Running Head: CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change Management: Process Re-examination

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Change is a constant focus and concern for any organization. However, the identification of what to change, and when, can come about in a variety methods. For instance, market fluctuations which result in poor input/output performance can signal the need for changes in operational or supply processes. Customer retention issues and/or customer dissatisfaction can also signal a need for change to outputs. That is, when outputs do not meet strategic goals or timelines. Additionally, process transformation can be signaled “when it is determined that minor changes won’t produce the desired result” (Harmon, 2007, pp. (kindle)7369-7370).

Resistance to change comes in multiple flavors, however, two most common are loathing and fear. People tend to loath change in that it requires them to do things they would not normally do, as well as, operate outside what their current routine is set out as and what they are used to. Fear is related to this in that change can lead to job loss via redundancy. Namely, people tend to carve out niches for themselves where their current work secures their livelihood through an internal knowledgebase. If that knowledge base is no longer relevant then their position may become irrelevant.

Loathing can be overcome through training, management, and communication. A person trained in a new process is likely to use the new process since they know what it does. Additionally, management pushing the new process and communicating its importance will solidify the matter as it becomes significant to a person’s role and responsibilities.

Fear is a little more difficult to overcome as, in some cases, redundancy cannot be avoided. However, clear and concise warning as well as an irreproachable attempt to redistribute employee resources into new areas through re-training can overcome the majority of naysayers. Having an appropriate organizational redundancy policy goes a long way with this, as well. If employees know that a redundancy can mean a large payout, which does not lead to them being monetarily inconvenienced, acceptance of the change will come without as much hand wringing.

Two ways of implementing changes are phased introduction and forced introduction. Phased introduction is similar to the SDLC way of working both systems side by side until users are competent in the new system, and only then retiring the old system. Processes would be run side by side until such time as everyone is on board with the new process. Additionally, the processes would be done in a sequential manner, the least work affecting process to the most ground shaking.

Forced introduction is when the old processes are removed entirely and the new processes must be operated upon. That is, all training and process change communications would take place before the implementation, then on a specific date and time the new processes would go live and the old processes shut down forever. That being said, this is usually done in a test state first, all relevant parties trying out the new process to see if there are any unseen flaws, and then when it is known to work, the process comes online permanently.

The sponsor of change is the person or persons in charge of leading the way with process changes, and guiding the change process throughout an organization. They usually up-play the benefits of the change while downplaying the old process methods. This is to ensure a greater adoption rate, as well as, a person(s) for staff to communicate worries and/or suggests through. Moreover, they act as a mascot and visual representative of the change process within a company.

This week’s reading introduced the BPTrends process redesign methodology. In terms of implementing change, personally I believe this is the most clear and concise method shown thus far. It resembles the Unified Process, which is a software development methodology used by IBM, and as such, is easily adopted from an IT standpoint. Since the BPTrends process is outlined both in terms of organizational units and timeline, it is easy for everyone else to get on board, as well. This is due to its clearly defined process redesign steps and the timelines each should take. A Business Architect could easily take this model and build an entire process change project from it with very few diagrammatic alterations required.

Reference

Harmon, P. (2007). *Business Process Change: A guide for Business Managers and BPM and Six Sigma Professionals* (2nd ed.). Burlington, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.