

Running Head: CHANGE LEADERSHIP

From Change Management to Change Leadership: A strategic perspective of inspiration

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The Context of Discontinuous Change

The organizational change has become the norm for many people in all types of organizations (Drucker, 1995; Kotter, 1996; Reinhard, 2007; Williams, 2003). As early as the mid-1990's, theories have commented on the unprecedented amount of change that is often traumatic in a global economy (e.g., Drucker, 1995; Kotter, 1996). Today, the massive changes in large and complex organizations are more frequent than ever. With many Fortune 100 companies looking to reinvent themselves in order to maintain a competitive advantage, the challenge of discontinuous change rests upon the shoulders of organizational leaders and the I/O psychologists that influence these leaders (Block, 2000; Landy & Conte, 2004; Leonard, 2002; Reinhard, 2007; Williams, 2003). Especially with globalization, many organizations such as Sun Microsystems and Conoco Phillips employ people from numerous ethnic and cultural foundations. This diverse workforce further complicates organizational change issues (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Reinhard, 2007). In addition, the increase of technological advances further challenges people at all levels of organizations. Especially with organizations' hierarchical decisions on technology infrastructure, the level of stress adopting new technologies further complicate the employees' perception of numerous organizational changes (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998). These environmental forces drive organizational change to be discontinuous, traumatic and constantly increasing (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Reinhard, 2007; Williams, 2003). The complexity of people, technology and global competitive forces provide ample room for further study and consultation for I/O psychologists (Landy & Conte, 2004).

Unfortunately, the amount of research within large and complex organizational change environments is limited (Else, 2004). Reinhard (2007) believes that the sense of secrecy concerning what leaders perceive within this environment keeps them safe. Whether it's loyalty to the organization or fear of retaliation from other executives, most of what happens within organizational change is unknown to the public. This can also be an issue of awareness. Many leaders may not be aware of the cultural values and beliefs that drive their decisions (Aycaan et al., 2000; Clawson, 2006). For some leaders, beliefs about power distance and community drive decisions and behaviors to be hierarchical (Aycaan et al., 2000). Such implicit beliefs may drive significant stress for organizational members during times of change (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998). These implicit drivers of decisions and behaviors within organizational leaders are one workplace for I/O psychologists (Landy & Conte, 2004; Leonard, 2002).

Conventional Wisdom of Change Management

Significant amount of theories and models exist for change management from various authors (e.g., Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1974; Moss-Kanter, 1977). While looking at the role of I/O psychologists within the context of discontinuous change in organizations, a fundamental context that limits thought is the prison of change management. Building organizational change models on the principles of management in the knowledge economy is a challenge on a fundamental level (Drucker, 1968, 1993; Jacques, 1996; Senge, 1990). The principles of management grew from the industrial revolution with concepts like Taylor's scientific principles of management. During this period, the lack of organizational management theories drove theorists to model management principles from the military. For the industrial revolution, labor was the primary resource. While the mechanistic principles were effective for labor resource, it does not meet the needs of a knowledge economy (Clawson, 2006; Jacques, 1996; Morgan, 2006). For example,

change management makes an assumption that managers can specify behaviors related to change. With this simple approach, those engaged in these behaviors will receive positive consequences (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell & Liu, 2008). Such an assumption falls on the premise of behaviorism; it assumes that people will simply follow a specified set of behaviors based on perceived consequences. This perspective does not recognize the cognitive aspect of humanity (Clawson, 2006; Ormrod, 2006; Sun, 2006). Before individuals change their behaviors, congruence theory calls for an alignment of values and beliefs for such behaviors (Sun, 2006; Williams, 1993). The knowledge workforce is more complex than the laborer during the industrial revolution (Jacques, 1996; Morgan, 2006). Mechanistic principles and behaviorist approaches from management further complicate and increase workplace stress, especially during organizational change (Clawson, 2006; DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Jacques, 1996).

