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The Lack of Leadership Leading to Misguided Organizational Change

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Abstract- Organizational change continues to be a focal point for most American organizations. Although, American firms have been successful in promoting organizational change in the workplace, unrealistic expectations continue to be endorsed in most organizational structures. Consequently, this organizational dilemma has led to misguided expectations resulting in dissatisfaction in the workplace, leading to dysfunctional organizational behavior. Additionally, studies have suggested that the lack of leadership is blamed for disproportioned organizational behavior issues leading to misguided organizational change in the workplace. In so doing, recommendations will be offered in an effort to streamline organizational change in the workplace, which will lead to improved work productivity.

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The Lack of Leadership Leading to Misguided Organizational Change

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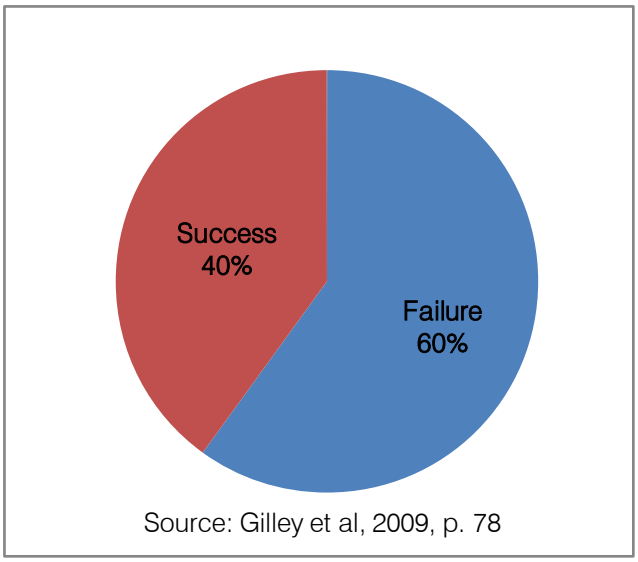
I. Introduction

Organizational change is unavoidable and continues to be the focal point for most organizations in the United States. The organizational competitive nature continues to ignite new product lines and services; however, this has led to organizational expectations to be unreachable. The lack of leadership to support change in the workplace continues to hinder certain organizations to reach revenue expectations. In so doing, recommendations will be offered to promote positive leadership behavior that will coincide with seamless organizational change initiatives in the workplace.

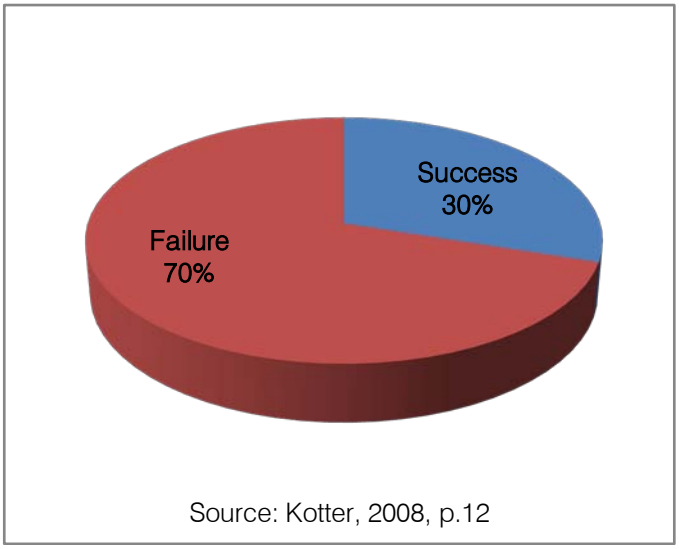
II. Cause and Effect – Reasons for Organizational Change Resistance

Organizational leaders are faced with tremendous challenges with minimum operational resources and increased work responsibilities, which have led to dysfunctional organizations. Unfortunately, this is a common trend that continues to be embraced by most mid/large organizations throughout the United States. Studies have suggested that communication breakdown is to blame for organizational change resistance (Ford, Ford and D'Amelio, 2008). Other studies have suggested that leaders who promote trust in the workplace are far more successful, as opposed to others who do not exhibit this behavior (Matthew, 2009). Unfortunately, this has led to unproductive work environments leading to disastrous results for certain organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1993). As listed in Figure 1, according to Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan (2009), 60% of organizational change will fail in some capacity. Most alarming in Figure 2, Kotter (2008) states that "it is estimated that 70 percent of needed change either fails to be launched or completed (p.12).



