Change Management and the Life Cycle of Resistance of Change by Mark Bennett

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Normally when people think of change it means making a thing different. It actually means that change is about challenging the status quo, bringing a move in the normal routine of individuals and the organization. Resistance and friction to this change can be considered as a normal activity. Some changes are irresistible like Charter Bundles.

It is very important for business organizations to analyze and understand the resistance in order to effectively deal with them. The resistance to change witness a shift over a period of time, starting with a few people who support change and it moves to with a mass number of people supporting it. The basic cycle of change is divided into five phases which are characterized as below:

Phrase 1

In this phrase, which is the starting phrase, there will be only few people who support change. These people become scared of the change as they feel that it could threaten their position. So they start criticizing, ridiculing, and feel persecuted. Besides that they show massive resistance and feel that this change has been applied to degrade their kind of working. What you need to know is that change can be easily implemented in a small organization, but it can be hazardous and dangerous in larger organizations.

Phrase 2

This phrase is very important, as you could easily identify the people who resist change. The forces that are against and for changes can be easily identified by the behavior of the people who work in the organization. In this phrase, change is discussed and more people start to understand why the change is implemented. The organization may sometimes explain the procedure on how the change would make the job easy, so people start to accept it. When there is a greater understanding, there is less resistance.

Phrase 3

In this phrase, there could be a chance of conflict between people who agree and disagree with the change. People who are for the change will start to pull out the merits of the change and those who are against it will strongly oppose it saying that it degrades their way of working. The people who oppose it take it as a matter of life and death and would sometimes go to any extend to prevent the change from being implemented. Such kind of thing can be found in small or medium size corporate companies.

Phrase 4

In this, if there is a huge support by people for change, then the change will be implemented immediately. Usually the resistance to the change is considered as stubbornness and nuisance. You can say almost a kind of irritation. Anyway when compared to other phrases, in this the balance of power shifts from the proponents (people opposing change) to the opponents (people who support the change). A clear act of wisdom and understanding is required in dealing with the resistance.

Phrase 5

In this phrase, there would be less resistance in implementing the change. The majority of the people will accept the change as they know that the change will make their life better. Most of the time, in case if there is any conflict it will be in the form of verbal disagreement, questions and sometimes reluctance. Okay, even though these things are present, you would see the change implemented and accepted by people whole-heartedly.

The next thing is how do organizations implement change. It is not that change is easily accepted by people. One thing we all should know is that change is not about a single intervention, but requires multiple interventions, for instance changing the way team works in the organization and how much the business has to change its structure.

Like all people in the organization, we need to know that change is inevitable. There can be no situation where change can be avoided. People need to get used to the change and think about how effective it would be.

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