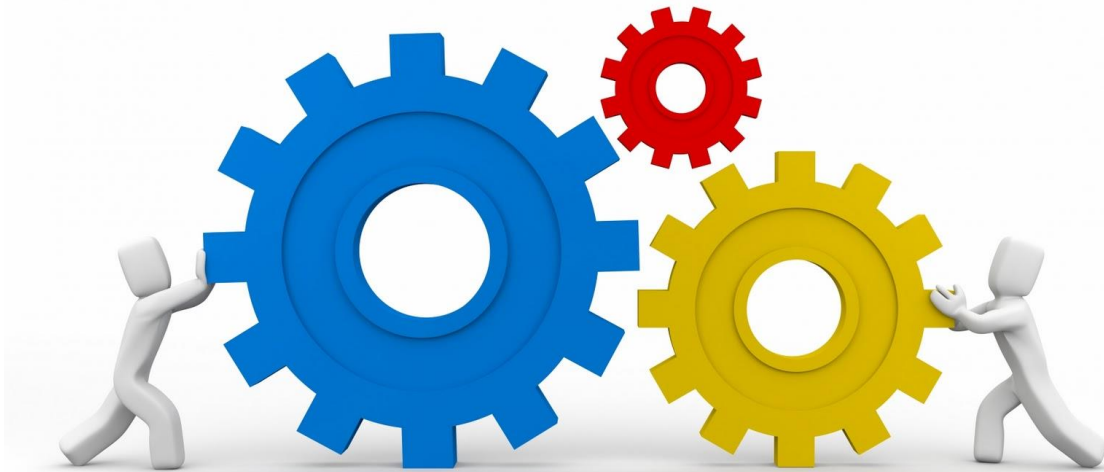


GOING PAPERLESS

Introducing the ERP system: Automating work processes at Foris Telecom

Leading & Implementing workforce change: BMSK6003



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Introducing the ERP system: automating work processes at Foris Telecom.

Introduction

The recent advancements in technology accompanied by the ever-growing competition on a global level make change inevitable for businesses to have a future (Armenakis and Harris, 2009). As such constant adaptation to environmental changes to secure the company's market position and grow is an ongoing experience (Biedenbacha and Soumlerholma, 2008). ERP installations and implementation within businesses are associated with a lot of complexities, some of which come with change implementation and management. With time, rating the level of successful implementations versus those that have failed oscillates between a scale of fifty-fifty.

While some business enterprises are ready for the transition from the traditional way of operating business into the use of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to consolidate their external and external operations on one platform, other businesses are not ready. This report aims to analyze how retrospectively, the changes in Foris Telecom's external environment have affected the strategic direction of the company. The overall intent is to develop a change model, which integrates the company's strategic change, management, and leadership style. The report evaluates the role played by organizational culture in the program of managing this change within Foris Telecom, involving an upgrade from the contemporary way of doing business to the use of an ERP system.

1.0 Foris Telecom background

Since the launch of Foris Telecom in 2010 in Uganda as an internet services provider that focuses on broadband services, operating at a frequency of 2.5GHZ, which lead to the introduction of 4G internet technology in Uganda, there have been many changes socially, economically, technologically and legally that have had an impact on the company's services delivery. It was Foris telecom that paved the way for the use of base stations that could transmit wirelessly on a 2.5GHZ frequency with minimal interference and thus enabling the company to acquire that capacity to provide wireless internet to a maximum of 2500 customers per base station placed on high raised buildings and in a sense this has proved to enabled the company stay in business challenges in the business environment. Only six out of the 30 licensed telecommunications operators namely Warid/Airtel, MTN, K2, UTL, Smile and Orange telecom are key competitors of Foris Telecom. And only two out of the six; UTL and MTN are currently providing both data and voice services as posited by Adongu (2014). He added that this is mainly due to in adequate financing opportunities, high operational costs in a low skilled environment yet the competition remains stiff.

Foris has since embarked on forming partnerships with Banks and other businesses such as surveillance companies to expand their product range in Uganda's emerging market. Foris has been able to maintain her vision of being the leading 4G internet provider while focusing her efforts on her mission of providing fast speed internet to homes and university students via dongles has been challenged from time to time by demographics of the targeted population aswell of the financial constraints associated with university students. Foris Telecom's current competitors provide voice services, and other telecoms have resorted to the unfamiliar voice over IP services, alongside mobile broadband.

This business environment makes the competition stiff enough for Foris Telecom as most of Foris' targeted (homes and university students) market already own sim cards operating on GSM technology, providing both voice and internet services at a cheaper rate. Moreover, only a few people are bothered

about the difference in technology as the social structure of most of the targeted homes is outside the network range, which is limited to the central business district.

This business environment makes the competition stiff. Foris Telecom has the advantage of having 4G technology and limited frequency interference, which means that with a robust structure infrastructure around the CBD, the company has access to the 8 million Telecom users within the city. The growing brand of the company, coupled with strategic partners such as providing free internet to the statehouse, is a selling point for the sales team as it serves as a point of reference during sales pitches. A dynamic customer service team is ready to help walk-in customers, and this contributes significantly to the company's capabilities and resources.

