Seizing The Moment: How crisis contributes to changing culture-A bottom-up exploration of Crisis and Change leadership and their potential impact on building the desired Organisational Culture

By

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ABSTRACT

The concepts of organizational crisis, change leadership and culture have continued to intrigue and excite academics as well as industry professionals for several decades. Researches in these disciplines have tended to focus on their impacts on upper echelons of the organizational hierarchies. This multi-phenomena qualitative case study sought to examine the relationships which exist between crisis, organisational culture and change leadership and their impact on middle to lower levels of organizational leadership. The paper proposes a conceptual framework which was developed on the back of an extensive literature review. The central premise is crisis by its very nature could potentially create a sense of urgency and ultimately serve as a conduit to spur change leadership initiatives and an effective change leadership can directly impact the creation of a desired Organisation culture. As a bottom up exploration of change leadership, the paper seeks to imbue in the psyche of lower to middle level managers that they have the opportunity to create culture with any crisis they could potentially face in their roles. The crisis creates a golden chance for them to expatiate on the change agenda to their direct reports and hopefully lead to a better team culture. There are clear links between crisis, change leadership and organizational culture creation. However, change managers and leaders must recognize the unique opportunity presented by the crisis event to ensure maximum benefits in terms of crafting the desired culture accrue to the Organisation.

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly unpredictable business environment, crises are inevitable. *The Holmes (2016)* details '*The Top 12 Crises of 2016*' to include the race row at Air China, Mylan's exponential increase in EpiPen prices, Tesco's accounting scandal, data breach at Yahoo and Samsung's exploding phones to name but a few. These are the ones that achieved global notoriety and it is fair to assume there are many others which occurred during 2016 but didn't receive the same level of attention but nonetheless had profoundly undesirable consequences on the corporations involved.

The purpose of this research is not to investigate the causalities of these crises events as there is quite extensive research in existence (Smith and Elliot, 2007). But to analyse in detail, the potential benefits of crisis events and their implications on change leadership at all levels of the organisation and how these crisis events could help support the crafting of the right corporate or departmental culture.

Deroussseau (2015) writes that a company in crisis is an opportunity for change. He explains that when faced with crisis, leaders in organisations are forced to examine and interrogate long-held assumptions which no longer contribute to the corporate goals and then demonstrate to stakeholders that they are able to create an enduring transformation. Missing from his paper however, are the specificities of crisis situations which lend themselves to make transformation change possible.

The predominant view among most academics and business leaders is change is difficult to achieve. For instance Mattone (2016) cites his own research as well as other research work conducted by the Boston Consulting Group and PwC which shows that 75% of business transformation efforts fail. So what makes the 25% successful in achieving transformational change? Kotter (1995) in articulating key reasons why leaders fail to successfully execute transformational change initiatives lists "Not Establishing a Great Enough Sense of Urgency" as the number one reason.

So could a crisis event equate to 'a sense of urgency'? And if so how do managers and leaders at all levels of the organisations seize on these events to bring about much needed change in their departments and by extension the organisation.

In order to answer the above question and a host of others, the paper begins with a thorough literature review in areas of crisis, change leadership and organisational culture. The literature review led to a design of a conceptual framework based on these three themes and positing of three research questions. These research questions were primarily explanatory in nature and as such following the recommendations put forward by Yin (2009) a case study methodology has been deemed to be the right approach to engage this research. After reaching out to a number of departmental heads across multiple organisations within the financial services industry, the creation of an independent investors' services team as part of ABC Investments Group EMEA Alternative funds operations was selected. This is because this was the one case which completely encapsulates the main themes and do so in the contexts in which this paper is attempting to explore, in that not only was it a new business from EMEA perspective but also provides the opportunity to examine a three level interactions between individual contributors, middle level management and senior level management. An unstructured recorded interview was then conducted among the head of department, the manager of the team and two individual members of the team.

The data generated on the back of the interviews were subjected to content analysis following the recommendations put forward by Lofgren (2013). Results and findings of the analysis are then discussed in the context of the three main research questions accordingly. This is then followed by a revision of the conceptual framework but this time in the context of the actual findings from the case study research.

Finally, the paper concludes by emphasising the opportunity crisis events present to change managers in the form of 'a sense of urgency' (Kotter, 1996) as well as recommendations for change managers. Limitations as well as gaps in this research are also highlighted as an opportunity for additional study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is presented within three main categories. First is the discussion on organisational crisis definition and conceptualisation with emphasis on the opportunities crisis events present to the organisation. Second is culture and why it is integral to the success of any organisation particularly when taking into consideration the current working demographics. Finally, studies combining change leadership, transformational leadership; why certain efforts fail and others succeed will be discussed.

CRISIS AND THE ORGANISATION

Organisational crises are defined 'as relatively low-probability, high-impact situations that threaten the competitiveness and viability of an organisation' (Carmeli and Schaubroeck 2008). Carroll and Hatakenaka (2001) note that organisational crises are mostly viewed through the lens of financial, technological or as a failure of leadership. These two interpretations appear to consider crises at the macro level but a safe assumption is that crises do occur at all levels of the organisation.

The literature on crisis in general and organisational crises in particular is quite extensive and goes back several decades. This perhaps can be attributed to the fact that crises are inevitable in all human endeavours. Milburn *et al* (1983) having reviewed the work of most of the pioneers in this field, came to define crisis as "*opportunity for the organisation to attain its current goals; or demand or threat on the organisation which either prevents the organisation from attaining its goals or actually removes or reduces an organisation's ability to attain its goals, that the organisation seeks to resolve because the outcomes at stake are important and the resolution strategy is uncertain*". This is perhaps one definition that encapsulates organisation crisis more so than any other in the literature. It is the first half of this definition that is particularly useful to this research as the researcher is keen on identifying the opportunities that exist in a crisis situation.

Moreover, Bundy et al (2016) having reviewed over 20 years of work in this area note an emerging convergence in definitions of organisation crisis and this lead them to consequently define organisation crisis as "an event perceived by managers and stakeholders to be highly

salient, unexpected, and potentially disruptive". They also found crisis have four main dimensions namely (a) sources of uncertainty, disruption and change (b) harmful or threatening to the organisation and stakeholders (c) as a product of social construct through behaviours and finally (d) crises are part of larger processes rather than discrete events.

An important observation can be made here, particularly taking into consideration dimension (c) which is if human behaviours contribute to creating crises, one can reasonably expect these behaviours to be at their most pronounced during crisis periods presenting the change agent or the leader an opportunity to highlight these dysfunctional behaviours and address them accordingly.

Through the transformation of the collective dysfunctional behaviours, the expectation is to be able to fix the structural weaknesses in the cultures of business units, departments and indeed the entire organisation. This observation is supported by the work of Stokes and Harris (2012) who found that seemingly insignificant micro-behaviours can have a potentially huge impact on the entire organisation. The effects are symmetrical in that negative micro-behaviours impact the macro aspects of the organisation and the opposite is equally true. In addition, Pater (2015) suggested organisation behaviour to be a complex compound of many particles and can only be affected positively through a total understanding of the underlying causes. For instance, in a seemingly stable organisation, a lack of trust in senior management can lead to a lack of employee engagement and a culture of apathy. It may require some form of unit or departmental crisis to highlight this root cause to enable remedial actions to be taken.

Indeed most of the earlier works in this area tend to focus on company specific incidents and or at the most senior levels of the corporations concerned. For instance Carroll and Hatakenaka (2001) discussed the opportunities presented by the crisis at Millstone Nuclear Power station in Waterford, Connecticut with emphasis on senior leadership. Ham, Hong and Cameron (2012) dealt with it at cross-organisational level but focused on the responses and not the opportunities presented by the crises. Similarly, Cooper, Miller and Merrilees (2015) examined it for Tiffany & Co and Burberry but were interested in how core capabilities of the companies involved can help them navigate crises situations.

This therefore allows for further research to be conducted by interviewing leaders at all levels of the organisation to examine how any form of crisis has contributed to making lasting consequential changes to the 'way things are done' in their units, departments and indeed the organisation. But first let's take a look at some of major corporate crisis and the positive cultural changes that resulted out of at least one of them.

MAJOR ORGANISATION CRISES

Corporate history is littered with crises and scandals of varying proportions. However, it will take crisis of epic proportions and so severe in magnitude to gain traction in American presidential election year (Matthews and Heimer, 2016). Writing for the Fortune magazine, Matthews and Heimer (2016) recount the following as four of the five biggest corporate crises in 2016.

These four companies operate in different industries comprising Financial Services, Pharmaceutical, Cable News and Electronics industries for Wells Fargo, Mylan, Fox News and Samsung respectively. However what they experienced as described by Matthew and Heimer (2016) is consistent with Bundy *et al* (2016) definition of crisis. These events no doubt forced the leadership teams of these organisations to investigate the causalities and all the underlying factors of these events and understand what needs to change not only in terms of personnel but crucially in terms of culture to help prevent similar events from happening again. For instance, in the case of Fox News, the departure of Roger Ailes helped foster an environment where other victims of perceived sexual or other forms of harassment could come forward with their own stories. This led to the firing of Bill O'Reilly arguably the biggest news star at the corporation under a sea of sexual and other forms of harassment allegations. Saraiya (2017) pose the question whether Fox News can really succeed in changing their culture? It appears this crisis will go a long way to bring about that much needed change at the news organisation because the leaders at 21st Century Fox want that change and they have been presented with the opportunity to do it.

Sexual-Harassment Scandal at Fox News – Roger Ailes was credited with building Fox News to be the number one cable news organisation in America and arguably the world. Mr Ailes was so powerful and revered in the industry so much so that when Fox News anchor Gretchen Carlson made her law suit against him for sexual harassment, very few believed such revelations

could end his career. But the revelation unlocked a plethora of reports about complaints of several other women that Mr. Ailes has allegedly harassed in the past. James Murdoch CEO of the parent company 21st Century Fox ordered an internal investigation by outside lawyers which uncovered several other allegations of sexual harassment. The report convinced the executives to fire Ailes even though it cost the company 40 million USD in severance package.

The remaining crisis cases are summarised below. Even though the resulting cultural changes unlike 21st Century Fox are not discussed here, there remains little doubt that these events forced some introspection among their leadership teams on what cultural changes are necessary to at least prevent future occurrences.

Wells Fargo – this huge US Banking Corporation survived the financial crisis of 2008 almost unscathed due to their relatively low exposure to subprime lending. Even when they were hit by liquidity contagion, Wells Fargo focused on funding itself with the help of its relatively substantial retail deposits. This enabled the Bank to emerge from the crises with a strong nationwide and global presence. It turned out that the Bank's profitability was driven by its unique ability to cross-sell more profitable products to its broad customer base. The drive for increase in volumes led to banking executives putting undue pressure on employees to hit sales quotas causing some employees to open fictitious customer accounts. This practice resulted to the senior executives being hauled in front of the US Congress and the ultimate departure of CEO John Stumpf.

