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Building Effective Management through Adaptive Change and Continuous Improvement

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In today's increasingly complex and dynamic environment, organizations must demonstrate agility, speed, precision, and a proactive capacity for change to ensure long-term success. The modern organizational model is no longer hierarchical but is instead characterized by networks of alliances and partnerships. Stakeholders now include a broader range of actors beyond shareholders, such as employees, suppliers, customers, local communities, and global partners. This evolving landscape necessitates a shift from reactive management to strategic, forward-looking approaches. **Methods:** This conceptual study explores the role of adaptive change and continuous improvement in building effective management frameworks. It emphasizes the strategic alignment of human resource practices with organizational culture, recruitment processes, and change management principles. Drawing upon literature and case observations, the analysis outlines key strategies for cultivating openness, transparency, mutual trust, and constructive competition within organizations. **Results:** Findings suggest that human resource managers must transition from traditional support roles to become strategic partners capable of anticipating future workforce needs. Effective hiring practices, continuous learning from both successes and failures, and the fostering of a learning organization are shown to significantly enhance performance. Change management emerges as a holistic process requiring careful coordination of goals, stakeholders, and internal capabilities to achieve sustainable transformation. **Conclusion:** To thrive amid complexity, organizations must embrace adaptive change and continuous improvement as integral components of management. Strategic human resource planning, combined with a culture of trust and learning, enables institutions to respond effectively to shifting demands. Coordinated and inclusive change management practices ensure that transformations are not only implemented smoothly but also deliver long-lasting value across all levels of the organization.

Keywords: Change management, Organizational change, Strategic management, Continuous improvement, Benchmarking

1. INTRODUCTION

The corporate world in the new economic environment is experiencing a paradigm shift in management thought where human resources have become the key asset of an organization and strategic human resource management is recognized as an important element to achieve competitive advantage.

Moreover, this era of fierce competition and ever-changing global markets has resulted in a shift in organizational design from command, control and compartmentalization to:

- 1) Smaller companies employing fewer people, with greater emphasis on teamwork.

- 2) Service orientation with a sharper focus on customers.
- 3) A network of specialists- a far cry from the bureaucratic way of functioning and integrated hierarchies.
- 4) Performance-linked pay rather than seniority-based pay.
- 5) A redefined work culture that focuses on constant learning and continuous improvement.

A major impediment to organizational efficiency is lack of proper communication and information flow. One reason for this is compartmentalization i.e., groups of employees working towards different goals with little knowledge of other functions or understanding of the overall goals of the organization. Werther (1996) explains human resource function can play a vital role in redefining the role of the middle management to reduce bureaucracy, building synergies across the organization and networking.

2. CHALLENGES BEFORE THE ORGANIZATION

With the increase in competition, locally or globally, organizations must become more adaptive, resilient, agile and customer-focused to succeed. Within the change in environment, Al-Haddad (2015) suggests the HR professional to evolve to become a strategic partner, an employee sponsor or advocate and a change mentor within the organization. In order to succeed, HR must be a business-driven function with a thorough understanding of the organization's key decisions and policies.

The idea for the research rests on the idea that organization must be dynamic, flexible and resilient in order to be remain in competition in new-era environment. The process begins with the analyses of both internal and external influences by the managers in the organization for the desired state. This diagnosis sets the foundation for the change and aligning the organizational strategy. Effective management requires that leaders articulate the purpose of change in a way that inspires employees and builds commitments with clear defined, realistic and measurable sustainable goals.

Flexibility is essential, as leaders may need to recalibrate strategies in response to emerging challenges. To remain in business, human resource managers need to efficiently handle the following human resource challenges:

2.1 Handling diverse workforce

Dealing with people from different age, gender, and race, ethnicity, educational background, location, income, parental status, marital status, religious beliefs and work experience can be challenging task for HR managers.

Managing people with different set of ideologies, views, lifestyle and psychology can be very risky. Effective communication, adaptability, agility and positive attitude of HR managers can bind the diverse workforce and retain talents in the organization.

2.2 Managing change

Bringing change in organizational process and procedures implementing it and then managing it is one of the biggest concerns of HR managers. Burnes (2011) explains business environment as very volatile. Upgrading technology and training employees lead to handle the change in the process.

2.3 Retaining talents

Globalization has given freedom to have endless lucrative opportunities to work, hiring and retaining the talent. Maintaining harmonious relations with them, providing excellent work environment and offering more remuneration and perks than competitors can retain and motivate them.