However, slow service delivery dominates business operations as sales teams have to drive back to offices to be able to generate invoices and receipts for customers and after that organizing for the equipment installations (Langenwaller, 1999). There is also a challenge of access to subscription scratch cards in some areas of the city since there is a minimal number of Foris Telecom shops in the city. The fact that customers must walk into the head offices to have their complaints resolved is currently putting Foris Telecom at a disadvantage. The poor customer services at the dealership shops and the constant shortage of stock have implications on the value chain of the services offered. Plus, the fact that all significant decisions are made at the headquarters in Israel by people who have no real experience of the Ugandan market but rather rely on what every information that is available on the internet leads to slow and often wrong strategic decision making (Swift, 2001).

Management software such as Sage and ERP software represents opportunities for Foris Telecom to improve its performance as a business. Because of such software, management can now plan efficiently and schedule resources to ensure optimization of productivity. It is now possible to streamline workflows with business processes, analyze data in real-time, and track employee performance (Cardoso *et al.*, 2002). The entire network can be monitored remotely estimate the actual downtime and the extent of this effect of the company sales and hence develop solutions to this problem. The introduction of LTE technology is also proving to be a challenge.

As advised by Kotter (2008) Foris Telecom would need to adapt to these constant evolutions in Uganda's business environment, thereby changing the organization culture into an agile or learning organization focusing on successfully implementing the change from contemporary operation of the business into to use of an ERP to secure both a short term and long term success. Automating the work processes using ERP involves the integration of several departments such as human resources, accounting, sales, and production into one system to process and analyze the tabulated data and manage activities involved in each department (Shehab *et al.*, 2004).

Consolidating of Foris Telecom information into a central database on the ERP would facilitate real-time access to analytics and reports irrespective of proximity with the head office. Furthermore, timely informed decision making would improve the strategic positioning as well of the internal process of the company, such as sales, customer services, and supply chain management. Moreover, financial reporting such as revenue cognizance, general ledger, and tax reports inbuilt within the ERP shall facilitate efficient book balancing.

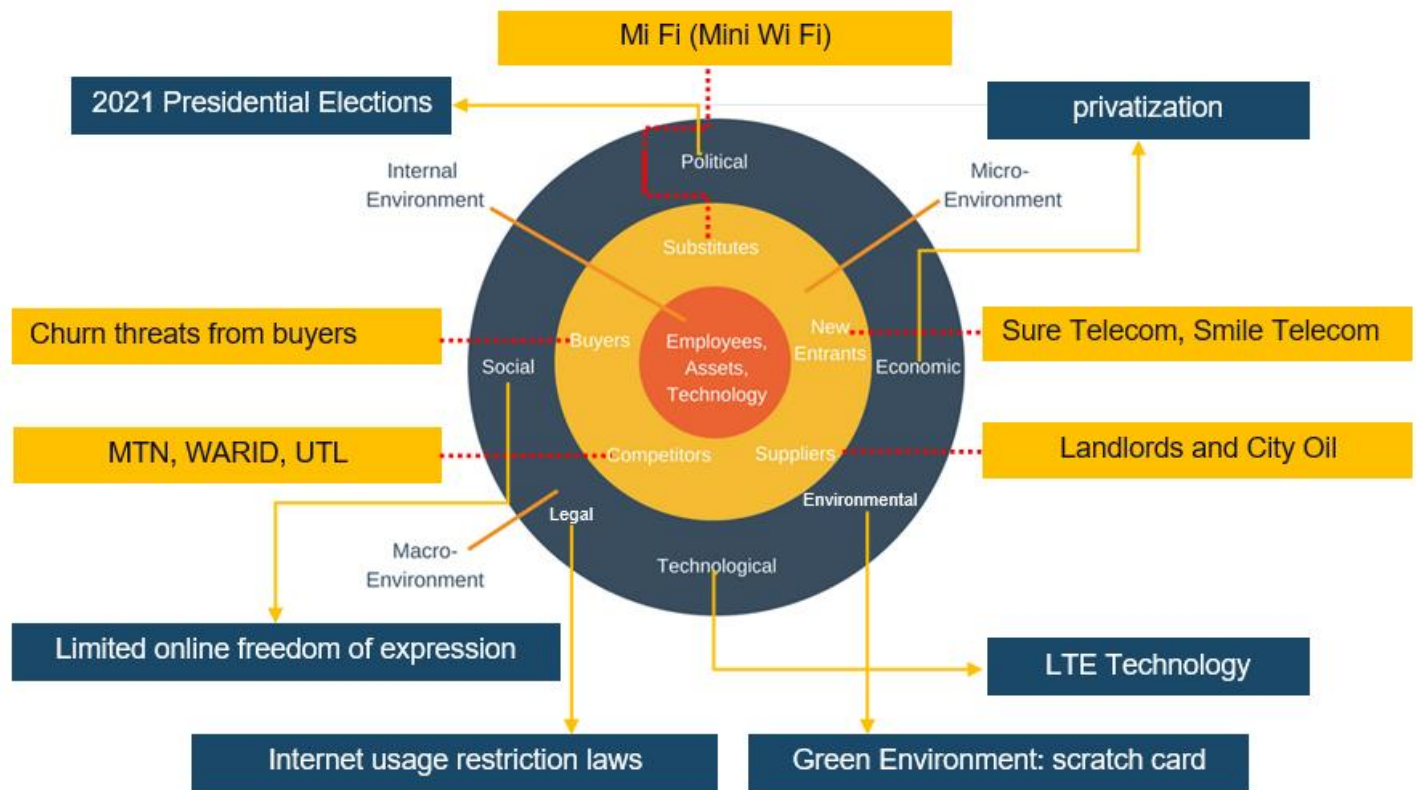
Sales representatives will be able to access the inventory regardless of proximity via the ERP, which can also enable full compliance when it comes to auditing as it gives management access to all business processes. The work process streamlined through the ERP will enable the company to save time spent on repetitive activities such as stock ordering. The system can be configured to reorder stock as soon as