Another major challenge is the reductionist approach to studying organizational change, especially when the changes are often drastic (Reinhard, 2007). While organizational change is complex, many studies attempt to separate leaders from their organizational environment (e.g., Collins, 2001b). Collins (2001a, 2001b) discussed the personality traits of humility and self-awareness for effective leadership. His research found many specific traits and behaviors of past effective leaders in challenging times such as confronting the real facts and not blaming people for mistakes. Howard and Bray (1990) also identified specific traits that creates success such as poise, ability to take action on impulse, a positive attitude and ambition. While many more studies continue to focus on traits of leaders, Stogdill's (1948) studies debunked trait theory. He concluded that there are many other factors besides traits that predict effective leadership. Other factors like a situational context are also crucial to effective leadership (Bass, 1990). Schein (1992, 1999) also felt that leaders and organizational cultures cannot be separated when studying

organizational effectiveness. Within the organizational environment, many levels of culture need attention in addition to the traits and behaviors of leaders. Change management's common practice of separating people, processes and environments miss the connected nature of organizational change.

A final limitation within the mental prison of change management is the change theories. For example, many strategies for working with, creating and implementing change call on Lewin's (1947) three step change model: *unfreeze*, make the change and *refreeze*. While the model provides a simple guideline, the last step of refreeze or institutionalize the changes goes against the need for constant adaptation and learning within a fast changing environment (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Senge, 1990). Especially with discontinuous and traumatic changes, the last step builds resistance for the next change. While the conventional wisdom of Lewin functioned well before the knowledge economy, the current environment requires organizations to be learning organisms. Since knowledge is never frozen, organizational change is a reflection of the constant learning process for new knowledge (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Gogus, 2003; Jacques, 1996).

Within the context of discontinuous change, change management has many limitations. One powerful role that I/O psychologists can play is to move beyond this conventional wisdom and into a synthesis of change leadership (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell & Liu, 2008; Reinhard, 2007) and learning organizations (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Senge, 1990).

A New Paradigm of Leading Change

A crucial aspect of strategic thinking necessitates the critical assessment of conventional wisdoms. Merely accepting change management and creating a strategy within this paradigm of thought could be an oxymoron. The focus of strategic thought for the next five years is aligned with leading change or change leadership, rather than managing change or change management

which can be rather reactive. According to Herold, Fedor, Caldwell and Liu (2008), change leadership keeps a focus on the vision for the change. It has many parallel elements that directly relate to transformational leadership. Rather than focus on desired behaviors, leaders take on an inspirational role and place focus on the end without forcing the means onto their followers. Reinhard (2007) adds the common notion of sustainability to this paradigm. Within change leadership, leaders instill a sense of purpose that authentically engages people in the process so that organizations achieve sustainable success.

Another critical aspect of change leadership relates directly with the role that I/O psychologists play within the field of business. To have a significant impact for the world, an entrepreneurial mentality enables I/O psychologists to penetrate conventional wisdom. One key aspect of the entrepreneurial mind is creativity (Sun, 2007). Within the mechanistic principles of management, it included strategic activities of coordination, command, and control (Morgan, 2006). Creativity is not one of the drivers. Within leadership, the competitive marketplace of today's global economy demands creativity (Frese, Brantjes & Hoorn, 2002) Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Paulus, 2000). Especially working within the common team-based organizations, creativity is a primary competence required for sustainable success (Paulus, 2000). Thinking as an entrepreneur challenges I/O psychologists to debunk existing paradigms that perpetuate organizational challenges in their designs. For example, many theorists use the concept of thinking outside the box (e.g., McLean, 2007; Skinner & Drake, 2003). One study focused on the comparison of adopters who conformed to explicit rules within a paradigm and innovators who preferred freedom of thought without structure. While the study looked at the difference in motivation, it did not address how one develops the cognitive style to be innovators nor did it define what it means to think outside the box (Skinner & Drake, 2003). A simple

question might ask – why does thought have to be in a box in the first place? If one is outside one box, are they only placing thought into a larger box that may have different and new limitations? With the given context of a box, researchers do not have to accept the context as a fixed container. As I/O psychologists take on the various roles to lead organizational change, creative thought would challenge many existing paradigms in organizations that limit people's potentials (e.g., people as interchangeable parts and hierarchical structures). The abundance of management principles embedded in leaders' belief systems is a starting place for I/O psychologists to have a profound impact (Clawson, 2006; Jacques, 1996; Morgan, 2006). I/O psychologists are poised to make intrinsic shifts in thought towards congruence (Sun, 2006; Williams, 1993), while shifting organizational systems external to leaders is also a natural outcome of change leadership (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell & Liu, 2008; Landy & Conte, 2004; Reinhard, 2007).

