

***The use of organisational communication to facilitate the
implementation of change by reducing employee resistance***

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Abstract

The overall topic relates to the use of communication during change management to ultimately reduce employee resistance to change.

Change management is a major part of organisations due to the ever changing environment. Survival within the market place is one of the main reasons an organisation is forced to change. Organisations need to update, develop and ultimately stay one step ahead of their competitors.

Identifying a process throughout the implementation of change is key. In relation to process a number of models will be put forward. Communication also plays a major role in the process. With employees at the centre of change it is important they are fully updated with all changes. Resistance is also a factor and the need to manage resistance.

This dissertation sets out to examine the role communication has in change management and how it can assist in overcoming resistance. The importance of following a clear process will also be examined.

This will be achieved by conducting a full analysis of the literature in the areas of change management, communications during change management and resistance to change management. Following this a case study will be identified and examined in further detail with particular emphasis on recent change management that took place in the form of an acquisition and integration.

Declaration

I certify that the work carried out in this paper to be submitted is my own work. All information gathered and used outside my own contribution is fully referenced.

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Chapter One – Introduction

In the constantly changing business environment there is an ever increasing need to change. There are numerous reasons a company needs to change; mainly due to internal and external forces. How a company implements change is crucial. For change to be successful it needs to be structured, easy to understand and most importantly communicated to all. Communication is one of the most important factors during the change process. Failure to communicate the process is setting up for a fail. Resistance is a crucial part of change management and is to be expected. Managed in correctly resistance can be beneficial to the company and can encourage people to get on board. Commitment and involvement of people is a key part of the change management process.

A full review of the literature will be undertaken in Chapter two, to gain in-depth knowledge of the areas associated with change management, communication and resistance.

Following on from the literature review a research methodology will be outlined in chapter 3 to demonstrate a method for gathering and analysing the data. This chapter aims to highlight the main reasons for choosing qualitative data by the means of a case study. The researcher also chose to use interviews as part of the research methods. The specific unit of analysis within this research is on Uniphar. The company background and history is provided in chapter four of this study.

Uniphar in recent years has been through many changes. In 2008 / 2009 the company was in a challenging place. Four years on, through significant changes the company successfully purchased one of its competitors and has successfully integrated both businesses. Planning and communication was key. Communication is not always a strong point of the business but learnings can be taken to improve the process for future changes; be it large or small.

Following on from this, the research findings gathered from the interviews will be presented, analysed and discussed.

Purpose of Research

This specific topic was chosen due to the fact that organisational change is something that all companies need to manage. In an ever changing environment the need for change is more relevant. Communication can be an issue for organisations in particular the lack of communication. The importance and the need for communication will be highlighted.

Resistance to change is a major part of change management and some companies have difficulty overcoming resistance. Resistance to change is one of the major reasons change management programmes are unsuccessful. The relationship between communication and resistance is vital.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical framework will be outlined. An in-depth review of the literature was undertaken. This provided the researcher with an overall view from the literature academic. The areas covered for this paper were – change management, communication within change management and also resistance to change management.

The reasons for change management will be presented along with some frameworks associated with change management. The importance of communication through the change management process will be highlighted. And finally the researcher will examine the role of resistance throughout change management process.

Theoretical Framework

Change management as illustrated in the literature is complex. One of the reasons is due to the fact the changes mostly involve and impact on people. Throughout any change management process there will be failures and successes. Two key aspects of change management are communication and resistance to change. It is the researcher's intention to look at change management with particular emphasis on how communication can help minimise resistance to change. The researcher will focus in particular on the work of Lewin (1951) and his model of change management and also the work of Kotter (1995) and his eight step change management model. These models will be used as a starting point with the emphasis on communication and resistance to change management. Based on this the following research question is proposed:

How can organisational communication facilitate the implementation of change by reducing employee resistance?

Change management

“Change management is not a distinct discipline with rigid clearly defined boundaries. Rather, the theory and practice of change management draws on a number of social science disciplines and traditions.” (Burnes, 1992)

Change management is complex, there are more cases of change management failure than successes. Before a change can be implemented an organisation needs to recognise that a change needs to take place. There are different drivers that lead to change; these factors can be both internal and external. Ultimately the people / employees of the organisation will be the ones that will determine if the change is a success or a failure. Employees need the motivation for change to occur; it won't happen by itself. The employees affected by the change should be involved from the outset; this will assist with the change being successful rather than a failure. Changes should not be imposed on the employees. The overall goal of change management is to improve the organisation by modifying how work or a process is currently done. Ströh (2001) stated that only when *“the changes are internalised in the hearts of the people will behavioural modification occur and the desired effects be achieved”*. pp. 149.

A generic change model by Kelly (2009) illustrates the external environment as a driver for change. This illustrates the Who, When, How, What and Why before change management commences. As shown in the below illustration change can be planned or unplanned. As stated by Kitchen et al (2002) the change can be continuous or discontinuous, the external environment will determine whether the change is continuous or discontinuous. *“Continuous change assumes gradual shifts in factors such as consumer demand, government legislation”* (Kitchen et al, 2002, pp.) permits the organisation to plan in advance for such change. *“Discontinuous change is much more dramatic and can alter the nature of whole industries and economies beyond recognition.”* (Kitchen et al 2002, pp. 48) A big part of change management is to consider the communication of the change and also to understand that there may be an element of resistance of change. Organisations are very much influenced by the external environment. When looking at the external environment there are threats and opportunities that can trigger the change for the organisation. Kitchen et al (2002) discuss that the environment we operate in today has become more difficult to predict.

The testing part for managers now is “to learn to live with it, anticipate it, and where possible capitalise on it”. (Kitchen et al, 2002, pp.49)

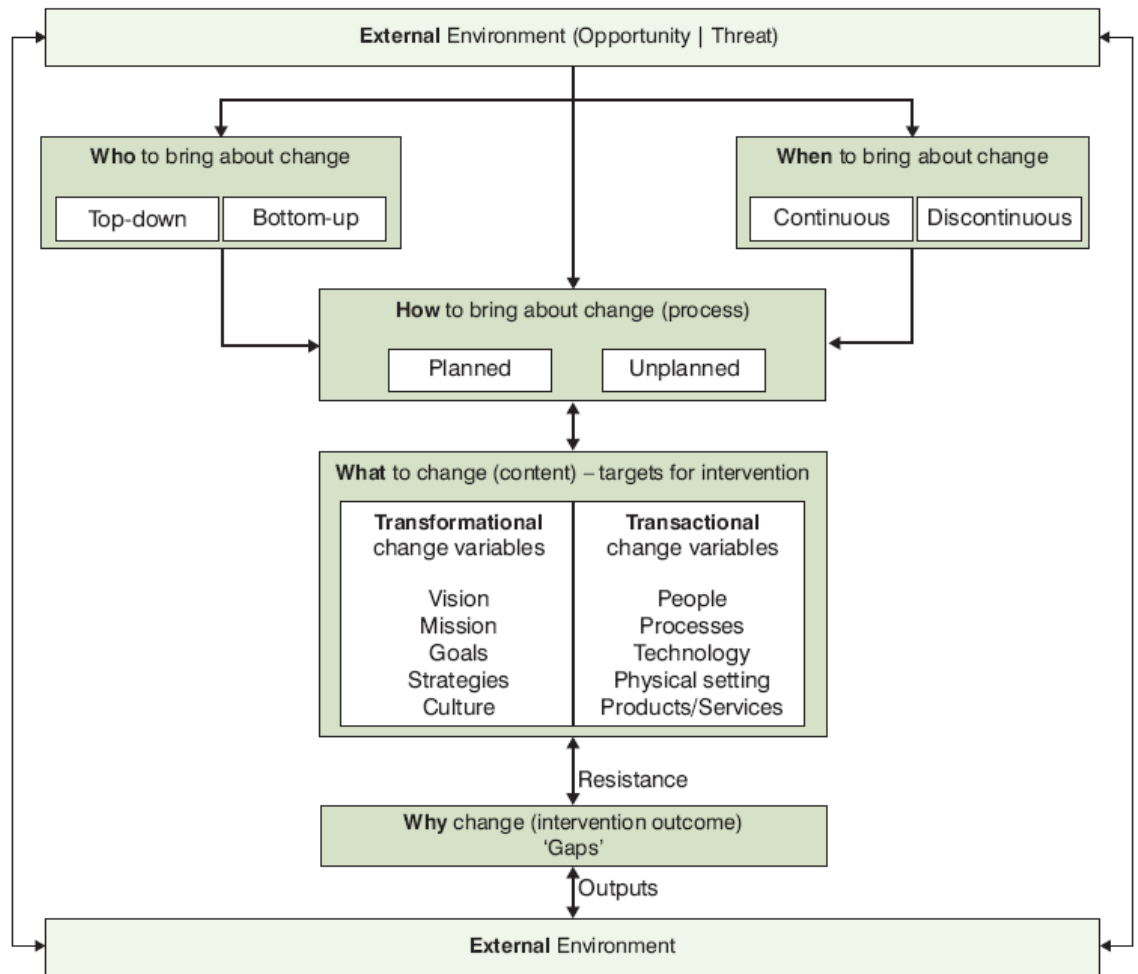


Figure 1: Internal / External Environment
(Kelly 2009) - www.mymaster.com.au/files/upload/20120617.../1340114110.ppt

Change is the process of moving from one way of doing things to another way of doing things. Kotter (1996) discusses the need to lead change rather than just managing the change.

Understanding what drives change is also important. Gilgeous (1997) discusses that there are external and internal factors that start the process of change within an organisation:

External Factors: New technology, changes in the marketplace, changing customer expectations, competitor activities, quality and standards, government legislation and prevailing political values and economic cycles.