Source: Gilley et al, 2009, p. 78

Figure 1 : Organizational Change Effectiveness



Source: Kotter, 2008, p.12

Figure 2 : Organizational Change Effectiveness

Moreover, this has rooted surfaced a false sense of urgency among management personnel. This

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type of behavior (false sense of urgency) leads intangible battles among management and staff, which leads to a dysfunctional organizational setting (Rivero, 2013). In so doing, it is vital to understand that managers and employees must be able to exchange ideas, that transcend into a shared vision and respect for all parties involved during organizational transitional stages (Blau, 1964).

III. Understanding Historical Information – Organizational Cultural Changes

Prior to promoting changes in the workplace, it is vital to understand an organization's historical information. Knowing an organization's history can solidify the organization's vision which can contribute to a change to the organization's mission statement thus promoting change in the workplace. Bass and Avolio (1993) further state "…..promotions should be made to ensure that these older values can survive despite the necessary changes. …..values of trusting employees and respect will hopefully transcend over time" (p. 115). Consequently, this will reinforce innovative efforts, which will coincide with the new mission statement. The objective is that the founder's vision remains intact; but most importantly, should the founder's beliefs and values come into question, changes should be forthcoming and should not be considered as part of organizational change initiatives (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

IV. Organizational Change – Readiness

During organizational transition, employees are uncertain of the future, which can have an effect on the transitional stages of an organization. This is a critical stage that will determine how quickly the organization can transcend its business processes. This being said, it is important that an organization promotes organizational change readiness. This leads to successful change agents that promote a positive work environment. In most instances, employees are eager to understand the new forecasted changes to the organization. As Weiner (2009) points out, "….unfreeze the existing mindsets and develop a sense of urgency, before the change is actually set in motion for implementation." Moreover, the objective is to promote a seamless transition in an effort to make sense of organizational changes that will take place (Bercovitz & Feldman, 2008).

In an effort to promote organizational change readiness, it is important to understand employees' relationship initiatives with the organization. According to Bateh, Castaneda, & Farah (2013), "some employees are more loyal to relationships, while others are more loyal to structural components of an organization, which are often based on principles such as efficiency, tradition or creating an acceptable fit". This further validates the importance of being flexible during the transitional stages of an organization.

V. Leading Organizational Change

A seasoned transformational leader should be at the helm during major organizational overhaul initiatives. A transformational leader is able to promote a sense of urgency that encourages growth potential for subordinates to think critically when it comes to organizational changes in the workplace (Bass, 1999). In most cases, from an organizational strategic level, most organizational changes are too broad and are directed to a larger audience, which may be misinterpreted (Carter, Armenakis, Field, & Mossholder, 2012). This being said, it is vital that open dialogue remains intact among managers and employees, which will enhance the social exchange among parties involved for common goals and objectives (Blau, 1964).

VI. Recommendations for Streamlining Organizational Change

The author of this article proposes the following recommendations for the improvement of Organizational Change Initiatives:

1. Improve the communication gap between mid-management/managers and subordinates before\during\organizational change initiatives.
2. Defuse false sense of urgency stigma among staff/management by establishing an open dialogue among all parties involved. This will prevent this kind of behavior from ever taking place.
3. The organization's historical values/belief should be preserved and implemented as part of the organizational change initiatives. Moreover, should the founder's values/beliefs come into question, changes should be immediate.
4. Organizational change should be a seamless process and employees should be involved from its infancy to maturity stages. This will solidify loyalty among all parties involved during organizational change initiatives.
5. At times, an organizational strategic plan could be difficult to understand. With this being said, it is recommended that managers have informal meetings with staff in order to discuss the organization's strategic plan as it pertains to staff responsibilities in order to prevent an array of miscommunication.

VII. Conclusion

Organizational change initiatives will continue to be vital components among American firms. Competition is the driving force that supports change

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within an organizational structure. It is important that the organization does not promote unrealistic expectations among staff members, which can later lead to a dysfunctional organizational setting. Certainly, change will not cease to exist and organizations throughout America need to be able streamline organizational change initiatives accordingly.

Moreover, it is vital that the organization appoints a transformational leader who is able to streamline organizational change initiatives by promoting an open dialogue with all parties involved. By doing so, the organization is better prepared for the new initiatives that will come to pass. Most importantly, employees should be involved during each transitional stage from beginning to the end. This will promote loyalty among employees and changes to the organizational structure will be acceptable by all parties involved.

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