

Implementing Change

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Aims and Objectives

- Understand how to manage change
- Develop knowledge of best practices
- Identify drivers and barriers of change
- Understand the importance of planning for change
- Identify how to evaluate change

Content

- Internal and external drivers for change
- Enabling and hindering change
- Supporting and communicating change
- Planning for change
- Best practices for change management
- Monitoring change
- Conclusion

Drivers for change (Internal)

- Internal drivers for change are within the organisation and its control
- Leadership style (e.g introduction of new manager)
- Poor performance (e.g targets not being met)
- Employees (e.g high staff turnover)

Drivers for change can be both internal and external, Internal drivers would refer to factors within the organisation itself such as a need to develop systems and external would be factors outside of the organisation which drive change such as political, economic, or social factors. Internal drivers are typically things which are in the organisations control or within it's internal environment and can include leadership style, low performance and a new company mission. The introduction of a new manager or the promotion of a current employee can bring with it a new style of leadership, this can implement how things within a

department or organisation are done and also how a team is managed, these new ideas and perspectives can lead to changes within the organisation for example an organisation may be accustomed to an autocratic leadership style whereby delegation is not present and then a new manager may be appointed who uses a laissez-faire approach which encourages employees to make decisions themselves (Demetriades Toftdahl 2020) and the organisation would have to adapt to these changes. Poor performance is another internal factor which can lead to change, if an organisation is underperforming in a certain aspect e.g staff retention, it may then look to implement new initiatives to attract and retain good employees which over all would help achieve its goals. A new company mission is another internal driver of change, organisations need to be adaptable and may have to diversify or re-brand, this large change needs to be managed and implemented appropriately and depending on the scale can lead to policies and procedures having to be overhauled.

Drivers for change (external)

- External change drivers are not within the organisations control.
- Usually any PESTLE related factor
- Political (e.g Brexit – staffing problems)
- Economic (e.g Minimum wage increases – pay structure reviews)
- Social (e.g Desire for work life balance – staffing to accommodate lower working hours)
- Technological (e.g new soft ware – speed up production lines)
- Legal (e.g change in safety legislation – review procedures)
- Environmental (e.g pandemic – social distancing etc. in work place, lower capacity)

External drivers for change are not within the control of the organisation, these usually fall into one of the following categories: political, economic, social, technological, legal, or environmental. Technological change is an external factor whereby organisations may drive change through faster and more efficient technologies, this can lead to workforces being streamlined and Tucker (2019) discusses that organisations may have to make changes to the technologies they use to remain competitive. Political factors can also be drivers of change e.g brexit which may lead an organisation to see a fall in employee

numbers and potential issues recruiting in certain sectors such as hospitality, this may mean a change in organisational structure to minimise staffing gaps or in recruitment procedures. A topical factor that has driven change in recent times comes from the covid-19 pandemic which has mean organisations have had to change processes to accommodate staff shortages and absence as well as evaluate the product they are offering to ensure it complies with safety standards and legal requirements. A driver such as the pandemic can lead to reactive change rather than changes an organisation wants to make, this is often done quickly and can need evaluating again after the event, (Deloitte 2020). Often internal and external drivers of change are linked together and impact each other.

Enabling change

- Enabling change
 - Change ready culture allows acceptance readily (Mulcock 2017)
 - Communication (this must be constant and clear)
 - Strong leadership (leading by example)
 - Trust
 - Flat organisational structure
 - Strong working relationships with front line employees

The key to implementing change successfully is having a 'change-ready' culture. This enables changes to be made and be accepted more readily. According to Mulcock (2017) a change ready culture can be built and implemented by planning properly and ensuring processes and time scales are thought out, this ensures time for employees to adapt and outline any potential issues, it is also important to build trust and communicate the processes thoroughly throughout and also upon completion of the change, this should generate a greater buy in and ensure a smooth transition amongst a team. Communication is important when

implementing change and ensuring the process is communicated at various steps helps gives employees the time to adapt feel involved in the change. Another factor which enables change in an organisation is having a flat organisational structure with fewer levels of senior managers, this often means that proposed changes can be planned and implemented faster due to less input from multiple sources and the process can be sped up as information does not have to filter through as many organisational layers, it also eliminates the problem of senior managers disagreeing on how or when things should be implemented, usually this type of organisation would have one senior manager implementing and authorising the change (Morgan 2015).

Hindering change

- History of change – changes managed poorly in previous times create a lasting impression and decrease buy in (CIPD 2020).
- Trade unions – can slow processes and challenge changes
- Complex organisational structure – decision making can be difficult if too many conflicting opinions are involved
- Lack of communication – decreases employee acceptance
- Poor planning – implementing changes too quick means employees don't adapt

There are also many factors which can hinder organisation change and make it less effective. History of change is arguably the largest barrier to effective implementation of organisation change, if changes within the organisation have been poorly managed previously then employees are more likely to resist which can lead to individuals or groups forming and deliberately blocking change whether it's the change itself, such as a new process or the way it is being implemented such as in too short a time frame, (CIPD 2021). It is crucial that employees buy in and accept the change otherwise it can be costly and ineffective. Another barrier to change is the presence of trade unions, the union representing employees in an organisation are stakeholders and will want to have input into changes, this can slow down the process and may lead to disagreements and the need to negotiate meaning the change is not as initially intended by the organisation.

