good organisational culture for the firm. To support this initiative, Unilever has taken a cultural transformation plan in 2016 that will work for connecting growth approaches and ensuring experiment culture within the workplace.

Portfolio Transformation: Several portfolio approaches have been obtained by Unilever throughout the years of operation of the firm. This firm has been obtaining other organisations to strengthen the business operation of the firm (Palmer & Dunford, 2021). As a portfolio transformation, this firm has taken over Quila which is a beauty care organisation suited in Latin America. This takeover has happened to improve the product portfolio of the firm and ensure a better product for the customers of the organisation. In 2018, this takeover resulted in better personal care products for Unilever.

Impacts of changes in the external environment including COVID-19 on the organisation.

If the business environment changes overtimes, it can also impact the organisation in different ways. Sometimes the change in the external environment can have a positive impact on the business and in most cases, the changes in the external environment can have negative impacts if the changes go against the business expectations. Therefore, business organisations need to be focused on the changes that are happening all over the world and that can impact the business operation (Harrington, 2021). Due to the changes in the external environment including COVID-19, Unilever has been impacted a lot. This organisation has suffered from different issues and challenges due to this particular issue. Here are some of the impacts of the changes in the external environment as well as COVID-19.

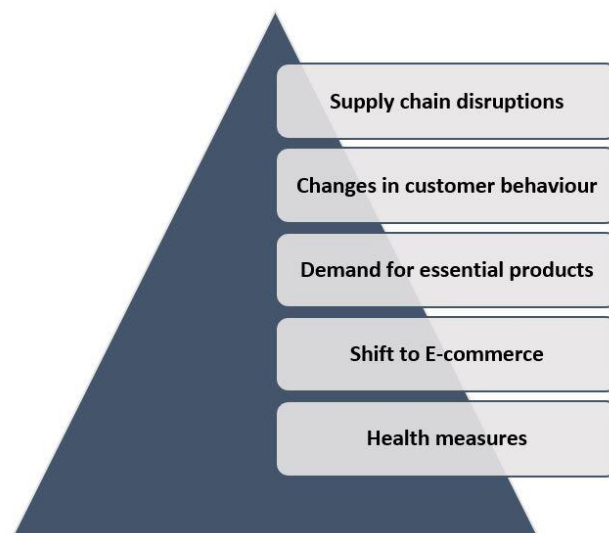


Figure 3: Impacts of changes in the external environment including COVID-19

Source: (Klein & Berrie, 2021)

Supply chain disruptions: The global supply chain before 2020 was smooth and running at a good pace. After the stroke of COVID-19, the global supply chain has collapsed and therefore, business products have failed short to reach customers in time. Unilever has faced huge issues in different matters regarding collecting raw materials from customers and delivering the products to the customers. For manufacturing products, raw materials are the most primary product that Unilever needed but due to the lockdown in different areas, the supply of raw materials has been stopped and therefore, Unilever has faced many issues (Jennifer, 2020). At the same time, Unilever has faced issues distributing the products that were already produced and kept in a warehouse. Therefore, due to the supply chain disruption some of the factories of Unilever needed to delay operation and stopped operation in many cases.

Changes in customer behaviour: The purchase habit of the customers have significantly changed over time. People are no longer fond of using the same sorts of traditional products. After the attack COVID and some other external changes, people are focusing more on hygiene products and therefore, the sale of traditional products has been stopped (William, 2021). At the same time, Unilever has faced a boost in delivering some other products that meanly ensure hygiene. This change in customer behaviour regarding purchases has made a significant change in bringing initiatives and requires harder efforts to meet consumer demand.

Demand for essential products: Unilever has faced a significant boost in making and distributing cleaning items. The Products that ensure 100% hygiene in terms of cleaning and washing are getting more popular. Moreover, the demand for some other essential products that are necessary to spend day-to-day life is also increasing (Gates & Young, 2020). In this case, Unilever has been focusing more on those products so that the firm can obtain more profits in these categories. Since the firm has been facing changes in demand for skincare products and other oral care products, the firm has been focusing more on hygiene items and other daily essential products so that the profit gaps can be reduced and ensure the highest effectiveness.

Health measures: In recent days, customers from all over the world are highly concerned about health and safety measures. Customers are highly concerned about the preparation procedure of the products that they consume from Unilever and therefore, the firm has been focusing more on ensuring hygiene. Moreover, the firm has been also focusing on the supply chain partners and the workers of the firm so that they also take precautions regarding safety and health measures (Palmer & Dunford, 2021). In this case, the firm has been focusing on training programs for the customers and trying to make sure that the employees are properly focusing on the safety measures and ensuring customer demands are satisfied. New protocols regarding hygiene and safety measures are also implemented in both the manufacturing and administrative sectors of Unilever so that workers from every area of the firm can focus on these sectors.

