

IMPROVING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE IN RAPIDLY CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

If we were not for change, a manager's job would be relatively easy. Planning could be so simple because it is based on historical events where tomorrow would be no different from today (Robbins et al., 1999). In addition, decision-making would be very streamlined because the result of every alternative taken in decision-making could be predicted with almost certain accuracy. However, this is not the way things work. Today's environment is full of uncertainty, market changes, changing workforce demographics, political and also social pressures and mostly certainly advancement in technology make today's organization one constant changes (Savery et al., 2000). Organization in global market place will therefore continues to experience tremendous change. Organizational leaders thought change was an event (Frohman, 1997). However, change is now viewed as an ongoing process triggered by multiple variables (Grieves, 2000). Managers at all levels, but more specifically those at the middle level, must be constantly being reminded of their role and their influence is respect to organizational performance. Leading organizations spend 20 percent of effort on formulating and 80 per cent on the implementation of change and the benefits are accrued from the ability to embrace change more quickly and effectively than competitors (Samson et al., 2000). With the scenario, we can say that today's competitive environments require organizational change; organizational change requires effective managerial performance; effective managerial performance requires appropriate skills and behavior. Appropriate skills and behavior development are facilitated through appropriate and effective management development activities. This paper, therefore, discusses and offers recommendations about how to improve current management performance in rapidly changing organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The Rapidly Changing Organization

To become more competitive, organizations and the people that operate them must break old habits and develop new behaviors and processes that make them more effective and efficient (Hill, 2000). Thus, the name of the new game is not only change but rapid change, in the search of competitive advantage. To this end, most modern organizations are presently engaged in various organizational change efforts aimed at improving performance. New strategies are being considered which require different organizational skill sets or behaviors. The complexity involved implementing new strategies has increased and the time available to managers to respond to competitive threats and implement changes has shortened. They must not only be fast but most important is be first.

Though we see that changes are taking place around us, the catalysts that set it in motion often remain unclear (Longenecker et al., 2002). Change can be broadly defined as "making or become different" or "a transition from one state, condition or phase to another". However, in the context of organizational change, others have

noted that any definition of change is potentially problematic (Kemelgor et al., 2000). It can therefore be suggested that organizational change encompass ongoing initiatives that are directed from the top to the bottom of the organization and has a profound effect on the depth of the change effort (Appelbaum et al., 1998). Change can also be understood in a temporal context. Rapid change might occur in responses to dramatic or urgent situations. As Chapman (1997) pointed out, "in a world that is changing with incredible speed, ambiguity is a constant"

Robbins et al., (1999) identified that change essentially falls into 3 categories: structure, technology and people. Changing structure include any alteration in authority relations, coordination mechanism, degree of centralization, job redesign or similar structural variables. Changes in structures of the organization ordinarily follow changes in strategy (Clardy, 2001). Structural change attempts to improve performance by altering the formal structure of task and authority relationship. At the same time, the structure of an organization creates human and social relationships, which will become ends for the members of the organization. These relationships, when they have been defined and made legitimate by management, introduce the element of stability.

The second category, changing technology includes any application of new ways to transform resources in to the product or services. It encompasses modifications in the way the work is performed or the methods and equipment that are used. In the usual sense of the word, technology means new machines but we should expand the concept to include new techniques with or without new machines. Therefore, from the perspective, the work improvement methods of scientific management such as automation and computerization can be considered as technological breakthrough (Lavin, 1997)

Lastly, changing people refers to the changes in employee's attitudes, expectations, perceptions and behavior. The major objective is to enhance the capacity of individuals to perform assigned tasks in coordination with others. In this relation, change could also be perceived in terms of individuals as agents who facilitate organizational transformation. It must be recognized that individuals are the critical catalysts for organizational change where real change occurs through the initiative and creativity of people, no hardware or systems. Therefore, in rapidly changing organization, the dynamics of management development must change (Longenecker et al., 2001) to help managers recognize their changing and revolving roles. Managers must also be assists to acquire the skills needed to get their jobs completed but also to function more effectively and efficiently (Robbins et al., 1999).

MANAGERIAL ROLES IN RAPIDLY CHANGING ORGANIZATION

Besides the function of planning and implementing, integrating and coordinating, leading and controlling as the main functions in management roles, rapidly changing organizations require:

The Development of Different Management Skills and Leadership Styles.

