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Strategic Changein Organizations: A Literature Review

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Abstract
Organizations are facing rapid changes in technology, changing social trends, diversity in the workforce, political changes, globalization, and changes in stakeholders' needs and preferences. To sustain in a turbulent environment, businesses have to move and change themselves at the same pace at which their surroundings are changing. But the achievement of desired change is directly linked to people and 'Strategic Change' helps to manage this people's side of change effectively so that the business side of change is achieved. This paper explores how to manage people during an organizational change and focuses on promoting readiness to change and reducing resistance to change amongst their employees. As a conceptual business framework for an organization, change management increases the success of critical projects and improves a company's ability to adapt quickly.
Keywords: *Organizational Change, Strategic Change, Change Management, Resistance to Change*

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I. Introduction

"Nothing endures but change. The only thing that is constant in this universe is CHANGE."
(Heraclitus)

Businesses, economies,and nations are constantly transforming themselves through both technological and non-technological innovations and organizations have to compete in this rapidly changing world. Globalization, increasing cultural diversity in the workforce, demographic changes, shifting social trends, fast technological advancements, economic drifts, and unforeseen happenings across the globe has made the events and their aftermaths more unpredictable and uncertain.

Understanding 'Strategic Change' helps managers deal with such uncertainties efficiently and facilitate organizational changes (according to their environment) in a planned and structured way (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008). Moreover, in India percentage of youth (18-23 age group) is continuously rising; by 2030, India will be amongst the youngest nations in the world with nearly 140 million people in the 18-23 age group accounting for 10% of the total population (FICCI report, 2014). These people are upcoming entrepreneurs, managers, business tycoons,and researchers of tomorrow, so understanding 'Strategic Change' will prepare businessesto fight against this external worldwide turbulence proficiently.Burke (2011) recognizes it as the most difficult attribute of organizational change because the change in organizational culture means a "change in the way we do things".Organizational members have to discard old work habits and learn new ones (Bridges, 1991).

II. Literature Review

Numerous studies and research work has been done in past decades to understand the wide dimensions of CHANGE and various models have been proposed to smoothen the change strategically in a system. But demand for more and more the philosophies and models on 'CHANGE' will always be on the upper side as managers endlessly strive for the master key to a 'perfect' change (Paton and McCalman, 2008)Change simply means to make things different (Robbinset al., 2013). Literature portrays Organizational change as a process of movement from the present state to a (potentially desired) future state(Lewin, 1951; Buchanan and McCalman, 1989; Burke, 2011; Bridges, 2009; Dawson and Andriopoulus, 2014).While for Paton and McCalman(2008)change is like a journey and managing change is about handling the complexities of travel; Burke(2011) views it as turning an organization in another direction and modifying the ways things are executed. Quoting Burke (2011):

"*By 'change significantly' I mean…to fundamentally modify the "way we do things", to overhaul the structure- the design of organization for decision making and accountability and to provide organizational members with a whole new vision for the future.*"

Organizational Change (including time to time realignment and maintenance of business processes) is necessary to improve the quality of output and develop a competitive edge in any industry (Bevington and Samson, 2012). Strategic change means facilitating the change carefully and in a planned and structured way (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008).

