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Change Management Application Paper

Change Initiative Description

When I first joined the Asbury Water Authority (AWA), I realized that there were a lot of things that needed to be changed. First, the production was very low regardless of the many employees the company had. Also, the authority was using old production technologies and techniques that were only making the cost of production high leaving the company with less revenue (Pieterse, Caniëls, & Homan, 2012). It is true that a lot of organizations have tried to invest in new technology equipment with the aims of reducing both the overhead and overall costs of production. Such initiatives have seen most of companies improve their productivity, and this was the case of AWA when I first joined.

Like many of the organizations experiencing spontaneous change in their production systems, AWA decided to change its performance strategies for successful outcomes. The authority saw it wise to do away with some sections and include new performance practices so as to make operations more efficient. It was difficult for the employees to adapt to these changes since the top most managers failed to understand that when an organization is making changes in its operations, it is always important to involve the employees through the evolution as well (Pieterse, Caniëls, & Homan, 2012). I realized that this was a mistake, and proper measures had to be taken so as to include the employees in change process. I was not among the top managers, but I managed to forward my concerns to the managers so that a good training platform could be established to assist employees gain insights that were needed to help the organization achieve its goals.

Change Diagnosis

It is the duty of leaders and managers to put efforts in making sure that the objectives of the organization are met successfully and this means imposing every necessary change needed to achieve both the long term and short term goals (Faraci, Lock, & Wheeler, 2013). It is always realized that not all managers are good at these efforts, and some are always prone to make several mistakes in all the attempts. Whatever the change is, depending on the size and type, the target is always to increase the effectiveness of the organization and also to come up with a way of coping with the challenging environment. There are several theories that can be used to explain the change processes and the challenges that organizations go through in order to meet the new expectations. For instance, the life-cycle models and teleological models consider a

change as a set of objective that can evolve and the results be improved through new inventions (Faraci, Lock, & Wheeler, 2013). Also, there is the dialectical theory that makes an assumption that change happens when unrelated values or events acquire sufficient power to defy a status quo.

It is always important to learn how the organization works in order to understand the reason for change. Similarly, it is necessary to understand how the change should be undertaken so that the organization is able to continue with its normal operations. The major part of understanding is the employees' readiness to adapt to the change and continue with the company's operations (Pieterse, Caniëls, & Homan, 2012). The ability to adapt and perform becomes the major determinant for successful application of the change. Following these demands, I thought of a change diagnostic tool that could be used to capture the changes needed to achieve the desired objective. Through my help, the organization was able to come up with an examining instrument that could be administered before the change. The first step was to take the change through a modification stage so that the authority could determine if the members were ready to embrace these changes. It was also important for the managers to determine the areas that needed to be handled to eliminate the challenges that may arise in the course of systems implementation. To have a successful change plan, the managers must be able to predict and diagnose the importance of change. I researched on the theories that would help in change management. In my research, I found out that there are stages that are involved in organizational change (Cameron, et al, 2005). Therefore, the challenge our organization faced arose from the fact that we did not realize that each of these stages had a crisis that needed to be managed. At the Asbury Water Authority (AWA), we realized that the organizational diagnosis was the efficient way through which we could know the gaps that existed between our current market and production situation and the objectives regarding the performance planning as well as process that could be used to achieve the major operational goals. Before the change, the business culture allowed employees at Asbury Water Authority to follow a chain of command whereby one could only report to the Head of his department. This means that the process of decision making was left in the hands of senior staffs, hence making it difficult for the junior staffs to propose an idea and implement it even if it was for the good of the company. It was difficult for me to raise a concern on the specific areas that needed change for the fear of getting into with the top managers.

When I decided to present my ideas as far as the change process is concerned, I realized that our department manager was very friendly and open to new ideas. We held a meeting on how best the organization could shift from the old production systems to a system that creates a platform for open communication between employees and their team managers. In our discussion, it was necessary to let the manager know that we needed to understand the organization's current culture before undertaking the change. It was obvious that top-level managers lacked good understand of what usually happens at every level of management. Using an interpretive system, I got the information about the organization's current values, the strengths and weaknesses of its

operations and the areas where the organization was receiving negative results. This particular information was to help in understanding the discrepancies between our production level and the production needed to serve our clients effectively. I decided to assess the situation thoroughly to come up with the recommendations on how to decrease the negative values that hindered the full performances of the employees and to come up with the solutions which could increase the production at lower costs.