it reaches set thresholds, as well as routing invoices to the accountant for quick approval of broadband installations once the sales representatives close the sale. Customers can make web-based purchases of internet bundles top-ups after the integration of the ERP with the company website, and this would increase the accessibility of top-up services to the customers as implied by the TechAdvisory.org (2017).

2.0 Foris Telecom external environment

Foris Telecom's external environment is made up of both the Micro and Macro environment.

Figure 1: An illustration of Foris Telecom's external business environment

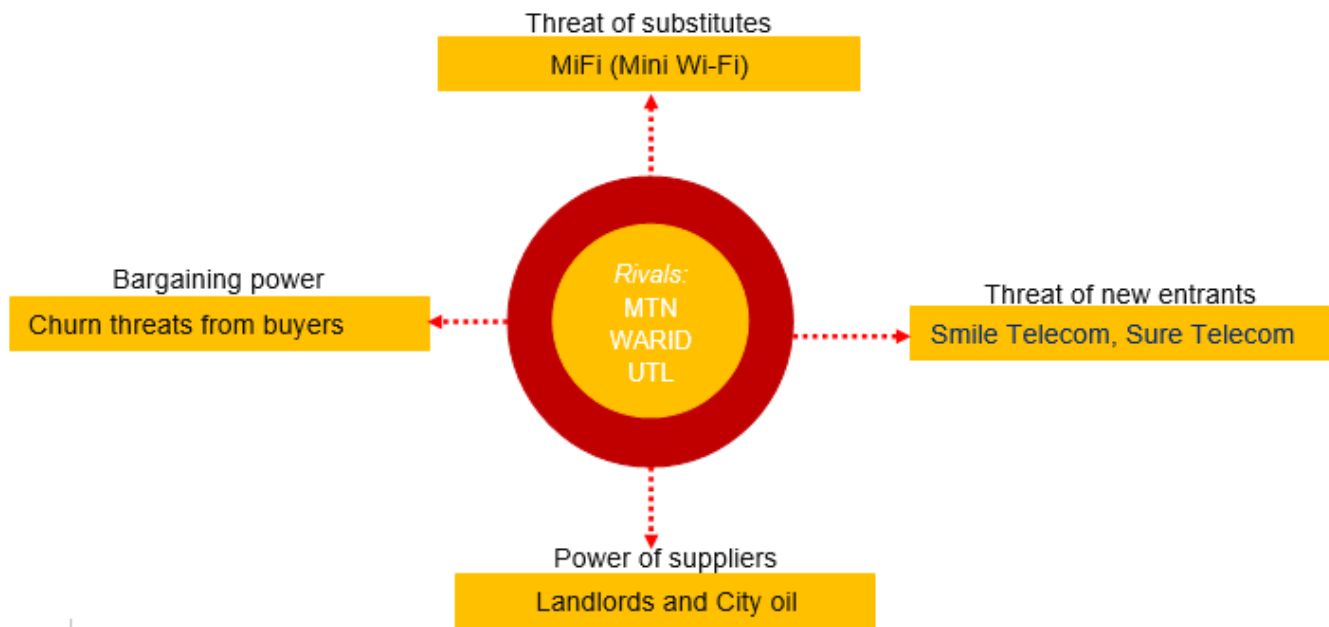


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2.1 The Micro level: Porters five forces

As shown in figure 1 above, at the micro level, porter's five forces dominate Foris Telecom's external business environment. These forces include the power of buyers, the power of suppliers, the power of competitors/rivals, the threat of new entrants as well as substitute products. Understanding how these forces affect the Foris telecom's profitability can leverage the company for sustainable growth as suggested by Porter (2008). In order to ensure long-term sustainable profits, Foris Telecom needs to combat influence from the competition, always keep knowledgeable about the company's established rivals such as MTN, Warid, Orange, and UTL.

Figure 2. An illustration of Porter's five forces.