Change in any organization has broadly two facets: The business side of change and the People side of change. Organizational changes as described above by various authors have focused primarily on the business aspect of change. It includes a structural change of organization, setting up of a new vision for tomorrow, changes in organizational processes, changes in tools and techniques, changes in technology used in production as well as services, corporate restructuring, mergers, expansion, divestments, launching of new or improvised product and so on. But considering the realization of change, the achievement of desired outcomes is directly linked to peoplethe hardware part of change like new technologies, new organizational structures, corporate restructuring, etc. are not exactly the change enablers, more specifically these are essential building blocks (Hiatt et al. 2012). Thus, change is successful only when organizational employees have accepted the change and favorably adapt to new skills and new job roles. Bridges (1991), Prosci(2012), Hiatt and Creasey(2012), and Kotter and Schlesinger(2008), Bareil(2004) have exquisitelyexplained the importance of thesepeople's side of change, which author has also named the 'software' part of the change.William Bridges (1991)has differentiated 'change' and 'transition'. He argues that change is a phenomenon that happens to people even if they don't agree with it, while the transition is something that happens internally in people's minds when they change. Change is situational and can happen quickly, but the transitionis psychological and thus, is a slow process. Bridges' (1991) transition model is a three-stage scheme, with the first stage as 'ending' or letting go of the past which means organizational employees have to discard old ways of working and adopt new work habits. Singh and Bhandarkar (2016) also propound this ending stage as "*creative destruction for transformation*". They strongly argue that for growth and advancement one has to supplement the old habits with newer approaches because unless creative destruction takes place there is no scope for change (Singh et al., 2016).The second stage is a neutral zone where anxiety rises and motivation falls. People are overloaded with mixed signals and confusion is high. Change the manager's key role here is to minimize the denial, shock,and frustration amongst employees by holding regular team meetings and clearing their doubts. Empathy, communication,and participation; the Kirkpatrick's 3 elements to manage change are very effective here (Kirkpatrick, 1985; 2001). And finally, the 3rd stage of the bridge's transition model is the new beginning, filled with acceptance, hope,and enthusiasm when the desired new state has been achieved.

Hiatt and Creasey (2012) put forwardthe resistance to change from employees as a '*norm' not an 'exception'* and further state that failing to lead the people's side of change results in a poorer capability to move ahead towards change (Hiatt et al., 2012). On the other hand, when change management is well-executed, people feel engaged in the change process and work collectively towards a common goal, substantiating benefits and delivering outcomes(Prosci, 1985; 2012).

III. Objective of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1.1 To explore and understandthe concept of strategic change in organizations.
1.2 To analyze the problems in implementing strategic change in organizations.
1.3 To analyze the benefits of understanding strategic change for organizations.

IV. Research Methodology

This study is exploratory based on an extensive literature review on strategic change in organizations.

V. Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Overlapping stages of different models on organizational change

Lewin(1951)-**3 STEP** MODEL	Buchanan and McCalman (1989)-**4 STEP** MODEL	Kotter (1996)-**8 STEP** MODEL
UNFREEZING	TRIGGER LAYER VISION LAYER	1. CREATING A SENSE OF URGENCY 2. FORMING A COALITION 3.CREATING VISION
MOVEMENT	CONVERSION LAYER	4. COMMUNICATING VISION 5.EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES 6. CREATE REWARD SYSTEM 7. CONSOLIDATING IMPROVEMENT AND REASSESS CHANGE
REFREEZING	MAINTAINENCE AND RENEWAL LAYER	8. REINFORCING THE CHANGE

Source: Author(Compiled from literature review)

Buchanan and McCalman(1989) have proposed a four-layered interlocking transition management model of change: Trigger layer; Vision layer; Conversion layer and finally Maintenance and renewal layer. Kurt Lewin(1951) has mapped this basic change process into athree-stepmodel: unfreezing the status quo; then moving to the desired future state,and finally refreezingthe newly achieved state. Does that mean the change process revolves around creating instability and stability? Lewin has (very artistically) simplified the most complicated and multifariouschange process, whichat a glance it looks like a simple task. First, the change agent has to make the existing old state unstable(*Trigger and Vision layer*: Buchanan and McCalman, 1989; *Unfreezing the status quo*: Lewin,1951) by creating a sense of urgency to change (Kotter, 1996); increasing the driving forces and decreasing the restraining forces (Lewin, 1958) of change. Once attained the new situation is desired, the change agent has to work on stabilizing it (*Maintenance and renewal layer*: Buchanan and McCalman, 1989; *Refreezing stage*: Lewin, 1951; *8th Step-Reinforcing the change*: Kotter, 1996). But the real picture isn't that simple and linearbecause the change process does not alwaysprogress as planned (Burke, 2011; Lawler, 1986; Paton and McCalman,2008). Burke (2011) denotes it as the "*Paradox of Planned Organizational Change*". He admits that planning for change is *linear* according to specified phases of change more or less like John Kotter's 8 step plan for implementing change (Kotter, 1996; 2012): Creating a sense of urgency to change; forming a coalition; creating as well as communicating the vision; empowering employees to reduce resistance to change; creating reward system; consolidating improvement and reassess change, and finally reinforcing the change.

