Change management and process optimization of an Enterprise

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Abstract: Change and transformation nowadays force companies to remain competitive and meet customer requirements by continually improving their performance. For this, leading and the support for change are essential in the company. The changes brought about by implementing the Lean approach require preparation and support on all levels and the different actors. Moreover, without comprehensible and complete communication with the collaborators, the project will not be able to succeed. Communication allows the project to start and to collect data on the motivation and involvement of all stakeholders. The dialogue between the project pilot, collaborators as well and the place given to the human in the project, undoubtedly leads to success. Increasing transparency of the hierarchy for the project's stakeholders will be seen as a positive change for all employees in the company.

1   Introduction

Change management is the method that: a company decides to correct a situation of dissatisfaction and achieve the desired goal. Change is immediate or gradual and it is imposed or voluntary. Its nature depends on the problem and the possible solutions [1].

Managing and supporting change is essential from the start until the implementation of the project. For most companies, the technical aspects take priority over the human aspect and, therefore begin the inevitable resistance to change.

Resistance to change is a natural phenomenon that can appear in any new organization or situation. To support employees in an improvement or transformation project and manage resistance to change, there are very effective methods.

1.1 Methods for overcoming resistance to change

Identifying sources of resistance is knowing how to understand the causes of resistance. This is one of the key points for being able to act adequately and at the right time.

Change management can be based on the authority, intervention, information, or participation [1] of employees. All these methods mentioned above can be applied to specific situations.

The authority method must be driven by management and its team and is used for the company's strategic decisions. In this method, the changes are imposed and immediate.

The method based on employee participation is the most recommended and the easiest to convince employees because they are informed and aware of the objectives and expectations of the hierarchy. This method allows employees to participate with their ideas until the solution is implemented.

Resistance to change is one of the main reasons why companies fail in their change implementation projects.

Therefore, controlling resistance to change at the beginning of the project is necessary to achieve the objectives.

Different stages of change management will be treated in the next section.

1.2 How to manage changes in three stages according to the LEWIN's model?

The ability of companies to manage change and resistance to transformations today is the possibility of adapting to the opportunities and constraints that appear before them either internally or externally.

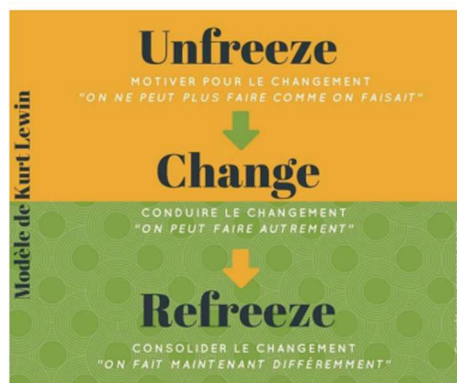Kurt Lewin's model is based on three theoretical steps for successful change (figure 1).

Figure 1. Kurt Lewin's model [1]

1. In the first "Unfreeze" phase, the objective is to make employees aware that urgent change is inevitable. Convince that the organization has no other way out than to do otherwise. Resistance to change appears at this stage [1].

Taking stock of the current situation is the first step in this phase, then explaining to employees the importance of change while taking their concerns into account.

The objective of this phase is to ensure employee buy-in by reducing resistance to change.

2. In the second phase, "Change", minds are ready for novelty thanks to the feeling of urgency created by the previous stage, and new practices are defined. Presenting the benefits, the new way of doing things [1], identifying resistance to change, and dealing with it without delay are the keys to success in this phase. To involve employees, you must communicate the importance and progress of the project, train, and reward. Everyone's participation in defining the "new way of doing things" is necessary.

3. And finally, "Refreeze". Once the changes have been adopted, the objective is to stabilize and consolidate the new organization, new working methods, etc. If this phase is ignored, old routines quickly return [1].

Communication, motivation, and taking into consideration employees' comments are essential in this phase. For project closure a last change standardization is necessary.

According to the author [3], there are key points for effectively leading business change:

The initiation of the change project must be communicated from the beginning and throughout the project. The way of communicating has a very important role in the continuity of the project on success or failure. Finally, the standardization of the new situation makes it possible to change the culture of the company.

Other authors have gone further on the theme of change management. Then we will see the stages of change according to researcher Kotter.

1.3   The 8 stages of change according to Kotter

Harvard Business School professor John P. Kotter formulated an eight-step recommendation for transforming a business [2], (figure 2).