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As shown in figure 2 above, Foris Telecom's examination of the entire Ugandan telecom industry, beyond the company's known rivals, is inevitable such as Orange Telecom, as often well-experienced customers bargain the company into reducing the prices with churning threats. Higher renting costs incurred by the Foris Telecom to maintain the shops, base station and office space constrains the company profits, alongside the City Oil's fluctuating prices of petrol required to power the generators, at the network base stations used to transmit the network signals. City Oil has continued to increase their petrol prices despite the signed MOU between Foris Telecom and City oil petrol stations which states that written communication regarding the price increments should be sent to Foris Telecom before application of the same. Because these sudden rises affect the company's profit Margins.

The telecom industry in Uganda has made it easy for new entrants to start trading, and this impacts Foris Telecom's market share, thus making the cost of maintaining and increasing Foris Telecom's market share even harder. Substitute products such as MiFi (a portable mobile Wi-Fi) solution supplied on the market by the rival Smile telecom at relatively the same price, and yet it can share broadband internet with more than one computer, is making it hard for Foris Telecom dongles to compete.

Foris Telecom competes with industry rivals that must learn how to manipulate the market to their advantage. Such rivals sign exclusivity rights to establish dealership shops on the most populated shopping centers within the city, leaving Foris telecom to work with street vendors and hence limiting the supply of top-up scratch cards to its customers.

2.2 The Macro environment: PESTEL Analysis

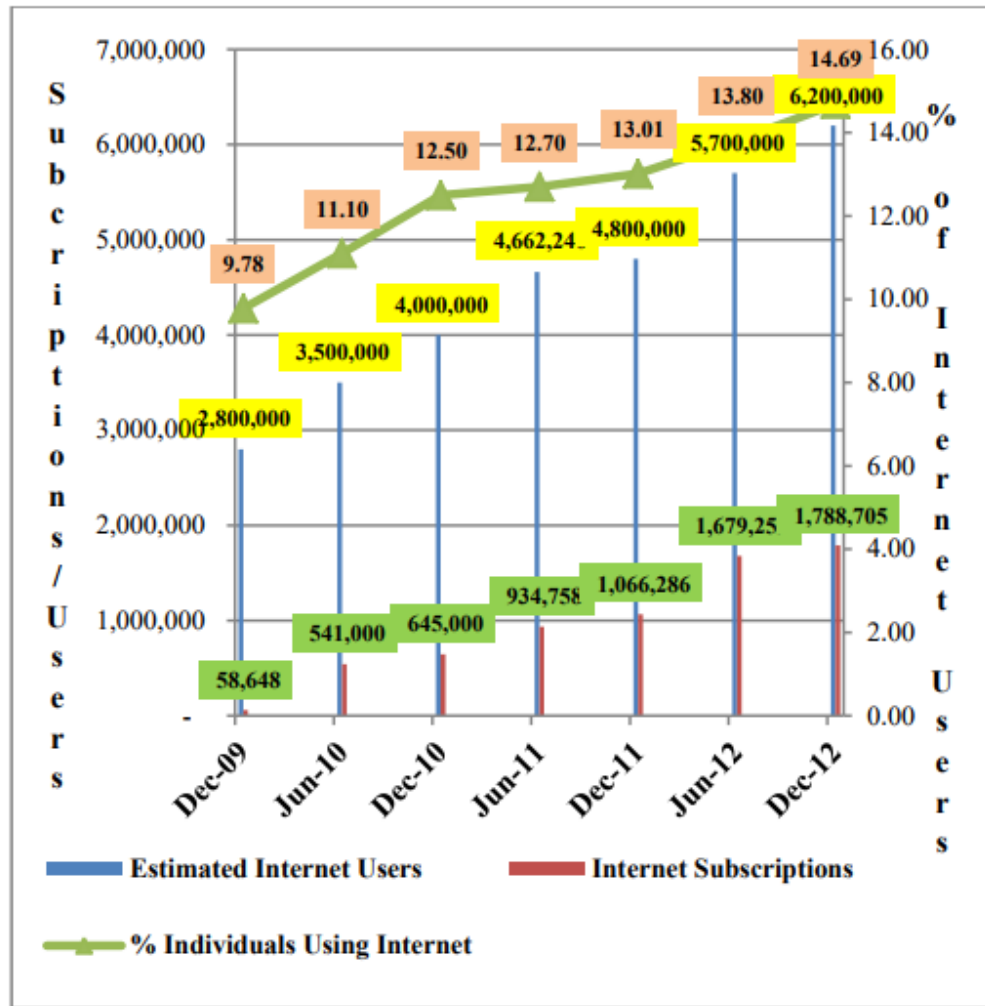
In the macro environment, PESTEL analysis is used to examine the Foris telecom's external industry. Political, social, economic, technological, legal, and environmental factors can influence the company's sustainable success. The current political environment is quite volatile now as the country is moving towards the 2021 presidential elections. There is much uncertainty regarding the security of the entire country due to many bills passed into law, including those that go against the right to privacy. The government is pushing for a law to allow them total access to conducting surveillance on the Ugandan Citizen. There have been limitations regarding the use of the internet, and this has created fear among internet users. As a result, Foris Telecom has experienced income surges that come with political uncertainty.