Internal Factors: These relate to management philosophy, organisational structure and culture as well as the systems of internal power and control.

In order for organisations to survive in today's business environment they need to have the ability to make changes on a constant basis. We are operating in a fast paced environment with increasing demands from the customer. Failure to adapt or change could lead to loss of business. Armstrong (2012) views HR's role in change as both leading change and facilitating change. Armstrong (2012) refers to leading change as instigating the change and then managing the culture change that needs to happen within the organisation. He refers to facilitating change as making the change happen; the change will not happen on its own.

A common theme throughout the literature is that the environment we now operate in has moved from predictable to unpredictable. This is one of the main reasons why there is a need to look at change management as a continuous process and look more towards the emergent approach to change.

There are many different models for change management. The most notable change models in the literature are:

Lewin (1951) speaks of the transitional change model; this is seen as a three step process:

- Unfreezing the existing situation
- Moving to a new position
- Refreezing in the new state



Figure 2: Lewin's 1951 Change Model

http://ic-pod.typepad.com/design_at_the_edge/organisational_change/

This model is useful for planned change. The other type of change is known as emergent change. Ströh et al (2001) refer to Lewin's model as a model for changing the current behaviour by discontinuing with the current behaviours, as no new way of doing things will be effective until one stops the current behaviour – this would be referred to as the unfreezing stage. Once the unfreezing stage has been completed the change can occur and finally move on the refreezing stage; the new way of doing things is implemented, behaviours reflect the new way of doing things and the change is permanent. Criticism for this model would be that it could be too inflexible for all organisations. Burnes (2004) and Kanter (1992) were part of those that criticised the model for being fixed, undeviating and systematic.

Lewin's work within change management is one of the key pieces. Those that have criticised his model are looking to models within complexity theories. Complexity theories as described by Burnes (2004) "*are concerned with the emergence of order in dynamic non-linear systems, such as weather systems, operating at the edge of chaos: in other words, systems which are constantly changing*" pp. 310. Organisations themselves can also be considered complex. As part of complexity theories behaviours are also considered to be complex. Lewin's work focused on resolving conflict through planned change facilitated by learning. Although the three step model illustrated above is most familiar there was another three components to the planned approach – Field Theory, Group Dynamics and Action Research. Field theory is concerned with the group behaviours. Group dynamics refers to the importance of the group determining the behaviours of the group. Finally, action research refers to the notion of researching before action can occur; once the action has taken place this leads to assessment of the research and actions. (Burnes, 2004). Complexity theory

has also been described “as a label for a number of theories, ideas and research programs that are derived from scientific disciplines such as biology, mathematics, chemistry and physics” (Styhre 2002 pp. 343). The complexity theories are considered non-linear in nature compared to the linear format of Lewin’s model. Many author’s including Styhre (2002), allow complexity theory to evaluate “*the discontinuous, disruptive and emerging patterns of change within organisations.*” pp. 343 – 348. This is linking back that organisations are operating in a different climate than previous years; with change been rapid.

As previously stated Lewin’s work centred on planned changed. During the 1980’s and more recently, organisations went through drastic organisational changes; there were authors in the area that felt Lewin’s approach was too planned to be able to deal with drastic changes that were being undertaken. Kanter et al (1992) considers the model as unsuitable and does not believe that it should gain popularity. Many critics including Pettigrew, Wilson and Garvin, viewed the model as too basic. Another criticism in the research as discussed by Pettigrew, Harris and Dawson determine that the model is not suitable for radical changes within organisations and is only suited to once off change tasks. Lewin’s work focused on the behavioural change of employees at individual and also group level. The same critics as mentioned above also critiqued Lewin’s work for not recognising authority, political affairs and the conflict that is part of every organisation. The main criticism of most of the same authors, Dawson, Kanter and Wilson is that Lewin supported a management led method for change and was very much driven from the top downwards. In Lewin’s (1947) as cited by Burnes work he does recognise the need for commitment of all involved for the change to be successful. Involvement of all those impacted by the change and learning from behaviours are the main points of his work. Burnes (2004) speaks of not just the three step model in isolation but his overall approach to change to incorporate Field Theory, Group Dynamics and Action Research. All four combined can lead to effective change within an organisation. Burnes (2004) would also agree that the 3 step model in its own right is simplistic but combined with the other concepts is effective. Burnes (2004) regards Lewin’s work as extremely relevant in today’s world as there is always the need to resolve conflict. Change is a group effort and can be continuous once the group norms have changed. Styhre (2002) notes that Lewin’s model does not take the external environment into consideration at the point of refreezing. Styhre (2002)

would consider Lewin's model as weak due to the simple view of the external environment that is given. A criticism of the planned approaches to change as discussed by Cole & Kelly (2011) is that it is not always possible to plan for change in an ever changing environment.

More recent work in the area is the concept "*is not that everything changes but that everything is change: people, organisations, ideas*". (Sturdy and Gray 2003 pp. 655)

Cole & Kelly (2011) put forward two approaches for change management, a planned approach and an emergent approach. The planned approach would be considered as a formal management driven very much pre planned approach. The emergent approach which is suggested as being more suited to today's environment; as disorderly, less top down approach and seen as on – going. Planned approaches to change are linked to radical changes whereas emergent approaches to change are associated with minor changes within the organisation.

Other models within change management to consider are:

Beckhard (1961) looked the change process to integrate the following:

- Set goals and define the future state
- Diagnose the present condition in relation to these goals
- Define the transition state activities and commitments required to meet the future state
- Develop strategies and action plans for managing this transition in the light of an analysis of the factors likely to affect the introduction of change.

(Cited in Armstrong, 2012, pp. 564)

Thuley (1979) speaks of following five approaches to managing change:

- Directive
- Bargained
- Hearts and Minds
- Analytical
- Action Based

(Cited in Armstrong, 2012, pp. 564)

Kotter (1995) carried out research on a number of companies where transformational efforts had failed. Findings from the research would determine that many of change management initiatives are unsuccessful. Kotter (1995) discusses an eight step change management model

- Establishing a sense of urgency
- Forming a powerful guiding coalition
- Creating a vision
- Communicating the vision
- Empowering others to act on the vision
- Planning for and creating short term wins
- Consolidating improvements and producing still more change
- Institutionalising new approaches.

In Kotter's model one should not move on to the next phase until the first phase is complete, moving to the next phase too soon could impact on the change. As shown in the below diagram of the eight steps it can be broken down to three distinct stages – preparation, implementation and finally the management stage.



Figure 3: Kotter's eight step model

<http://thevirtualleader.wordpress.com/2011/12/20/teleworker-toolkit-the-basics-of-change-management/>

Within Kotter's model communication is key; communicating the need for change and how the change can be realised. Key learnings from Kotter's work of 2007 are that the more successful changes within organisation take time to implement and also faults during any of the stages can have a huge impact in a negative way. The eight step model has been described as a model for transforming organisations. It is a model that allows an organisation to work through each step in the change process without making errors (Mento et al, 2002). Ultimately for the change to be successful the organisation needs to avoid making errors.

Hanson (2010) discusses the need for an assessment of the organisation and the employees to clarify the "readiness for change". Failure to consider the knowledge, skills and abilities of the workforce again could have a negative effect on the changes being implemented. Timing of the change is also crucial. Speed is also a factor but will differ from organisation to organisation. Training is another key factor. Employees must be provided with the required new skills involved with the change. Employees need to feel confident with the new process, this will help create a positive outlook for the change process.

Strebel (1996) discusses that vision and leadership make change successful. Employees perceive change as unsettling and disturbing and so communications is essential to managing resistance.

Purpose of Change Management

There are many reasons why an organisation goes through change management. The main reasons include:

- Crisis
- Organisation objectives
- Ineffective work practices
- External opportunities
- Internal and external forces
- Mergers and acquisitions

Resistance to Change Management

“Resistance has been classically understood as a foundation cause of conflict that is undesirable and detrimental to organisational health” (Waddell et al, 1998 pp. 543)

Resistance to change management can “make or break” a change management effort. As previously discussed the key group of people should be involved. It has been referred to by Bovey et al (2001) as a response to change as people go from one known to another. With a group effect hopefully you will limit the amount of resistance and have a successful change management implementation. Research carried out in 1960’s and 1970’s have found that resistance should not be avoided as management can gain knowledge and insight through the resistance (Waddell et al 1998.) It is quite natural for employees to fear change and one of the ways to display this fear is through resistance. Most people prefer to keep doing what they are doing without the need for change. Failure to overcome resistance or even recognise the resistance to change can impact greatly on the change. It is up to the management to ensure the employees are aware of the need for change, this will also aide in minimising resistance to the change. Trust amongst employees and management is also important to overcome resistance to change. It is important that the employees have trust in managers in what they say and do but also that managers trust and respect the employee’s opinions and ideas. Employee involvement from an early stage will help reduce the resistance to change. Resistance to change has been found to be one of the major factors leading to change failure within organisations. (Seel 2000). There can be too much focus put on the actual change itself and not enough attention put on the people side of change management.