Mylan's EpiPen Price Gouging Scandal - The pharmaceutical industry is no stranger to steep price hikes on drugs. But none of those increases has drawn the outrage like Mylan's decision to raise the price of its EpiPen. This device helps children deal with allergic reactions from food. It is estimated that one in every 13 children across America suffers from food allergies and the EpiPen is the number one choice of parents with children who have these allergies. Mylan acquired the manufacturing company of EpiPen in 2007 and in 2016 decided to increase the price by 400%. Many American families struggled to meet the $500 price tag of this vital device and this resulted in a national outcry. The CEO of the company was brought in front of the Congressional House Oversight Committee to justify the pricing decision. The publicised hearings negatively impacted the share price of the company. The national debate also brought

Mylan's acquisitions and other commercial activities under the scrutiny of law enforcement. The company was forced to settle with Justice Department over whether it underpaid rebates to the U.S government healthcare programme by misclassifying the drug.

Samsung Battery Recall – in early summer of 2016, reports started to surface that batteries in the new Samsung Galaxy Note 7 were exploding. The technology press jumped on the story and the news spread very quickly. Barely a week after the news broke, the American Federal Aviation Administration advised passengers not to turn on or charge their Note 7 smartphones aboard aircraft or stow them in plane cargo. Then came a warning from Product Safety Commission to consumers to stop using Galaxy Note 7 altogether. These developments forced Samsung to issue a formal recall but at this stage in irreparable reputation damage has been caused to company and the bodily harm suffered by some users as a result of the explosions also resulted to a number of lawsuits against Samsung.

Now, we turn our attention to organisational culture as a phenomenon. We will take at the determinants of what could be considered as a positive culture in the contemporary sense as well as some of the contributors of cultural failures.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Organisational culture as a concept continues to generate a high level of interest and enthusiasm among scholars, business leaders and policymakers (Connolly, James & Beales 2011). However, notwithstanding the extensive research on organisational culture, there still remains a profound lack of consistency in defining and conceptualising the term (Al Saifi 2015). This point gains credibility as we begin to look at how the various literatures define organisational culture.

Culture is defined as "the learned shared, tacit assumptions on which people base their daily behaviour" Schein (1999). It also refers to a learned phenomenon for the group, giving them a shared identity the same way as personality and character gives an individual (Schein and Schein 2016). According to Schein (1999) this is the result of what has been popularised as 'the way we do things around here'. Such thinking in many respect creates a more predictable, stable and meaningful environment for the business. However, Kotter (1995) notes that sometimes in seemingly stable organisations, the 'status quo' could be potentially dangerous than leaping into

the unknown. This point is emphasised by Cameron and Quinn (2011) when they noted that if the culture of the organisation remains the same in terms of no change in values, ways of thinking, managerial styles, paradigms, approaches to problems solving, virtually all attempts to bring about enduring improvements to the organisation will fail.

Meanwhile Kotter and Heskett (2008), found that organisational culture should be thought of as having two levels which are different from each other in terms of their visibility to change and their resistance to change. They argue that at the core and subtly visible level, culture refers to shared values of the people working at the organisation, including matters such as innovation and employee well-being. These tend to remain, even as personnel change over time. At the opposite end, is the more visible aspect of culture which comprises the behaviour patterns of an organisation which new joiners are encouraged to model, among these are things such as 'strong work ethics' and 'very friendly'.

The concepts of the invisible culture being more resistance to change and visible culture being easier to change will be a key conversation in the context of the impact of crisis events. This research will be looking to establish whether or not even the seemingly invisible aspects of the corporate culture are brought to the fore in the midst of crisis to enable the change leader to introduce initiatives to address any deficiencies.

CORPORATE CULTURE AS ENABLER FOR ORGANISATION'S SUCCESS OR FAILURE

Culture has been touted as one of the most important critical success factors for a business second only to the business model (Demers, 2015). Building the right culture at the organisation brings a lot of valuable benefits to the company including ensuring the corporate mission is kept at the heart of everyday decision making, attract the best talent available in the industry, retaining best trained and high performers and above all serves as key brand differentiator for the organisation concerned (Demers, 2015). Besner (2015a) adds that with millennials making up of about 54 million of the United States workforce has shifted company culture from the 'nice-to-have' column to the 'must-have' column. The inference here is that traditional motivation factors such as salary and job security are not given the same importance as contemporary issues such as company values, meaning, community, diversity and inclusion as well as work-life-balance by millennials (Besner, 2015b).

Notwithstanding the above, a report commissioned by PwC[1] revealed some very intriguing preferences of millennials with respect to organisational culture. The study found in 2016, 80% of the global workforce at PwC was made up of millennials. To be able to retain this important workforce demographic, the firm needed to develop their culture around four key tenets of Balance and Workload, Engaging assignments, People and Teams and Competitive pay as well as job opportunities. The Workload and career opportunities are particularly salient because as we will later observe with this case study, excessive workload contributed significantly to increase in stress levels whereas lack of career growth opportunities sapped morale out of the team.

HALLMARKS OF SUCCESSFUL CORPORATE CULTURE

Despite the overwhelming evidence in support of the need to build the right culture to support strategic growth, very few companies have actually been successful in this endeavour. Shandrow (2015) analysed three global companies Pixar, Patagonia and Google to understand what they all have in common and why they are largely perceived to having the right corporate culture.

- o **Pixar** - a culture of innovation in the midst of ambiguity with emphasis on team work as opposed to ranking employees and encouraging creativity through collaborations.
- o **Patagonia** - a culture of environmental sustainability with emphasis on long-term perspectives, focus on employees growth and development and flexible working conditions.
- o **Google** – a flat management structure, strong emphasis on team spirit, a fun-filled working environment. A community that stimulates and celebrates new ideas.

Evidentially what all three companies have in common is a culture that promotes fun and freedom, celebrates diversity while at the same time pursues innovation and creativity aggressively. What they have been successful to create is a culture which attracts the most vibrant and growing workforce demographics of the 21st century.

In addition, Daisyme (2015) analysed a list of 10 companies perceived to be the leading innovators in creating a unique corporate culture which is worth modelling. The list comprises Kayak, W.L Gore, SolarCity, Edward Jones, Kalp Tree Energy, Airbnb, Etsy, Zappos, Netflix

and Pixar. All these companies have been incredibly successful due to the fact that underpinning everything they do is effective leadership, vision and talent but above all a company culture which stimulates and guide the talent within their organisations (Daisyme, 2015).

CREATING THE RIGHT CULTURE

The most profound and thoughtful contributions on how to create a winning culture have not come from academics but from entrepreneurs and business leaders (McKinnon, 2013, Bloom, 2015. Todd McKinnon the chief executive officer of Okta recounted 6 key lessons he has learned throughout his business life. Having these key points as a guide for any change manager in a crisis situation will be of tremendous advantage in terms of their ability to stimulate the right behaviours to bring about the culture change they envisage.

- o **Assign An Owner** – every organisation must have a culture champion. This person will not be tasked with doing everything but will ensure everyone is operating from the same page and headed in the same direction with respect to all key business areas of HR, Operations, finance and technology.

- o **Leadership Sets Tone**- the tone of senior management invariably shapes the overall culture of the organisation. Corporate ideals such as teamwork, transparency etc. must clearly through the actions of senior management all the time.

- o **Structure Says Everything:** The structure of the organisation can help communicate corporate values. Make sure the departments tasked with company's unique preposition be it product design or engineering have unimpeded access to senior management.

- o **Constant Evaluation** - it is imperative to continuously check the pulse of the organisation to establish whether or not everyone is clear on what the culture of the organisation entails. This could be an offsite exercise where questions like what do you like or don't like about the current culture? What is culture anyway and why does it even matter? Answers to these questions will go a long way to align everyone to the corporate culture.

- o **Prioritize and Focus** – Place team work ahead of individual star performers particularly where star performers don't fully align themselves with the organisational culture.

- o **Communicate** – never stop communicating the corporate values and culture as explicitly as possible both internally and externally. Your employees must understand your culture and know why it is important. Build into your reward structures those who advance the corporate culture.

The steps to building the right organisation culture must be executed in tandem but the process must start from the hiring phase to ensure individuals who share the vision and by extension the culture of the organisation are brought on board (McKinnon, 2013).

Having looked at culture and some of the key initiatives that could be implemented to craft the desired culture, we switch our focus to change leadership and how it can have transformational impact on the organisation or on the team in this case. This discussion also delves into some of the known resistances to change initiatives and what the change manager can do to overcome them.

CHANGE LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Similar to culture and organisation crisis, there is quite an extensive literature on the concepts of change leadership and transformational leadership. This is probably due to the fact that leading change is the most critical and onerous responsibilities for managers and administrators (Yukl 2013).

CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Higgs and Rowland (2000) posit change leadership as having the capacity to influence and excite others through personal advocacy, vision and drive and to tap into resources to build a strong platform for change. This definition perhaps suggests that the change process is programmatic and linear and will only require a systematic approach to implement. In fact this thinking seems to underpin most of change management frameworks. For instance the three step model[2] (Unfreeze, Change and Freeze) designed by Kurt Lewin has been studied by academics and utilised by Change Agents and Coaches for well over 50 years. Again, Kotter (1995) also suggested 8 steps framework to explain why transformation change efforts fail, emphasising the linearity of the change process.

However, as the literature evolved, it has become abundantly clear that whereas the programmatic frameworks help structure the change processes in certain areas of the business, Change and to a large extent cultural change requiring a change in attitudes and behaviours is overly unstructured and complex. For example, Higgs and Rowland (2008) reflected that usually the kind of change required in this situation is of high magnitude and complexity and demands for alignment, commitment and energy of all concerned. They conclude that, change is constantly happening around us all the time and that '*culture is continually being recreated in each and every conversation'*.

Higgs and Rowland (2008) advocates for the change leader to target the change efforts at the micro level of the organisation where the leader should position to map events such as *what's happening where? Who is connected to whom? Where are we already seeing signs of innovation and adjustment that working towards a new future? Where might we be stuck, and what deep rules are creating that pattern of behaviour?*

TRANSFORMATION LEADERSHIP: WHY CERTAIN EFFORTS FAIL

Bass and Riggio (2006) defines transformational leadership as the ability of the leader *to inspire followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organisation or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers' leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support.* This definition adds credence to the argument that a transformational leader may be required to effect change in people's attitudes, minds and behaviours. In a nutshell, a change in culture is required to be successful in any transformational change efforts. This is supported by Hutahayan *et al* (2013) who found transformational leadership to have a direct impact on employee behaviour and consequently organisation culture.

Moreover, Kim (2014) found a strong correlation between transformational leadership and employee clan culture. There are also a host of other research all suggesting the need for transformational leadership to focus on changing attitudes, minds and behaviours of their people which as we have discussed already help form the culture of the organisation. So why the abysmally low success rates of transformational efforts?

