Organizational Change Management in the Telecommunications Industry: Human Resource Department's Role as a Recruiter and Trainer

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Abstract: *As organizations strive to remain economically viable, various changes are effected. In most instances, these changes are implemented with little or no participation of the human resource department. As a result, most organizations have had dismal success with managing organizational change. Using Telkom Kenya as a case study, this paper evaluates the role of the human resource department as a focal stakeholder in organizational change management. Specifically, the paper discusses the role of staff recruitment and training as undertaken by the HRD towards organizational change management. The discussions in the paper are anchored on the findings of a study that sought to understand the contributions of the HRD at Telkom Kenya. The study targeted the entire management and staff of Human Resource Department of Telkom Kenya in North Rift Valley Region which is 66 in total. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedule. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used for data analysis and interpretation. The author observes that the HRD contributes to change management through fast implementation of change, less errors in change implementation and less fraud in change implementation. This paper recommends that the HRD should be actively involved in recruitment and training of employees. As such, the department ought to be well facilitated to enable it oversee this vital role. This paper is a valuable contribution to the study of organizational change management.*

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Employee Recruitment, Staff Training, Organizational Change, Human Resource, Change Management, Telkom Kenya*

I. Introduction

1.1 Human Resource Management Simplified

The Human Resource Management (HRM) team's main function is to manage people. Among others, the HR department enriches the organisation through recruitment procedures. HR department also ensures that members of staff follow a general direction by frequently clarifying and reminding them of the organisation's goals. Besides this, they are also responsible for the training of employees. All these functions contribute towards organisational effectiveness. Improvements to their contribution can be done by arranging training for staff members, organising activities for the organisation and changing organisational culture [1].While there are still many companies operating under the tried and true, traditional human resource management theories and practices, the contribution of HR in today's businesses is changing. While the Human Resources Department has typically been known to deal with the issues of policy or administration, today, HRM requires a more interactive approach than ever before [2]. The average Human Resources Department is learning to work more closely with individual employees, assisting in training, and helping workers to better meet the corporate and business goals [1]. It is no longer just the economic issues that drive the department, but also the behavioural ones. In general, HR is becoming more a part of the team than it once was.

Rather than being the folks who sit in their closed offices and interview applicants then allow department managers and executives to handle day-to-day operations, HR is now getting involved in decision making, and making a contribution to the company as a whole, rather than only the HR department. Many of these changes come as a result of management's change in focus, going from a distinct hierarchy where top level managers are the only ones whose voices matter, to a team approach to organizational management that recognizes the importance of every team member. Some of the more involved aspects of the HR department may include employee training, both in the realm of selecting what is needed and providing for the delivery of content, as well as evaluating the results [2].

With the changes in HR laws, the department is also becoming more adept at providing the ground rules for hiring, firing, discipline and interaction with employees, as well as training, an area they have pretty much managed all along. And as laws continue to evolve and change, the HR Department is expected to become increasingly important in the management and policies required to remain in compliance of each one. The changes in Human Resources Management has resulted in the department doing what its name has always implied - managing the most vital resources to any company, its human resources.

1.2 HRD and Change Management

Renda and Lesser [3] argue for a closer relationship between HRD and effective change management. These authors acknowledge that the involvement of the HRD is a major trigger towards the acceptance of change at minimum costs. Organizational change has, in recent decades, become stuck in a rut. It is arguable that no organization can succeed until the individuals within it succeed. No group can achieve its objectives until its team members achieve theirs [4]. Most change managers will confirm how difficult it is to generate real change in organizations. Evidence of change failure suggests this is not only caused by employee resistance, but by a lack of senior management vision, a failure to integrate cultural considerations and business strategy and a lack of long-term commitment to communicating clearly the vision and importance of individual commitment to success. The organisation development approach, itself built on process-based change, remains the dominant methodology. Its focus can, at worst, ignore the people aspects of change and, at best, seek to use the 'medical model' which assumes that 'things are not working here, but if you just do this everything will get better'. Such approaches can offer salvation in failing businesses but, for many, OD should be just that: a development of what works best, drawing and building upon the value which makes things work already [5].

Erica [1] observes that the need for change within organizations and the need for human resource personnel who can successfully manage change continue to grow. Coping with rapid change is one of the greatest challenges facing today's organizations and the telecommunications industry is no exception. Organizations in the telecommunication industry have undergone unprecedented changes including but not limited to technology, improved educational level of employees, and demand for higher remuneration, political factors and change in tourism trends. They need leaders who can clearly recognize the need for change and make it happen, who can develop and communicate a vision for what the organization can be and provide the motivation and guidance to take it there. Due to rapid change and turbulent environments in which organizations in the industry operate, human resource personnel are increasingly being seen as a vital success of business. Increasing business competitiveness and the need for the most effective use of human resources will most likely result in management focusing attention on how leaders revitalize or transform organizations. Organizations, thus, due to the competitive and changing nature of their respective sectors, must ensure that their top management functions towards a direction that meets their respective goals and objectives (ibid). As noted by Dawson and Jones [6], change creates feelings of resentment with almost half of layoff survivors saying their responsibilities increased. Recent shifts in corporate strategy have left many employees confused about the link between their jobs and company objectives, making recovery efforts more difficult for companies. Contrary to conventional wisdom, people resist change only when it makes them feel out of control–when change is foisted on them without their consent. The belief that it is human nature to resist change is the wrong starting point, because it creates an adversarial climate.