2.4 Conflict management

HR managers should know how to handle employee-employer and employee-employee conflicts without hurting their feelings. They should be able to listen to each party, decide and communicate to them in a convincing manner in order to avoid future conflicts.

Once, the challenges are cleared the implementation of adaptive change should be gradual and systematic; focusing open dialogue, coaching and support. Alongside this, continuous improvement ensures the sustainable progress by adopting tools such as Lean management, Kaizen and Six Sigma for enhancing productivity. A culture of learning must be fostered as opportunities for growth. Adaptive changes emphasize adjustments rather than shifts, ensuring modifications with organizational goals and employee's capabilities. It complements by adopting systematic approaches such as Plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle, benchmarking and performance reviews to regularly monitoring outcomes, identifying gaps and implementing refinements. Moreover, training and development must be central, equipping employees and leaders with the skills to embrace innovation and goal oriented.

To establish goal oriented framework, there is need a structured approach to guide organizations through planned and efficient skills and communication. A transition approach of ADKAR (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement) offers systematic approach to manage and sustain long-term improvements creating urgency for change, engaging leadership support, building awareness among employees, and reinforcing new behaviour to embed changes into organizational

culture. First, awareness must be created to help people understand the change. Once it builds, implementing necessary desire focusing on motivating individual and building their willingness. They also need knowledge to establish new environment by applying new skills, overcome challenges by training, skills and acquiring information to transform ability. Finally, reinforcement ensures the change is sustained through recognition, feedback and continuous support. ADKAR ensures the changes embedded into the organizational culture making one of the effective modes for the long-term success.

Thus, HR managers must be proactive with all strategies and action plans in order to meet the changing needs of the organization.

3. NEED TO RESPOND TO THE CHANGE

An organization comprises a network relationship involving human and physical resources. There are several ways in which human resource management can strengthen these relationships to accomplish organizational goals.

Al-Haddad (2015) emphasis change management as a broad discipline that involves ensuring change is implemented smoothly and with lasting benefits, by considering its wider impact on the organization and people within it. Each change initiates to have its own set of objectives and activities, all of which must be coordinated.

With globalization and technological changes feeding each other, business paradigms have undergone a major shift. Information technology has resulted in flatter structures and less hierarchical control in organizations. This has to lead to reduction of supervisory levels with fewer middle managers; thus, the role of middle managers will need to be refined. They can no longer be only collectors and fillers of information but will have to add value to the organization. Burnes (2011) further concern to run system and create new ones if required, facilitate the efficient flow and utilization of information and work transnational.

Zehir (2012) explains middle managers and supervisors should be trained to become independent entrepreneurs. Moreover, to avoid stagnation, they should aim to get promoted to higher management levels through continuous learning. Middle managers need to come out of their traditional ways of following instructions from their supervisors.

Today, the Indian managers are more productive, creative and innovative and operate in a flexible time frame, which may require working longer than nine-to-five working hours. Zehir (2012) further enthused to focus on the diversity in work and the opportunity to meet people and markets worldwide. Thus, the Indian

managers are more than happy and satisfied to push ten frontiers of his job responsibility.

Competition has placed several demands on Indian companies, especially in terms of revamping the organization to meet contemporary needs. To remain competitive, Werther (1996) suggests organization to achieve higher productivity levels with fewer resources. This may lead to the abolition of, any jobs to make way for new and different job profiles.

4. EFFECTS OF COMPETITION ON ORGANIZATION

A new management profile is where managers should take into cognizance the fact that organizational competitiveness is linked to human resources competence. Ruchi (2009) suggests business should be viewed holistically. The human resources managers should develop competence in dealing with employees as well as other organizational stakeholder-customers, investors, lowers, etc.

In the current Indian scenario, while public services are being privatised, private sector organizations are also in the process of re-examining their structures and job roles. Traditional hierarchies are making way for innovative structure to manage organizations.

In an organization, importance is given to hiring the right people for the right roles. Learning from the success or failure, the workers improve their individual efforts and collective resources. This strategy is to self-actualization at the workplace, where human beings perform best when they have the freedom and responsibility for doing their job.

5. TECHNIQUES OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The present business environment, require both private and public sector enterprises to continuously hone their skills, inculcate the best practice across divisions and functions, reengineer their business processes, and keep reinventing themselves through continuous learning and innovation. There are two important tools-benchmarking and business processes reengineering- used for bringing continuous improvement.

