Implementing Change in Adversity

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Implementing change in any organization can be a challenging experience for leaders (Higgins & Bourne, 2018; Covey, 1989; Armstrong, 1982; Kotter, & Schleisinger, 2008; Lawrence, 1969). People are usually wary of change and this is manifested in increased tension, resistance, anger and emotional stress because of the unknown that change bring (Lewin, 1952; Zand, & Sorensen, 1975). In fact, Lawrence (1969) postulated that one of the most concerning challenging business executives' face is the reluctance of their employees to adapt to change in the work place. This can be seen in high resignation increases, frequent disagreements and low productivity.

Additionally, Lawrence posits that pseudological paradigm is another major reason change does not work in the workspace. (Lawrence, 1969, cited in Higgins & Bourne, 2018, p. 9).

Change, however, is an inevitable part of life and will be an integral feature of organizational life (Kotter, &Schleisinger, 2008), which means that strategies must be developed to address resistance to change of employees or people in general (Paycor, 2019). For many people change and adversity are difficult paths to traverse in life as well as in an organization (Yalmaz, &Kilicoglu, 2013). Employees, in some instances, are fearful of being dislocated from their comfort zones to allow adapting into a new system or to a new policy that will change how they are accustomed to fulfilling their duties. Some of these changes may be perceived as negative or positive depending on the employee. It was found that employees were resistant to change because 1) they do not believe it is necessary, 2) discomfort with process modification that may disadvantage them, and 3) the change was contrary to their beliefs and attitudes. The sources of the resistance for the employees were 1) changes in job cause economic fear, 2) fear of the unknown, 3) threat to their feeling of safety, and 4) structural inertia (Masunda, 2015, p. 27). According to Hughes (2006) resistance toward change encompasses behaviours that are acted out by change recipient in order to slow down or terminate an intended organizational change (Hughes, 2006, cited in Masunda, 2015, p. 22).

Resistance to change is seen as an impediment to organizational growth due to the negative effect it has on the organization. Change is normally implemented to instigate positive changes; however, employees' normally react negatively to this regardless of its potential success. According to Lewin (1951) change occurs in three steps: unfreezing, moving and refreezing. (Lewin, 1951, cited in Boohene, & Williams, 2012, p. 136). He notes that the unfreezing phase is classified as the most important stage in the process to change. This step involves getting people to understand the need to move away from the current practices. It also includes gaining support and feedback from all parties that the change will affect. When this is achieved then the leader or manager can proceed to the second step of implementing the change (Lewin, 1951, cited in Boohene, & Williams, 2012). For the moving phase of the change, the employees would have bought into the change, seen the benefits of the change and are willing to be involved to take action and make a change (Lewin, 1951, cited in Boohene, & Williams, 2012, p. 136). The final stage of the change process would require the employees to make the change become permanent and practice the new way of doing things to enable the organization to achieve its goals. The leader should be patient during the change process and ensure effective communication because is relayed to employees, mainly because effective communication is an imperative too in enacting any real change.

There is evidence that change become easily acceptable in periods of adversity. The rationale for adversity resulting in change is simply because peoples' existence or well-being is best served if they change. Adversities are negative situations or 'bad' experiences that people undergo. It is this reality that lessens the unwillingness to change. There are many examples that can support change in periods of adversity. When Marcus Garvey was prosecuted and found guilty of mail fraud in the United States, this change the course of how he operated thereafter (Pusey, 2019). Alexander Graham Bell had to change how he conceptualized things before he successfully invented the telephone—the difficulties he experienced was that he wanted to solve the dysfunctionalities, hence he had to change how he conceptualized things (Hochfelder, 2019). Like Bell and Marcus Garvey, many other inventors and leaders had to change how they operated their endeavours; before they finally became successful—Humphrey Davy (electric bulb; Karl Benz (motor car).

During the period of democratic socialism in Jamaica(1970s), which was spearheaded by the then Michael Manley administration, after the People's National Party (PNP) lost the election in 1980, this resulted in a change, of the earlier stance of democratic socialism (Stephen, 1986; Ambursley, 1981; Stephens & Stephens, 1986). The matter was Jamaicans feared that democratic socialism was tending toward socialism, and many people were concerned about the concepts of loss individuality, and capitalism. Hence in order to be a viable and competitive political party in Jamaica, the PNP had to change its political philosophy because of the defeat at the polls. The loss was the adversity for the PNP, and changes had to be made because otherwise this threatens its existence in being an alternative government (Stephens, & Stephens, 1986; Keith, & Keith, 1992). The constant in those situations and outside of those is adversity, and it being a precursor to change. In fact, adversity (or crisis) and change are directly correlated, which has been empirically established in the literature (Valdez, Lim, & Parker, 2015; Williams, Gruber, & Zhao, 2017).

In the Biblical narrative, the Book of Job recounts how Job dealt with adversity. Job was a prosperous man, a man of integrity and wisdom. Satan, believing that all man cared about was materialism and self-interest, insisted that Job was faithful to God only because he was so privileged. Satan then challenged God, to remove everything Job had, and he guaranteed that Job would curse Him (God), and his true character would emerge (Job 1, KJV). God in his infinite mercy and wisdom, gave Satan permission to remove all Job had including his children. Job was stripped of all his possessions; his servants and children were killed, and he was inflicted with sores from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. Not once did Job complained, instead he remained steadfast in his belief in God. Despite his friends and his wife's attempts to sway him, blaming his suffering to God's displeasure with him, Job refused to concede. The issue of adversity is a difficult situation or unpleasant incident that people undergo in life, which epitomizes the experience of Job in the Bible. There are many other people whom have undergone adversities to include Marcus Garvey (Clarke, 1973; Satter, 1996; DuCille, 1997), Nelson Mandela (Reading Blue Coat School, 2017), and Organizations (Williams, Gruber, & Zhao, 2017).