1. Create a sense of urgency: This first step consists of creating a feeling of urgency among employees. To ensure the creation of this sense of urgency we will rely on the potential risks of the current situation if we do not change performances, market competition, customer complaints, changes in standards, and regulations.
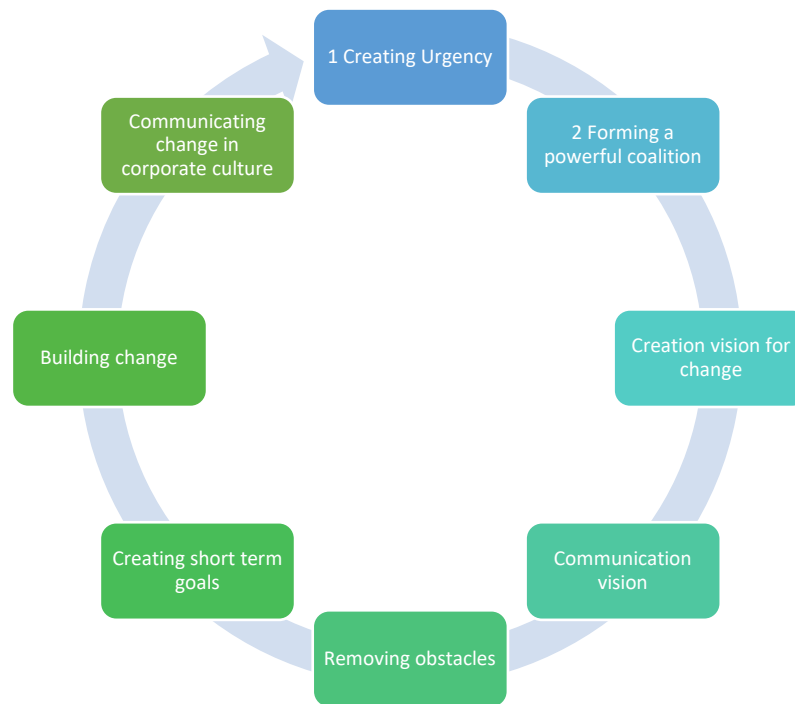
Figure 2. The 8 Stages of Change by John P. Kotter's model [1]

2. Form a powerful coalition: It is a grouping of people with different skills, talents, experts, and people who have a good sense of communication, it is to create real leadership.

3. Create a vision of the future state: Here we look to mobilize employees by offering them a project that motivates, inspires, and reassures them. The goal is to describe the future state after the change.

4. Communicating the change vision: It is important to reinforce the sense of urgency created by the first step and to communicate them based on the dramatization of the current situation if we do not change, and of course to share solid communication daily.

5. Encourage action: After communication and the clearly defined goal, it is time to get the stakeholders moving and make them accountable. In this stage too, we can act on the objectives if they are declined about the company's strategy throughout the project and give the possibility to the actors to adapt to local objectives.

6. Generate short-term victories: To maintain stakeholder mobilization it will be necessary to set short-term objectives. Clarify and make short-term results visible to stakeholders.

7. Consolidate successes for more change: To be able to demonstrate the credibility and capacity of the organization [2] to change, we can present the first results, but they are not enough to believe in a great victory. To maintain the

dynamic of change [3] the team must be the force of proposals and share other projects at the company level.

8. Announce new approaches in the company culture:

We can name all the previous stages as a transition state to get to the GOAL. Then it is necessary to write the procedures, and the operating methods [2] and formalize the established standards.

As cited by the author [3] the success of this method rests on two points:

- Deal in detail with the eight steps and
- Guarantee the order of processing of all stages.

According to Kotter's model, there are limits, so all the steps are not always applicable in business, hence the different constraints do not always allow all the steps to be carried out [3].

Change management is essential for companies facing competition, customer requirements, regulations, and the transformations that have taken place in recent years with strong technological growth toward Industry 4.0 [4].

The key to successful change management is agility. This is the ability of the workgroup - team to adapt to the organization of the project, and according to needs to make it evolve and react quickly.

In the next section will be treated the change management methodology.

2   Methodology

In a company, there are three levels of organization:

- Level 1: Hierarchical parts (manager)
- Level 2: Executive parties – managers (project pilot)
- Level 3: Employee parts (collaborators)

When the hierarchy initiates a change project for various reasons, they know the opportunities and risks related to the project. Along with the first level, there are also opportunities and dangers at the third level. Employees do not see opportunities and risks in the same way: for them, it is the risks that concern them the most.

In a change project, the role of a project manager is to send the message from the first level to the third level, choose the effective change management method, and support the collaborators during the project. The objective is to bring the same point of view back to all levels of the company as quickly as possible.

To effectively lead change, we must rely on the four objectives of change management: information, understanding, acceptance, and participation of collaborators.

To ensure the information of all collaborators, the communication tools that could be applied are classic methods such as meetings, discussions with collaborators in the field (in the workstation), emails, posters, etc.

The best way to ensure employees understand the project is to be as close to them as possible. In our case, I therefore preferred the methods of questionnaires and interviews when discussing with them. This helps to detect the actors resisting change and to deal with them quickly. This method will be a questionnaire for each stage of the project.

3   Conclusion

Support and change management are essential in a company for all levels and all departments. As I mentioned above, change scares collaborators, and resistance to change is normal and inevitable.

Furthermore, with good communication throughout the project with clear (realistic) and well-defined objectives, needs, and constraints, we can move forward with the implementation of the project. Then, there is no debate on the purpose, and the intended target is known to everyone.

For further research, can be used the DMAIC approach.

To lead and support change, the DMAIC method could be used which is structured according to these five steps (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve – Innovate, Control).

Using this methodology will help to classify the tools that are applicable and easy to implement to consider the need to train employees in Lean Six Sigma – DMAIC tools. Then, a specific questionnaire at each stage of project deployment is very helpful.

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