The actual execution of the above linear plan is non-linear and often complicated. Warner Burke states that implementation of change does not always go as planned because employees have their thought process about change and may not follow the plan or sudden unexpected behavior of stakeholders-those who were expected to support/resist may behave in just opposite way. Similarly, Lawler (1986) states that it is very difficult to execute the overall change in a highly programmed way.Paton and McCalman(2008) echoing Lawler's thoughts emphasize recognizing issues and disturbances that keep impeding the change process from being moved as per the plan.Many Organizations are unsuccessful because they see change as a well-programmed process confined toa few steps and fail to address the potential implications of change scenario (Paton and McCalman, 2008) that keep diverting the change from its path throughout its execution.

All Changes at all times are not identical (*Heterogeneous face of change*)

Change can be classified depending upon the type and intensity of change triggers and its scope and complexity (Ackerman, 1986; Burke, 2011; Bhattacharyya, 2014). Change can be 'Planned' or 'Unplanned/ Emergent' or'Revolutionary' vs 'Evolutionary' (Burke, 2011; Bhattacharyya, 2014). While unplanned change has to be carried 'out of a sudden'due to unexpected slue in the internal or external environment. Such unexpected changes may be on the ground of anynew tax implications/ new competitor's arrival/ natural calamity/ sudden takeover/ union strike/ latest technological change etc.

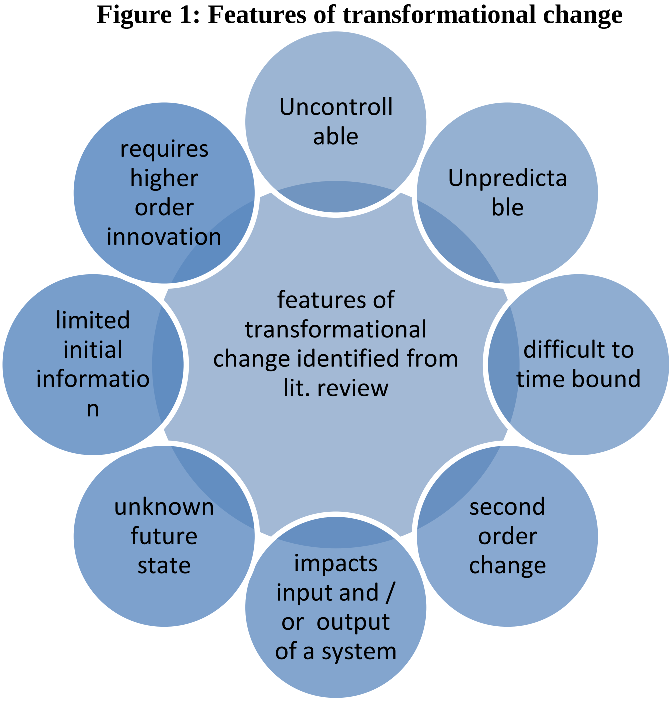
Planned organizational change is usually on large scale affecting the entire system and is not a routine activity (Burke, 2011). Such changes are backed by a solid motive behind; that may vary from simple cost reduction to creativity and innovation. But Burke (2011) questions the successfulness of large-scale fundamental organizational change because of many reasons: changing organizational culture may not be an easy task; when an organization is working already well, what to change, andthe improper knowledge of change implementation. Moreover, in his view,most of the changes in any organization are unplanned and gradual.