Influence Model

- Influencing and leading by example can drive change considerably (Basford and Schanainger 2016)



There are many models which identify and explain the processes of change. Basford and Schanainger (2016) discuss the influence model which looks at Role modelling where managers or senior members of staff need to lead by example and be visible with this within the organisation, for example actively embracing and demonstrating that they have accepted a proposed change. Understanding and conviction which focuses on explaining why changes are taking place and explaining the effect this will have, this could involve taking the time to communicate plans and why certain decisions have been made for the organisation to employees, this

should be done frequently not just once. Talent and skills identify the need to retrain staff or recruit to implement a change successfully, this could be training employees on new equipment to aid transition. Formal mechanisms highlight the support needed to implement a change and can include ensuring accountability for changes if they do not bring the required results and also financial incentives to increase employee buy in.

Kotter (1996)



8 step change model by John Kotter

(Lynch 2020)

Another notable model of change is Kotter (1996), this model has eight clear steps for implementing change. Creating urgency is the first step, by getting an entire organisation to believe that a change is needed and also quickly needed the buy in is generally higher, this first step is the most important as this drives the rest of the change. The next step is using strong leadership to convince employees that a change is necessary, this could be through showing stats and figures of for sales for example and how a proposed change would rectify that. Creating a vision is also a crucial step, this focuses on creating a clear strategy and linking it back to the

organisation's values and mission. Communicating the vision is also key and this is evident through most change models and also mirrors the influence model. Step five looks at potential obstacles and how to overcome these, preventing and having a plan for overcoming these is key to ensuring change is driven forward even during challenging times. Creating short term targets makes up a successful change strategy as this gives employees and the organisation something to aim for and can keep employees engaged with the change and its purpose, this step goes alongside building on the change as it can be beneficial to evaluate as the process is on-going. The final step in the model looks at cementing the change, this stage is about ensuring the change is carried and not implemented and then left, this can be done through continuous communication and ensuring engagement and enthusiasm for the change does not decrease. Both models identified discuss the need for good communication throughout the process of change, Kottter (1996) uses a more in-depth approach and the importance of continual evaluation and amendment, the influence model has a greater focus on formal approaches to employee buy in e.g financial incentives.

Communication and Positive Working Relationships

- Positive work place relationships enable change. This is done through trust and communication.
- Line managers need good, honest relationships with front line workers to ensure buy in, absence of this causes scepticism (Keller and Schaninger 2019)
- Different communication methods should be used for different stakeholders (Scott 2020)
 - shareholders (e.g use stats and figures)
 - Trade unions (e.g highlight benefits for employees)
 - Employees (e.g avoid jargon and focus on how job roles affected)

Positive work relationships can help with the implementation of change. Communication is crucial in implementing change and this should be consistent and frequent throughout the process. McKinsey and Company (2016) discusses that although senior management buy in is important as they influence their teams and departments, the most important buy in is front line or lower level employees, this is due to the fact they have the most influence on their colleagues and tend to group together which is beneficial if it's in a positive and adaptable way but can be detrimental to change if the change is perceived as negative and can

cause significant resistance. Keller and Schaninger (2019) discusses the need for line managers to influence employee mind sets and help them understand how they can be part of the solution to a problem an organisation is facing and how their attitudes can drive this forward, this relies on positive working relationships at all levels throughout the organisation as information and strategy if filtered down. Change can be hindered by poor leadership styles and negative relationships amongst teams, these relationships need to be continually maintained to ensure trust and honesty and strong working relationships, induction and training are the first opportunity to build rapport and this is crucial.

Communicating change to different stakeholders is important as different stakeholders will have different interests or needs that they are concerned with. Stakeholders can be internal such as employees, managers or external such as customers, shareholders, or trade unions. Different approaches are required for different stakeholders, for example, Scott (2020) suggests communicating to shareholders or top-level managers through models and using statistics and figures to show the need for changes and the return these will generate, this is important as they will want to know where finances are being used and if it is a high-cost project they may expect justification, having appropriate figures in this situation can minimise

resistance.

Communication with employees is different to that of shareholders as they are not focused on business returns, they are concerned with how changes will affect their day-to-day job roles. Wood (2019) discusses the need to communicate with employees regularly throughout the change process and give them the opportunity to raise concerns, it is also noted that the use of business jargon should be avoided to ensure clear understanding of what and why the change is taking place. Managers need to fulfil the trust employees have in them and must ensure they communicate when things aren't going to plan and outline new approaches, if this is not done correctly and changes are then different to those proposed initially, there can be resistance, managers should also ensure they offer training and coaching to aid transition. CIPD (2019) discusses the role of trade unions in change management and the need to communicate effectively with these stakeholders and they are a crucial bridge between the organisation and its employees, although they may cause challenges for the implementation of change for example if changes are related to pay structures, but they can be beneficial in getting employees on side and reduce conflict.