Change management encompasses management of change process from unfreezing, changing and freezing. If change is effectively managed it will lead to positive effects which will be manifested in terms of minimal resistance, high levels of productivity, high levels of employee adaptability and less conflict. The HRD contribution of recruitment and training contributes towards effective change management and this is normally manifested in faster implementation, less resistance to change, less errors in change implement and less fraud in change implementation Recruitment contribution as an aspect of HR function involves attracting a pool of manpower from both within and outside the business. It also encompasses advertising and designing job specification and person specification. Training contribution, an aspect of HR function, includes, among others, training employees either on-the-job or off-the-job, existing and new skills which will lead to increased productivity and efficiency. If employees are properly trained, they will embrace and manage change smoothly.

1.3 The Debate: Why Telkom Kenya?

The Human Resource department plays a critical contribution in management of change to enhance performance. However, in many instance the overall management overlooks the HRD with dismal results [1]. Telkom Kenya was set up after the need of separating it from the giant Kenya Post and Telecommunication Corporation due to liberalization and privatizations of the telecommunication sector. Telkom Kenya is regionally spread countrywide with regions designated as: Nairobi, Coast, North Rift, Central Rift, Central, Eastern, North Eastern, South and North Nyanza regions. Due to legal changes and stiff competition, Telkom Kenya had and has embarked on a continuous introduction and implementation of organizational, structural and procedural changes. Contrary to expectation, these changes have not had the desired effect. It is worth noting that despite the changes, the lacklustre culture attributed to employees in the public sector seems to have migrated to the firm, which is ostensibly supposed to operate within the private sector environment. As a result, this has led to resentments with incidences where employees have contemplated going on strike. The level of productivity has also not registered much, if any, improvement. This paper posits that this trend is a result of inadequate involvement and recognition of the human recourse function as key to effective change management. Using Telkom Kenya as a case study, the paper focuses on the role of HRD in managing change in

organizations by evaluating how both employee recruitment procedure and employee training relate to change management in the telecommunications industry. It is the postulation of this paper that every individual stakeholder must be involved in the continuous change process. Human resources department is one of the stakeholders that should play a key contribution in ensuring that the change process is carried out successful from planning to implementation.

1.4 Related Literature
1.4.1 HRD's Role of Recruitment and Change Management
Hyde [7] identifies recruitment of employees as the role of the HRD. This is one of the most fundamental contributions of the HR department. This is because this function ensures that an organization selects the most skilful and competent person from a sea of applicants. This function involves evaluation of ability and competency of potential employees in relation to what the organization needs. If this function is performed well, then the organisation will experience value addition and, consequently, be on the right pathway to achieving its organisational and departmental goals and objectives. Therefore, recruitment contributes to change management by sourcing and employing efficient staff who will be able to conceptualize issues related to change management and as a result change management will be effectively implemented.

Effective recruitment can be done through a number of ways. First of all the organization can conduct educational and psychological measurements. This task will involve assessment of abilities, skills and character evaluation of applicants. Through psychometric evaluation, the organization can ensure that employees have the right attitude necessary to fit into the organisation. Another method would be to recruit members of staff through interviews. Here, the HRD can ask applicants questions that evaluate their decision making abilities and how they would deal with certain situations if presented with them. The department can also employ the use of written interviews where applicants answer questions addressing key issues in the organisation. Through these channels, the department contributes towards organisational performance. An example of a company that performs this contribution well is Tesco Ireland. The Company notifies the public about vacancies. It then posts a questionnaire online and interested parties fill it at that time. This is then evaluated and those who fall within their minimum requirements are invited for an interview. In the interview, applicants are asked a number of questions and those who did extremely well are further analysed and retained. Those who did moderately well are not immediately eliminated; instead, their interview questions are kept on file then these are reviewed after six months. By so doing, the firm makes sure that its employees are highly capable and that they will enrich the organisation (ibid) hence change management is enhanced by appropriate methods of recruitment as evidenced in the above case.