Role of I/O psychologists

Within the paradigm of change leadership, I/O psychologists play a number of roles. A common role is a consultant (Block, 2000; Landy & Conte, 2004). As consultants, I/O psychologists assist organizational leaders with challenges at the individual, group and organizational level (Leonard, 2002). Another role for I/O psychologists is the role of a coach. The field of coaching for executives has seen a tremendous growth. Unfortunately, it is an unregulated field with many players from business to psychology (Brotman, Liberi & Wasylshyn, 1998). A contextual role that I/O psychologists are poised for is a systemic thinker. This is not a traditional title like the other two. Instead, it is a way of thought and being that transcends a content-driven world that contains human behaviors within a category. This role is about seeking understanding of the various systems within organizations and their

interconnectedness that is often ignored within problem-based approaches (Checkland, 1999). Within the roles of a consultant, a coach and a systemic thinker, I/O psychologists can perform many functions. Each role sees the organization differently. The consultant may provide a change focused on a problem; the coach may focus on individuals' learning and development as the change; the systemic thinker enables leaders with a realization of the change complexity (Block, 2000; Brotman, Liberi & Wasylyshyn, 1998; Checkland, 1999; Leonard, 2002).

As Consultants

Being independent consultants requires thought as an entrepreneur. The major dilemma faced by consultants includes immense responsibility for one's success and future (Ardichvili, 2000). This is the largest mental challenge facing many entrepreneurs. They have to balance personal survival and leading change with clients. The consultant's ability to obtain clients and be successful with a client's project makes or breaks the business. As a consultant, many talents including the ability to market/partner and be flexible with the changing environment are requirements for success. Independent consultants may face significant internal change in addition to those experienced by client. As a result, they need to practice what they preach and apply changes theories internally first within their own organizations, not merely apply them externally (O'Roark, 1999; Sun, 2007).

On an application perspective towards organizational change, the consultant requires multiple levels of expertise. These levels include the understanding and navigating of individual differences, group dynamics and organizational systems (Clawson, 2006; Leonard, 2002; O'Roark, 2002). According to Block (2002), the impact of a consultant occurs in two arenas. The first is some form of change in the organization like some structural change or policy change. This organizational change will impact all three levels. At the individual level, high competition

and discontinuous change creates additional stress and challenges for organizational members (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Reinhard, 2007). Adding more changes to address existing problems could lead to escalated stress with added responsibilities and changes in daily habits. Often, the individual stress extends into one's family and personal life (Brotheridge & Lee, 2005). At the group level, changes in structure leads to new team dynamics. At the organizational level, a consultant's recommendation could shift the nature of the entire organization from culture to processes. The second arena of change revolves around the transformation of people. One crucial benefit to being an external consultant is an outside and unbiased perspective (Block, 2002). This perspective reveals many implicit norms or systems that go unquestioned by organizational members. Rather than only focusing on the content of an organizational challenge, the outcome of seeing the contextual system at work can dramatically shift leaders' thinking around the contexts that lead toward many problems (Checkland, 1999; Senge, 1990). For example, an executive team may have certain attitudes or norms that limit growth. The I/O psychologist would help the executive identify and clean up these barriers to success (Block, 2002; O'Roark, 2002).

A consultant has multiple roles within the two change paradigms. From a change management paradigm, the consultant's functions would focus on changing behaviors and working to resolve problems (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell & Liu, 2008). From the change leadership paradigm, clients begin to see the system surrounding problems and creating further understanding at all three levels (Clawson, 2006; Leonard, 2002; O'Roark, 2002). Through these developments, a focus on change leadership enables individuals to see a clear vision, empowers groups to enhance team interactions and successfully achieve goals and shifts organizational systems to be both efficient and effective (O'Roark, 2002). Moving towards a change leadership

paradigm is a significant competitive advantage for I/O psychologists with a field with countless consultants (Leonard, 2002).