Kotter (1995) found a lack of urgency or not establishing a strong enough urgency as the number one reason why most transformation efforts fail at the first hurdle. When asked what *Urgency* means, Kotter (2008) explained this to be referring to **Thoughts**, **Feelings** and **Actual behaviours.** He further articulated thoughts to be implying the great opportunities and hazards that exist, the feelings are the gut determination to act immediately and the behaviour is the hyper alertness to stay focused on the key priorities. This clearly points to a crisis situation particularly when Kotter further added that urgency is totally absent in a stable environment where employees and management are likely to be complacent. He also stated it doesn't happen naturally and that it can potentially come from any part of the organisation.

Another interesting observation here is that, without some form of crises, attempts to change the '**the way things are done'** at the Unit, Department or indeed the Organisation is most likely to fail. Paul O'Neill one of the most renowned transformational leaders of his generation who helped pioneer the concept of Safety leadership at ALCOA, recounted how it took an unfortunate loss of the life of a staff in one of their plants to make the rest of the Organisation be responsive to his safety culture initiatives. "Often times the things that move organisations are unfortunately not happy stories" (O'Neill 2015).

So how these resistances to change initiatives formed and what are the underlying motivations? Next in our discussion is an attempt answer these questions by exploring the literature further.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Putting up resistance to any change initiatives could be the results of emotional and behavioural response by affected stakeholders, usually employees to actual or perceived threats to the status quo (Brown, 2017). These threats could comprise; fear of failure, loss of status, incongruent group dynamics and breaking routines (Brown, 2017). In addition, Brookins (2016) believes poor communication, self-interest, feeling excluded, lack of trust and skills dearth is potential contributors to change resistance. To be able to effectively execute the change strategy, change agents must invest considerable amount of their time and efforts into understanding and addressing the factors which impede change initiatives (Rick, 2013). Rick (2013), found 8 predominant reasons why people resist change;

- *There isn't any real need for the change*

- *The change is going to make it harder for them to meet their needs*

- *The risks seem to outweigh the benefits*

- *They don't think they have the ability to make the change*

- *They believe the change will fail*

- *The change process is being handled improperly by management*

- *They believe those responsible for the change can't be trusted.*

What we will find is that in almost all change situations, most of the resistances outlined above do exist but in a crisis situation, it seems as though the crisis event is naturally able to neutralise them to afford the change manager the real opportunity to get his change agenda across with little or no resistance. This neutralisation we suspect is the real sense of urgency as described by Kotter (1995).

In line with our suspicion, we expect a crisis event to make people more malleable to change but in the absence of any real sense of urgency, how come some of the resistances outlined above be overcome by the change manager?

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Where a culture of trust, openness in communication, involved and engaged employees as well as positive interpersonal relationships exist in an organisation, resistance to change become so apparent to see or is much less likely to happen (Rick, 2013). Similarly, a survey conducted by Willis Towers Watson[3] in 2013 revealed that anywhere from 55%-75% of change efforts fail completely at implementation or to achieve desired outcomes. The report points out that those organisations that are able to maintain change in the long run are those that keep the focus on the fundamentals known to be the key drivers of successful change initiative. These fundamentals comprise effective communication, adequate training and robust leadership engagement and measurement. Blount (2017) reckons the biggest hurdle to effective organisational change is people and that it is the leader's job to motivate others to overcome the inherent human bias toward maintaining the status quo. To overcome these resistance Blount (2017) recommend following key steps;

Identifying the Sources of Resistance – it is important to identify the group or the individuals who have the biggest potential to frustrate the process and make genuine attempt to understand their perspectives.

Engage in conversation with the Resistors – in this conversation the change agents must forget about efficiency, focus on listening and crucially must be open to change themselves.

Resistors Management - after identifying them and starting the conversation, the change agent must actively manage their concerns through multiple conversations. This must be made an important component of the overall change management. The process largely requires the change leader's ability to listen to opposition, diagnoses their antipathy, consider their thoughts and feeling and explain to them how that has impacted the leader's thinking.

CONCLUSION TO LITERATURE REVIEW

So here is an intriguing dimension. It has been demonstrated throughout the literature that culture is invariably made of the collective mind-set of the people, their feelings about the organisation and the behaviours they demonstrate on regular basis working at the organisation. Again, in the context of organisation crisis, we observed that during crisis, the seemingly unconscious behaviours that may have contributed to the crisis are at their most pronounced making it easier for the change agent to highlight them for corrective measures to be engaged to address them.

In addition, the literature clearly outlined the link between culture and transformational leadership in the sense that a change in culture invariably demonstrates the success of the transformational leader. Here we are positing that leadership doesn't have to be at the very top level of the organisation alone and for a transformation culture change to be successful, leaders are required at all levels of the organisation. We are particularly interested in the role that lower to middle level manager can play in contributing to culture creation in midst of crisis.

Moreover, the leader has established that leaders' inability to create enough urgency is known to be the number one reason why most transformation efforts fail. This assertion appears to emphasise the role crises play in any transformational change initiatives. The research will look to examine what happens when initial sense of urgency brought about by the crisis has waned, the implications this has on the team and the change agenda.

What the literature review hopefully has demonstrated is the potential relationships which exist between the central themes of crisis, culture and change leadership. We intend to explore these relationships in more detail. We begin this first with a discussion on the methodology employed in carrying out this research.

The literature review as outlined earlier led the researcher to posit the following research questions based on the main themes of crisis, change leadership and culture.

From the standpoint of crisis as an enabler of change the research seeks to explore;

RQ1. Why certain human behaviours are at their most pronounced during crisis? How this presents the Change agent an opportunity to address dysfunctional behaviours and reinforced good ones? Why crisis creates a sense of urgency?

To establish how culture is being created through the seemingly small changes in daily behaviours;

RQ2. How is culture being created or shaped as part of the change implementation process and to what extent does crisis enable the process? This must be answered through the following;

- *What is happening where?*
- *Who is connected to whom?*
- *Where are we already seeing signs of innovation or improvements?*
- *Where might we be stuck and what deep rules are creating that pattern of behaviour?*

Finally to understand the role leadership plays in getting a desired outcome;

RQ3. How the level of leadership commitment engaged with contributed to effect complex change process? Which of the four components of transformational leadership (Intellectual simulation, Individualised Consideration, Inspirational motivation and Idealised Influence) is most useful in crisis situations?

To help answer these questions and also establish whether or not evidence exist to support the findings of the literature, it was further envisaged that a model framework will be necessary to conceptualise the phenomena of culture creation and change leadership in the context of crisis events. This framework it is expected will not only enable a revision of the themes after the

analysis but also contribute to how this research could be approached in terms of data collection, analysis and interpretation as well as discussions on research findings.

MODEL FRAMEWORK

Crisis -

Sources of uncertainty, unexpected and potentially disruptive

Harmful or threatening to the org

It could be a product of social construct through behaviours

creates a sense of urgency-thoughts feelings and actual behaviours

Culture -

Learned and tacit assumptions that influence behaviour.

Invisible-shared values

Visible- Stong/weak work ethics and friendliness/conflicts

Change leadership-

Capacity to influence and excite through personal advocay, vision and drive

-When targeted at attitudes and behaviours, culture is created.

leadership qualities- idealised influence, individual consideration, Intellectual stimulation and Inspirational motivation

Desired Culture

A commumity that stimulates and celebrates new ideas and

Openness. It's collaborative,
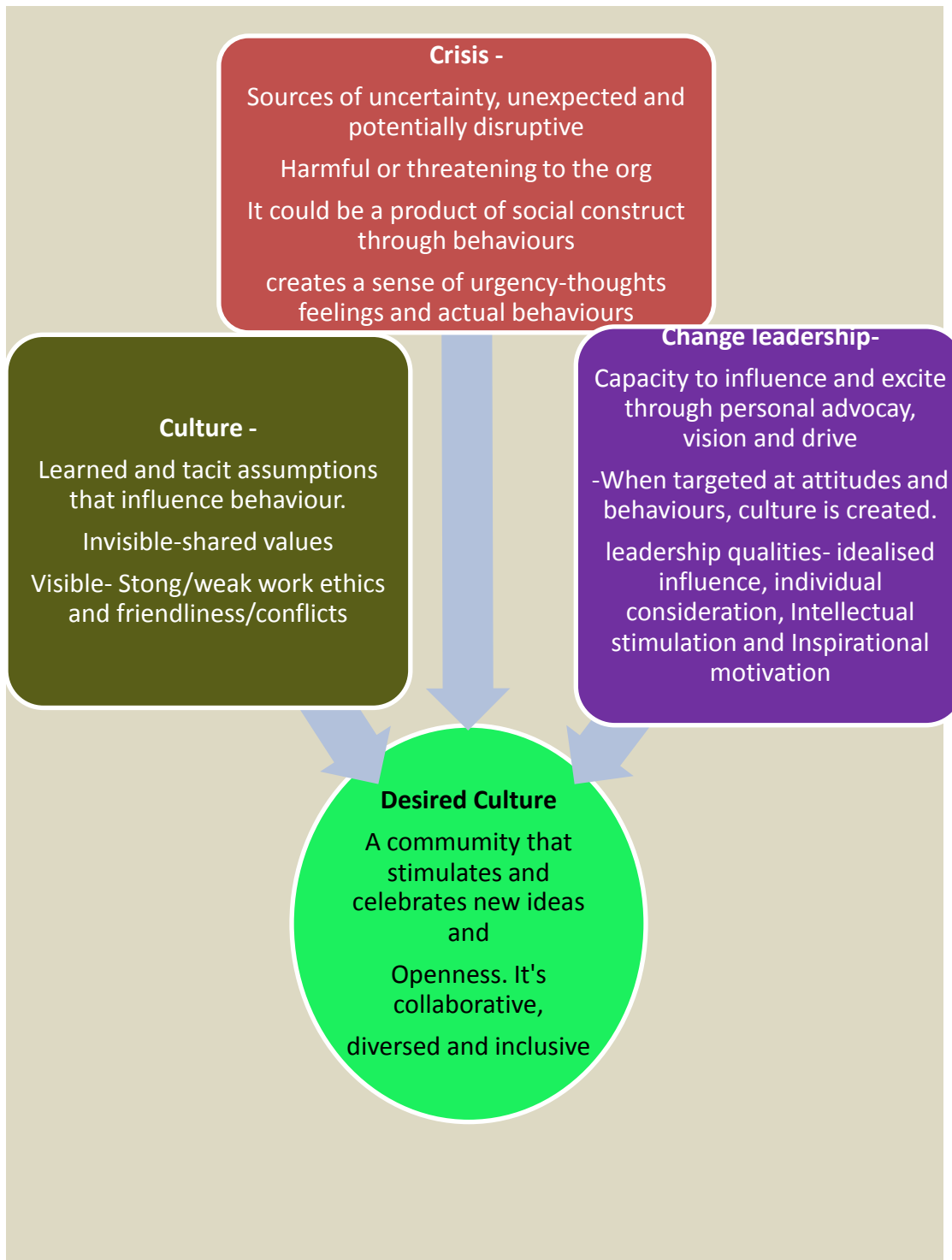
diversed and inclusive

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Organisation Crisis, Change leadership and impact on Organisation Culture.