After I had provided the manager with the evidences on the gaps that needed adjustments, it was now time to begin working on the goals that the organization had set to achieve. The achievement of these goals could only be possible if the company invested quality time, funds, and efforts from the employees. Since change does not happen immediately, there were steps which could be taken to shape the organization. The first step was to have a discussion with the managers, employees, and general staff members. Through the discussion, we realized that our organization had a lot of experienced employees, but their voices could not be heard because they lacked the freedom to participate in some of the decisions the organization makes. This brought us to the notion that managers needed to understand the goals and experiences of the employees so that it would be easy to determine the processes that would generate positive result. The second issues was that managers, before implementing any change, should analyze the disadvantages of the change since some of the elements may not work effectively with every organization depending on the business culture. It was also important that we recognized the obstacles to change and found a way to prevent or eliminate the barriers to the change process. Change is inevitable but may result into negative effects if an organization fails to embrace it. One of the negative impacts of not embracing change is that it will lower the morale of the staff members. This can spread in the entire organization leading to low level of production. The second thing is that when the employees resist change, they will lose their focus on performing their daily duties hence reduction in the level of efficiency within the organization. Lastly, resistant to change can lead to a disruptive environment due to commotions among the staff members. Such instances are known to cause unrest among other staff members thereby reducing the spirit of teamwork (Cummings, et al., 2014). These are the reasons why I proposed to the manager to have a talk with the staff members and educate them on the importance of embracing changes. I feared that in case there were resistance among the employees, then the level of production would go down.

Change Strategy

Just like other organizations, the Asbury Water Authority (AWA) felt intimidated to embrace the changes. Whether the scale of change is big or small, organizations always feel uneasy to embrace a new change in their system. To do this without fear, we realized that we had to do it in steps, know the people that had to be involved, and predict the result (Johnson, 1992). In the first step, we had to determine that the whole Asbury Water Authority needed change and show other

staff members that the change was urgently required in order to improve on the current level of performance. We had to convince staff members with facts about the market competition and the expectations of our customers. To achieve this first objective, we made the staff members understand that the organization will be exposed to threats of future fallout in case we do not accept the changes. We also thought it wise to give the employees a reason to start thinking on the best means that can be used to involve other stakeholders so as to strengthen our change. We had to identify true leaders within our organization as well as the main stakeholders. We had to work on building the team spirit thereby identifying the team's weak areas and strengthening them (Johnson, 1992). To fulfill our vision, we realized that it was important to determine the values that were strategic to the change itself. Communicating a vision that would be achieved through the implementation of change is an important factor. Therefore, it was important to talk about the vision in every meeting so that it could stick in the minds of employees. Addressing people openly and leading by example was a major turn that the manager took to create a good communication ground with the employees (Kaplan, et al., 2001). After the successful implementation of the change, we started to analyze everything to determine exactly what went right and what went wrong. In many organizations, the projects always fail due to an early declaration of a win. It was discussed and agreed that the organization had to set long term goals so as to continue with the momentum that we had created. The managers agreed to welcome any positive change that would be brought by the employees and other stakeholders. Lastly, all the successful ideas that had been brought to be used in the daily running of the organization were taken into consideration.

Despite the success, there were challenges that were met during the implementation period. The first challenge was the planning problem. If one fails to plan the actions to be taken step by step, then the change is most likely to fall and would lead to more problems than the benefits expected (Kaplan, et al., 2001). To overcome this, we had to take the time to understand the changes that were to take place and the process of implementation. We also realized that not everyone was ready to embrace the change and some of our employees failed to incorporate with the changes especially the top level management. But after the managers were shown the positive effects of the change on the company's operations, they agreed to it. The last issue was about communication as employees always speculate about the disadvantage of a change if brought in the organization. To avoid this, the managers held a meeting as fast as possible to clarify things and the benefit of the change.

Benefits of the Change

These changes will create a good relationship between the top level managers plus the junior staffs. As the communication will be opened to anyone who has an idea. It is realized that most employees have experience from different firms. If they can be allowed to bring these ideas on board, then they can help in realizing potential strengths and weaknesses in the organization.

Another thing is that the introduction of modern technology within the organization will increase the productivity at a lower production cost (Cummings, et al., 2014). This will, in turn, reduce the workload and the organization will stay strong among its competitors as they meet their customers' expectations. The current technology uses less time in the production of high quantity as compared to the old technology.

Conclusion

Throughout the process of bringing change at the Asbury Water Authority (AWA), I realized that change within an organization is something that requires teamwork. It is something that takes some time to achieve and does not come in a day. It takes time since it is with a lot of challenges and failure to plan on how to handle the challenges, the problem that might be caused can be bigger than the benefits it would have caused. To see the victory of the change, proper planning must be put in place, and all the theories plus elements of change must be studied carefully and be brought on board. The changes that bring success to the organization must be maintained and be applied whenever necessity calls.

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