Privatization of government parastatals and the recent gazetting of land in Namanve and Nakaseke to create space for foreign investors to set up factories is creating jobs for the local masses. This action by the government is economically financially empowering Foris Telecom's target market to a level where they can now afford to buy the company's products and services. Foris Telecom can quickly optimize this opportunity by setting up a base station to transmit to the nearby areas and thus expand Foris Telecom's market shares. Expanding the network coverage can help reduce the buyer's bargaining power as the effect from a few customers churning can be fundamentally minimized. Innovations in the financial sector such as Mobil money can no enable Foris customers to make payments through web-based applications directly connect to the ERP. A steady growth of 52% with approximately 8,650,00 mobile money users has potential to propel Foris Telecom towards its goal. Limited access to banking services in the rural areas where Foris can extend their network is dominated by mobile money (Adongu, 2014).

The courts of law in Uganda have continued to constrain internet freedom over the years under the pretense of upholding morals values and ensuring national security. Legal implications associated with the Computer Misuse Act have affected the use of the internet due as it considers some actions on the internet as internet stalking, which is criminal according to the law (CIPESA (2016). Although Ugandans a very sociable, only 22% of the entire population has access to internet services (Gronlund and Wakabi, 2015). They added that the low internet usage may be due to high levels of illiteracy coupled with poor substructures in the community. The current population is dominated by the youth who spend most of their time on social media despite the limitations that come with the regulation of online freedom of expression and fear from their online actions monitored (CIPESA, 2013).

According to Adongu (2014), by 2013, the estimated number of internet users in Uganda were 6.2 million and an estimated 5% of the population of Uganda which comes up to 1.8 million had already subscribed to the internet. However, the number of internet users is still low since by 2009, the household access to computers was 2% of the population. The nature of the infrastructure does not facilitate an environment where people can readily access computers, firstly, because they can afford then but also secondly the gap in the skill set makes it impossible for people in the rural areas to be able to own and more so use the computers. Electricity distribution may be another factor contributing to the reason why the number of people using computers does increase couple with high prices of both electricity and solar regardless the location in which an individual may live. None the less, the industry has seen steady growth both in numbers of internet users and subscribers as shown in figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Internet usages estimates in Uganda



Adongu (2014)

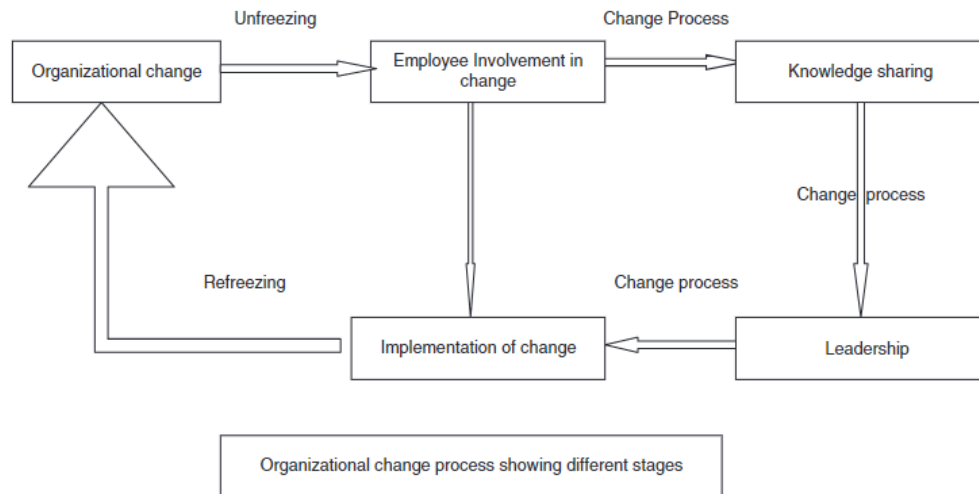
Recent environment preservation campaigns such as the green environment campaign have pressurized the Uganda communications commission, the telecom industry regulator, to enact regulations that have included a ban on the use of scratch cards to top up internet bundles. Although the ban was imposed effective immediately and has an impact on the entire telecommunications industry, with the integration of the ERP with our web-based applications such as the company website, customers can still top up their internet bundles. This situation puts Foris Telecom ahead of the game as the competition struggles to deal with this situation.

3.0 Implementing change using Lewin's change model

As suggested by Hussain *etal* (2018) Foris Telecom adopts Lewin's change model which postulates the application of change in three steps denoted as unfreezing, changing and refreezing. Therefore, the ideal change method as suggested by Stanciu & Tinca (2013) would indulge in best practices such as

leadership training and promotion of Foris Telecom's needs when it comes to the implementation of the ERP.

Figure 3 Kurt Lewin's Change Model



Adopted from Hussain *etal* (2018).