1.4.2 Role of HRD on Training
Training and development refers to the practice of providing training, workshops, coaching, mentoring, or other learning opportunities to employees to inspire, challenge, and motivate them to perform the functions of their position to the best of their ability and within standards [8]. Training and development activities provide all involved with the tools they need to develop professionally, increase their knowledge, effectively work with colleagues, and build their capacity to perform the tasks associated with their positions within the organization. Human resources conduct performance system training for every manager in the company. This ensures that each manager is utilizing the system in the same way and is rating each employee based on the same standards. The training should be tailored towards organization structure systems and procedures of that when change is proposed it will be easy for individuals to accept and participate positively towards change management. If training is haphazard, it will disorient employees and therefore change management will not get maximum returns. Thorough training will ensure not only that the system is utilized properly, but that the ratings are meaningful and fair across the organization. Human resource training is particularly important with respect to selecting, interviewing and hiring new employees. People who work in human resources must be able to find the right candidates for a wide spectrum of job openings. These individuals must know how to ask appropriate questions, evaluate a job candidate's responses and determine if the candidate gets past the screening process [9]. The importance of human resource training is also evident with health benefits. Health and other benefits are often quite extensive and confusing. Human resource employees must be trained on filling out various forms, so that they can instruct new-hires on the paperwork. Moreover, these professionals must also learn how to evaluate various benefit programs to potentially save the organization money. Human resource training is also important for teaching human resource employees about various safety issues [1]. HRD should train its staff on change management aspects and provide facilities to enhance and facilitate smooth change management methods.

II.   Materials and Methods

The study employed a case study design. The use of case study allowed a lot of detail to be collected that would not normally be easily obtained by other research designs. The data collected was also a lot richer and of greater depth. The study targeted the entire management and staff of HRD of Telkom Kenya in North Rift Valley Region who were 66 in total. To enable gather data that is comprehensive and representative, the study used the entire population. This was deemed necessary because most of them are based at Eldoret town and sampling this population would not have provided detailed information that could be generalized for the entire organization.Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data pertinent to the study. The questionnaire was used to collect data from different cadre of staff working in HRD based in Telkom North Rift Region. Open and close-ended questions were used as they were most suitable in providing detailed information. Likert questions were also used. This type of questions provided a list of responses, which the respondents chose one, that is right according to her. This allowed all possible responses by the respondents. To ensure reliability and validity, the instruments were given to two experts in strategic management and two professionals in research and methodology of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and their suggestions implemented. The research instrument were also subjected to thorough examination by specialists in research and methodology in the Faculty of Commerce to ensure they met both content and construct validity.

A pilot study was conducted using 10 employees on Telkom Nakuru who were not part of the study sample. Cronbach alpha test was used to test reliability of questions. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. However, there is actually no lower limit to the coefficient. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. Based upon the formula $\_ = rk /[1 + (k -1)r]$ where k is the number of items considered and r is the mean of the inter-item correlations the size of alpha is determined by both the number of items in the scale and the mean inter-item correlations. George and Mallery [10] provide the following rules of thumb: "$\_ > .9$ – Excellent, $\_ > .8$ – Good, $\_ > .7$ – Acceptable, $\_ > .6$ – Questionable, $\_ > .5$ – Poor, and $\_ < .5$ – Unacceptable" (p. 231). While increasing the value of alpha is partially dependent upon the number of items in the scale, it should be noted that this has diminishing returns. It should also be noted that an alpha of .8 was obtained which is probably a reasonable goal.The data collected for the purpose of the study was adopted and coded for completeness and accuracy. Descriptive statistics method was used for data analysis and interpretation. SPSS version 17.0 was used to analyze data using multi-regression analysis. The collected data was analyzed quantitatively. Inferential statistics (Spearman Rank Correlation) was used to analyze the relationships between the variables. Descriptive statistics (mean, weighted averages and frequency) was used where measures of relationships did not apply. The level of significance for statistical analysis was 0.05. According to Aiken [11], this level of significance is most commonly used in behavioural science, hence its adoption in this study.

III.   Results and Discussion

3.1 Role Played by HRD in Change Management

The researcher sought to establish the roles played by HRD in change management so as to relate them to effective implementation of change. On recruitment of employees, 70% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 0% neutral, 5% disagreed 0% strongly disagreed, On training of employees, 60% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, 5% neutral, 6% disagreed 4% strongly disagreed, On appraisal of employees, 30% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 6% neutral, 14% disagreed 10% strongly disagreed, On rewarding of employees, 40% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 10% neutral, 6% disagreed 4% strongly disagreed. This is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Roles Played by HRD in Change Management

Roles	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Recruitment of employees	42	70	16	25	0	0	4	5	0	0
Training of employees	36	60	16	25	4	5	4	6	2	4

Note: Multiple responses were allowed

It is therefore apparent from the above findings that majority of the respondents agreed that the roles of HRD in change management include: recruitment of employees, training of employees and rewarding of employees.