5.1 Benchmarking

In the era of constant environmental change, total quality management is the need of the hour for organization. While greater emphasis on the product quality is required to survive in any business in today's competitive environment, customer service has to be given equal importance. For this purpose, Gray (1993) proposed new management tools and techniques need to be developed. Benchmarking is one such structured management tool, and novels the simple act of comparison and learning for organizational improvement.

An organization can improve its own process and systems by carrying and learning from other leading organizations excelling in specific areas. Benchmarking has wide applicability for various functions and also serves as an important vehicle for implementing contemporary strategic human resource policies and practices.

It is worth noting that successful benchmarking begins with the mind and has to be approached with the attitude of a learner. It requires the humility to learn from someone else and the wisdom to implement match and perhaps better the best practices. This is especially relevant in the case of benchmarking; human element forms a major component.

An essential ingredient was found by Nambiar (2009) that for a successful benchmarking programme is to prioritise and focus on a few business practices or functions that will affect the critical success factors of an organization at given point of time. One can identify appropriate internal and external benchmarking and most importantly, absorb the relevant best practices to enhance organizational effectiveness.

5.1.1 The Benchmarking process

Benchmarking is not just a competitive analysis. Ruchi (2018) explains it as further more than simple examination of the pricing and features of competitors' products or services; it considers not only the output, but also the process by which the output is obtained. Benchmarking is much more than market research. Because it considers the business practices that enable the satisfaction of customer needs and thus helps the organization to realise superior business performance.

Benchmarking is a systematic and continuous process that enables organizations to identify world-class performance and measure themselves against that. The process of benchmarking is as follow:

5.1.2 Benchmarking Human Resources Policies and Practices

Human resources management offers wide latitude for the benchmarking process as it is amenable to internal, competitive, and functional and generic benchmarking. According to Gray (1993), an organization should benchmark to develop a holistic model for its human resource function, which is tuned to its corporate objectives and serves to enhance its competitive edge. The model should include appraisal of the human resources function in terms of its contribution, both direct and indirect, and also financial and non-financial, to overall profitability and effectiveness of the organization.

The relative weight age to be given to each area for benchmarking is best determined by an organization's objective pressures. An effective approach would be to identify and focus on an aspect that will have maximum impact on critical performance areas.

5.1.3 Active Steps for Effective Benchmarking

The goal before the human resource manager is to use benchmarking as an effective tool to bring about transformation in organization.

A manager should consider the benchmarking exercised as a "project" that must show results. To begin with, the manager should:

- 1) Understand why such a study is being conducted. Is it because of the influx of technologies or loss of customers/market share?
- 2) Nambiar (2009) suggests preparing a report that documents the processes or functions the exercise will address, the extent to which the exercise will improve those areas, and

Table 5.1.1. the benchmarking process.

Planning phase	Identifying who and what to benchmark
	Collecting data and information
Analysis phase	Determining the "gap" between the current status and the benchmark
	Forecasting levels of performance
Integration phase	Communicating findings and gaining acceptance from organization
	Establishing functional goals
Action phase	Preparing an action plan
	Implementing and monitoring
	Recalibrating benchmark
	Inculcating best practices and achieving the leadership position

Source: Adapted from OpenAlex, 2025.

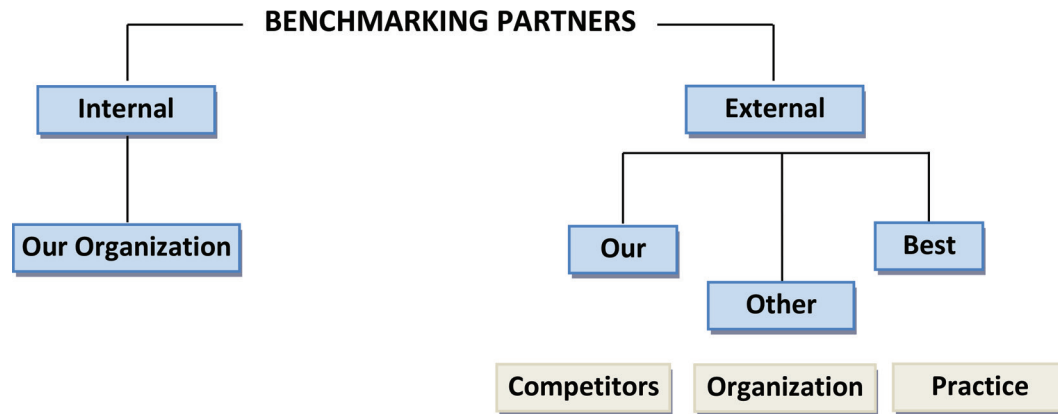


Figure 5.1.2. Benchmarking Partners

the likely result of these improvements on the organization, customers, employees and shareholders.