As Coaches

I/O psychologists can also play the role of an executive coach during organizational changes. According to O'Roark (2002), being a trusted guide and practitioner may help executives find their way through turbulent times of change. These functions require a mixture of behavioral modifications and mental framework enhancements. One of the foundations of this role is to enhance an executive's self-knowledge. This process is a holistic process that considers all aspects of adult psychological developing, including one's personal experiences from childhood, adulthood and the current situations. It also does not take the reductionist approach that separates work and personal life. Instead, the coach encompasses both aspects of life into the process of coaching (Axelrod, 2005). As the organizational changes occur surrounding the executives, their adult psychological development creates the perceptions to these external events. The increased competition and political delicacy may cause executives to be in denial, fall into disequilibrium and become disengaged (Reinhard, 2007). As coaches, I/O psychologists provide stability and guidance to these executives. Guiding their development with strategic skills like reflective thought, openness to different views, strategic thinking and focus, I/O psychology coaches support the individual needs through a conscious development process (Axelrod, 2005).

As Systemic Thinkers

The first two roles address the problematic changes in organizations and the individuals that lead these changes. The role of a systemic thinker goes beyond the content of the problem and the people involved. A systemic thinker combines the many elements of an organization and seeks understanding of the system through its interconnectedness (Checkland, 1999). The

foundation of systems thinking is a core competence of I/O psychologists (Leonard, 2002). Rather than trying to find solutions to a problem, systems thinkers seek understanding of the system. They guide organizational leaders towards a layout of the influences from various systems upon each other in systems diagrams (Checkland, 1999; Senge, 1990). In the midst of organizational change, a high level of awareness on the system with an organization helps leaders move away from blame. For example, the industry of telecommunications is one of the most technologically driven industries in the world. Applying new strategies to create a customer-driven system, Wrighton (2008) clearly pointed out the existing system that would prohibit the implementation of new strategies. Upon further analysis, the system of command and control principles from the industrial revolution lead to obvious problems like customer turnover. As systemic thinkers, I/O psychologists can help leaders understand the complexity of existing system. They can connect the dots between institutionalized management principles and the problems it naturally creates, regardless of the people involved (Jacques, 1996; Morgan, 2006). Senge (1990) also supported this notion. He theorized that different people operating within the same system tend to create similar outcomes. Rather than blaming individuals working in the system, leaders can focus on understanding the systems that cause the problems. As a result, organizations facing change no longer waste valuable resources band aiding problems in a system with design flaws that perpetuates future problems. Systems thinkers empower organizational leaders to first understand the system and then take wise action especially during times of change. This moves organizations into a proactive mode of minimizing future problems and leading change, rather than reacting to problems that an existing system created (Checkland, 1999; Senge, 1990; Sun, 2007; Wrighton, 2008). I/O psychologists

playing the role of systems thinkers can help organizations realize a new way of life at all levels and achieve sustainable success.

Strategic Perspective on Change Leadership

A five-year perspective on change leadership calls for creation of a learning cycle. Since the speed and intensity of change continues to increase, the strategic perspective involves a process that encompasses systems thinking (Checkland, 1999), leadership theories (Bass, 1990) and learning organizations (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Senge, 1990; Sun, 2007). This strategic cycle provides a context for leading organizational change. Rather than a focus on outcomes alone within the paradigm of change management, the context balances the need for performance as well as the need for learning (Seijts & Latham, 2005). The strategy is titled Systemic Learning Cycle for Change Leadership (SLCCL). The whole systems approach is a collection of processes and concepts that seek to enable the collective wisdom of the organization (Block, 2000; Checkland, 1999; Sun, 2007). The strategy has seven phases that create a cycle of learning.

Phase I: Identifying Stakeholders

The first step of organizational change is to clearly identify the stakeholders. In traditional management principle, lower level employees do not contribute with their ideas. Only top level management creates and drives changes (Jacques, 1996; Morgan, 2006). This hierarchical system naturally creates significant resistance to change. Very few people enjoy being told what to do, especially when it involves their basic daily work routines (Long & Spurlock, 2008). This phase of SLCCL invites people who would have a stake in the organizational changes. It may include stakeholders at all levels from the executives to the front line employees. Involving stakeholders at multiple levels of the organization can provide a catalyst for authentic and powerful organizational changes (Cook, Holley & Andrew, 2007).

