

HR Strategy: The Power Broker of Change

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ABSTRACT

In any global agenda, one could easily observe that when organisational changes take place, there is bound to be insecurity among management and employees. HR can help them manage in the era of change. Progressive organisation of today, survives on intellectual sovereignty, rather than the one that is solely profit oriented. Organisation have undergone a better diplomatic shift, where the point of reference now transcends mere physical boundaries and where the weapons of defence, comprises only the human mind. Change, is inevitable, you cannot escape change, no matter how resistant you are to it. Whether you decide to adapt to change, anticipate it, or use a mix of both, HR has a role to play in leveraging this opportunity. In today's time, an organization should be agile and understand the importance of effective HR leadership in bringing about change.

Keywords: Progressive organisation, Intellectual sovereignty, Inevitable, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION-

One might get upon this realisation, that the only constant in life is, change, in order to become a superpower. A superpower is a knowledge economy, producing goods and services in a boundary less global market, and where the units comprising the knowledge economy, are the human capital or employees who are the sustainable competitive advantage. Managing in a time of change, also talks of the quality and productivity of knowledge and our knowledge workers, on whose shoulders the performance capacity and survival of any organisation, the knowledge society will come to depend on. A global workplace environment is a common feature in most companies today, especially with a company who has established offices of subsidiary companies abroad --multinationals or transnationals, and those whose activities are in more than one geographical region and culture. Now professionals in business world have moved from just being local managers to global ones.

To merge into the heterogeneous surrounding, the challenge of HR would be to provide skills and commitment in employees to compete with the brightest and the best people in the world, and to impart technological and leadership training to them, so that workers career are able to stay above board. On the other hand, a heterogeneous workforce also has the advantage of orchestrating the completion of projects, by multi skilled individuals who may give a wider perspective to business problems.

HR: THE CHANGE AGENTS

HR acts as a change agent by taking responsibility for overseeing and implementing the change process into a global workplace. All this only reinforces the subtle truth, that change is imperative and inevitable. What comes with this realisation is that change can also be managed to yield constructive results without an overpowering resistance, which argues that the proposed change is perhaps doing good to the organisation and does not need to be re -examined.

It is here, that the change agent, through involving and educating the employees, are able to smoothly disarm insecurities. Communication about the nature of change is an important and effective tool which breaks down the barriers between top management and associates. In addition, it reassures people that the management is aware and concerned about them.

Involving employees in the change process is equally necessary. The most important factor however in the entire process is educating the employees about the culture and system of the new order, building a path for them to tread on and setting reasonable expectations for achievement. On the other, if we objectively look at the process of change and its dynamics, while the force of competition thrust itself, organisations are always pressurised to change.

In such a scenario the reality is that for a company to be successful, it needs a flexible, skilled and responsible workforce that can adapt itself to the environmental changes of corporate innovation and productivity.

While people are slaves of habit, change will demand them to break off from their familiar 'comfort zone' into a world of new process. But a perceived threat could be, when people feel that they might lose their power and influence or control over the familiar. The modern-day companies also have the option to subcontract these changes to an outsider, a specialist familiar with the organisational psychology and behavioural problems that may arise, during the period of transition. The question then is, that is it really unreasonable for an organisation to demand higher expectations of performance and productivity from its people, especially if it is accountable to stakeholders. For faster economic growth, greater international competitiveness, higher real wages and improved standards of living change is essential. It is unfair to have a performance-based compensation system that relates a portion of an employee's pay to the individual level of productivity, and rest on the performance of the entire organisation.

From a manager's point of view, a period of change can also provide opportunities. This is because the transformation process means that the people have to change and evolve their own existing theories at a personal level as well. It is easier for the people to make waves in a new or changing workplace rather than in a mature and well established one. Small insights, like a little skill innovation and a willingness to act quickly can go a long way to accomplish all this.