- 3) Identify the human resources related areas to be benchmarked and prepare a list of the sources of the excellent practices to be followed.
- 4) Evolve the scope of the study that includes project duration, resources and budget requirement and key players and their roles.
- 5) Review methodology or the research techniques to be used. These steps will enable the department to gather valuable competitive comparison data that will help the organization to take corrective measures wherever necessary.

5.2 Business Process Reengineering

The contemporary practice for enhancing organizational growth involves focus on internal and external factors, such as customer's needs, market trends, cost, quality, service and speed of deliver. Improvement in these requires constant redesigning and rethinking of existing business strategies and processes. This practice helps to create a dynamic and flexible organization.

Business Process Reengineering (BPR) is the ability of an organization to step back and rethink the way it does business. It further helps the organization to improve efficiency and effectiveness and achieve competitive advantage. A successful reengineering programme will move an organization from rigid compartmentalization to a more fluid environment. This will improve the formation and disbanding of teams comprising employees with different specialization, as and when required.

BPR often shifts the power base, changing the "command-and-control" approach to "mobilise and enable". Effective reengineering involves focus on all four business components: strategy, business processes, people and technology. Nambiar (2009) focuses business

processes for undergoing a transformation from function-oriented company to a process-oriented structure where service delivery, customer's satisfaction and product development are the key components. Thus, it is important for the human resources function to reposition itself for high value-added service.

5.2.2 Action Steps for Reengineering

We have seen that business process reengineering can serve as a powerful tool for transformation of organization. The challenge before human resource manager is to successfully handle the reengineering exercise using the following measures:

- 1) Identify the key signals factors that's suggests the need for reengineering within an organization.
- 2) Carrying out a needs assessment kin the areas market needs, customer-satisfaction to provide maximum return on investment for reengineering efforts.
- 3) Setting performance targets to achieve corporate goals and provide the organization with competitive advantage.
- 4) Top management support is of paramount importance since reengineering has the power to change the destiny of a company and its internal and external stakeholders.
- 5) An effective plan should be prepared on the study of policies and practices of market tends, customer needs, internal strengths and weaknesses and competitors' benchmarking facilitate accurate decision-making.
- 6) Forming a steering team with senior managers, human resource professionals, line managers and consultants interlinked and assigned specific responsibilities.
- 7) A pilot test must run to confirm the effectiveness of the systems and new processes.

- 8) Monitoring the steer group to empower managers and employees by making the responsible for the completion of the exercise.
- 9) Creating a sense of urgency for implementing a compelling programme with top priority.
- 10) Managing reengineering with fears like anxieties, politics and power struggles within the organization for internal change towards new way of doing business.

6. CONCLUSION

The rapid advancement in IT is transforming the human resource function as routine transactional activities are being atomised, streamlined, reengineered and substituted by high-powered information system. Today's human resource professionals need to move towards effectively fulfilling the multiple roles strategic partners, administrative experts, employee champions. Continuous improvement serves as a powerful strategy for navigating change and enhancing overall management effectiveness.

The human resource function should be customer-focused rather than functionally driven and should be able to add value in quantifiable terms. Human resource professionals need to deliver higher quality services, create an effective competitive corporate culture and reduce the human resources related administrative costs. Effective leadership, organizational readiness and style of implementation are important inputs for its success.

Ultimately, the integration of continuous improvement into change management ensures a sustainable process. It equips organizations to respond confidently to new challenges, drive performance, and maintain effective management practices in a constantly changing world.

6.1 Recommendations of the Study

To thrive in today's dynamic business environment, organizations must adopt adaptive management practices grounded in continuous improvement. The organizations should embrace teams to view change as an opportunity. Leader should develop a growth mind-set across all levels. Effective management empowers team to adopt agile methodologies for flexibility and decision-making for continuous improvement goals. The team must set clear objectives, delegate authority and trust to make decisions aligned with autonomy and accountability. Moreover, leaders must be equipped to manage uncertainty with planned training in change management and system thinking to ensure they can inspire, support and lead through complexity.

However, change is constant, but adaptability is a choice. Building a management approach is both

responsive and resilient ensures long-term effectiveness and sustainable success. Adaptive change is more successful when knowledge and innovation flow freely across an organization. Leaders must be the catalyst-creating environments where continuous improvement is not a project, but a way of operating.

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The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) did not employ any of the Generative AI and/or AI-Assisted technologies for Language refinement, drafting background section and did not perform any Task of the technology.

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