With respect to the literature review, this follows the suggestions put forward by Short (2009). The starting point was to use 'Summon' to search for full-text articles with key words such as

crisis/crises situations/crises events, organisational culture and transformational change/leadership. Relevant articles were located in different data bases such as SAGE, Emerald etc. The researcher then identified which ones are closely aligned to the central research question. It was discovered that most of the original definitions of key terms like organisational culture could be found in books so the search was expanded to include a number of books by influential writers.

The next phase is to consider the most appropriate approach through which the model outlined above can be explored. Here the researcher consulted extensively, the recommendations put forward by Yin (2009) on case study research methods and design. The researcher had assumed that a case study approach was perhaps the right approach to adopt because as demonstrated in the literature, culture as a phenomenon is behavioural driven and as such it is important to understand all aspects of the situation to enable the formation of an evidence based opinions. However, a more scientific justifications underpinning case study's suitability for the purposes of this research were needed and this is outlined below.

RESEARCH APPROACH – CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Yin (2009) gives a more detailed definition of case studies as;

- o An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident
- o The case study inquiry copes with the technical distinctive situation in which here will be many more valuables of interest than data points and as one results, relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result, benefits from the prior development of theoretical positions to guide the collection and analysis of data.

In addition, Hartley (2004) posits case study research as 'a heterogeneous activity covering a range of research methods and techniques, a range of coverage (from single case study through carefully matched pairs up of multiple cases), varied levels of analysis (individuals, groups,

organizations, organizational fields or social policies), and differing lengths and levels of involvement in organizational functioning'.

Yin (2009) outlines three key conditions which normally decide the type of research approach to use. These conditions are; (i) the type of research question posed, (ii) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events and (iii) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events. These conditions are particularly poignant considering the research questions posited are seeking to answer 'How' and 'Why' phenomena.

These conditions together with different research methods options are illustrate below;

Method	Form of Research Question	Requires control of behavioural Events?	Focus on contemporary Events?
Experiment	How? Why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, What, Where, How many, How much	No	Yes
Archival Analysis	Who, What, Where, How many, How much	No	Yes/No
History	How? Why	No	No
Case Study	How? Why	No	Yes

Figure 1. Relevant situations for different research methods, Source: Yin 2009

In addition, Yin (2009) further argues that questions such as ('How' and 'Why') are more explanatory in nature and as such case studies are the most suitable research approach to adopt in order to get to some meaningful conclusions. He further submits that such questions deal with *operational links* which must be tracked over time rather than *frequencies* or *incidents* (ibid). In

addition, Yin (2009) suggests the distinctive need for case study research stems from the desire to develop an understanding of complex social phenomena as the method allows the investigator to "*retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events, such as organizational and managerial processes*". Case studies are categorized into three main types, namely exploratory, explanatory and descriptive case studies (Yin, 2009). It is also noted that exploratory research is the only research that is flexible enough to allow any of the five methods as outlined in the above to be used to carry out the research (ibid).

Taking into considerations the strong arguments made in favour of case study research by both Yin (2009) and Hartley (2004), the case study approach is deemed to be the most appropriate means to carry out this research. This is because the natures (How and Why) of research questions satisfy condition (i). The selected case study for this research as we will learn later also satisfies condition (ii) because it is contemporaneous in nature but crucially the researcher has no control over the actual events or the characters involved and this satisfies condition (iii). Historical analysis, experimental studies, archival analysis were considered but only case study analysis offers the situation where there is seamless boundaries between the phenomenon (culture creation) and the context (crisis events).

Notwithstanding the above, case study research methodology like all research methodologies have some known limitations and it is imperative to examine some of the key limitations of this research methodology.

LIMITATIONS OF CASE STUDY AS A RESEARCH APPROACH

Despite the overwhelming support case study approach as research methodology particularly in the field of qualitative research, there continue to be strong prejudices against case study research (Yin, 2009). Among the many reasons cited by opponents of case study methodology include the following (ibid);

- o Lack of rigor – it has been observed that the case study researcher has often been sloppy in following systematic procedure while at the same time allowing biased views to creep into their conclusion.

- Lack of basis for scientific generalization - especially with respect to a single case, the key criticism has been how a general observation can be made from a single case study. It is well known that with most experimental research approaches, multiple texts are carried out to generate enough data for interpretation and the ensuing conclusions. The counter argument is also to perform a multiple case study research.
- Time consuming with mostly unreadable document- another key objection to case study methodology is that it is extremely time consuming and sometimes the document generated is unreadable. This is particularly the chief drawback of traditional case study report writing which had very lengthy narratives.

All these objections to case study research methodology are strong and equally valid. However, as enumerated earlier for the purposes of this particular research, it is the most appropriate choice among the options that were explored.

SECURING ACCESS AND CASE SELECTION

So having settled on case study as methodology, the next step was to figure out how the data will be collected. The researcher wrote to a number of departments heads in a number of organisations within the financial services industry (the researcher is employed in the sector and believed this will facilitate access) via email. In the email, the researcher outlined the research objectives and requested if they could share any cases that could help fulfil the research objectives and also if they will be willing to allow themselves and the other characters in the selected case to be interviewed.

 A number of options were received but the selected case as outlined below was the only one that satisfied the three main conditions necessary to support the use of case study research as outlined by Yin (2009). In addition all the characters in the case still work at the company and hence easily accessible for interviews. The backgrounds to the company as well as the case study are outlined in the next chapter.

ABC INVESTMENT GROUP

ABC Investment is a global financial institution head quartered in New York in the United States. It was founded in 1800 and currently has a global workforce of circa 20K. It has more

than 20 international locations. The company provides financial solutions to wealthiest individuals and families as well as fund administrative services to sovereign funds and Alternative funds managers. ABC Investment Group within Ireland provides asset servicing, middle office and fund administration services across its business functions. The Alternative Funds Services Business was established in 2012.

THE CASE – ALTERNATIVE FUND SERVICES (AFS)

AFS operations leverage a number of shared services teams to serve their clients. These teams include **Transfer Agency**, **Derivatives and Collateral**, **Clearing and Settlements**, **Financial Control**, **Pricing**, **Investor Accounting** and **Relationship Management**.

At the initial stages, experienced partners from New York were brought over to Dublin as short term assignees to help set up these teams. Upon set up and after the short term assignees (STAs) have returned to New York, the teams were expected to work closely with the New York teams until they build enough experience to be able to operate independently.

TRANSFER AGENCY TEAM (EMEA)

Case Summary:

The Transfer Agency (TA) team is responsible for primarily three main things as part of the Alternative funds administration business. These comprises on-boarding of new investors, screening investors for anti-money laundering and know your customer regulatory requirements and looking after investor statements and contract notes. The team essentially initiates and closes the periodic investors' net assets valuation delivery continuum.

The Irish operating model is an exact replica of what was used in New York which was the default global model. However it is worth noting that the US model has been built around US clients' needs and requirements and hence using the exact model to service EMEA clients was somewhat problematic. At inception the EMEA Transfer Agency team only consisted of a sole individual. Growth in EMEA clients necessitated additional hiring to support team deal with the inevitable increase in volumes of deliverables.

However, the original team member who was trained by the New York team resigned very early on in the process prompting a backfill. This ultimately created a team of two individuals with very little Transfer Agency experience with both the concepts and support systems needed to serve very sophisticated Alternative funds clients. To compensate for this knowledge gap, the team had to rely extensively on the US TA managers and their support teams and in so doing all key decisions making was centralized in New York. With decisions being made in the US meant that EMEA clients often had to wait a bit longer to get resolutions to their queries due to time difference between the two geographical locations.

AFS Ireland continued to see growth in their clients' intake and this consequently increased the workload on the Transfer Agency team. This increase in workload coupled with the lack of deep conceptual knowledge on the part of the existing team as well as their increasing propensity to defer all queries to the US management team resulted in a spike in the number of errors in client's deliverables and undue delays in the service delivery. To rectify this situation, senior management decided to increase the headcount of the team to three people.

However, the problem not only persisted but exacerbated to the point where an extremely important client who accounted for a significant portion of the AFS Ireland revenue was put at if the issues are not resolved once and for all. The risk to this further increased the involvement of the US TA management team. While this deep involvement provided quick and short term wins for the business in terms of improving the relationship, it further decreased the confidence of the Dublin team to take initiatives on their developmental needs and grow as professionals to the benefit of themselves and the business in the long term. This was a culture of 'doers' and not 'thinkers as well as doers'.

In order to find a long term solution, senior management at Dublin recognized that what was absent was a direct leadership in Irish TA team. So a senior manager with extensive Transfer Agency experience as well as leading and developing team was hired to join the team. This manager was tasked with not only finding lasting solutions to the pressing immediate problems but also creating a team of independent thinkers and potential leaders within the TA space.

Investigation

This case study as described above is expected to test among other things the following;

- Crisis – can be potentially disruptive (threat from client to pull business) and could also be a product of social construct through behaviours (lack of initiative to resolving queries with confidence). (RQ1)
- Culture – can be visible such as weak work culture (doers and not thinkers) as well as invisible (lack of confidence and assertiveness). Culture is created as part of the change process (RQ2)
- Change leadership – When targeted at attitudes and behaviours, culture is created. (RQ3)

To achieve the above the following key personnel at the department will be interviewed;

- Head of AFS Operations
- Manager of the Dublin TA team (change agent)
- Two existing team members of the Dublin TA team.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

It was agreed between the researcher and the department that all efforts will be made to protect all clients' sensitive information including the use of pseudonym to protect the identity of the company (True identity of the company has been shared with researcher's supervisor). In addition the researcher will share his findings with the head of department to review for any possible confidential information breaches before the information could be made public. The recordings too will be destroyed after the content has been consumed. None of the participants too could be identified by name instead the two legacy team members are represented as Team member A and B respectively and the manager referred to as 'The Manager' while the head of department is also referred to as 'Head of department.'