Spiker and Lesser (1995) and Ackerman (1986) all debate the need for the correct balance between the organisations needs and also the needs to the employees. It is important to recognise the human elements (Boyey and Hede 2001). They recognise the human elements to include cognitive and affective processes. Understanding and recognising the elements can lead to a reduction of resistance towards change management within the organisation. It has been recognised that change within organisations is determined by personal change. (Bovey et al 2001). In order for organisational change to be successful individual change is required. This will be the

first step in the change process. Resistance in earlier research was seen as a behaviour that went against the interest and wellbeing of an organisation. (Waddell et al, 1998). It was also seen as a practice of conflict amongst groups of employees within an organisation. Further research in the area resulted in resistance to change to be considered as *“a complex, multi – faceted phenomenon that is caused by a variety of factors”*. (Waddell et al, 1998 pp. 544)

Following further research it is now suggested that resistance has a very valuable role to play in organisational change. It is suggested by Waddell et al (1998) that resistance is an important factor in influencing the organisation towards increased stability. Resistance can be the balance between the external and the internal environment. Resistance is strongly linked to communication. Resistance can also bring about a sense of energy surrounding the change. Resistance can act as a source of innovation throughout a change process; it gives people a chance to step back and consider all options. Waddell et al (1998) would agree with the classic theorist like Lewin and the three step model, in that involvement from an early stage can help reduce resistance. They are also in agreement with Kotter’s work confirming the need for two way communication regarding the change. Although the research is there to confirm that resistance should not be avoided it is the belief that most managers still see resistance as conflict and a behaviour that should be avoided. Maurer (1996) found that the way employers responded to employee resistance was to resist their resistance.

Resistance is a behaviour that is seen by many as negative employee behaviour. Judson (1991) developed a spectrum of behaviours that illustrates an individual’s behaviour towards resistance to change. These behaviours would be considered as employees’ tactics towards changes that are being introduced. At one end of the spectrum is commitment – the employees are on board with the changes. Most importantly they have also accepted the changes. Behaviours displayed include enthusiasm and cooperation. At the other end of the spectrum is resistance to change. At this end employees are not committed to the change. Behaviours displayed include slowing down of work, doing as little work as possible and protest. There are also the in between stages of behaviours that people can show as they go from resisting the changes to acceptance of the changes.

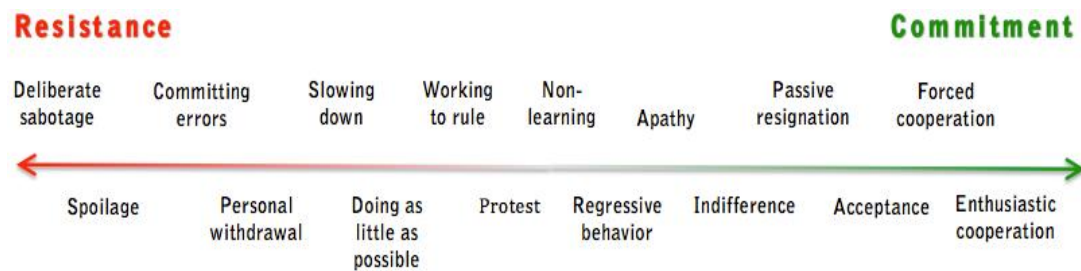


Figure 4 – Spectrum of Behaviours

<http://www.howtochangemanagement.com/2013/03/what-binds-commitment-and-resistance.html>

Schein's (1988) view is that managers consider resistance as the opponent to change and you have to win over your opponent in order for change to be successful. Resistance is seen as an adverse reaction to change by employees. It can be seen as a tactic to delay or even stop the change.

Rowe & Bosie (1973) considered resistance as detrimental and it should be disregarded from the outset. It is considered the enemy of change management. In the earlier years it was seen as individual's self-interest. (Waddell et al 1998.) Further research in later years found that resistance came from different factors – Rational Factors, Non – Rational Factors, Political Factors and Management Factors. (Waddell et al 1998.)

Linking back to Lewin's three step process, if employees are involved in all stages of the process this will assist in minimising the resistance to change. One of the reasons for this is that the employees are fully aware of the changes and have bought in to the idea of change. They will have a higher commitment level towards the change that is being undertaken. Kotter's work on the eight steps to change would also encourage communication – communication being encouraged early on in the process.

Waddell et al (1998) considered that a much deeper understanding of resistance to change has taken place over the years but management theory has failed to utilise resistance in a more positive manner.

Organisational change will impact on people, and in turn, will cause people to react in certain ways and go through a certain process known as the reaction process. Scott and Jaffe (1988) refer to the process as a process of four stages – initial denial, resistance, gradual exploration and eventual commitment. (Bovey and Hede 2001).

All employees react to change in different ways and they also have different ways of accepting change. Consistent communication campaigns will help people through the process all be it at different paces.

It is important that managers realise that some sort of resistance to change, no matter how much planning goes into the change, will be inevitable. This is due to the fact that each individual feels vulnerable to change; be on a small or large scale. As illustrated by Cole & Kelly (2011) Lewin's three step model can allow for limited resistance by individuals if the model is followed. The model as previously discussed allows the initial behaviour to change (unfreeze). At the second stage you can begin to amend the behaviour and finally reinforce the new behaviours (re-freeze). Cole & Kelly (2011) further discuss the need for "*coalition building*" (pp. 279), which will allow the organisation to gain support. Coalition building is "*the forming of partnerships to increase pressures for or against change*" (Cole & Kelly pp. 279).

As discussed by Armstrong (2012) involvement in the change process that is being undertaken is a key factor to allow management to overcome resistance to change. Involvement in the process allows those affected an opportunity to put forward suggestions and raise any concerns that they may be experiencing. If the employees are involved from an early stage they will buy in earlier with the aim to overcome resistance that otherwise could be present. A communication strategy is also important method to overcome any resistance to change. It should not be taken for granted that everyone knows what is going on with regards to change. It is important to consider how a change will effect employees. Failure to consider this will result in resistance.

Communication

The communications process can be described as “*the process by which views and information are exchanged between individuals or groups*” and communication itself as “*the activity of conveying information*”. Cole and Kelly (2011 pp. 589)

Nelissen et al (2008) suggested that communicating a change that will take place in an organisation is one of the main challenges. Research by Jones et al (2004) found that communication throughout the change process is important though little research has been carried out to evaluate the role it fully plays throughout the process. In particular they have found that not enough research has been carried out on how well the change is communicated to individuals. Their research also concluded that successfully communicating the organisational change can help individuals overcome any vagueness or uncertainty that they might encounter.

Effective communication is key for the successful implementation of change initiatives. Traditionally communication starts at the top and works downwards throughout the organisation. Poor communication can lead to a negative state of mind amongst employees. Throughout change management, implementation of the plan should be to avoid any sort of “rumour mill” amongst employees. A positive message needs to be communicated with regard to change. Employees fear change as they are most comfortable doing things a certain way. Attitudes along with the new way of doing things needs to be communicated.

Culture is at the heart of every organisation, Seel (2000) describes organisation culture as “*the emergent result of the continuing negotiations about values, meanings and properties between the members of that organisation and with its environment*” (Seel 2000 pp. 2). As discussed by Seel (2000) it is important throughout any change management process that without the culture of the organisation changing there will be no real change within the organisation. He looks towards the complexity theories as to how change management fits in. Seel sees the new way of thinking and processing the change is to “*build new connections and relationships so that a process of self-organisation can take place*” (Seel 2000, pp.7) The culture of the organisation is developed through communication.

Communication is essential throughout change management. There is a requirement to not only communicate the change to employees but also the need to convince the employees of the need to change. Communication if carried out in the correct way can assist in removing barriers to change that may exist. Communication will also aid in the motivation of the employees to get involved and embrace the change.

Work carried out by Proctor et al (2003) found that the standard form of communication is top level down was found to be ineffective throughout change management. Other means of communication were required in order for the changes to take place. In their research, poor communication was attributed to negative feelings amongst employees. Open communication was promoted throughout the organisation. A case study carried out in 2012 found that a number of organisations would move towards social media as a means of communication to their employees. (Schmitz et al). This would show that there is greater emphasis on methods of communication and the need to keep up with technology advances.

Kitchen et al (2002) are also of the belief that communication is key for the successful implementation of change within an organisation. Not only does communication let the employees gain knowledge and understanding of the change but will also minimise resistance that is likely to occur. The type of organisation, organisation culture and manager style all need to be taken into consideration with regards to communication within an organisation. Hargie et al (1996) sees the need for effective two way channels of communication within organisations. Linking back into external factors that trigger organisational change, the need for communication is increased, Ströh et al (2001).

Communication at the most basic level can be formal or informal and there are many different ways to communicate. Technology has had a huge impact on the way communication is carried out amongst organisations. Cole and Kelly (2011) make the point that organisations need to communicate “*what is important and what needs attention*” pp. 298. The organisational structure impacts on communications channels within an organisation. The correct structure will allow for the effective passing of information from management to employees and vice versa. Most importantly is that the message received is the intended message. A breakdown in communication can lead to unsuccessful change implementation. Strebel (1996) considers managers

placing themselves in “employee shoes” to gain insight from an employee’s outlook; as this will be different from the manager viewpoint.

Steffan (1999) notes that during a period of change initiative the new way needs to be communicated from top level down and also needs full support from the top. He further describes a method for communication throughout the change initiative. Firstly, assessing the organisation’s needs, looking at all the resources available and choosing the adequate approach for change. Following this analysis the implementation stage can begin – setting up the communication infrastructure, transferring the message to the intended audience and the final stage is to evaluate the effectiveness. The process can be repeated if the conditions change. Communication has to be planned in order for the right message to be communicated. Quirke (1996) would also agree that commitment from senior management with regards communication is key to success. Communication needs to be high on senior management’s agenda. Research by Quirke (1996) has found that 70% of information that employees receive is through the grapevine – this gives very little control over what message is actually conveyed to the employee. Also the accuracy of the information comes into question – can you rely on the grapevine to get a message across? Within change management the answer is no, the organisation should do all it can to eliminate messages through the grapevine. Getting the communication correct is key step to making changes within the organisation (Quirke, 1996). Poor communications is seen to have detrimental effects on the change initiatives that are taking place.