A change or a transformation, necessarily involves a symbiotic relationship of employees and management. While one cannot downplay the importance of human element, that is seen as the arsenal in the making of a superpower organisation in today's world, one cannot also undermine organisational commitment to quality and productivity. Though it may be argued that the technology is crucial for high productivity, but the truth that really stares one in the face is, that technology can only act as a support to people, it will always be a means to an end, but can never be the end in itself. People with talent make all the difference and it is this reality that helps distinguish the victors over the vanquished. It is therefore the responsibility of management to understand and quell the fears of the people who have worked with them to build the road to its success, more so in a time of change. It is the responsibility of management to dispel the fear of the unknown. In very simple words, people of quality are probably the most important resource in today's corporate scenario.

HOW AN ORGANISATION CAN SUCCESSFULLY ORCHESTRATE CHANGE

- Unfreezing the existing status.
- Movement to a new state.
- Refreezing new changes and making it permanent.

Lewin considered the primary process of unfreezing critical in the change process. Unfreezing helps to minimise individual resistance, by increasing the driving force and also by minimising the restraining force, that hinder movement away from the equilibrium. In the movement stage, all the new change process and system are implemented. The objective of refreezing stage is to quickly consolidate the change by stabilising in the new situation and balancing the driving forces, along with the restraining forces at work. It is a very tall order for any organisation to successfully manage and implement the change process. While from the employee's point of view, the change process may seem to be limited to a fresh incentive scheme or perhaps a new metric system to measure productivity, but from the point of view of the management it is more complex, because for any building process destruction is first necessary.

ROLE OF HR IN CHANGING THE WORKPLACE

- **Watchdog**

HR department plays an important and crucial role in re-thinking processes and monitoring the activities of the organization and the employees.

- **Taking The Time To Communicate**

As HR gains expertise and business intelligence, it's important for them to share the strategic vision of the organization with finance, marketing, as well as other key departments of the organization.

- **Establishing A Change Agenda**

HR should recommend specific milestones to be reached by, both the organization and its employees. Business transformation process takes time and if rushed, could lead to a costly failure.

- **Anticipating Emotional Roadblocks**

Change creates fear amongst employees and managers both, so it is hard to predict the negative reactions of employees.

- **Training Managers**

It's important to train managers, not only so that they become good change agents – this should be done before business transformation happens, so that they understand the pros and cons of the change they are contributing their efforts to.

- **Proposing Adapted Solutions**

Depending on the purpose of change HR should propose appropriate solutions to each critical situation faced by the organization.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BRINGING CHANGE

Change in organization fails, due to employee resistance, failure to prepare for the change and employee miscommunication. So, there are certain requirements for bringing change in organization. Companies must work systematically, adopt a proactive approach to be successful. Change brings new ideas, new solutions and ensures growth, by breaking free from the comfort zone, viewing alternatives available for organization to progress and move ahead in the right direction. It embraces business transformation, makes the organization more agile and adaptable, taking advantage of the latest innovations to improve its competitive position. Change in the workplace can take many forms like introduction of new process, merger or an acquisition. In all cases, change is a behavioral reaction in the form of objection, resistance that could make or break the success of the organization. One thing needs to be understood, that change can't come without some facilitator. So, the top management stands in a position of playing this role. They have the power to elicit positive emotions and neutralize negative ones, to drive the organization towards success. The management guides its employees and tries to bring stability and balance during phases of change. A strategic vision, a proactive contribution to building a strong company culture, and a committed investment in developing competencies along with an efficient leadership team, are all essential to support organizational change, and make it happen at the workplace.

CONCLUSION

The broader vision is that if employees are concerned about the future of the institution, it is the management's responsibility to create the appropriate and supportive environment. The provision is also that if employees want higher compensation packages, lavish perks and awards, they have to invest sincerity and perseverance and ultimately become an indispensable resource for the organisation. HR has the power to make an individual realise and believe that he or she has the inherent power to change on a personal level. HR also acts as a catalyst and a facilitator during times of change, by assisting in improving the ability and potential of people to adapt to the alteration in the system and process their face. When HR does make a determined effect to ease the transition process, the truth is that, a change habit does not fall into place on its own. To make a progressive decision of putting the new change into action, to see if it works individually, one needs to make a conscious decision, and when made it gets institutionalised, until one decides that it is time for change.

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