Based on swiftness, change can be revolutionary or evolutionary.Revolutionary (also termed 'episodic') changes are occasional and are deliberately designed for a particular purpose (Bhattacharyya, 2014). Burke (2011) recognizes it as any significant overhaulin leadership/culture/strategy of an organization that may also be for a newly revised mission.Ackerman (1986) has characterized three types of organizational change – developmental, transitional, and transformational. Developmental organizational change is an incremental type and is a first-order change with the least complexity. While Van Tonder (2004) explains it as simply improvement in an existing setting; Bhattacharyya (2014) recognizes it for process and skill up gradation. Moving up to the category of a second-orderchange or type II (Van Tonder, 2004), comes transitional and transformational change. While first-order change limits itself to up gradation in the existingprocess, second-order change is a complete departure from the existing system and reliance on the new system (Conrick, 2006). Transitional change is planned, controllable, and aims to achieve a new and known desired state in a time period but in its opposite; transformational organizationalchange is most complex, uncontrollable, and unpredictable as it tries to achieve a new state that is unknown and thus it's difficult to time-bound it too (Ackerman, 1986; Bhattacharyya 2014; Van Tonder, 2004).Transformational change is radical, demanding higher-order innovation (Conrick, 2006) and thus requires a shift in the assumptions made by the organization and its members. Since the desired state is unknown, change facilitators have limited initial information which makes it more difficult to manage (Conrick, 2006).

Ackerman has expressed this peculiarity of transformational change in one line (1986, pg. 7):

"*Transformational change is akin to letting go of one trapeze in mid-air before a new one swings into view."*

Figure 1: Features of transformational change



Source: Author(Compiled from literature review)

Legion dynamics that compel an organization to change must be well-known to upcoming managers(Forces of Change)

The forces that act as stimulants to change are the driving forces of change (Robbins 2007).But what are these entities and events that force an industry or organization towards change?Many studies (Robbins et al., 2013; Pettigrew, 1985; Paton et al., 2008; Dawson et al., 2014;Nilakant et al., 2009;Burke, 2011) have mentioned such change triggersasglobalization, nature of the workforce, technology, competition, social trends, world politics and economic issues, government and legislation, industry and business cycles, etc.

Pettigrew (1985) states that both external and internal factors are responsible for the change in an organization and managers need to keep a bird's eye view on these business and economic events as a signal for change.While Hughes (2010) has formed code PESTLE to discover external forces of change, Dawson and Andriopoulus (2014) have proposed the code PACT to describe internal change triggers.

Globalization has interconnected markets, nations and an economy thus happening in another part of the world potentially impactsthe national business (Nilakant et al., 2006). Changing customer taste and expectations, changes in the supply chain or distribution change, intensifying competition threat, increasing cultural diversity in the workforce, increasing women's participation at work, and changing communication media must not be ignored as internal changes can be very well seen as a response to these external triggers (Paton and McCalman, 2008).

Managing Change successfully is a multi-elementary affair: Strategic change management helps prepare a good recipe for successful change

Good recipes always have a few secret ingredients that intensify their aroma, taste, and texture; similarly,a recipe for a successful change ought to have such inputs. The first dimension for a successful change is to have a crystal clear vision and purposeto transform (Ghoshal et al., 2000; Singh and Bhandarker, 2016; Burke, 2011; Kotter, 1996;2012). Then, education and proper communication of - what the organization is actually planning, why it's essential – to all its members from top to bottom (Kotter, 1996; Kotter et al., 2008; Bridges, 1991;Prosci, 2012;Kirkpartrik, 1985). This further helps in building a good relationship between change initiators and resisting elements present in the system(Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008). Now begins the most difficult and challenging phase of change, after realizing that the organization has finally decided to go through change, employees undergo psychological turbulence filled with frustration, uncertainty, stress, and ambivalence. Employees view this reorganization as a threat because ofrisk in job security, fear of the unknown (what will happen next?), discomfort froma disturbance in status quo due tothe notion of negative impact on current job role, resistance to adopting new skills and technology as they feel they are more comfortable with traditional ways of doing work and view change as unnecessary and time and effort wasting activity, lack of awareness of the need to change, selective information processing (they hear what they want to hear), lack of support from top-level, threat to expertise, threat to established power relationship, organization's past performance with change was not good and so on (Bridges, 2009; Robbins, 2007; Kotter et al., 2008; Kotter, 1996;Bareil, 2004; Lewin, 1952; Hiatt et al., 2012;Prosci, 2012). Due to these reasons, this resistance from employees towards change is pretty obvious.