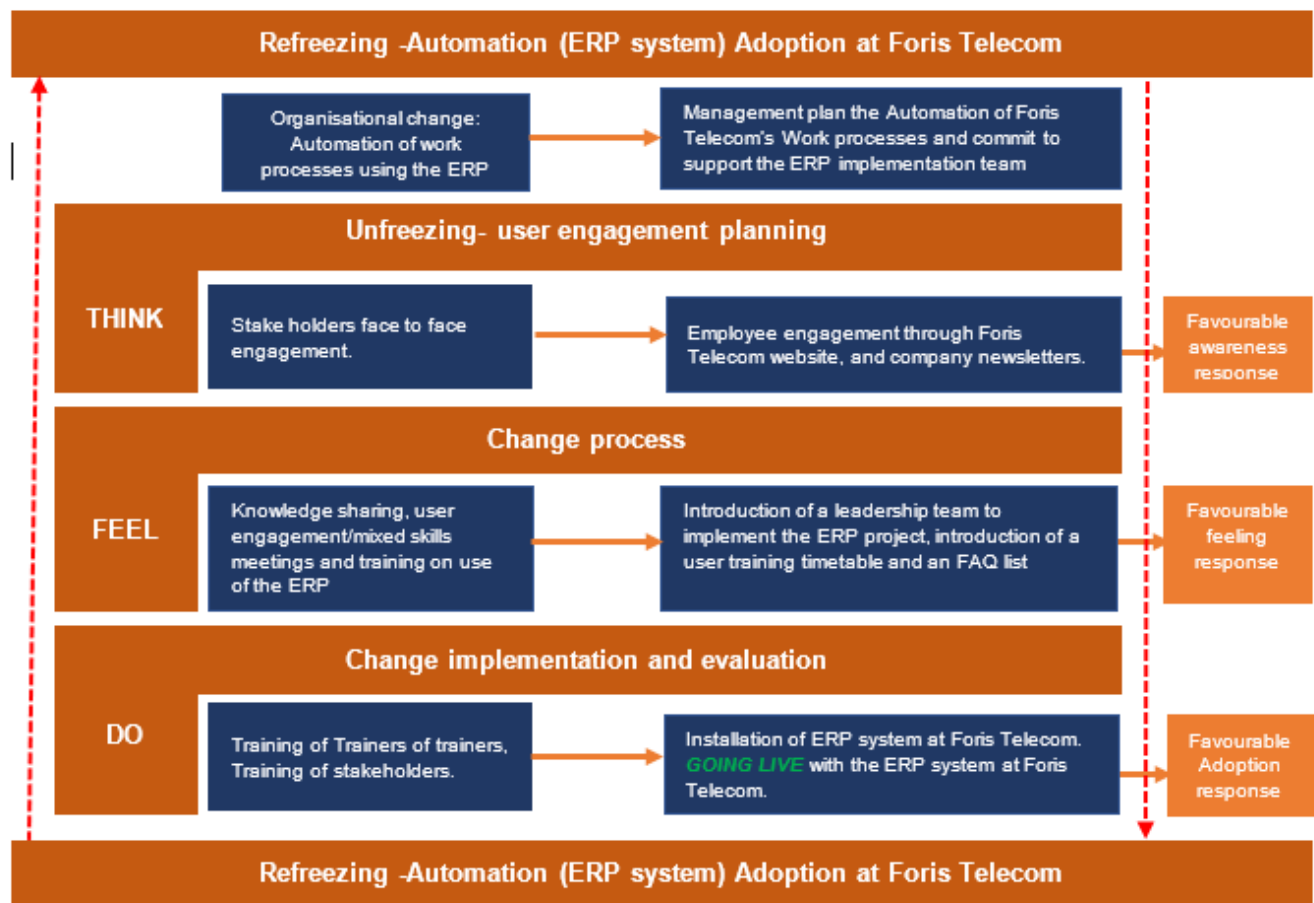
Foris Telecom shall adopt the steps shown in figure 3 above to enact the desired organizational change and this model clearly shows the change process required to challenge the status quo and how to effect it. How the change from the tradition work process into an automated system would be managed with in Foris Telecom is very vital to the successful implementation of the ERP. The top management at Foris Telecom plays a major role in making sure that the required resources are available to implement the ERP as posited by Klein *etal* (2001). In implementing an ERP system, is susceptible to resistance from users, just as a sales team selling a new product may be resisted by customers (Aladwani, 2001). He added that just as Lewin's model, his conceptual model which is may be adopted for Foris Telecom and applied in three phases.

These phases are;

- a) Formulation of knowledge: Knowledge is broken down into small chunks to address the various stake holders, prioritizing them based on their influence and relevance in Foris telecom.
- b) Implementation of Strategy: This central part of the model using the framework of think, feel, do.
- c) Evaluation of status: This part focuses on the strategy implementation of the change management.