It is sometimes taken for granted or assumed that all managers are good at communicating as it is part of their job; this is not always the case. Managers are not always aware that people have the potential to get the wrong impression about what is been said or done. It is recognised that it takes at least two people to communicate in the context of co – operative action (Varey, 1996). An effective manager as well as an effective communicator must take into consideration the variation of communication efforts amongst individuals. The managers within the organisation are accountable for their own method of communication but they must also take into consideration the communications that are taken place within their own teams. The culture of the organisation will also play a part in how managers and employees communicate with each other.

Kotter (2007) discusses that in step three of his eight step model that the organisation must create a vision. Most importantly, in step four, to be able to communicate the vision to others. He states that if you are unable to communicate and get your vision across in five minutes or less then you haven't successfully created the vision, and in fact do not fully understand the vision. It is important to understand but also to be understood. Until you are able to communicate the vision you are not in a position to move to the next phase. Kotter (2007) states that "*communication comes in both words and deeds, and the latter are often the most powerful form. Nothing undermines change more than behaviour by important individuals that is inconsistent with their words*". Pp.64 Communication and behaviours are closely linked. In order to change; the change must be communicated and behaviours altered. Communication of the change alone is not enough to make the change happen. Managers are required to lead the organisation through change. Kotter throughout his work has noted that managers have a tendency to under communicate and not usually by small amounts.

Overcoming Resistance to Change

As outlined in the literature some level of resistance is to be expected throughout the process of change. It is up to the management team to find the best ways to overcome the resistance and ensure all employees are on board with the changes and are fully committed to the changes.

Kotter's work on the eight steps demonstrates that communication is key. It is important that employees are fully informed and kept up to date with regards the changes, particularly if they are impacted directly by the changes. His work on the eight steps is a guideline to helping overcome resistance. Providing regular communications will avoid the use of the rumour mill amongst employees. The rumour mill will not get the message across clearly.

In order to minimise the resistance it is important that managers have considered the impact of the changes on those affected. As already identified people will be fearful of changes that are occurring as they may not fully understand the impact it will have. Clear communication of the vision and the process is essential. It is important for managers to recognise the fears or uncertainties that employees face with the changes.

Once they are recognised they can then work through the fears and uncertainties with the individual, therefore reducing resistance.

Involvement in the process is key to enable those to overcome resistance. Managers or those tasked with leading the change should give all employees the opportunity to get involved. There should be an opportunity to raise concerns and opinions. A process of two way communication is encouraged.

Armstrong (2012) suggests a communication strategy is put in place. The strategy should form part of the initial planning stage and play a role in the unfreezing, moving and refreeze stage of the change process.

Rosenberg (1993) would also suggest allowing time before the change happens. Before the implementation of change employees should be given time to allow them to come on board or “get their head around the idea”. If the change involves a new process or a new way of doing things it is advised that employees are given the adequate training before the change happens. A failure to ensure all are up to speed with the new process can result in resistance. It is ideal to allow time but in the real world it is not always possible.

Research has also shown that the use of change agents can prove extremely valuable within the change management process. (Armstrong 2012, Caldwell 2003) Change agents as defined by Caldwell (2003) “*an internal or external individual or team responsible for initiating, sponsoring, managing and implementing a specific change initiative or complete change programme*”. (Cited by Armstrong 2012 pp 567). The purpose of the change agent is to implement and lead change. The change agent will promote the changes from the outset. The change agent can be an internal or external person. It is important that people change their behaviours. This will not always happen straight away; behaviours will change overtime as people commitment and accept the changes that are happening.

“People resist change because it is seen as a threat to familiar patterns of behaviour as well as to status and financial rewards – Armstrong (2012) pg. 565.

Summary

Following an extensive review of the literature it can be determined that there are many factors influencing change management within organisations. These can include internal and external factors. Change management is complex and as an organisation goes through the changes it will bring about success and failures. Lewin's model has been highlighted as key in the literature and form the basis of the research. The model has been criticised over the years but still remains as a useful model in today's environment. Kotter's eight step model is another key model within change management. The main theme throughout his work focuses on communication. It was found that there cannot be too much communication in relation to change. Resistance forms a big part of change management. Resistance is displayed by people's behaviours to change. Failure to change behaviour will result in resistance. The main reason people may resist change is due to fear of the unknown. Suggestions have been put forward to best overcome the resistance. It was also note that resistance should be not avoided; the mangers or change agents need to manage the resistance. It is important that the leaders of change do not make assumptions and assume that everyone is aware of what is happening.

The next chapter will go on to explain the research methodology used for carrying out this research.

Chapter Three – Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research paradigm, the methods used to carry out the research, the participants used in the study, how the data was gathered and how it will be analysed. The limitations for the research will also be discussed.

Research Approach

The research carried out was used following MacKensie and Knipe's (2006) research journey as a guideline.

Illustration of the guidelines below. Following these guidelines it allowed the researcher to ensure a process was followed throughout the research.

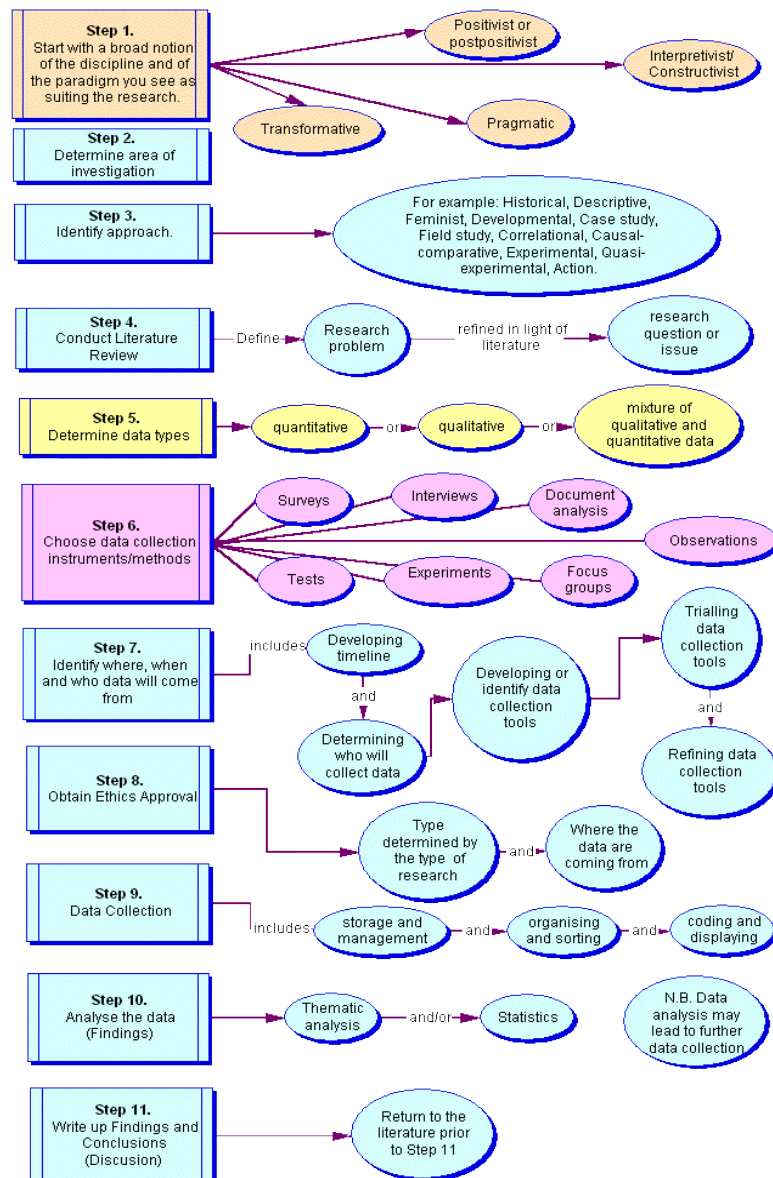


Figure 5 – Research Journey

Illustration <http://www.iier.org.au/iier16/mackenzie.html>

Research Paradigm

There are two main research paradigms as outlined by Collis & Hussey (2003). These concepts are known as positivistic paradigm and phenomenological paradigm. A paradigm as described by Easterby – Smith et al (2008) is “*a consensual pattern in the way scientists understand, and inquire into, the world*” pp. 331. The research paradigm refers to the how the research will be designed, how the data will be gathered and analysed. Paradigms are also referred to as philosophies.

Positivistic Paradigm

The positivistic approach was most commonly used in the natural world. It is now adapted to social science, the way we study the natural world should also be the way we study human behaviour and the social world. Collis & Hussey (2003). In this approach it is assumed that in reality something does exist and the researcher must go about to discover and prove that reality. It has been found that this approach can be somewhat influenced by the researchers own personal beliefs or theories on the topic. (Reichart & Rallis, 1994). This approach allows the researcher to compare their own claims about a certain reality. The methodology most typically used in this type of research is quantitative in nature. There is a tendency to use a large sample size as part of the data collection. The researcher is concerned with proving a hypothesis in a given area or subject. In this approach the researcher is independent to the observations discovered. Ultimately hypotheses are formed and they are put to the test. This approach would be considered scientific in nature.

Phenomenological Paradigm

“The phenomenological paradigm is concerned with understanding behaviour from the participants own frame of reference” (Collis & Hussey 2003 pp. 53)

As the quotation states this approach is concerned with developing an understating of human behaviours based on the individuals taking part in the research. Phenomenological approach developed from the main criticisms of the positivistic approach. Main beliefs of the phenomenological paradigm is that the world is subjective and that the observer which is the researcher is part of what is being observed. Throughout, the research is trying to understand what is happening and

developments are made based on the data collected. Qualitative research methods are mainly used within this approach. The research itself tends to be subjective. This approach will gather different theories on a particular subject or topic. This approach will consider the experiences of people.