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE AND ANALYSIS

The interview was largely unstructured but emphasis is placed on key research questions which stem from the literature review as outlined above. This is consistent with the approach used by Carroll and Hatakenaka (2001). The researcher notes other alternatives such as structured and semi-structured interview methods as suggested by Silverman (2014). However, looking at the nature of crisis events which are steeped in naturalism, the most appropriate way to gather data is

to allow the interviewees to tell their stories in a way they experienced them to the researcher. The data gathered as part of the interview is then subjected to content analysis with the aim of establishing if there is some validity to the central research assertion that crisis can make a contribution to changing the organisation culture and to what extent is the significance of such impact. The face to face interviews with each of the participants which were conducted separately lasted for about 45 minutes to one hour on average. After the interview the contents were transcribed accordingly. This generated about 17 thousand words worth of content. This data is then subjected to content analysis as outlined below.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is arguably the most common approach to qualitative analysis as it entails uncovering underlying themes in the materials under analysis (Bryman, 2004). Content analysis is defined as "An approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of texts. There is an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data and to recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analysed (and categories derived from it) appeared" (Bryman, 2004). Babbie (2001) however was far more concise in defining content analysis as "the study of recorded human communications". It is essentially a coding operation with the aim of transforming raw data into standardized form (ibid).

Kohlbacher (2006) highlights the key strength of content analysis as being strictly controlled methodologically and the material is analysed step-by-step. At the heart of it all is category system which is developed right on the material employing a theory guided procedure (ibid).

The content analysis for the purposes of this research follows the recommendation put forward by Lofgren (2013). The steps followed are outlined below;

Step 1 – Reading the interview transcripts;

- o A quick browse through the whole transcripts
- o Notes making about the researchers first impression
- o A read through of the transcripts again one by one
- o A careful read through the transcripts line by line

Step 2- Coding the data

- o Labelling of relevant words, phrases, sentences or sections
- o The labelling is focused on actions, activities, concepts, opinions and processes
- o The coding is based on the following premise; the words is repeated in several places, it surprises the researcher, the interviewee hinted that is important, it reminds the researcher of theories or concepts
- o In this case the coding will be built around the model discussed above with the central themes as Crisis, Change leadership and Culture.

Step 3- Deciding on what codes are the most important and link them by bringing several codes together

- o Going through all the codes created earlier
- o New codes are created by combining several codes where appropriate
- o Certain codes that could not be combined could be eliminated

Step 4 – Labelling categories and deciding which are the most relevant and how they are connected to each other

- o The categories as described are Crisis, Change leadership, and Culture
- o Analysing the connections between the these categories
- o The connections between the categories essentially form the main result of the case study

Step 5- Writing Up the results

- o A description of the categories and how they are connected, using a neutral voice with no attempt to interpret the results.
- o Interpretation of the results will be done under the heading 'discussions'
- o The interpretations of the results are done in the context of the literature review, additional literature, theories and concepts as well as the framework developed on the back of the literature review.

To fulfil confidentiality agreement, these individuals are represented as Team Member A, Team member B, The Manager and the Head of department instead of their actual names. The content of the interview is coded along the following key themes; Crisis, Change Leadership and Culture.

TEAM MEMBER A

Crisis	Change Management/Leadership	Culture
'under-staffed', 'firefighting' 'sink or swim situation' 'unsustainable situation' ' repeated issues and incidents' 'feeling trapped in a vicious cycle' 'repeated mistakes' 'incidents kept happening' 'it was adversely impacting clients'		'lacking in structure' 'over worked staff' 'stressful environment' 'feeling inferior with respect to New York' 'lack of career path' 'feeling demoralised' 'lack of progression' 'had expectations of huge efficiencies' 'lack of time to implement changes'…
	'Manager brought more experience' 'Able to deal more professionally with issues' 'efficient management of resources' 'Getting the right structure in place' 'started seeing improvements' 'freed us to concentrate on BAU' 'He is an effective Communicator' 'consensus builder'	'finally felt like we were more proactive' 'good structure' 'good working systems of control' 'Started gaining respect from the client' 'had a good more balance to the team' 'felt we could work more independently from New York'
'issues started cropping up', 'a lot of incidents' 'impact on client deliverables'	'reduction in headcount' 'reluctance to increase headcount'	'felt deterioration in working conditions' 'constant debate on resources needed' 'we feel like losing the structure'

TEAM MEMBER B

Crisis	Change Management/Leadership	Culture
'issues in the first few months', 'not enough resources' 'firefighting everyday'		'working 12 hours' 'long hours' 'stressful environment' 'lack of structure' 'Unclear career grow path'
	'immediate impact by new manager' 'volume of work got diluted' 'started to get client back on track' 'significant reduction in hours 2016' 'took responsibility for dealing with clients' 'he brought a knowledge' 'relieved the pressure' 'he dealt with client better' 'very good mentor'	'We got some structure back' 'established controls' 'late 2016 was our best year' 'We operated at full capacity' 'felt motivated' 'felt empowered'
'issues started cropping up', 'a lot of incidents' 'impact on client deliverables'	'reduction in headcount' 'reluctance to increase headcount'	'felt deterioration in working conditions' 'constant debate on resources needed' 'we feel like losing the structure'

THE MANAGER

Crisis	Change Management/Leadership	Culture
'A lot of mistakes were happening' 'a feeling that things were in disarray' 'series of clients dissatisfaction' 'Global team demanding more control and oversight in Dublin'	'Giving people the benefit of doubt' 'explained the discipline of TA to them' 'Observed the hiring process might not have been rigorous enough' 'Decided to align staff roles with their strengths' ' I will normally hire to compensate for my weakness' 'Created consciousness around the our limitations'	'feeling oppressive under the US regime' 'feeling punitive with their expectations' ' A heavy handed approach ' 'micro managing' 'lack of organisation' 'skills set not aligned to the roles' 'The team was lacking in confidence'
	'I had to build the confidence level the team' 'I had to motivate them to believe in themselves' 'I had to identify	'Started showing initiatives' 'started believing in themselves' 'started gaining back respect from the client' 'Gaining senior

	who can assist me to execute the mission of lifting out the US oversight' 'Needed to make sure I can bring someone along with me who can learn and grow' 'A lot of consultation, collaboration and consensus building' 'Use empathy to guide them through the process' 'I had to implement a linear programme within a specified period of time'	management confidence in the team' 'Gain full control on oversight and independence from New York' 'Team became more effective and productive' 'Six month period of consistent clients' satisfaction' 'We had enough checks and compensating control'
'two people handed in their notices around the same time' 'this unexpected change caused some clients to suffer' 'decision to replace two with one caused friction among the legacy guys and Manager' 'the automatic reaction from the legacy guys is that things are going to go wrong' 'mistakes are occurring repeatedly and it is affecting everyone' 'A real knee jerk reaction when the guys left'	'I felt we were over staffed' 'I was able to replace one of the partners with a very good hirer' 'I had intended to outsource most of our daily operational activities' 'I failed in that the outsourced team didn't have the capacity to take them on' 'I had a lot of faith in the new hirer' 'I was finding difficult to unfreeze this mind set' 'You can bring the horse to river but can't force it to drink' 'I remained resolute that we have enough resources to do our job but the legacy guys disagree' 'it is almost impossible to change people who don't feel like they are in the right job' 'there appears to be the need for me to exert more influence' 'inject a bit of passion in the team' 'perhaps start again'	'The senior guys were not using the junior guys effectively' 'the training weren't adequate' 'things started to unravel a little bit' 'the seemingly smooth sailing ship is now being re-routed' 'There was an element of apathy after the two girls have left' 'lack of delegation skills caused the underutilisation of the departed partners' 'We started recording errors again' 'We lost our time management skills' 'we lost some of our organisation skills' 'The gains from the six solid months were not consolidated' 'there is an element of self-fulfilling prophecy' 'The over resources enabled the legacy guys to become complacent and comfortable'

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Crisis	Change Management/Leadership	Culture
'firefighting approach' 'BAU done in firefighting mode' 'major incident with major client was catalyst' 'not able to stand on own feet' 'over reliant on US counterpart' 'A period of repeated error' 'inefficiently engaging the process' 'feeling overwhelmed' 'struggling to grow leaders organically' 'our process wasn't right' 'Seismic change required' 'continues pressure from clients'		'lacked more strategic approach' 'unrealistic expectation' 'lacked experience' to ensure growth and development' ' a proactive mind set'
	come in and build out a team' 'come with a lot of experience' 'experience of managing teams' 'entrepreneurial approach' 'provide mentoring' 'shares philosophy' 'relationship building' 'getting the best out of the team' 'introduce different levels of control' 'more strategic solutions' 'systems development' reorganisation' 'focused on business growth'	'process re-engineering' 'strong focus on clients' 'coaching' 'empowerment' 'managed to turn the corner' 'transparency in client issues resolution'' set up a programme to deal with client issues' ' always felt we had the right resources to meet the challenges' 'stability has been achieved'' a culture of learning, growth and development' 'commitment to execution' 'attention to detail' 'focused on procedures' 'development through rotation' 'matured' 'self-sufficient' 'collaborative' 'building a business to out pitch the client' 'leveraging that

		experience to improve hiring in Location 2'

RESULTS OF THE CASE STUDY

The coding shown in a tabular format above is final version of 3 stages of coding where several codes have been consolidated and in some cases phrases and sentences have been developed as a result. The table is a logical representation of the relationships that exist between crisis, change leadership and culture. The logical flow link between the themes employed here is consistent with the suggestion put forward by Yin (2014). For instance the assumption is that in the absence of change leadership, crisis contributes to undesirable culture and presence of change leadership provides the opportunity for building the desirable culture.

FINDINGS ON CRISIS

The definition of crisis adopted for the purposes of this case study is the one put forward by Bundy *et al* (2016) which was discussed under the literature review but also restated here as 'Any event perceived by managers and stakeholders as salient, unexpected and potentially disruptive'. The researcher was looking for phrases and words which will satisfy this definition. The language used by all the participants in the case study like 'firefighting' 'feeling overwhelmed' 'client dissatisfaction' 'excessive process errors' clearly support the assertion that this was for all intent and purposes a crisis situation. In addition, Bundy *et al* (2016), further argued that evidence of crisis can be espoused by the presence of certain key dimensions including it being sources of social construct through behaviours as well as being harmful or threatening to the organisation and stakeholders.

Another interesting piece of evidence that demonstrated the situation as constituting a crisis event is how the head of department felt handicapped by the situation in his efforts to organically grow leaders in his department. He also felt '*their processes weren't right and felt strongly that a seismic change was required'*. The change manager too observed on his arrival that clear signs pointed to things being in a state of 'disarray'. There is therefore enough evidence to support the argument that the situation concerning the Transfer Agency team amounted to a crisis event.

In cognisance with the findings of Hutahayan *et al* (2013), the researcher looks for certain actions taking by the manager as well as skills and talent demonstrated that had direct impact on employee behaviour to bring about desired change.

The overwhelming consensus among the legacy partners as well as the head of department is that the manager brought with him a lot of industry experience. This had immediate impact on how to handle most of the work related queries. He was seen as an effective communicator who was able to handle both the client and senior management engagement effectively and professionally. This they believe freed them to concentrate on more the 'BAU' stuff. He was also seen as a consensus builder and this was particularly important as the team engaged with New York and other shared services teams on how to best support the business.