When it comes to adaptation, acceptance and adaptation of an ERP system at Foris Telecom, managing the change is inevitable as suggested by Somers & Nelson (2004). All activities in the change implementation should aim at creating a conducive environment to facilitate changes in the business process, technology, culture and organization according to Kemp and Low (2008). It is therefore inevitable that for Foris Telecom to add a new webpage on their website on which information regarding the implementation of the ERP is published.

Figure4. Combining Aladwani framework together with Lewin's change model to facilitate change management during the installation of an ERP at Foris Telecom.



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As shown in figure 5 above, when unfreezing, after deciding the required organizational change, top management would adopt a change management plan in which the support required during and after the installation of the ERP has been clearly stipulated, including the management and customization of the ERP project to Foris Telecom's needs, Data migration, training and consultancy.

Think phase (Formulation of knowledge): *Unfreezing*

User agreement planning takes place at this stage, and employees and all necessary stakeholders are informed of the new changes due to take place, benchmarking on the benefits of the ERP system as opposed to the old traditional way. Employee engagement is done through the company website/ portal, which is directly integrated with the ERP and newsletters to get them on board with the proposed change. Chance should be given to employees to interact directly with the system and opinions about the systems analyzed (Kotter, 1995).

Feel phase (knowledge sharing): *Change process*

At this stage, the goal is to create positive feelings regarding the ERP system to minimize resistance. Knowledge sharing is vital in ascertaining the level at which Foris Telecom may be in the learning

process, clearly indicating employee or stake holder's knowledge regarding the company's work processes, products, competition, and customers. Knowledge may be explicit or tacit depending on the relevance and situation according to (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Availing hands-on support to the employees using the trial version during the training to minimize any frustrations and engaging them off-site through training and mixed skill meetings is vital at this stage. Keeping staff active in the automation process may generate positive feelings towards the ERP system, as suggested by Furst and Cable (2008), as it represents information sharing on suggestions and ideas relevant in some tasks across management levels and staff.

The Do phase (Evaluation of status): Implementation and evaluation.

The activities at this stage enhance employee adoption to the system. It involves the training of trainers and other stakeholders, the installation of an ERP system at Foris Telecom. The managers would take up the role of advocates for the system to ensure successful adoption and at the same time, engage and evaluate the employees' level of understanding and confidence in using the ERP. This stage requires the planning of activities, commitment, and structures to manage the change (Beckhard and Harris, 1987). These activities include change integration tasks, temporal orientation, and explicitly tying tasks that keep the team focused on the implementation of the ERP. After the successful implementation of the ERP is confirmed, then refreezing the change would take place.

3.1 Foris telecom strategic change, its management and leadership

Change takes place on comprehensively regardless of the age or size of business. For companies like Foris Telecom to survive and develop, they must change to adapt to the changing world (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Going paperless (automation of work processes) at Foris Telecom is a strategic change made that will leverage the company against the competition in the Ugandan Telecom industry. ERP has the potential to improve the way Foris Telecom receives and processes orders from customers into invoices and, eventually, revenues and profits of the company. Whereby, a sales representative entering a customer's order into the system will have entered all the necessary information about the customers to enable the order fulfillment.

The order can be tracked and delivered on time to the customers. However, due to the uncertainties associated with the automation of the work process, resistance to the change is very eminent, and therefore actions to motivate employees to adopt the change are vital. With both Foris Telecom's internal (in efficiency in current work process) and external environments based on the PESTEL and SWOT analysis done, work process's automation is rather a more strategic change that the company should adopt in a proactive and reactive way as suggested by (Pierce et al., 2002).

3.2 Change management

Change management involves the continual renewal of an organization's structure, capabilities, and direction to meet both internal and external needs of customers (Moran and Brightman, 2001). Change management requires developing a sense of communication and teamwork among the stakeholders in the ERP implementation. Often when people buy into the fact that change is inevitable at that point, progress towards change begins to happen. The change agents such as Foris Telecom management and the ERP team must maintain leadership to steer the change process in a transactional manner and hence creating and maintaining the necessary momentum for the implementation of the ERP (Levasseur, 2001).

Furthermore, management and the ERP installation team at Foris telecom should involve the staff in the testing, installation, using, measuring, debugging, and enhancing the ERP, according to Lewin's model. The entire refreezing stage should take time to institutionalize the change. Using Lewin's model going paperless at Foris Telecom requires knowledge sharing, staff willingness and involvement, and implementation of the ideal leadership style to effect change.

3.3 Leadership enabling change in Foris Telecom

Using one's influence over a group of people for purposes of a common goal denotes leadership, according to Northouse (2004). Implementation of an ERP system at Foris Telecom requires the leaders' instruction of the involved staff members in the unfreezing, changing, and refreezing process (Porras & Robertson, 1992). The management and ERP lead team play an essential role as change agents in terms of integrating both behavioral and social tasks and dimensions, respectively. Management should motivate change and inspire vision to show clarity in terms of the company's status, need for change and the eventual unfreezing, develop support from senior management and transition management in the change processes, maintaining the drive during the implementation and after that refreezing the new change.