Shift to E-commerce: Since COVID-19 people were not allowed to go out, they used to purchase products through online media and therefore, it changed their buying habits too. After the pandemic, people did not go to their traditional ways of buying goods and products. Therefore, this shift to E-commerce has significantly changed the distribution activities of Unilever. Now the firm has been collecting a huge profit from the online distribution channel (Franklin, 2021). Since most of the profit of the firm comes from retail business, the shift to E-commerce has created a moderate impact on the firm and therefore, Unilever has been impactfully handling this situation.

e) Evaluating change management models with the identification of challenges related to strategic change in the firm and also showing the ways the change was managed and what leadership style was utilised.

To ensure change within an organisation it is necessary to apply different change management models. If business organisations cannot ensure the proper use of change management models, it will be difficult for firms to apply change initiatives. The use of different change management models solely depends on the situations and use of the models. Therefore, the effectiveness of the change models also depends on the selection of the best change management model.

Change management models

There are different change management models. Here are some of them that Unilever can use.

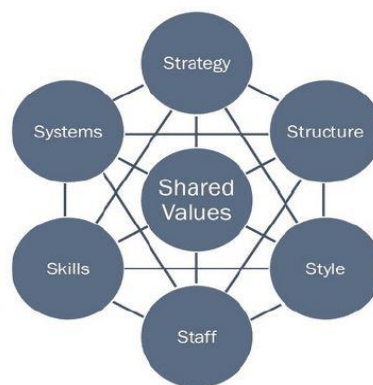


Figure 4: McKinsey 7-s Model

Source: (Jenfer, 2020)

McKinsey 7-s Model: This particular change model is consisting of 7 different stages that must be implemented by the organisations in obtaining the best output from the actions and change. This model starts with building a strategy for the change. After that making a good structure to implement the strategy is the focus (Borland, 2019). Then a proper system is developed for easy access to other activities for the change. After making a system some shared values are created and required skills are identified for the changes. A proper staff member is generated for implementing the change and at last a style of implementing the change is built.

Lewin's Change Management Model: This particular change model is implemented by following three different steps. Starting from unfreezing the current approach of implementing

different activities to changing it and further refreezing the new change model is defined in this change model by Lewin (Ivanaj & Mehta, 2018). It is an easy model to implement change within the firm that can be implemented by Unilever and can be successfully applied as most of the workers of the firm will be able to obtain new changes easily.

Issues related to strategic change in the firm

Certain issues are connected with the implementation of a strategic change in the firm. Here are some of the issues and challenges that have been described-

Resistance to change: One of the major issues while implementing a change is resistance to change. Not all the workers within the organisation be supportive in terms of participating in the change models of the firm. Even some of the managers do not show an optimistic attitude regarding change as this will require higher efforts to implement a change.

Issues in leadership: A change cannot be brought by the subordinates. They can implement the change according to the orders made by the leaders (Klein & Berrie, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to ensure a good leadership strategy. Without a good leadership strategy change will not be applied and in this case, it can be an issue to bring change.

Organisational structure: A good organisational structure can successfully initiate a change and on the other hand, if the organisational structure is not good enough, it will not be supportive of bringing change. In this case, business organisations should be careful regarding developing a good organisational structure that will be supportive and make sure that the change model is applied.

Lack of collaboration: A change cannot be initiated if the managers do not collaborate with the subordinates and the subordinates do not support the managers in terms of implementing the change initiative (Harrington, 2021). Therefore, proper collaboration is necessary among the managers and the subordinates so that a proper change initiative can be brought by the firms.

Ways in which the change was managed.

The change initiatives of Unilever have been managed by applying certain things. Here are these.

Generating a vision: Without a good vision for the change, it will be difficult for the managers to implement a change within the organisation, therefore, Unilever has always ensured a vision so that the subordinates and the change team can work effectively by focusing on the vision as the guideline for change.

Ensuring a change plan: After generating the vision it is necessary to create a plan that the works of the firm will follow (Lawrence & Weber, 2018). In this case, Unilever has always worked effectively in terms of making good change plans so that the workers of the firm can effectively obtain necessary changes.

Engaging the workforce: A change cannot be generated and implemented effectively if the whole workforce is not engaged in the change initiative. Here, Unilever always ensures that a change management team has been created and at the same time all the workers who are connected with the change plan are properly connected with every step of the change.

Training and development: Change is a new thing, and the workers of the firm are not familiar with the changes initiated by the firms. Therefore, change requires training and development for the workers (Franklin, 2021). In this case, Unilever always ensures proper training and development activities for the workers of the firm and makes sure that all the workers are obtaining proper knowledge regarding the change who are participating in the management activity.

A leadership style that was used for change management.