Managers are people who do things right while leaders are people who do the right things. The difference may be summarize as activities of vision and judgement, which facilitate effectiveness as a leader, versus activities of mastering routines, which facilitate efficiency as a manager. A successful leader in the organization is a person who inspires, by appropriate means, sufficient competence to influence a group of individuals to becoming willing followers in the achievement of organizational goals.

These leaders are creating new ideas, new policies or new procedures and have reputation for bringing change to the organization. They are viewed as "creative change agents" and not simply as masters of basic routines. (Darling, 1999)

THE ACQUISITION OF NEW BUSINESS SKILL

Determining the organization success is the key factor for all managers. At the very least managers need to understand the organization's situation well enough to know what is more important to competitive success and what is less important (Thompson et al., 1998) and then acquire the skills needed to accomplish the task. This thinking is based on the premise that customers satisfaction, employee satisfaction and impact on the society are achieved through leadership driving policy and strategy, people management, resources and processes, leading ultimate to excellence in business results. (Shergold et al., 1996)

IMPROVING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

The findings of the study made by Longenecker et al., (2001) point toward the dynamic and complex nature of management development. In rapidly changing organization, work and production processes change, reporting relationships are altered, technology use increases and people are called to become more self-managing and team-oriented. These changes place significant pressure on managers who must get results in this environment in shorter time period, with less formal authority and fewer resources. If organizations desire to increase the effectiveness of their managers during periods of rapid change, leaders and management development experts would be well served to review the lessons.

Managers Must Have Clear Understanding of Their Roles in The Changing Organization

Changes in strategy, structure and work processes often leave managers unsure of their roles and related responsibilities. It can also lead to confusion about the roles and responsibilities of others within the organization. Bringing managers aboard the changing organization, assigning the new job and expecting them to perform up to new standards. (Ziglar, 1998). Only with a clear understanding of their role, managers can develop strategies for implementing new business project or change effort. Managers cannot be effective if they experience role ambiguity. Perhaps this is why clarifying roles, goals and performance expectations was the most important tools in improving manager performance in rapidly changing organizations.

MANAGERS NEED ENCOURAGEMENT TO LEARN

A very effective method of management development is to give managers a chance to learn by tackling real world problems or in the word, let them learn by doing. Learning by doing increases retention of covered material, causes managers to think current organizational practices, provide opportunities for managers to take risks in decision-making process. A central assumption in learning by doing is that individuals learn from their experience by the making probability of changes conditional on their history (Greve, 1998)

THE IMPORTANCE OF ONGOING PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

Performance measurement provides organizations the opportunity to refine and improve their development activities. It can help identify gaps between manager's training and abilities. Performance feedback can be used to recognize and reward improvements in performance and provide opportunities to demonstrate the knowledge skills. Performance measurement and feedback programs should provide specific feedback and be based on specific objectives. Top management can and should increase both the quality and quantity of performance feedback to improve management performance during periods of rapid change. (Doyle, 2000).

PRAISE THE PERFORMER; CRITICIZE THE PERFORMANCE

The cheapest, most effective motivation going is a simple, pleasant "thank you" for a job well done. Managers who feel appreciated and respected are more likely to be loyal, happy, productive, effective and highly motivated. If they really believe that the organization is having their interest at heart, they are far more inclined to be dedicated to their work and are thus more productive. (Jensen, 1995). The best way to show recognition and appreciation is to get to know to people and reinforce their positive performance with things that are important to them. Sometimes a card, a note or verbal recognition is the very reinforcement they need. However, if criticisms are necessary, criticized the performance.

CONCLUSION

In organizations experiencing intense competition, managers' effectiveness at anticipating, responding to and implementing change in organizations can determine an organization's ability to complete. Organizational success is almost a function of the effectiveness of organization's managers. Thus, improving the effectiveness of organization management practices can be a distinctive source of competitive advantage in the years to come. The most encouraging aspects is that this competitive advantage can be expanded without a huge capital and technology but what is really needed is to help managers improve current management development efforts within the organization

Yes, it takes everyone involved to make an organization successful in times of rapid change; from the CEO down to managers to the leaning crew. Each person's job is important and each person has the power to make a positive or negative difference. Whether you are in the top management or you fill in part time for temporary service, you have a choice to make everyday of the week. Then choose to do good things that nurture your organization.

With the scenario, we can say that today's competitive environments require organizational change; organizational change requires effective managerial performance; effective managerial performance requires appropriate skills and behavior. Appropriate skills and behavior development are facilitated through appropriate and effective management development activities.

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