Employing the right type of leadership is essential during the automation of Foris Telecom's work processes. While transactional leaders emphasize rewards and punishment to ensure organizational performance (Bass, 1985), transformational leaders tend towards being intellectual, charismatic, inspirational, and person-centered. The goal is to get a leadership style that identifies all the stakeholders in the ERP system implementation, such as senior managers, department heads, and department staff, to support the change, thereby establishing influence over them.

Foris Telecom management is expected as leaders to support the staff members' involvement in the automation of the work process long after the status quo has been challenged. It is the responsibility of leaders in Foris Telecom to stimulate the change process by making sure that the staff has been addressed regarding the change into using an ERP system. This calls for education, communication, participation, involvement, providing incentives, task-oriented support, emotional support, coerce and manipulate, staff into the change as posited by Pierce *etal* (2002). In the process of going paperless, the manager's transparency is vital as it re-establishes and encourages employee trust regarding their involvement in the transition into the use of an ERP system. Leadership is especially outstanding in meetings and discussions where management allows room for employee opinions and hence giving them a sense of control (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Therefore, Foris Telecom leaders should create an environment which encourages and supports suggestion during the automation of work process in order to benefit from the staff commitment and the corresponding effectiveness.

4.0The impact of organizational culture on change management

The values and norms governing the member's behavior in a group are referred to as the organizational culture. These values determine issues of importance and what should be respected by the entire group of people in the organization and therefore is a very crucial determinant when it comes to the regulation of the expected members' behavior. Foris Telecom has a different organizational culture from the rest of the competition (Harwiki, 2016).

It is therefore imperative of the change agents at Foris Telecom to understand that the individual mixed cultures of staff that make up the organization inherently influence the values and norms of the entire group, which may not be the same as those values set in the company vision.

It is this culture that influences people interactions and actions that determine the accomplishment of the job. Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that during the change process, management observes the shared perception of the staff members. This shared perception is that obligation, which has now been converted into the culture of the organization and must be fulfilled. A proper understanding of this culture would help the change agents in managing the staff with minimal warnings as possible. Change management involves internal integration and external adaptation of the work process, which is often resisted by the based-on assumptions taken in as culture as it represents the group's shared values, norms, beliefs, and attitudes towards the change (Nitzsche *et al.*, 2014).

The culture of the Foris Telecom staff is founded on the members' mutual understandings, levels of interaction, traditions, and history of the members, and therefore, these characteristics serve as the gateways of influence of the organizational culture. Foris Telecom should use these same characteristics influence the spirit of risking and innovation among staff, which is critical part of adaption of the ERP system, being results-oriented with attention to detail to enable debugging and correction of errors in the system, individual motivation as well as that of the group with a will to move forward with maximum stability.

5.0 Recommendations

It is paramount that Foris Telecom redesigns the influence of Porter's five forces to its advantage as posited by Porter (2008). To counteract the power of the supplier, it would be best that Foris Telecom considers the installation of solar and inverters with capacity power the smaller network base stations and use generators as a backup when the inverters run dry since Uganda receives sunshine all year round. Generators would then serve the main transmission radio, which supplies the entire network as per the case of an office, radio, and shop space.

Foris Telecom should consider moving the head office out of the CBD, provide subsidized broadband internet to owners of the buildings on which the base stations are, in exchange for discounts on the radio space rent. Foris Telecom should consider giving able entrepreneurs a chance to take up dealership opportunities with the company and sign an MOU with the new dealers whereby Foris Telecom is only responsible for the branding of the shops.

However, the rent and furnishing are covered by the dealer in exchange for discounted scratch cards, dongles, and internet bundles. The company should heighten awareness regarding the automation of work processes, its benefits to the various stakeholders, and the phases this change will go through to be fully capable within the organization. To make sure that knowledge sharing is maximized during the unfreezing and moving stages for the success of the project. The integration of all the factors mentioned above, as well as employee involvement, is crucial throughout the three phases that the organization has to go through to effectively and efficiently carry out the automation process (transition into the use of an ERP system).

6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, organizational change is an integral part of the life of any organization at both operational and strategic levels. Hence, the relevance of change in a company is of uttermost importance for purposes of the survival and growth of the business (Burnes, 2004). Using Lewin's model to implement change

in Foris Telecom, involves the leadership of the company, both senior and middle management teams to take on the role of change agents to change the mindset of the staff members during the unfreezing stage. Therefore, choosing the ideal leadership style to execute the change is as vital to the organization as the change itself. In this case, the Transformational leadership style would be the most suitable as; such leaders can engage staff, create awareness, and, based on these engagements, the best decisions are made. Transformational leaders are, indeed, the critical factor for this change to happen (Gong *etal.*, 2009). Therefore, for Foris Telecom to acquire the desired change, management should encourage a rewards and recognition system as often this socially impacts the desired change within any organization. Emphasis must be put on the selection of the right leader to manage and execute the change, sharing knowledge with the relevant stakeholders in time during the change process, and ensuring that a link between knowledge sharing and staff involvement is maintained during the entire change process.

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