As this research is concerned with people's experiences, specifically the link between communication and resistance the research paradigm will be phenomenological in nature.

Research Methodology

As previously outlined this research will be a phenomenological paradigm. There are different methodologies associated with both positivistic and phenomenological paradigm. For the purposes of this review the author will examine the methodologies associated with phenomenological paradigm. When gathering research it is possible to use quantitative research, qualitative research or a combination of the two methods.

The main phenomenological methodologies are:

Action Research – This is referred to as a type of applied research. It is described by Easterby – Smith et al (2008) as *“an approach to research which seeks understanding through attempting to change the situation under investigation”*. Pp. 326

Ethnography – As described by Collis & Hussey (2003) *“an approach in which the researcher uses socially acquired and shared knowledge to understand the observed patterns of human activity”*. Pp. 70. Data is mainly gathered by observations over a long period of time. Some involvement of the particular activity is required by the researcher.

Grounded Theory – As described by Strauss & Corbin (1990) *“a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon. The findings of the research constitute a theoretical formulation of the reality under investigation, rather than consisting of a set of numbers, or a group of loosely related themes”*. Pp. 24.

It is proposed that this method is used to explain social or physical phenomena. Easterby – Smith et al 2008. A series of observations are used.

Case Studies – *“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in dept and within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”* (Yin 2009, pp 18).

Case studies are also referred to as exploratory research. A case study will examine a unit of analysis. A unit of analysis can be a single person, group of people or a company. The researcher will gather data and analyse the data found based on the unit of analysis.

There are different approaches to collecting data in a case study. Some of the methods used are interviews, observations and documentary analysis. Case studies can also take on different forms. Although it can be seen there are different types of case study Yin (1994) outlines the characteristics of all case studies

- (1)Aims to explore certain phenomena and also understand them within a certain perspective
- (2)It does not start off with questions and notions about the limits which the study will take place
- (3)The researcher can use different means for gathering data including both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Having considered all of the above the researcher has decided that a case study is the most suitable method of research design to gather the data required to complete the research. The methods that will be used include interviews and observations.

Interviews

Can be described as *“a method of collecting data in which selected participants are asked questions to find out what they do, think or feel”*. Collis & Hussey (2003) pp. 349. It is highlighted in the literature that there are different types of interviews as outlined by Easterby – Smith (2008) these are highly structured, semi structured and unstructured interviews. It has been determined by the researcher that the interviews will be semi structured in nature as this format is a guided open interview. It allows

for specific questions to be asked but also an opportunity for further discussion in the area. Cannell & Kahn, 1968 pp. 527, define interviews as “*a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation*”. Through the semi structured interviews the researcher will aim to gain an understanding of the interviewee’s perspective and also gain understanding of their experiences.

Yin (2009) recognizes that there are strengths and weaknesses of the interview process. By having an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses the researcher is then best placed to structure the interviews and gather data in a fair manner.

The main reasons for choosing interviews as a method for gathering information is due to the ability of the researcher to gain further insight in to the experiences of people more so than a survey or questionnaire would allow. As the interviews are semi structured in nature it allows for further insight. The researcher’s position in the company also allows access to a variety of managers and employees at different levels throughout the organisation; again this will allow for further insight from different perspectives. Time was also a factor in deciding on the method for gathering data, as with interviews it allowed the researcher to put down time slots for each participant, ensuring all were met and in a timely manner.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research it is important to consider ethics. Firstly permission was granted from the HR Manager in terms of the research topic. Secondly, consent was obtained from each individual that participated in the interviews. All participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the process at any stage. The researcher informed all the participants of the nature of the research and the reasons why the research was being undertaken. Thirdly, the issue of confidentiality needed to be considered. All participants were reassured that the responses they gave were for use within the research paper only. All interviews were strictly private and confidential. No names were used throughout the process. All interview responses were coded to ensure anonymity amongst the participants. With the assurance of complete confidentiality further insight can be forthcoming. Finally it was important for the

researcher to understand that dignity and respect was afforded to the participants at all times. Bell and Bryman (2007) have developed 10 principles of ethical practice. These principles are provided in appendices 1. The majority of the principles relate to ensuring the researcher protects the interests of the participants. Ownership of the data obtained was another point to consider reassurances were also given to participants over this point.

The researcher attempted to consider all ethical issues by providing a full explanation of the research being carried out and the reasons why. All participants were fully aware that the replies during the interviews would be strictly private and confidential. Permission was also given from the company to carry out this research. No vulnerable groups were part of the process nor was there any risk to the participants.

Research Design

As interviews had been decided as the best approach to gather the data it was important for the researcher to understand the process as it related to interviews. In the literature there are many different models for interviews and one that the researcher could relate with is the model of Kvale & Brinkmann (2009). The stages involved are as follows:

Thematizing – The first stage is involved with clarity and the purpose of the interview. Once the researcher has full clarity and purpose then the researcher can move on to deciding what information is to be gathered throughout the interviews.

Designing – At this stage the researcher must design a guide for following throughout the interview. This will ensure consistency across all interviews. At the design stage it is also important to understand the time and resources required throughout the process.

Interviewing – At the actual interview it is important to put the participant at ease with the process. Ensure the participant is fully aware of the process and what is involved in the interview. As the researcher it is important to listen and observe throughout the interview process.

Transcribing – As all interviews are to be recorded this stage involves the typing of the interview notes based on what was recorded. All participants agreed prior to

interview that the interview would be recorded. Transcripts were reviewed at the end of the process to ensure accuracy of the information.

Analysing – At this stage of the process the researcher is required to re-read the transcripts to determine any themes that can be formulated throughout the responses. At this stage it may be possible to speak to certain participants again to gain clarity or gain further information.

Verifying – At this stage the researcher is tasked with determining the validity, reliability and the generalisation of the interview. Validity refers to how the findings most accurately denote what is happening. Findings are deemed to be reliable if the research can be repeated and the same results obtained. (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Generalisation refers to the research findings being applied to other cases or scenarios. The researcher should consider if the research can take place in another setting.

Reporting – During the final stage the researcher must produce a report of the findings provided by participants in the interviews. The report will provide the outcome of the results but also how the results found can assist future work in the area. In this case how the findings will assist the company in further change management situations.

Sample Selection –

In order to gather the data in relation to communication and resistance it was important to identify a sample of people as key participants. It was important to gain an understanding of their experiences during the acquisition and merger. A selection of managers and employees from different parts of the business were chosen to be interviewed. A total of 10 people were selected for this research. Those that took part in the interviews were from an Irish owned company. A profile of the participants is included in the appendices.

Summary

Following a review of the research it was determined that a phenomenological paradigm based suited this research. Qualitative methodology was the approach to be taken throughout. A case study, in this case a company was the unit case of analysis. Interviews and observations were the main methods used to gather data. A reasonable

approach to gathering the data and analysing the data was followed. At all times throughout the interview process ethics were taken into consideration.

Chapter Four – Findings

Introduction

As illustrated in the previous chapters the main reason for this research is to determine how organisation communication facilitated the implementation of change by reducing employee resistance. As outlined in chapter three of this research a case study on a particular company will be used to determine this question. The company that the researcher will use as the case study is Uniphar. Background information will be provided on the company to allow for context. This will outline and provide information on changes that have occurred in the company, in particular the most recent change Uniphar undertook. The most recent change being the acquisition of its competitor and integration into Uniphar.

Following on from this the interview findings from both managers and employees will be presented. This will then lead to a discussion and findings based on the findings within the literature review and the findings from the interviews.

Following the qualitative research method involving interviews the responses were coded and identified by themes. These themes are identified below and analysed based on the responses provided by the participants.

Theme 1 – Understanding of Change Management

Theme 2 – Communication

- Communication during acquisition stage
- Communication during integration
- Communication post integration

Theme 3 - Resistance

Company Information

Uniphar is one of the leading wholesale distributor of pharmaceutical, healthcare and animal health products within Ireland. On a daily basis Uniphar to pharmacies, hospitals and veterinary surgeons majority of customers receiving two deliveries per day. Towards the end of 2008, Uniphar experienced difficulties in operating, a familiar pattern had emerged for many other companies. A series of pay reductions and a downsizing programme were put in place. This was done with one main aim, survival. This process commenced in early 2009. Following the downsizing programme that was undertaken the employee headcount within Uniphar reduced dramatically from seven hundred to a little over four hundred.

Up to 2013 there was three main wholesalers in the market place. Due to the economy environment between 2011 onwards it became apparent that the Irish market could not endure three wholesalers. Other factors outside of the economic environment included HSE cuts, a number of drugs becoming off patent. A combination of these factors meant there was a need to move from three to two wholesalers. In 2013 Uniphar was successful in the purchase of Cahill May Roberts one of its competitors and has successfully integrated with Uniphar. This was an important move in the pharmaceutical wholesale environment. Uniphar can now focus on innovation and continuous improvement all the time with the focus on the needs of the independent community pharmacists.

Over the years Uniphar has had to undertake many changes. Internal and external factors were the instigator of changes. Some of the change management tasks that have happened – introduction of SAP, change in process – how the product was picked moved from a manual driven process to a computer driven process, change for all monthly employees requirement to clock in/out on a daily basis compared to a process of recording working hours through employee self-service (ESS) system. All of these are big changes in their own right and affected many people. All had their difficulties with losses and wins along the way. The most important thing was people were committed to the changes and came on board. Also to note that Uniphar is a unionised environment.

The acquisition of one of Uniphar's main competitor was a substantial change not just for the employees of both companies, Uniphar and Cahill May Roberts, but also to the market place. The competitive environment went from three to two. The external market place was the instigator of change in this particular case. If Uniphar did not act another player in the competitor environment would. Once the acquisition of Cahill May Roberts was secured the process of integrating the companies could begin. Although both companies were doing the same thing, providing pharmaceutical products, there was sizable differences between both. Uniphar grew in size, employee wise and also in site size. With the acquisition Uniphar inherited a further four depots to its already five depots throughout the country.