3.2 Contribution of HRD Practice on Recruitment during Change Management

The study sought to find out the contribution of HRD on appraisal practice of recruitment during change management so as to recommend possible activities to be used to enhance the role of HR in effectively implementing and managing change. It was established from the study that on faster implementation of change, 50% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 10% neutral, 15% disagreed 5% strongly disagreed. On less resistance to change 30% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 10% neutral, 10% disagreed 10% strongly disagreed. On less errors in change implementation, 60% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 6% neutral, 4% disagreed 0% strongly disagreed. On less fraud, 30% strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 5% neutral, 20% disagreed 10% strongly disagreed. This is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Contribution of HRD Practice on Recruitment during Change Management

Contribution of HRD practice on recruitment	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Faster implementation of change	30	50	12	20	6	10	9	15	3	5
Less resistance to change	18	30	24	40	6	10	6	10	6	10
Less errors in change implementation	36	60	18	30	4	6	2	4	0	0
Less fraud in change implementation	18	30	21	35	3	5	12	20	6	10

As demonstrated in Table 2, HR practice of recruitment contributes to change management through fast implementation of change, less errors in change implementation and less fraud in change implementation.

3.3 Contribution of HRD Practice of Training on Employees on Change Management

The researcher sought this information so as to relate HRD practice of training on effective implementation and management of changes. It was established from the study that on faster implementation of change 40% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 10% neutral, 10% disagreed 0% strongly disagreed. On less resistance to change 30% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, 5% neutral, 10% disagreed 5% strongly disagreed. On less errors in change implementation, 50% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 5% neutral, 10% disagreed 5% strongly disagreed. On less fraud, 30% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 10% neutral, 20% disagreed 10% strongly disagreed. This is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Contribution of HRD Practice of Training on Employees on Change Management

Contribution of HRD practice of training	SA		A		N		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Faster implementation of change	24	40	24	40	6	10	6	10	0	0
Less resistance to change	18	30	30	50	3	5	6	10	3	5
Less errors in change implementation	30	50	18	30	3	5	6	10	3	5
Less fraud in change implementation	18	30	18	30	6	10	12	20	6	10

It is apparent from the above findings that majority of the respondents identified the contribution of HRDs practice of training on change management as faster implementation of change and less errors in change management The study showed that HRD practice of recruitment contributes to change management through fast implementation of change, less errors in change implementation and less fraud in change implementation. This is shown from the findings where 70% identified fast implementation, 70% less resistance to change, 90% less errors and 65% less fraud. This is supported by Hyde [7] who has identified the positive effects of HRD as recruitment of employees. HRD role of recruitment will contribute to sourcing and employment of efficient staff which will be able to conceptualize issues related to change management and as a result change management will be effectively implemented. Findings also identified the contribution of HRDs practice of training on change management as faster implementation of change and fewer errors in change management. The results showed that 80% were in agreement that there was fast implementation of change, 80% less resistance, 80% less errors and 60% less fraud. This finding is in line with Handy [9] who has postulated that human resource training is particularly important with respect to selecting, interviewing and hiring new employees. People who work in human resources must be able to find the right candidates for a wide spectrum of job openings (ibid).

IV.   Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the above findings and discussion, this paper concludes that much of the change in Telkom Kenya has occurred in policy changes, new technology and job description, restructuring of policies and functional systems, branding and re-branding of products, venturing into new market areas, change in technology and organizational culture. The common HR practice used in Telkom Kenya includes recruitment practice and training practice. These are the core HRD practices which provide a base for employees to conceptualize and embrace issues of change management. They must therefore be effectively managed with clear polices to enable management of change.The HR practices that are performed by the HRD in managing change include helping in getting the changes implemented, understanding change management, obtaining resources and information, diagnosing the problems of managing change, helping employees to see and embrace change, enlisting people to participate in the change process, and training programs.

This paper has thus demonstrated that the HR practice of recruitment contributes to change management through fast implementation of change, less errors in change implementation and less fraud in change implementation. This implies that when sourcing and employment of the right personnel is done, it will be easy to manage change using the personnel recruited. This calls for every organization to manage the recruitment process well so as to enhance effective change management. It has also been demonstrated that the contribution of HRD's practice of training on change management is faster implementation of change and less

error in change management. This implies that HRD's practice of training enable employees to be trained on strategies of implementing change and avoiding errors and wastage of resources during change implementation.

4.2 Recommendations

The researcher therefore recommends the following to be adopted to assist effective management of change. First, the HRD should be facilitated to ensure that the recruitment process is effective. This would entail provision of resources and adequate staff to enable the HRD carry out the recruitment exercise in a manner that adds value to the organization. Second, this paper points to the need for training employees to embrace management change and provide effective communication on its effects. Training programs should thus be designed in such a way to enhance conceptualization of change issues.

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