Planning change

- Planning is crucial to implementing successful change
- Consideration should be given to
 - Time scales
 - budgets and costings
 - How the environment will look by the time changes come into practice
- A strong change plan risk assesses and highlights potential problems.
- Change plans follow the 3 steps to change implementation (Murphy 2016)
 - 1. Design**
 - 2. Enact**
 - 3. Sustain**

Planning for change is key to its success. It is important to use a through change plan to cover all bases and ensure change is thought out and implemented in the best way possible. Change plans typically cover three phases, design where the change is decided and planned assesses the current environment and identifies the need for change, this is then used to set goals. It is important to consider the current capabilities of the work force and factor in how the environment around the change will have mutated by the time the change comes into fruition. The enacting stage is where stakeholders are informed of planned changes and the

drive for buy in and acceptance begins, communication is key throughout but is essential at this stage (Todd 2019). The sustaining stage is about keeping the driver for the change present and reminding employees of how things were 'pre-change' and keeping engagement levels up, this is where evaluation is important to assess and monitor how effective the change has been, (SHRM 2015).

A strong change plan can help effectively implement change, it should cover how the change relates to the organisations vision and objectives and identify how the change will help achieve goals, the plan should have specific objectives and look at the roles and responsibilities of those involved in achieving them. The plan should identify stakeholders and their interests and outline how to engage with different parties to ensure maximum buy in and minimal conflict. The plan should also factor in resources whether that is financial considerations or timings for accomplishing different milestones, this helps keep drive for change moving. The final steps look at measuring success and keeping the communication channels going to ensure the change does not revert to its previous form, (Murphy 2016).

Best Practice

- Strong, frequent communication (Prosci 2021)
- Thorough planning
- Risk assessing
- Set smaller mile stones during the process
- Training on changes to aid acceptance
- Gather feedback on change from multiple sources

According to Prosci (2021) communication is one of the best ways to enable change, this should be done frequently through the process and should be adapted to meet the needs of individual stakeholder groups, the article also notes the importance of communication with front line employees as these are the ones that changes typically affect most and they carry the most influence amongst the work force, this should be done by highlighting specifically how and why the change will benefit them individually as well as linking back to the organisational goals and mission. Collazo (2020) also notes the importance of communication and that

leaders of the change project should not only communicate with employees but should also be open to feed back and be prepared to take this on board as often front-line workers will have a better idea of how things will work on the shop floor.

Other best practices are thorough planning and risk assessing, this should ensure that the relevant funding or finances are available for the project and that time frames have been thought out to ensure the future needs of the organisation are met, budgets should be carefully calculated and monitored to ensure corrections can be made as the process moves forward, (Malhotra 2019). When a proposed change impacts policies and procedures, it is important that training and support be given to employees, this will ensure competence and provide an opportunity for queries to be resolved and will increase acceptance amongst the work force.

Evaluating and Monitoring Change

- Quantitative evaluation – Figures and statistics. (e.g Have sales increased? Is customer feedback scoring higher? Is staff turnover decreasing?)
- Qualitative Evaluation – Employees or customers feelings and well being. (e.g Communicating with staff and asking how they feel about changes?)
- Combination of qualitative and quantitative provides holistic view. Must remember individuals all perceive things differently.

Change can be monitored both quantitatively whereby facts and figures are used to identify trends or qualitatively whereby employees' feelings and thoughts are evaluated. Quantitative measurement may be best used to show those stakeholders more concerned with financial figures the effectiveness of change, (Taskinen and Smeds 1999), shareholders the percentage of growth for an organisation based of a change that was made or another example would be HR managers using staff turnover rates or customer feedback to assess how effective a new training/induction programme has been. Qualitative ways of measuring change could be

conducting employee interviews to gather their thoughts and feelings, it could also come from focus groups or just by observing their wellbeing within the work place.

Prosci (2021) discusses that measuring change management and its success can be complicated, this is due to many reasons such as employees adapting to change differently and at different paces, it is also difficult as the success of the change will look different to different stakeholders for example shareholders or senior managers will be perhaps more concerned with returns of investment in a financial sense where as line managers and employees may look at well-being and whether employees are happy within their work, because of these difficulties usually a combination of both qualitative and quantitative measuring provides the most wholistic picture of whether a change has been a success.

Summary

- Drivers for change can be internal or external or a combination of both
- Change implementation can be aided/hindered depending on organisational culture
- Positive working relationships are crucial to successful change implementation and communication should be constant
- Changes should be planned and evaluated to ensure the best result.

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