From the manager's standpoint, he had to build the confidence level of the team, something he observed was lacking by virtue of the approach adopted by the US in executing their oversight obligations. He also identified individual(s) he could take along with him on his mission of removing the U.S oversight from the team. He had to utilise a lot of consultation, collaboration and consensus building skills in dealing with the Global heads of investor services to impress on them why the team should be given full autonomy over their operations. Recognising the team was initially struggling with the Change, he needed to demonstrate 'empathy to guide them through the change processes'. The manager talked of one senior person in New York who was particularly sceptical of Dublin's ability to function independently of New York went on maternity leave and her absence gave him the opportunity to run a 'programme' within a specified time period. With this programme they could quantify the number of errors per each delivery cycle and as the errors reduced significantly with the consequent improvement in clients' service quality, he was able to make a convincing case for autonomy and it was eventually granted.

After coming out of the programme, the manager felt they were over-staffed. A six-eye check was required during the programme but in his estimation that is not an efficient way to run the business going forward. Two resignations took place simultaneously and he decided to only replace them with one person. The legacy team members disagreed strongly with this decision.

He remained resolute and argued that not only do they need to prove to senior management they can be effective but also show they can be efficient as well by being able to do more with less.

From the perspective of the head of department, the new manager brought with him a lot of experience as well as an entrepreneurial approach to managing the business. He bought into his 'managerial philosophy' and to him this was important as one of the main targets he had set for him was to come and 'build out' a team which is able to support the growth agenda the department was pursuing. In his assessment, the manager introduced different levels of controls and reorganised the team and their roles to position them to not only meet the BAU challenges but also able to deliver strategic solutions to support business growth.

FINDINGS ON CULTURE

The findings on the culture are presented in three stages. The culture that existed before the change manager arrived and upon arrival, the culture that was being created during his interventions and finally the current culture that exists within team. Schein (1999), defined culture as 'the learned shared tacit assumptions on which people base their daily behaviour'. This learned phenomenon also gives the group a shared identity (ibid). With this in mind the researcher was looking for indications and patterns of behaviour which best encapsulate the culture within the investor services team.

CULTURE BEFORE INTERVENTION

The language used in describing the prevailing culture before the arrival of the change manager from the standpoint of the two employees is '*lacking in structure*', 'very stressful environment', '*feeling demoralised*', 'demotivating' and of '*lack of respect*' from the New York partners. A culture that forced them to work long hours without any real prospects for career growth. To quote one of the legacy members, "*my impression of the place was that from day one it was lacking in structure, certainly understaffed and it was pretty much a firefighting exercise, both myself and the other partner were working very long hours, was stressful.*" The evidence clearly supports the existence of a dysfunctional team with no strategic direction and merely struggling to meet the demands of day to day operational tasks.

The sentiments of the two employees are echoed by the head of department, who described the team as "*lacking in self-direction and strategic thinking*". The change manager too on his arrival observed a culture that was lacking in organisational skills but crucially lacking in confidence. The manager attributed the lack of confidence to the seemingly 'oppressive' and to some extent the 'punitive' regime they were held under by the New York management team. The manager remarked "*I suppose initially when I started what I observed probably was a lack of confidence that was the first thing I tried to tackle.*"

Next we take a look at the cultural changes that took place as the change agenda was being implemented.

CULTURE DURING INTERVENTION

The most consistent narrative that rang through from the two legacy team members when talking about the impact the new manger made on the team is bringing a sense of structure and balance to the team. They experienced improved conditions in working conditions as well beginning to gain respect from the clients. They also talked about feeling they were more able to get ahead of issues more. The manager too recounted, "*I observed they have started to use their initiatives more as well starting to believe in their ability to deliver for the clients*". In his estimation, the team became more effective as they begun to pull away from New York's oversight. The head of department too talks about how the team achieved the desired stability needed to support the clients' service delivery. They were also able to demonstrate 'transparency' in issues resolution and this generated strong positive feedback from clients.

THE CURRENT CULTURE POST INTERVENTION

The current culture from the perspective of the two legacy partners have been described as 'deteriorating working conditions'. In the words of one team member, "*I feel like we've taken a step backward from last year and my opinion is that now we are constantly reactive instead of being proactive*". This they attribute to being under-resourced as well as feeling marginalised by the manager. There is also a sense of the team losing their structure and balance. Incidentally, they have been begun to see a spike in errors with negative impact on client deliverables. At least

one partner feels the current structure in the team greatly diminishes him as a professional and does not see any real path for career growth and development.

The sentiments of the two legacy partners are shared in part by the manager. He describes the current situation as that which appears to have lost their '*time management skills*' as well as their '*organisation skills*'. The manager expresses disappointments that the gains from the intervention periods were not consolidated. He concedes that the team lacks passion, drive and determination at the moment and the '*ship needs to be re-routed*'. The manager believes this to be the result of the legacy guys showing a '*knee jerk reaction*' to losing a headcount. He reckons that the legacy guys put forward an unconvincing argument that losing the headcount will set them back and result in poor services, an argument he disagreed strongly and insisted they are adequately resourced to meet the challenges of the team, are now victims of 'self-fulfilling prophecy'.

Notwithstanding the above, the head of department has a very positive impression on the current culture post intervention. He notes that one of his main objectives for intervention was to improve the leadership capabilities of at least one of the partners and his assessment is that this individual has seen remarkable growth in potential and now presents himself "*as a more matured professional*". He is also witnessing a team which is now more able to deliver consistent good results to the clients and even though they make occasional mistakes, they have built enough credibility in the bank to afford to make those mistakes. In addition, he believes there is now '*a culture of learning, growth and development as well as strong commitment to execution*'.

Perhaps the most important of the benefits of the intervention is that now they are can leverage the experience of the Transfer Agency team to build out parallel operations in Location 2, particularly in their talent acquisition strategy. As the head of department remarked "*So now with Location 2 we know the type of candidate we want to hire, we know what activity we want to position our clients and we know how we want to grow that over time. Hopefully Location 2 can learn from the other teams that have come through which is very important for the culture aspect.*"

The discussions on these findings are done in the context of the main research questions outlined earlier and restated below;

RQ1. Why certain human behaviours are at their most pronounced during crisis? How this presents the Change agent an opportunity to address dysfunctional behaviours and reinforced good ones? Why crisis creates a sense of urgency?

It is important to recognise the fact that the two legacy members who were running the investor services team, went through a selection process where they may have spoken eloquently about their qualifications and demonstrated their fitness to meet the challenges of the role. It is also equally important to state that they were able to execute the challenge to some degree albeit with the support of the US counterpart at least at the initial stages of the team's inception. However, as the day-to-day support of the US team was withdrawn, they begun to struggle. As the errors spiked and clients begun to express their dissatisfaction, coupled with the seemingly draconian oversight approach adopted by New York in their efforts to address clients concerns, the following things became obvious;

- o A team that lacked confidence in their abilities
- o A team that lacked organisational skills
- o A team that lacked time management skills
- o A team unable to offer strategic solutions
- o A lack of industry experience and knowledge

The central argument is that these seemingly dysfunctional behaviours existed since these individuals joined the team but would have continued to remain undercurrent if the situation had not reached crisis level. With the crisis, the poverty of these critical professional requirements became observable as these individuals struggled to negotiate the challenges of investments transfer agency. The hiring process is a complex one and the decision to hire someone mostly relies on their historical performance as demonstrated on their CV as well as any presentation given at the interview stage. However, an assessment of their actual performance can only be gauged after they have been hired. In some cases in mature organisations with experienced

teams, certain competency gaps can go unnoticed for an extensive period of time until a particular event forces those weaknesses to be uncovered.

However, in this particular case, the ABC Investment Group Alternative Funds Services EMEA business was relatively young even though it was part of a mature global financial institution. It can therefore be argued that the life stage of the business contributed in part in identifying these issues but the biggest contributing factor is the whole crisis situation particular the apparent risk from this important client that they will withdraw their business if the situation is not resolved.

Now the question is why did it take crisis to uncover these behaviours? The answer to this question resides in human psychology. For instance the German-American psychologist and academic, Erik Erikson outlined what he termed as 8 stages of Psychosocial Crisis Stages[4] and ensuing behaviours as shown in the table below.

Crisis	Malignancy
Trust v Mistrust	Withdrawal
Autonomy v Shame/Doubt	Compulsion
Initiative v Guilt	Inhibition
Industry v Inferiority	Inertia
Identity v Role Confusion	Repudiation
Intimacy v Isolation	Exclusivity
Generativity v Stagnation	Rejectivity
Integrity v Despair	Disdain

It is important to emphasize that not all the 8 stages are relevant in this discussion but we can draw some meaningful conclusions from the first four;

Trust v Mistrust – to what extent did the legacy team members trust the experienced team who trained them on the job at the initial stage. It is safe to assume that if the level of distrust was high, then they are more likely to avoid asking questions which would have exposed them as lacking the relevant skills to do the job.

Autonomy/ Shame or Doubt – we have established from the case study that, the legacy guys never truly felt they were going to own the process and operate independently. They were made to feel New York was always going to provide the innovations and strategic directions and they will be expected to execute on purely operational levels. In their minds they were not being prepared to be equal partners but subordinates and as a result there was no need to confront any deficiencies they may have in that department.

Initiative v Guilt – similar to the above point, one of the key weaknesses identified by the manager is the team's inability to use their initiatives in problem solving. This also comes back to the selection process and the conditioning at the training phase. The US team as well as the hiring manager may have made a lot of assumptions accurate or otherwise about their capabilities. In the absence of any crisis, they will be more inclined to play it safe else they risk exposing their vulnerabilities.

Industry v Inferior – there is no doubt that the team in Dublin felt in many ways inferior to their New York counterpart, part of the reasons have been articulated in points one and two above but the other part is a factual one in that New York was the mature business with a lot of industry experience. But how this knowledge power was displayed by the New York team was crucial to the psychological development of the Dublin team in terms of supporting their growth and development.

It is now clear from the above that all these behaviours existed covertly within the team but the crisis event and the sense of urgency (Kotter, 1995) it brought ensured that the legacy team members have to let go of their inhibitions and allow these behaviours to become ostensible. This sense of urgency is found in several key points not least the following;

- An important client could pull their business which could have a dramatic impact on revenues and potentially lead to job losses
- The legacy team didn't like the seemingly oppressive regime from New York and hence were hugely motivated to gain autonomy
- The absence of the key opposition to this autonomy was only for a limited period of time. Hence the team should be able to demonstrate within this period that they could function without US oversight.

These findings indeed support the argument that crisis can be a facilitator of change in so far as unearthing and highlighting behavioural deficiencies including the ones which are hidden in the sub-consciousness.