Different leadership approaches can be used for bringing change within the organisation. In Unilever, participating leadership is highly applied. This leadership approach is used within the organisation for certain reasons. Here, the firm can take the opinions of the subordinates regarding the necessary improvement plan and the visibility of the change plan. This is necessary for different reasons. First of all, the subordinates are the members who will be working to bring change. If the firms ignore the opinion of the subordinates, they will be directly ignoring a major portion or a major part of the implementation of the change. Therefore, Unilever always ensures the participating leadership approach. Moreover, the firm also includes some of the subordinates in the change management team so that the subordinates can provide their opinions regarding the change (Klein & Berrie, 2021). In this case, the subordinates will be able to provide an opinion if the firm visualises something that is not obtainable. Therefore, this leadership approach is necessary to apply for implementing the change model effectively and Unilever did this for the same reason.

f) Evaluating the effect of organisational culture on the change management activities and developing a suitable change management plan for the future.

Organisational culture is one of the major elements of change management. If business organisations cannot create a changing environment or change the culture within the organisation then it will be difficult for the organisation to plan and manage a change (Borland, 2019). Therefore, some effective change management models must be identified by Unilever to appropriately manage change.

Effect of organisational culture on the change management plan

The organisational culture of Unilever can significantly impact the change management plan. Here are some of the ways the organisational culture can impact the change management plan-

Resistance or support: Sometimes the organisation's culture can be supportive and sometimes it can be resistant to change. It is necessary to manage the organisational culture otherwise it may not support the change. In most cases, the management team may not be supportive in terms of changing the current working ability of the firm (Mercer, 2018). But in the case of Unilever, the work environment and corporate culture are supportive of the change.

Collaboration: Ensuring collaboration among the workforce is necessary for bringing change. Collaboration as well as communication among the workforce is built through the corporate culture and the workers are forced or motivated to collaborate to different changes in the firm. In this case, workers are highly influenced by the corporate culture. In Unilever, the workers of the firm are collaborative and ensure effective communication among them due to the effective corporate culture.

Organisational structure: Organisation structure is one of the major parts that can be supportive of the changes made by the firms. In this case, if the organisational structure is not supportive of the firms, it will be difficult for the firm to bring new changes. In Unilever, the firm has a good corporate structure and therefore, the firm usually brings new changes over time.

Learning and development: If the organisational culture does not support the learning and development of the workers, it will be difficult for the organisation to sustain itself in changing environment. Here, learning and development are necessary for organisations in ensuring new things are in effect (Gates & Young, 2020). On the other hand, positive learning and development environment can ensure a good change for the firm. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that the firms are positive towards changes.

A suitable change management plan

A suitable change management plan for Unilever will follow certain steps. In following the change plan has been shown-

Defining the proposed change: Defining the proposed change is the first step of the change management plan. Here, Unilever needs to define and explain the necessary changes that the firm will be incorporating. Without a proper definition of the change management plan, it will be difficult for the firm to approach it further (Ramani, 2018). Therefore, defining the proposed change will be necessary for Unilever to encounter.



Figure 5: A suitable change management plan

Source: (Mgqibi & Sines, 2019)

Creating a change management team: A team is required to create that will be focused and incorporate the whole change. Without the support from the change management team, the whole change effort will not be accomplished. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Unilever to develop a good change management team that will solely work to effectively implement the change management efforts of the firm.

Communicating the change strategies: Building strong communication and collaboration among the members of the change management team and other workers of Unilever is necessary. If proper collaboration and communication are implemented, it will be difficult for the firm to explain to the general workers the necessary changes that are required to bring (Borland, 2019). Therefore, it is ensuring proper communication among the workers of the firm will be effective in terms of ensuring a good change management initiative.

Training to change management team: After properly communicating the change management approaches to the workers of the firm, it is necessary to ensure good training for the workers of the firm. If proper training and development initiatives are applied, it will be easier for the workers of the firm to adapt to the change easily. As bringing change for the workers will be a new thing for them to focus on, the workers of Unilever will require proper training.

Implementing the change: After providing proper training and implementing development initiatives, it is required to implement the change within the organisation (Palmer & Dunford, 2021). While implementing the change within Unilever, it will be the responsibility of the higher management to ensure that all the subordinates are properly understanding new policies and the whole change appropriately.

Monitoring and evaluating the change: Monitoring the change and evaluating its success is highly necessary. Without proper monitoring of the activities done by the workers and evaluating the success of the new policies and actions taken by the firm, it will be difficult to measure the effectiveness of the whole process (Mullennix & Cohn, 2019). Therefore, monitoring and evaluating the whole approach is necessary.

Conclusion

As change is a new trend for business organisations and it is necessary to cope with the market demand, business organisations must be careful in terms of initiating change. Further, it is also necessary to make sure that the best change model is selected by the organisations based on business demand and consumer preferences. Here, the change is necessary mostly for the business organisation that operates globally (Franklin, 2021). As global business organisations need to deal with a higher number of consumers and the changing behaviour of the customers can strongly shape the product demand for the products of the firm, global businesses must be careful in terms of generating new ideas and bringing change for the firm. To do this in time, business organisations must prepare the corporate culture in a way that will be effective in terms of adopting new changes (William, 2021). Here, if the business organisations cannot accept changes made by the firms, it will be difficult for the firms to manage huge demand globally and ensure the highest profitability of the firm. These change-related discussions of this report have been made based on information taken from Unilever.

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