Phase II: Establish Common Ground

The common ground of values and beliefs set the stage for future behaviors and decisions (Clawson, 2006; Sun, 2006). Using the various stakeholder groups, this phase sets out to seek understanding of the core values and beliefs in various groups. The process treats people as individuals while minimizing hierarchies. Many psychology theorists proposed the importance of understanding the system of values and beliefs that drive behaviors (Aycan et al., 2000; Clawson, 2006; O'Roark, 2002; Williams, 1993). Creating a comprehensive set of values and beliefs as a common ground guides future behaviors and decisions in the change process. It establishes a context of thought that builds mutual respect (Sun, 2006).

Phase III: Creating Interest

The third phase is the final step of establishing a solid foundation to build change. A foundation of trust and respect creates a responsive and sustainable change process (Downe, McKeown, Johnson, Koloczek, Grunwald & Malihi-Shoja, 2007). To initiate any form of change, individuals involved cannot be afraid of failure. During this phase, stakeholders transform their thinking towards a balance between performance outcomes and learning processes. A focus on learning processes helps people engage authentically, without fear of consequences for failure (Seijts & Latham, 2005). This authentic engagement fuels the change process with passion. As discontinuous and turbulent changes impact individuals and organization, the shared focus on collective learning becomes the focus of change processes (Cook, Holley & Andrew, 2007; Reinhard, 2007; Williams, 2003).

Phase IV: Change Creation

The creation of the change does not come from the top or the bottom. This phase of SLCCCL eliminates the hierarchical system that naturally causes organizational dissonance (Jacques,

1996; Morgan, 2006; Williams, 1993; Wrighton, 2008). Using technology as a medium, all stakeholders enter their thoughts as individuals in the system. When their ideas appear to the group, they appear as a unique identifier or some alias within a knowledge management system. This provides anonymity while maintaining accountability for great ideas. A simple question or situational statement initiates the transfer of tacit ideas into explicit forms (Mathew & Kavitha; 2008; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Sun, 2007). In addition, the specific measurements for outcomes and learning processes will also accompany the ideas to establish an accountability structure to each idea (Seijts & Latham, 2005).

Phase V: Synthesizing Collective Wisdom

Now that the knowledge management system captured the various individual change ideas, the challenging aspect of the cycle rests on a team of individuals to synthesize the collective wisdom (Sun, 2007). This can also be a participative process where individuals engage with each others' ideas to further solidify a set of plans for action. Mathew and Kavitha (2008) phrase this as the knowledge identification stage. Guidelines that lead towards change decisions include resources considerations such as costs and time. All activities and dialog occur in an open forum where all stakeholders see the ideas and quantification of value on each idea. This further builds trust, which is a crucial organizational context for change (Jones, 2001).

Phase VI: Implementation

Building off the involvement from the beginning of the process, all stakeholders have a foundation of trust and respect in the change process. The implementation of the decisions from phase V will have very limited resistance (Cook, Holley & Andrew, 2007; Long & Spurlock, 2008). A simple plan of action will guide participants' involvement.

Phase VII: Evaluation and the Learning Spiral

The final phase of SLCCCL cycles the process back into phase IV to establish the learning spiral. The data from the outcome and learning measurements established in phase IV provides further knowledge for organizational change. Feeding the information back into the knowledge management system captures lessons from the organizational change (Mathew & Kavitha; 2008; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Within this entire process of SLCCCL, the roles of the I/O psychologist encompass the consultant, the coach and the systemic thinker. The consultant helps the organization identify the problems (Block, 2002; O'Roark, 2002); the coach guides executives through the creation of the system and helps them align leadership beliefs and values to processes and policies (Clawson, 2006; Sun, 2006); the systemic thinker designs and walks the organization through a new system of organizational change and learning (Block, 2000; Brotman, Liberi & Wasylyshyn, 1998; Checkland, 1999; Leonard, 2002; Senge, 1990).

Conclusion

As the world of business continues to increase its pace of change, I/O psychologists play a crucial part of helping leaders (Block, 2000; O'Roark, 2002; Reinhard, 2007). At the individual level, they help leaders develop key skills to lead, and management change in both personal and professional lives (Axelrod, 2005; O'Roark, 2002). At the group level, I/O psychologists establish healthy group dynamics guided by principles of learning and empowerment (Sun, 2007). At the organizational level, I/O psychologists help leaders design and implement a learning organization that authentically engages its members. Through the application of key theories such as systems thinking, the strategic perspective move organizations from reacting to change towards leading change (Checkland, 1999; Leonard, 2002).

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