RQ2. How is culture being created or shaped as part of the change implementation process and to what extent does crisis enable the process? This must be answered through the following;

- What is happening where?
- Who is connected to whom?
- Where are we already seeing signs of innovation or improvements?
- Where might we be stuck and what deep rules are creating that pattern of behaviour?

Kotter and Heskett (2008), argued that an organisation culture or in this case department culture should be thought of as having two predominant levels. The core comprises things such as employee well-being or otherwise and shared values of the team whereas the outer level or the easily observable things such as work ethics and friendliness (ibid). Building on from this the culture within the investor services team as illustrated by the case study can be categorised as;

- Core – lack of confidence, stressful and a lack of morale within the team
- Visible - lack of organisational skills, lack of time management, and lack of structure and a sense of hostility emanating from New York oversight team.

Furthermore, Higgs and Rowland (2008), propose to the change leader to target efforts at the micro level to be able affect the culture of the organisation. The central premise here is culture is being created throughout the change implementation process (ibid). Moreover, Kotter (1996)

posit that a sense of urgency is a powerful lubricant to ensure the wheels of change run effectively and smoothly. A sense of urgency is described by Kotter (1998) as feelings, thoughts and actual behaviours. We have already observed that in a crisis situation, individuals' feelings, thoughts and behaviours including those which are hidden are all exposed.

So we observed from the case study that as the change process was being implemented the following things begun to happen;

In the words of one of the legacy team members, "*I felt the team suddenly had a structure to it. The stress level of the team started easing considerably and it felt we were headed in the right direction*".

The manager realised that the global head of Transfer Agency wielded considerable amount of power in terms deciding whether Dublin can gain autonomy or not. To this end there was a greater need for more consultations and collaborations on that front if he were to succeed.

From the perspectives of both the head of department and the change manager, the team started showing initiatives, started growing in confidence and show belief in their capabilities. As the team gradually begun to gain autonomy from New York oversight, the team became more productive and effective and as a result started gaining respect from the clients.

However, with all these things happening, the change manager was acutely aware of the possible effects of what the New York oversight approach as well as what was termed as the 'firefighting' approach has done to the psyche of the legacy team members and has feared that mental block was always going to impede his efforts.

RQ3. How the level of leadership commitment engaged with contributed to effect complex change process? Which of the four components of transformational leadership (Intellectual simulation, Individualised Consideration, Inspirational motivation and Idealised Influence) is most useful in crisis situations?

We note that appropriate level of commitment was brought to the process to effect the change, particularly coming from the head of department. For instance by committing resources to bring the manager on board is a clear indication of the department's head desire to ensure the desired

results are achieved. However it remains unclear as to how this decision contributed directly to the change process considering we are yet to establish whether the change process was able to achieve sustainable desired results.

In terms of the leadership style of the manager, he has been described by one of the legacy members as being a good mentor and someone he can learn a lot from. Both legacy members also speak of him as very knowledgeable and an effective communicator. The manager also talks about the things needed to do to influence behaviour such as identifying which individual to bring along on his journey, working to build the confidence of the team and needing to leverage a lot of motivational techniques. Whereas it appears almost all the four dimensions of transformational leadership have employed by the manager, we observed these two may have direct influence on how the team members behaved during the process;

Individualised consideration – by identifying one individual who the manager felt could partner him to shape the change process, made this person felt particularly empowered and extra motivated to engage the process. We observed this was crucial in helping the manager to communicate his agenda to rest of the team generate adequate levels of support for success.

Idealised influence – the manager is mostly admired for his seemingly good communication skills and wide industry knowledge. Both legacy members of the team speak of how they have profited from his display of these two qualities. They believe these are qualities they hope to model from the manager throughout the rest of their careers. This is the clearest of evidence to suggest the manager's presence may have had some transformational impact on these individuals but to the extent that it contributed to creating the desired culture can only be assessed by revisiting the model framework in the next chapter.

Another important observation which came through in conversations with the participants of this case study is how they have different understanding and expectations of the manager including the manager himself. For instance, from the standpoint of the legacy team members, the manager was there to handle difficult clients' conversations as well as senior management engagements to free them to focus on business as usual stuff. In this team member's own remarks," *I think we*

should have somebody above looking at other things". From the perspective of the change manager, his number one mission as he understood was to remove the New York oversight from Dublin to allow the team to operate autonomously. The manager noted "*It was my goal, bestowed upon me to remove the US review and sign off of the team*, "The head of department's expectations were several but salient among them was the need for the change manager to provide some sort of mentoring and coaching to one of the legacy team members who he had hoped would have been able to grow organically to lead the team. In his words, "*As a team lead we believe he will be enhanced by having the benefit of a more senior manager around.*" This chasm in expectations among these participants is pertinent as we revisit our model later on to assess the current situation with respect to culture under conclusion and recommendations.
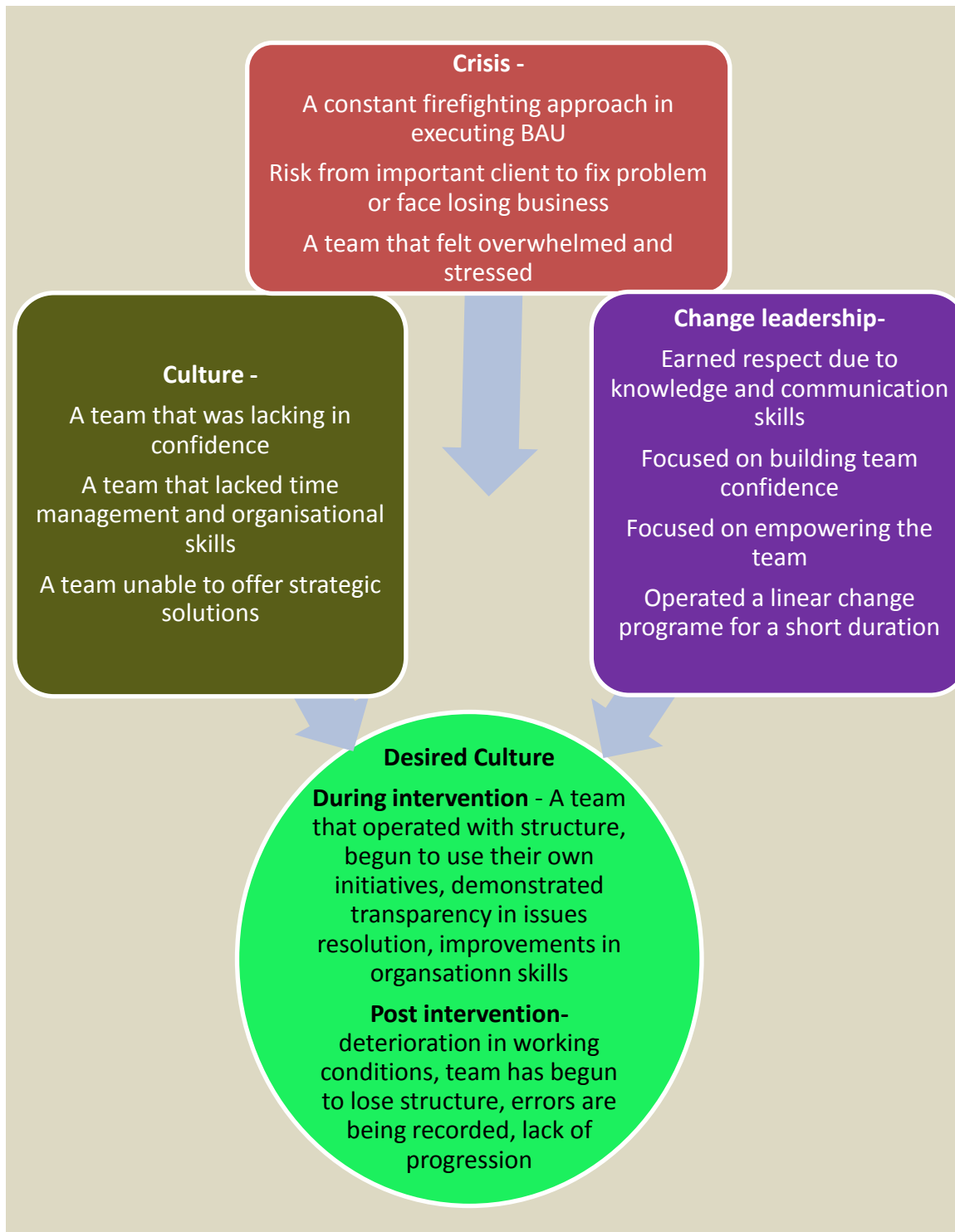
Crisis -

A constant firefighting approach in executing BAU

Risk from important client to fix problem or face losing business

A team that felt overwhelmed and stressed

Culture -

A team that was lacking in confidence

A team that lacked time management and organisational skills

A team unable to offer strategic solutions

Change leadership-

Earned respect due to knowledge and communication skills

Focused on building team confidence

Focused on empowering the team

Operated a linear change programe for a short duration

Desired Culture

During intervention - A team that operated with structure, begun to use their own initiatives, demonstrated transparency in issues resolution, improvements in organsationn skills

Post intervention- deterioration in working conditions, team has begun to lose structure, errors are being recorded, lack of progression

EVALUATING THE MODEL

Looking at the model (figrure3.), it appears this change process yielded mixed results. Some good outcomes including improvements in time management and organisation skills as well as showing initiatives and transparency in problems solving were recorded during the implementation phase. The team appeared to have the right balance and structure to it and was able to operate more effectively and efficiently in delivering consistently good services to their clients. The general consensus among all the participants is that for a period of six months after gaining autonomy from the US oversight team, the team was operating at what could be described as optimal levels. Within this period, no errors in clients' deliverables were recorded and the impact of this on the team's morale was very positive. During this time, the structure of the team comprises the manager, a team lead, a senior consultant and two junior employees.

However, at the end of the six months period, the two junior members of the team resigned. The manager admitted that even before the resignations he had felt the team was over-staffed and the head of department also expressed similar sentiments that in his view the amount of resources being used at the time was not the most efficient way of running the business. Hence the manager decided to replace the two departed employees with one person. This decision as has been noted earlier on in the repot findings was vehemently opposed by the legacy members who argued the reduction of the headcount will inevitably lead to the 'firefighting' mode the team had experienced in the past which caused a lot of dissatisfaction not only for the clients but for the team as well.

Another interesting point is that the person hired to replace the two individuals was someone who was hired and trained by the manager in a previous organisation. The manager speaks very positively of this individual's capabilities and does see this person as your quintessential transfer agent. In the manager's estimation, this individual was very capable of replacing the departed members and hence remained resolute that the team had the right resources to serve their clients.

 So the current culture of team has been described as deteriorating in terms of working conditions. The team appeared to have lost its structure and errors in clients' deliverables have begun to spike again. But crucially, the one individual who the head of department has hoped the

manager could contribute to his professional growth and development feels marginalised and doesn't see any real prospects for career growth. He attributes this to the manager failing to recognise his longevity of service as well as the contributions made to the team but rather putting him on the same pedestal as all the members of the team, particularly the new joiner.