The acquisition and integration could not have happened without a clear plan from the outset. The change was being driven from the top down and had to happen in order for the business to continue. Key members of the organisation were brought together to formulise the plan and other managers were brought on board as appropriate as the acquisition process progressed. In order to look at all aspects the researcher will use Lewin's model as a guide as there are elements of unfreeze (acquisition phase), changes (integration) and finally refreeze (post integration).

From the researcher's own point of view and from the observations made at the time a full communication plan was put in place at the acquisition phase. There were numerous parties that needed to be informed of the acquisition including, employees, shareholders and pharmacists. Company communications in the form of memorandums were utilised across all sites. Briefings by managers with individual teams also took place. HR played a key part in this process and were the guardian of in the information. Another key piece of communication that happened was a town hall presented by the CEO, the same town hall was given again across all depots. External communications were all required for shareholders, pharmacists and the press. The initial message was clear it was to remain business as usual.

As the company moved towards the integration stage this is the point where most of the changes started to occur. Some the changes that happened included the closure of two depots – one in Cork the other in Sligo. Surprisingly for most the company chose to close the Uniphar depots and made the decision to keep the Cahill May Roberts in both locations. This one change resulted in a number of redundancies across these

depots. Communication was once again vital at this point. Presentations were consistent across all depots. The company were legally obliged to enter into a period of 30 day consultation with unions and employee representatives – this resulted in negotiations on both sides. A level of resistance did present itself at this stage from the Uniphar employees as it was expected that they would not be affected. Through effective communications all exited the business.

Another change that was experienced with the finance team was the move of the Cahill May Roberts Credit Control Team to be based at Citywest. This was an area that displayed behaviours consistent with resistance that was outlined in the literature, such as unwillingness to move location.

Other changes within the depots included the introduction of updated versions of warehouse management systems and SAP.

Each department felt pressures differently and were all affected in different ways by the integration. Most evidently with both companies there was a team of people for example HR – Uniphar had its own HR department as did Cahill May Roberts – this raised questions for all departments where does my team fit in the new structure or more importantly where do I as an employee fit into the new structure. Managers had to deal with these questions and work with relying people's fears and uncertainties.

One of the most notable changes for employees throughout the process was the fact that redundancies were to take place following the acquisition. This was a fear for most people and was asked very early on in the process. At the outset it was made clear what roles within the combined business were at risk of redundancy. The HR department were heavily involved from the outset. They were involved with the communications regarding redundancy and also on hand to answer queries. Although the business was focused on those exiting the business it was also important to consider those that are still remaining in the business.

Theme 1 – Overview of Change Management

From a managers perspective the overall view of change management was consistent. All believed change management to be leading people through a process of change. Each manager interviewed held employees at the centre of change. Following a

process was key to achieving the results required. All responded that change can occur at different levels and could be a small change for example a process change or a larger scale change such as the acquisition and the integration.

For the employee participants they shared the same views as the manager perspective. The focus was seen to be on managing the people side and managing the team through to a new process. Change was again regarded as something that can occur on a small or larger scale. Many aspects are to be considered as part of any change.

In Kotter's eight steps to transforming your organisation, step three and step four refer to creating and communicating the vision. It is important for everyone to understand the vision and most importantly that the vision was communicated. In relation to the managers participant's feedback there were differences in relation to the vision. It was found that the more senior managers were fully aware and informed of the vision from the outset. Other department managers came into the process later and the vision was found not to be clearly identified or communicated. A town hall communication was used at the start of the process to explain what was happening; this was held by the CEO. One manager made the point that from this meeting they could clearly identify with the vision and deemed it suitable communication in relation to the vision. Four of the five of managers found that assumptions were made that everyone was aware of the vision and that it was communicated throughout the organisation. As an observation there was clarity that Uniphar had acquired Cahill May Roberts and that both businesses were to be integrated. It would have been less clear for some what the impact was for them. Manager's level of understanding was influenced by their involvement in the process. To link back to Lewin's model this would have impacted on the unfreeze stage of the model, as not all were fully aware of the changes that needed to happen due to lack of knowledge of the vision.

From an employee participants view there is a mixed review on the vision. Some felt that the town hall at the outset provided the vision and it was made clear and they could clearly see where the company needed to get to. Others felt that no vision was communicated at all their take of the town hall was very much this is what is happening and move on from there. Those that were unclear on the vision from the outset may have found it more difficult than those who understood the process from the outset.

The importance of communication was also asked of the employee participants. Employees were consistent in that they all were of the same opinion that communication is vital throughout any changes. The main reason given for why communication was important was that a lack of communication can lead to causing unnecessary fear and anxiety. Ultimately this will lead to resistance which is what the employer is trying to avoid.

Another question probed on the communication process if it was followed through the acquisition and the integration. From a senior management perspective they were able to determine that a process was followed. From a HR perspective the company were bound to follow a process due to legal obligations relating to the numbers of people that were due to be affected by redundancy. There was a requirement to inform the Minister of Government Department of its intentions. The employer was also required to enter into a process of 30 day negotiations with trade unions and employee representatives.

From an engineering perspective this area was also heavily involved in the integration process. This participant could also identify that a structured formal process was in place. This process involved a feasibility study prior to the changes followed by a consultation period with the employees. Following this a detailed plan was put in place and rolled out throughout the organisation. Behind the scenes preparations and changes were happening from an IT perspective in order to facilitate the increased business.

A further two department managers came into the process at a later stage. Both felt that there was a process followed. There was a person taking charge as project manager. This relates back a person in a change agent role. Although there was elements of a process followed, feedback was that there was a sense of make things happen without having the full reasons behind it. Due to a lack of context this could lead to potential resistance.

From an employee's perspective there was a difference on feedback in relation to following a process. Three out of five participants did feel that a formal process was in place and that the process was followed but only to a certain point. During the

integration there was found to be gradual slowing of the process and by the end no process was in place. Two of the participants felt that no formal process was followed.

Lewin's work also notes the value of commitment throughout the change management process. Commitment to changes will ensure that the changes happen and remain. A high level of commitment from people will also help to reduce resistance to the changes. A question was asked in relation to commitment. Feedback from all managers was consistent; all were committed to the task. As managers they were responsible for leading their own team; if they were not committed from the outset this would have implications for their own team members. To determine commitment to the process a question was asked if they at any point felt their own role was at risk. Two of the participants felt that yes at one point they did feel their role was at risk. Both indicated that this was at the start of the process. To overcome this both asked the question directly to managers to overcome this fear. The remaining two participants did not feel at any stage throughout the process that their role was at risk.

Findings from the employee participants found they too were committed to the task. All employees continued with their jobs to the best of their ability and got on board with the changes that were taking place within their own departments. All employees felt that at some point in the process their roles were at risk. Reassurances were sought from their direct manager.

All managers were also consistent in what they believe to be the main factors for change within an organisation. As highlighted throughout the literature there are both external and internal factors that can force changes. The main reasons provided by the managers participants included:

Internal Factors	External Factors
Cost Savings	Competition
Efficiency – opportunity for continuous improvement within the organisation and how work is carried out	Economy – particular in pharmaceutical industry including government cuts and price reductions
Employee Demands	Evolving Technology
Financial Pressures	Customer Demands
Customer Complaints	Shifting Market

Figure 6: Managers Feedback Internal / External Environment

Employee participant feedback was also consistent with the above factors for instigating change.

Research has found that change management is complex and an organisation can be faced with many challenges when undertaking change. Finally a question was asked to determine what the participants considered to be the main challenges for change management within an organisation. From the manager participant's feedback similarities on the challenges were found at all levels. A clear vision from the outset was an important factor. Getting buy in from senior managers can be a challenge; in this particular case the buy in was there from the senior management team. Time was also considered a challenge in that not always enough time was given to allow the changes to happen. Resistance to change was also considered a challenge. Finally ensuring all employees were on board or bringing the employees along would be another challenge that could arise.

From the employee participants, the general findings were that the main challenge to any change management is resistance to change. There is also the possibility of employees not willing to accept the changes. Finally, another challenge highlighted was that people are unwilling to accept the new process that comes with change.

Overall the views from manager participants was consistent in relation to their overall understanding of change management. It was found that depending on the level of involvement in the project influenced on the information made available to you. It is suggested that assumptions may have been made relating to the vision and

communication of the vision. A process was identified and followed to ensure the changes that needed to happen did in fact happen.

The employees understating of change management is also consistent to that of the managers – people are at the heart of change. Not all employees could identify with a process or could say that the vision was clearly communicated. This links back to the possibility that certain assumptions may have been made regarding all employees understanding of the change.

Theme 2 – Communication

As outlined in the literature communication is key throughout any change process within the organisation. Kotter's research has found that many organisations have a tendency to under communicate the messages. The traditional methods of communication find that communication starts at the top, at senior level and works down the organisation structure. Organisations can look at other means of communicating over the traditional methods. Increased technology has allowed for this to happen. The organisational structure has a big part to play; the more layers of management there is, a higher chance that the message being communicated will be lost in translation. Another key aspect within communication is the rumour mill. The lack of communication can lead to gossip or a rumour mill; this method of communication will ensure the wrong message is communicated. As indicated in the literature communication is a challenge for most organisations and not just in relation to change management. At all stages of Lewin's model communication should play a key role.