Change Managers need to reduce this emotional turmoil in employees towards change. Change gurus (Bridges, 1991; 2009; Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979; 2008, Kirkpatrick, 1985; 2001, Prosci, 1985; 2012) have time to time prescribed different methods to reduce employee's resistance toward change, and many studies ahead have appreciated, elaborated, and further refined these ways of reducing resistance to change (Bareil, 2004;Ghoshal et al., 2000; Singh et al., 2016; Robbins, 2007; Burke, 2011; Hiatt et al., 2012; Dawson et al., 2014). Communicate benefits to employees and show them their brighter future with the implementation of this change. Motivation increases the dynamism and passion in teamworktoward goal achievement (Singh and Bhandarkar, 2016). Employee empowerment again helps in boosting employee morale, significantly reducing resistance as individuals feel they are important tothe organization, and facilitating change is their responsibility. This empowerment comes along with accountability, participation,and involvement(Kirkpatrick, 1985; Kotter et al., 2008; Kotter,1996; Bridges, 2009). Soft skills or interpersonal skills play a much more vital role than technical skills when it comes to managing people. Thus, People connect, and engagementfacilitates re-gaining the once lost trust of employees.

Shaping talent and building leaders (Singh et al., 2016) has also been identified as a characteristic of a change master as it boosts faith and trust in employees for change leaders and they work enthusiastically towards change because they are assured that learning new skills for this change has a brighter tomorrow for themselves.These key techniques help change facilitators make employees enthusiastic, accept the change and ensure that they work forward passionately towards the achievement of the desired new state.

Due to rapid changes and rising uncertainties in worldwide happenings, managers need to be proactive towards change and must develop suitable capabilities and expertise to become change leaders not the victims of change (Dawson et al., 2014; Paton, 2008). The proactive approach helps managers identify and explore the opportunities well in advance.Ghoshal, Piramal,and Bartlett (2000) emphasize the need to follow a radical approach to change. The change agent must radically respond to changing economic, and competitive situations and changing consumer demography. Considering consumers'tastes, needs, aspirations,and expectations are inevitable to sustain in a competitive world as today's consumers are very smart and their tastes and preferences keep on changing (Ghoshal et al., 2000;Singh and Bhandarkar, 2016). To obtain customer delight and retain them, frequent innovation in the product is very essential. In addition to moving ahead in the competition, innovation brings variety, and spice and positionsatailored product (Ghoshal et al., 2000). When customers are over satisfied, change implemented is automatic a success.

Once the change has been implemented, reinforcing it helps in making the change permanent till the new one appears. This is done by a reward system or contribution-centric meritocracy (Bridges, 2009; Kotter, 1996; Kotter et al., 2008;Prosci, 2012). Identify and acknowledge the champions, and ensure prizes and incentives for those who have contributed to change. Also, reward and celebrate the short-term wins that move the organization towards change (Kotter, 1996; 2012). Groups and employees react differently to change, some passively resist change, some aggressively, and some seriously undermine and oppose it (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008). So, different techniques need to be used to tackle different levels of resistance. Simple passive resistance can be removed by keys mentioned above like education, communication, participation, empowerment, people connection and engagement, and fair negotiation. But many times, things are not that simple. There are few anti-organizational elements that heavily resist change, for their manipulation, co-optation,and even coercion can also be used (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008). Manipulation and co-optation include twisting the facts to make them look attractive, withholding facts, and creating false rumors to convince employees to accept change. Coercion even includes the application of direct threat on resistors, the threat of transfer, loss of promotion, negative performance evaluation, and poor letter of recommendation.(Robbins et al., 2007).

VI. Conclusion

Strategic change is a time to time process to manage the people side of change so that the business side of change is achieved. This process seems very simple, linear, and to move in planned steps but things do not proceed as planned because of people’s resistance to change, their reactions may be unpredictable, and also due to unanticipated consequences in the middle of execution. Moreover, huge costs and risksare associated with a change in an organization as if the poorly managed organization can crash in days. So, as a conceptual business framework for an organization, change management increases the success of critical projects and improves a company’s ability to adapt quickly. It further facilitates improved documentation of large enterprises. Upcoming managers and entrepreneurs must be well acknowledged intheir know-how of change and can manage it effectively against uncertainties and unpredictability of the universe robustly.

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