Corporate Culture Change Programme

Business Needs To Change

73% of business change efforts fail and 70% of new strategies fall short of expectations.

Vincent Pellettiere, "Organization Self-Assessment to Determine the Readiness and Risk for a Planned Change," Organization Development Journal 24, no.4 (Winter 2006): 38-44

Profit has become the single measurement of success and cold-hearted efficiency seems to be the sole driver of profit. And in order to satisfy this single-minded drive for profit, the needs of employees have only been paid lip service to. Governments have had to introduce legislation in order to ensure companies take on the responsibility of care for their employees. Many companies paying little attention to their obligations of minimising stress at work and regard it as an unnecessary cost.

Until recently management style has been mainly of the "stick" variety rather than the "carrot". Ultimately the individual is unimportant when profit is the sole determination of success. The command and control style of management is now seen as antiquated, but it's only recently losing its grip. The most damaging outcome of the "stick" variety of management is the fear and insecurity it causes. In the increasingly competitive work environment (seen as a good thing by most corporates), it is very difficult to admit to mental illness, whether it be depression, stress or anxiety.

In fact, it is difficult to admit to any weaknesses at all. The worry is that we'll be dispensed with and someone "better" will take our job, so we keep our metaphorical shield up so that nobody can attack us. The workplace becomes increasingly stressful and "dog-eat-dog"; and indeed, the higher up the tree you get, the lonelier it gets.

The over-riding atmosphere of fear experienced by most middle-to-senior executives is in no way conducive to optimal performance. The need to

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pretend and hide perceived short-comings eats up unquantifiable amounts of personal energy. When operating from a base of anxiety and fear, our behaviour becomes defensive, erratic, short-term survivalist and makes it completely impossible to give our best performance.

We need to be operating from an environment of cooperation, not competition. Companies spend £millions every year on improving teamwork, but if these new strategies are put in place over a background of fear, they are destined to fail and the investment wasted. We need a new business paradigm based on the primacy of people.

Default vs. Designed Future

If a company wants to transform its performance, changing or improving what has gone before is not enough: the future will be based on what has happened in the past. A future based on trying to improve what happened in the past leads to a default future. A default future happens because nothing has been done to change the CONVERSATION amongst the stakeholders of the business: the employees, the shareholders, the suppliers, the customers. Ultimately in a **default** future, the stakeholders are expecting more of the same and their conversation reflects that. Doing things the way we've always done them or even close to the way we've always done them, **will not work**!

Because of where humanity now stands with the huge changes manifesting in the world, it is more essential than ever for a company to design its future; this means nothing short of developing a totally new and Authentic Vision for the future that does not use the past as a basis for moving forward.

The designed future gives the opportunity of ownership and genuine commitment by the employees. One of the huge limitations of the old business paradigm is that the employees aren't consulted. The employee (at all levels)

needs to be heard. He needs to feel he has had a say in where the company is heading. Thus development of a new and Authentic Vision for the company is not about selling a strategy and hoping that the employees will "buy into" it; it's a consultative process, whereby the new Vision is part of the employee's sense of self: "I created this!" This results in an entirely different relationship to his employer and to his day-to-day work. This is where business performance is really transformed.

But the successful company of the future is already recognising that the rules have changed and that "business as usual" is not an option; it is already adapting its Vision and Leadership strategies; these changes reflect that people, especially employees and customers matter, not just as a mass, but as individuals. In fact large corporations have more ability today to positively influence the way society develops than they've ever had.

So what does a happy and stimulating workplace, free from fear, look like? Going to work allows us to fulfil two of the 5 pillars of happiness in our lives:

- Challenging and stimulating work

- Being part of a team/community

With these two elements in place, an individual's happiness in life is more easily available; they are crucial factors in creating happiness. However, if the person sees their work as too stressful through workload or the team is dysfunctional, then the workplace is a negative influence in the person's happiness. And because our emotions are infectious, it is easy for our own stress/unhappiness/ fear to spread throughout the team. Likewise a happy employee spreads happiness...literally. It has been scientifically proven that happiness spreads through three degrees of separation: so our happiness affects the happiness of our friend or colleague and their friend and their friend too!

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Authenticity

So how does a company create a working environment where everybody can be stimulated by their work and be a fully-functioning member of their respective team? Actually the answer is simple: create a corporate culture of authentic and open communication where hiding our weaknesses is no longer necessary, where we can openly put our hands up and ask for help. This sort of atmosphere not only takes away the fear, but brings the team together to support each other. A non-judgemental and cooperative environment means that we can openly admit our mistakes and weaknesses and expect help instead of condemnation.

Authentic conversation means saying what you feel in a constructive way; this open and full communication means that the other person fully understands your position and needs to do only a minimum of imagination to create their reality; the chances of misunderstandings or misinterpretation are much smaller.

Full disclosure gives power back to the relationship. Unfortunately because most of us lack self esteem, this is a rare occurrence!

There are 5 rules for Authentic Communication:

1. The company needs to ensure that the culture is one of openness where constructively speaking one's mind is encouraged.

2. The Leader needs to make a contract with his subordinates, that open communication is imperative and that they can say anything they wish to him, without fear of reprisals.

3. All communication must be constructive and as far as possible, free from emotion.

4. Each side should state what they think happened (their "reality") and be open to somebody else's "reality" being entirely different.

5. Each side should say what it is they want, in order to find the way forward.

Quite simply people are a company's greatest asset; the people are the competitive advantage. So authentic relationships not only within the company, but also with customers and suppliers, are now crucial to superlative performance for the future. Authentic communication is now not an option and dynamic companies are already starting to spot this area of competitive advantage; however, not many of them know how to achieve this huge change in culture.

This sort of cultural change can only come through Authentic Leadership and traditional leadership training is completely incapable of delivering Authentic Leadership.

The Work Revolution Culture Change Process

The process involves genuine consultations at all levels of the organisation; feedback from the coalface (shopfloor or salesforce) is fed back up the organisation, so that a unified Vision for the company's future is built as it goes back up the organisation. Pods of about 10 people, representing a statistically significant proportion of a particular team (whether geographical and/or functional, are created. Each pod is given half a day to meet and answer a detailed questionnaire about the company's future direction and desired culture.

For further information, please ring for a chat on

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