Communication can also help to lower resistance to change. If employees have the opportunity to ask questions they can have a better understanding of what the requirements are. Assumptions should not be made in relation to communication. A general question was put to all participants in relation to communication. All participants were asked to rate communication between strong, medium or weak. Overall it was determined that communications in general within the company are weak. Two of the managers considered communication within the company to fall between medium and weak. It was found that the company have improved with communications but still have further to go. A process of two way communication

was encouraged but responses from the managers found that this process did only happen in certain departments. Some of the participants found that they did not always have all the information that was needed for the process of two way communication to really happen. The manager participants found that communication did play a role in the process but not enough in the later stages. The employee participant perspective was of a similar view point to the managers. Communication was deemed a priority at the beginning of the process but became less important throughout. As the research has found communication should play a role in all aspects.

Being provided with the information and in a timely manner is very important, in particular for managers that need to communicate a message to their teams. Overall it was found that again, depending on how involved in the process, depended on how much information was available. Some managers felt that they had to gather the information by asking questions; whereas they felt they should have been provided with the information.

The preferred method of communication by all manager participants was face to face interactions. This gave the manager an opportunity to ask the questions they needed to ask. They would consider this the most effective method of communication. Support and information were the two requirements that managers needed from the organisation to assist them with leading their team through the changes required. From an employee perspective all were consistent in their feedback that they do prefer to have one to one meetings with their manager. They found it easier to ask questions in relation to the changes that were occurring. A one to one meeting also gave the employees the opportunity to openly discuss any fears or anxieties particularly about their own role.

In order to gain the participants perspective on communication questions were asked on communication in relation to acquisition, integration and post integration stage. Again using Lewin's model as a guideline.

Communication acquisition stage

The acquisition stage refers to the lead up to the time when it was announced that Uniphar intended to buy Cahill May Roberts. As the purchase of Cahill May Roberts

needed approval from the competition authority it was a long process. The third and largest player in the market was aware of what was happening. Those outside the industry were waiting to find out what was happening. As the acquisition was subject to approval planning had started prior to this. For employees within Uniphar the rumour mill was under way and many different speculations were discussed. Once the go ahead was given the CEO called a number of town hall meetings, in order to inform all employees that Uniphar was successful in its purchase of Cahill May Roberts and lay down the plan for integration. A clear message was delivered from the top down. The reasons why it was happening and how things would happen were outline. The same message was communicated throughout all depots.

In relation to the questions asked to the participants all managers recalled the use of town hall announcements from the CEO as being the main communication method during the lead up to the integration. Email communication was another method used companywide to deliver key messages and to keep people informed. Managers also made reference to one to one or complete team meetings. Team meetings would have been up to each department manager; this would have differed throughout the organisation. A personal observation, as a member of the HR Team we were kept fully informed from the outset as HR played a key role throughout the process. At the beginning updates were given on a day to day basis.

Similar responses were received back from the employees. All noted the town hall communications as the main method of communication. Employees also felt that email communications direct from the CEO were also effective. Interestingly the manager participants made reference to their own team meetings as a means of communicating but the employees did not make reference to this during their interviews.

The question was also asked to managers if they felt this was sufficient. Overall the general feedback was that the company could have done more overall such as by way of communicating. As indicated above it could come down to manager level and how involved in the process they were in terms of what was communicated to the employee. Managers that were more involved in the process from the outset felt they had more of the information that they could answer people's questions and alleviate

any fears or uncertainties. Employees did note that there could have been further communications particularly in the earlier stage of the process.

Communication during integration

In order to establish if communication was a one off occurrence in the process the participants were asked about the communication methods specifically related to this stage.

During this stage based on the managers participant responses it was found that very little communication was carried out at a company level. Communication was carried out at an individual level mainly if there was an impact on a particular role or team. In many of the cases communications were happening based on a role being made redundant. HR along with the individual manager played a part in these one to one meetings. Some areas of the business knew from the beginning that their roles were at risk of redundancy. For others as the businesses integrated it emerged that there was further duplication of roles leading to a further reduction in headcount. As there could have been fear amongst employees; fearing that their role was at risk, general company communications may have been necessary. Communications could have also taken place at department level to put employee's fears at ease. This links back to the earlier point that some managers felt they did not have all the information to allow them to have the conversations with employees.

As an observation for those that were exiting the business the message was fully communicated and kept up to date with regards their leaving date or any changes to this. The main focus of communication at the time was to those that would leave the business. Feedback from the participants would indicate that more communication could have been done particularly for those that remained in the business. It was suggested that regular business updates would have been sufficient to the rest of the business.

Similar questions were asked to the employee participants overall from their perspective, there was no companywide communications carried out during the integration stage. If employees had queries or concerns they did feel they could speak with their managers to gain clarity.

Communication post integration

Referring back to Lewin's model this stage would be referred to as the refreezing stage of the model. The participants were asked to consider the main communication methods that applied post integration. They were also asked if they were given information about mile stones that were reached during or after the integration. According to Kotter's eight steps to transforming your organisation step number six refers to recognising and rewarding employees for change improvements.

Overall the response from the manger participants found that the business did not communicate post integration. Many changes happened throughout the business in specific departments that others were not aware of. If these changes did not happen it would have delayed or stopped another change from happening. The business could have learned a lot had the company communicated how we were doing. Manager's feedback commented that they would have liked to have received updates on the increase business, how it affected the volumes and also new personnel entering the business.

Employee responses are also consistent with the manager responses. As with communications during the process they felt no communications or updates were provided by the company post integration. Employees did receive recognition for the part they did play in the process. Each team was aware of their own progress but would not have been very aware of how other departments were doing.

Post integration Uniphar did launch its own internal newsletter which provided a new method of communication within the business. This provided the company the opportunity to give an update to the business. It is also used to show case staff events and building awareness. In October 2013 Uniphar held an employee appreciation night. This was one way of rewarding the employees and recognising their hard work and commitment to the process. This proved to be an extremely successful event and employees did appreciate and acknowledge the efforts made by the company.

Theme 3 - Resistance

As reviewed in the literature resistance can be a major part of change management. Resistance can take on many different forms but is most commonly displayed as negative behaviour. Some level of resistance should be expected throughout any process of change. Earlier research found that resistance should not be avoided as there are benefits to be had with resistance. Fear would be considered the main reason behind resistance in particular, in this case as there was fears that their job could be at risk. In general people do not like to change, they like to remain as is. Involvement from an early stage is key to reducing or eliminating resistance. In order for organisation change to take place, change is first required at an individual level. Resistance and communication are strongly linked. Research has shown that the more communication there is, the more it can limit the amount of resistance. This is mainly due to the fact that a person's fears or uncertainties can be put at ease.

As outlined in the literature Judson developed a spectrum of behaviours to illustrate the different stages a person can go through from resistance right up to the opposite end of the scale, commitment. Based on this there will be different behaviours displayed depending on where an individual is at in the process of change.

Methods to overcome resistance were also highlighted throughout the literature review. Management need to find ways to overcome resistance. Each team will react differently to the changes depending on how they are directly involved in the changes. The main way managers can overcome resistance is to ensure that all employees are on board with the changes. Communication is also an important factor to overcome resistance. It is important that managers consider the impact on those affected. In this case study there was a combination of employees exiting the business and also others remaining in the business. Time is also an important factor to overcoming resistance to change. People should be given adequate time to come to terms with the changes that are happening.

In order to gain insight to resistance to change the participants were asked if they felt the process was met with resistance. The researcher also wanted feedback as to how they overcame resistance in their own team.

The feedback from the manager participants was not consistent as was seen with the other themes. The researcher would put this down to each individual manager experiences within their own department. Only one of the participants felt there was very little resistance to change, this was mainly due to the fact that everyone involved in the process was treated fairly.

Of the other manager participants they noted resistance throughout the organisation and not only in their own departments. Resistance to the changes was evident at all different levels of the business. Lower levels within the organisation structure displayed the behaviours associated with resistance. As already stated it is up to each individual manager to overcome resistance amongst their own team. The managers that encountered resistance were consistent in their approach to overcome. The main methods used:

1. Full explanation provided for the need for change
2. Risk involved for not making the changes was made clear
3. Benefits for both the individual and business highlighted
4. Spend time with the employees that were struggling coming to terms with the required changes
5. Listen to concerns

The researcher also probed on how the resistance was displayed. The main behaviours displayed were general dissatisfaction about the changes and slowness to come to making the changes. Some teams were required to change locations and this was initially resisted but managers and HR worked with the team to make the relocation happen. Threats of the union were also used against managers. As the company recognises the union, full and open discussions had previously happened. With this in mind the union were fully aware of what was happening and most importantly why it was happening. Initial resistance also showed that certain teams would do the bare minimum and not go out of their way or go above and beyond what was necessary. Very little resistance occurred amongst those that were due to exit the business. This links back to the previous points made that employees exiting the business were fully informed of the process. Those that stayed on perhaps feared the changes and were still unclear of how they could be impacted.

From an employee perspective there were different employees from different departments being interviewed. As can be seen, they have had shared experiences of the process. In relation to resistance they themselves did not resist the changes that were happening. Response findings from one participant felt that for those that transferred into Uniphar, they showed the most resistance. At the beginning it was very much a case of the Uniphar way and the Cahill May Roberts way. Over time and throughout the process this has changed. The participant has made the point that they have since accepted the new way of doing their job and can see that it is more effective and efficient. Any resistance has gone and they would be considered committed employees.

Other comments on resistance found that initially it was people's own fears and anxieties that showed. As shown in the literature fear is common amongst those experiencing changes within the workplace. People prefer to remain as they are. It can be particularly difficult for those with long service having to make changes to a process.

Further Discussion

As highlighted above the findings from both manager and employee participants links back to the findings within the literature review. All participants held employees at the centre of change. As indicated in the literature an individual needs to change before an organisational change can take place.