Taking cognisance of the all these developments, it will not be any stretch of imagination to conclude the change process from a culture perspective failed to achieve the desired results. The manager too appears to concede that his efforts have failed when he said "*It is almost impossible to change people who don't feel like they are in the right job…there appears to be th*e *need for me to exert more influence or inject fresh passion into the team.*"

Some positive culture gains were recorded at the start of the process and during the intervention phase but the manager and the team failed to sustain these achievements. It is therefore imperative to try and understand why the change manager failed to consolidate the gains. To do this, we shall revisit the literature on why change efforts fail completely or fail to achieve the desired results.

First is the sense of urgency, Kotter (1995) believes lack of sense of urgency is a major contributor to why change efforts fail. A sense of urgency is crucial to bring about lasting transformational change (ibid). We noted that at the initial stages of the change implementation, the sheer nature of the circumstances surrounding the team around the time, which we have already articulated as amounting to a crisis situation made the team members more malleable to be receptive to all change initiatives the manager tried to introduce. They were more willing to learn and grow and develop. They were forced to examine their own beliefs, thoughts and actual behaviours to see which ones ought to be discarded and which ones should be nurtured and reinforced in their efforts to excel in their roles. This sense of urgency served as self-motivating for the legacy team members and made the work of the manager much easier. It is unclear whether or not the manager understood this concept or perhaps had assumed the initial gains were exclusively down to his capabilities.

Another crucial point worthy of note is that after the ship had been steadied and the team given a clear strategic direction, we observed the team enjoyed at least six months cohesion and harmony and these enabled them to deliver excellent performances in clients' services delivery. However,

the manager decided to capitalise on the opportunity presented by the two resignations to implement another change he had contemplated on for some time. The reduction in staff numbers were met with fierce resistance from the legacy members. Brown (2017) articulates that fear of failure, loss of status, incongruent group dynamics and breaking routines are the chief drivers of resistance to any change initiatives. In addition, poor communication, Self-Interest, feeling excluded and lack of trust have also been cited as major contributors to resistance to change (Brookins, 2016).

The predominant reason cited by the two legacy team members when the staff reduction was implemented was that things could potentially revert back to the chaotic days where they felt they didn't have enough members to 'firefight'. They strongly believed that a team of five including the manager with one of the legacy members as team lead ensured the team had the right structure and balance to team. But there was something more nuanced to this. At least one of the legacy team members feared a loss of status in terms of his position in the team being diluted with the reduction in numbers. In addition, having navigated those challenging times in the past, the legacy members have built some routines around their work by significantly leveraging the help of the two junior members. This disruption in their routines was difficult to accept. Finally, mentioned earlier, the new joiner was someone the manager has worked with before and rate very highly. The manager genuinely believed that this person is very much capable of filling the void left by the two departed members of the team. To prove his point, the manager tried to impress on the legacy members to delegate some of their tasks to this individual to bring this person up to speed. This extra focus on the new joiner by the manager also created a very subtle sense of incongruence in the team. All these findings support the findings of Brown (2017) and Brookins (2016) on why people will normally provide resistance to change efforts.

In other for the change efforts to be successful, Rick (2013) calls on Change agents to invest considerable amount of time and efforts into having a strong appreciation of the factors which are blocking the change initiatives. Similarly, the 2013 Willis Towers Watson report also found that to maintain change for the long term, successful change agents have kept the focus on the key fundamentals such as effective communication, adequate training, robust leadership and engagement which drive the change initiatives. We therefore turn our attention to how the

manager handled the resistance to the staff reduction. This is done through the three steps of resistance management put forward by Blount (2017);

Identifying the sources of resistance – in this particular case, the resistance was apparent for the manager to see. The two legacy team members were very vocal in terms of articulating their concerns with respect to the staff reduction. The change was happening at the end of period of team stability and cohesion. These findings appear to support the assertions made by Rick (2013), that where a culture of openness in communication as well as positive interpersonal relationships exist, resistance to change are much more obvious to realise. To this end the manager's job was made easier by virtue of the culture that the previous change efforts have helped to build in the team. The legacy members spoke about how they raised their objections to the reduction at every opportunity. Their main concern was how that could potentially erode all the gains have made in terms of improving the clients' service delivery experience.

Engage in conversation with the Resistors – we also note that the manager didn't avoid having the conversation with the resistors. However, what Blount (2017) suggests is for the manager to avoid basing the necessity for the change on the need to improve efficiency but rather in having those conversations, the manager should focus on listening and at the same time open up to the possibility of being persuaded by the arguments put forth by the resistors. This clearly didn't happen as the manager recounts his counter argument to the resistors as "*the prevailing staff numbers were not the most efficient way to run the business*." He also added how he had remained resolute that the staff reduction was absolutely the right thing to do. The manager's position was also backed by the head of department. The positions taken by the manager and head of department even as they engage in conversations with the resistors could only serve to make the resistance stronger not only because they didn't follow the recommendation put forward by Blount (2017) but also the legacy members felt '*there wasn't any real need for the change*' and that '*the change was going to make it harder for them to meet their needs.*' These two reasons are among the 8 reasons identified by Rick (2013) as the predominant reasons why people resist change initiatives.

Resistors Management – the change leader must demonstrate his or her ability to listen to opposition, diagnose their antipathy, consider their thoughts and feelings and explain to them

how that has impacted the leader's thinking (Blount, 2017). It is difficult to tell if the manager had engaged in those conversations with the legacy team members with an open mind, particularly as he had expressed," *The size of the team enabled some of the people to push more day-to-day operations stuff to some of junior members of the team and felt slightly more comfortable in their roles. So I suspect there was a real knee jerk reaction to when the partners left…where people started panicking that things were going to fall back to the firefighting stage. This I believe is an element of self-fulfilling prophecy.*" He also added "*I think they could probably have been some complacency after we steadied the ship, may be some comfort when we had a lot of people on the team because some of their weaknesses would have been less exposed*". The inference from this is that the manager would probably not have approached the resistance with an open mind as suggested by Blount (2017) but rather with certain predispositions and assumptions which had the undesired potential to strengthen the resistance, especially in the absence of any real sense of urgency about the staff reduction.

So far we have been able to demonstrate that the conceptual framework model works and that crisis can serve as a catalyst for change depending on several elements. These elements and what this research can offer change leaders in terms of key lessons are discussed in the conclusions and recommendations next.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When Paul O'Neill was appointed as CEO of Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa) in the autumn of 1987, it was a relatively stable company. It had good profit margins even though it had failed to have a couple of successful products lunches in the previous year and this made investors a little bit jittery and necessitated O'Neill's appointment (Baer, 2014). The company also had better than average work place safety record across the United States (ibid). At his introductory meeting with investors and analysts, Mr. O'Neill stunned almost everyone by improvements in workers' safety as his main objective rather than financial ratios as investors had expected. Mr. O'Neill communicated this clearly across the organisation but his efforts were not gaining traction until a fatal accident happened at their Phoenix Arizona plant where a young 18 year old man was killed on his first day on the job due to failure in following safety guidelines under the supervision of a supervisor with 20 years plus experience. This tragic death sent a ripple effect across the entire organisational not only within the United States but across their international operations as well. This incident was the sense of urgency Mr O'Neill needed. Reflecting on this event years later, Mr O'Neill said '*Oftentimes, the things that move organisations are unfortunately not happy stories'* (O'Neill, 2015). This incident which Mr O'Neill attributed the cause to a collective failure of everyone working at the company enabled the CEO's message on workplace safety to cut across the organisation like a hot knife through butter.

A sense of urgency is a gift to any change agent but the change agent must have a full sense of appreciation on its importance to be able to fully profit from it. There is ample evidence both form the literature review and this case study to support the assertions that crisis help create that sense of urgency needed to execute change initiatives. However, to the extent that the change manager recognises this as an opportunity is monumentally important if he or she was to succeed in bringing about transformational cultural change.

Another key observation which came through this case study analysis is the apparent goal incongruence on the part of the head of department, the change manager and the team members. As previously hinted, what they all agreed on was the need for something to change for the team to function effectively but the metric to determine success or otherwise differs among them. The

failure by the change manager and by extension the team to consolidate the gains achieved at the initial stages of implementation could be partly attributed to this goal misalignment. The change manager had felt by gaining independence from New York, his main objective has been realised. Whereas the legacy team members felt that was only the beginning and that more resources are needed to achieve the service levels optimisation that the investor services team could potentially achieve.

In furtherance of the above, the same goal misalignment can be said to be the reason why the manager felt he could capitalise on the resignations of the two individuals to introduce the staff reduction initiatives. Whereas a strong argument could be made to support the need to achieve efficiencies across all aspects of the service delivery, the timing could not have been more inappropriate. As the manager later admitted, the team had been psychologically burnt by the experience of the 'firefighting' days. This meant a certain level of confidence must be achieved before any changes which could potentially put them under pressure can be initiated.

In addition, is the issue of resistance identification, engagement and management. There was plenty of evidence to support the findings of Rick (2013) on why people will resist change initiatives. We have also observed that a sense of urgency serves as a natural force in breaking down most resistances to change initiatives. However, in the absence of any sense of urgency as noted at the time the staff reduction was being introduced, then it is incumbent on the change manager to follow the recommendations put forward by Blount (2017) to manage the resistance to improve the chances of success.

Finally, it must be emphasised that many teams and departments will continue to face challenges of accelerated change and potential crisis. However, whereas leaders are expected to use all resources both internal and external to avoid most of the crises, certain crisis must be used to generate enough energy to bring about much needed change. An effective leader, if adequately resourced and knowledgeable could potentially find ways to sustain the crisis, seeing it as enabler for change, until the desired cultural changes have been achieved and consolidated. The key is to understand that culture as a product of behavioural change is achievable in the midst of crisis but like all human behaviours, the change is reversible if not consolidated or institutionalised.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

As a qualitative case study research, some of the limitations outlined by Yin (2009) apply. For instance one should exercise a degree of caution in terms of generalising the findings of this research since the findings are based on a single case study. It would have been helpful to conduct the research on multiple case studies which would have gone a long way in adding weight to the findings.

In addition, the research having been carried out by a single researcher meant that there is a high degree of subjectivity in the coding process as part of the content analysis. Even though the main themes were highlighted by the literature review, the researcher exercised broad discretion in identifying key phrases and words which could be linked to themes accordingly. A different researcher could potentially have different coding. A research team carrying out this research could help improve the rigorousness of the interview data interrogation.

Finally, what this case study has demonstrated is that crisis of any magnitude could be seized on to make cultural changes in a team or a department. However, the findings are not as strong as one could reasonably expect due to the limitations outlined above. The expectation is for a future research to build on this research by addressing these limitations.

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