The vision which is the starting point perhaps was not clear to all within the organisation. Assumptions may have been made at the start of the process. Communication which has been identified as a vital step in the process was found to be strong at the beginning. The use of town hall communications suited the needs of the organisation. As stated in the literature the change should be supported and driven from the top of the organisation. Having the CEO deliver the message was a clear sign of commitment from the most senior level in the organisation. Communication should take place at all stages throughout the process. From the findings it is suggested that there was room for improvement in terms of communication. Little or no company updates were provided during the process. As resistance was present, more frequent communication and updates could have assisted in reducing or avoiding resistance.

It was found that the individual managers were required to deal with their own team and deal with any resistance at a very much local level. Managers having the correct information in a timely manner could have helped in resolving resistance. It can be determined that fear was the main issue amongst all employees including managers. Many of the participants did feel at some stage in the process that their role was at risk. Again communication could have helped reduce the fear factor amongst employees. Managers did do this at a local level by answering questions and offering reassurances.

A process was found to be put in place and the researcher could identify similarities between that and Lewin's model. As illustrated, having a clear process will ensure the changes that need to happen do happen. The final stage in Lewin's model is refreezing; this stage could begin once all the processes and internal structures had changed. The company must now ensure that all systems and processes are bedded into the enlarged organisation.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings and linked the findings from the interviews back to the literature review.

Based on the case study the company went through many changes in the overall process of acquisition and integration. There were system and process changes throughout the organisation. The significant impact of the process was the closure of two depots which resulted in a number of redundancies. Also with the integration of the two companies came a duplication of many roles; this in itself was a project in determining what the new structure would look like. Due to the integration a number of employees were affected by redundancy in many departments.

As indicated a number of interviews were carried out with both managers and employees. The managers represented different levels throughout the organisation. Between the feedback from both managers and employees the researcher could gain insight into the experiences of the participants. As highlighted in the company overview, the company has been through numerous changes but the main focus of the interviews was the acquisition and integration of Cahill May Roberts into Uniphar

Overall it can be determined that both employees and managers have an overall similar outlook on change management. Employees are the focus of the change process as these are the individuals that will be impacted as a result of the change. Communication was considered a key aspect of change management. In agreement with the literature it was found that there can never be enough communication. In this particular case employee feedback found that although there was communications at the start of the process very little happened in the middle stage and also towards the end of the process. This is an area for improvement within the company. All participants commented that communication in general throughout the company is weak to medium.

Lewin's model was used as a framework throughout the process. From the findings the process followed at Uniphar showed similarities to that of Lewin's. There were elements of unfreezing at the start of the process, followed by the changes to processes and structures which would be the change stage and finally the refreezing stage where the new processes and structures become embedded and become the new way of doing things.

Department managers were key players in the implementation of both structure and process changes. Managers were a vital link for employees and were able to ease anxieties and uncertainties amongst team members. It would appear that at times they could have been isolated as some of the participants felt they were not equipped with all the information. Depending on how involved in the process a manager was determined how much information the manager had to hand. At all times senior managers were at hand and available to answer questions. It is suggested by the researcher that they could have had more of a pro-active rather than a reactive approach.

As the literature stated resistance is to be expected during change management. This was the case during the acquisition and integration at Uniphar. The main factor for resistance was the fear and uncertainty that people faced in relation to job security. Managers dealt with the resistance very much at a local level. It is also suggested by the researcher that more frequent updates could have helped reduce the level of resistance.

Overall the acquisition and integration was successful. Learnings can be taken from this study for further change management or in relation to communication alone. There was clear reasons for carrying out the changes. A plan was set in place and the plan was managed. There was some issues along the way but these were resolved resulting in employees being on board and committed to the process.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

Throughout this paper a clear process has been followed. A full literature review was undertaken to gain further knowledge and insight particular in the areas of change management, communication throughout change management and finally resistance to change management. Following the review of the literature a research methodology was undertaken. This allowed the researcher to find a pathway and structure throughout the process. Whilst doing this it was determined that a case study would be carried out looking at Uniphar with the emphasis on recent change management undertaken, which was the acquisition and the integration of Cahill May Roberts. Semi structured interviews were then carried out with managers and employees of the company to gain insight into their perspective on the change management process.

It is evident from the research that there is a strong relationship between resistance and communication. When undertaking change management overcoming resistance to change is a major challenge. As it was found resistance will be part of the process but the management teams ability to overcome this will ensure the success of the required changes. Numerous frameworks or models were found in the literature and put forward. The framework highlighted and used throughout the paper is Lewin's model. Similarities were found between that used at Uniphar and that of Lewin's model.

Not having enough information did cause a level of resistance amongst employees. At some point in the process majority of participants did feel that their role was at risk. The fear of the unknown is common amongst all of us. Numerous processes and structural changes needed to take place in order for the integration to be successful.

Overall there was a sense of commitment throughout the process. Over time everyone got on board with the process and did what was required. The culture within the company also allowed the changes to happen.

The research question asked how can communication facilitate in change management and it is evident that communication is an extremely important part of the process.

There can never be enough communication. Finally, communication is found to have a strong relationship to resistance; communication is a useful tool to overcome resistance to change.

Limitations

The main limitation in this research relates to the amount of time to carry out the process. Ensuring time availability of participants was an issue due to the demanding work schedules of individuals. The other limitation relates to only gaining change management perspective from a limited number of people.

Recommendations

Following a full analysis of both primary and secondary data a change management process was undertaken and learnings can be taken from this. Many parts of the process were completed well but areas for improvement can be found within the area of communication.

(1)Communication – Overall the company can improve on its own internal communications. Steps have been taken in the right direction for example the company newsletter. As all participants found that town hall meetings were successful this is a suggestion going forward. This will assist employees in developing further insights and knowledge throughout the business. Regular updates will also help reduce any further resistance due to future changes that may need to take place.

(2)Assumptions – Again in relation to communication it was found that assumptions were made particularly in relation to the vision. In order to avoid this in the future communication and the communication process can help to ensure no assumptions are made at management level.

(3)Involvement – Early involvement of key personnel is key. It was found that some managers felt they came into the process too late and therefore did not have all the information available to them. A deeper analysis of those required throughout the process is suggested. Early involvement in the process will ensure commitment which in turn will assist with overcoming resistance to change.

Appendices 1

Principals of Ethical Practice

Bell & Bryman – 10 Principles of Ethical Practice

1. Research participants should not be subjected to harm in any ways whatsoever.
2. Respect for the dignity of research participants should be prioritised.
3. Full consent should be obtained from the participants prior to the study.
4. The protection of the privacy of research participants has to be ensured.
5. Adequate level of confidentiality of the research data should be ensured.
6. Anonymity of individuals and organisations participating in the research has to be ensured.
7. Any deception or exaggeration about the aims and objectives of the research must be avoided.
8. Affiliations in any forms, sources of funding, as well as any possible conflicts of interests have to be declared.
9. Any type of communication in relation to the research should be done with honesty and transparency.
10. Any type of misleading information, as well as representation of primary data findings in a biased way must be avoided.

<http://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/ethical-considerations/>

Appendices 2

Interview Questions

Change Management – Resistance and Communication

Thank you for meeting with me today. As part of my Degree in Human Resource Management, I am carrying out research in the area of Change Management using Uniphar as a case study looking specifically at the acquisition stage and integration phase of CMR. The overall objective is how communication is best used to minimise / avoid resistance to change.

Your answers will be completely confidential and the data gathered will only be used with your permission. No referencing of your name will be used.

The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission. Are you happy to continue?

Questions

Personal Questions:

Position in Company?

Age -

Gender -

Length of time with the company?

Change Management

(1)What is your definition / understanding of Change Management?

(2)Do you consider communication to be a key part of Change Management? Give reasons for either yes or no

(3)With the most recent changes that have happened within the organisation do you think that communication played a key role in the change process? (Give reasons for your answer)

(4)Was the vision clearly communicated?

- (5) Could you clearly identify that a process was followed? Do you consider a formal approach was taken towards the change process? Please elaborate
- (6) What do you consider to be the main factors for change within an organisation?
- (7) How do you rate communication within the organisation?
- a) Strong
 - b) Medium
 - c) Weak
- (8) Did you feel committed throughout the change process?
- (9) What do you consider to be the main challenges for change management within the organisation?
- (10) Was there a process of two way communication throughout the change process?
- (11) What were the main fears / uncertainty you personally encountered? Were you able to seek assistance from management to rely these fears?
- (12) Did you feel that the change was met with resistance? Any level of the organisation
- (13) How was the resistance expressed?
- (14) How did you overcome resistance from your team?
- (15) As a manager how did you lead your team through the change process? What did you need from the organisation to lead the team and did you get what you needed?
- (16) In the lead up to changes what were the main communication methods and did you feel this was sufficient?
- (17) During the integration what were the main communication methods and did you feel this was sufficient?
- (18) Following the integration did communication continue? Where you kept informed of updates / mile stones reached etc.?
- (19) As a manager, were you given the information in a timely manner to pass on to the team? Was there sufficient information available?
- (20) During the integration did you feel at any stage your own role was at risk?
- (21) Was there sufficient information available regarding your own role and your team?
- (22) How did you prefer to receive communications regarding your role relating to the changes occurring?

Thank you for your time

Appendices 3

Profile of Participants

Manager – M, Employee – E

Reference	Area	Length of Service
M1	HR	6 Years
M2	Customer Service	3 Years
M3	Engineering / Facilities	4 Years
M4	Finance – Accounts Payable & Accounts Receivable	4 Years
M5	Operations	2 Years
E1	HR	2 Years
E2	Customer Service	2 Years
E3	Engineering / Facilities	3 Years
E4	Finance – Accounts Payable & Accounts Receivable	8 Years
E5	Operations	12 Years

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