Organizations sometimes face adversity in the form of crisis that threatens 1) performance, 2) productivity, 3) survivability, 4) changing in leadership, 5) profitability, and 6) natural disasters or obstacles that explain leaders' willingness to change from old paradigms to new practices (Williams, Gruber, & Zhao, 2017; Boin, 2004, 2009; Comfort, 2002; Drabek, 1985). This is a prime example that adversity or setbacks can be a great educator, bringing awareness to the limits of change (Wilson, & Rice, 2004). From a religious epistemology, God allows us to reach rock bottom, so we can appreciate and acknowledge that He is the 'Rock at the Bottom' as is the case of Job in the Bible. On the other hand, a non-religious perspective, adversity is the precursor to change because overcoming those obstacles or setbacks gives pleasure, success, well-being, and existence. Usain Bolt is among many athletes whom had to overcome many obstacles to attain his success in track and field (Biography.com, 2014).

The transformational leader of post-Apartheid South Africa, Nelson Mandela, was imprisoned for 27 years as a result of his efforts in wanting to introducing change to the system. His days were spent chipping rocks in limestone quarries and his nights in a tiny Spartan cell. In spite of the indignities he suffered, he spent the years developing his character and his belief in human dignity and equality. His relentless pursuit for social change never wavered (Kets De Vries, 2017, para. 8). In understanding Nelson Mandela's unrelenting decision to wanting change in the face of adversity, or any other person for that matter, this can be explained by the perspective offered by Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958) (cited in Higgins & Bourne, 2018), which aptly contextualize the situation. They wrote that:

The decision to make a change may be made by the system itself, after experiencing pain

(Malfunctioning) or discovering the possibility of improvement, or by an outside change agent who observes the need for change in a particular system and takes the initiative in establishing a helping relationship with that system (Lippitt, Watson, & Westley, 1958, p.10 as cited in Higgins & Bourne, 2018).

It can be deduced from Lippitt, Watson, and Westley's perspective that the pain experienced by Nelson Mandela as well as other Black South Africans, was a crucial psychological factor that expressed his unrelenting desire for change in spite of the adversity he faces in prison. Clearly, implementing change to a system necessitates a change agent that is not limited to Nelson Mandela. To better understand how leaders can overcome adversity and effect change, we need to underscore some of the qualities necessary to do so by way of examining Phase of Change Theory, which was developed by Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958).

Lippitt, Watson, and Westley's (1958) Phases of Change Theory was developed from Lewin's Three-Step Change Theory. This theory suggests that there are seven critical steps to change that guide the change agent. These steps are: 1) Diagnosing the problem; 2) Assessing the motivation and capacity for change; 3) Assessing the resources and motivation of the change agent. This includes the change agent's commitment to change, through effective power and consistent stamina; 4) Choosing progressive change objects is also essential in the effort. In this step, action plans are developed, and strategies are established to instigate that change; 5) the role of the change agents should be also selected and clearly understood by all parties so that expectations are clear; 6) additionally, after this is understood the change is maintained. Communication, feedback and group coordination are also essential elements in this step of the change process; and, 7) gradually, terminate from the helping relationship, where in the change is adapted and can be enforced without supervision. The change agent should then gradually withdraw from their role over time when the change becomes cemented into the organization's cultural structure. (Lippitt, Watson, & Westley, pp. 58-59). On examination of those steps to change, change inadversity provides many benefits and the unrelenting stance of the change-agent is the catalyst for greatness (Howling, 2017).

The Canadian College of Health Leaders (2018) refers to resiliency as the "ability to successfully change, adapt, overcome, and cope with unexpected setbacks" (p. 2). Edward and Hercelinskyj (2007) scrutinized how nurses developed resilience in the face of workplace stress. According to the group's findings characteristics that foster a resilient attitude include optimism, intelligence and humor. Most importantly, they stated that adopting reflective practices is the key to developing resilience in the work space. Taylor and Barling (2004) added that resilience is the ability to "learn from mistakes" and "bounce back" while keeping a sense of humor and a belief in one's colleagues and the designated leadership. The authors stated that "we can't teach people to be resilient, its experience that makes it so" (Taylor &Barling, 2004, cited in Edward &Hercelinskyj, 2007, p. 242).

Two UK National Health Services surveys conducted by Furlong, Harris, and Weaver (2014)

concluded that harvesting and maintaining a consistent balance of purpose whilst keeping the vision in mind helps one to strive under emotional resilience (p. 225). Additionally, choosing to soar above difficult changes that may be reinstated allows one to take a proactive approach to changes rather than being burden with the eventualities it may produce. Harris postulates that reframing the situation from a victim to a proactive stand point empowers and encourages leadership skills among nurses by combined knowledge, deliberate and experience to dictate good practices and clinical competence. (Furling, Harris & Weaver, 2014, p.233) A positive attitude makes a person happier and more resilient as it improves relationships, and even increases the chances for success (Beck et al., 1985; Kart, 1990; McConville et al., 2005). The WHO (2002) noted that "Studies have revealed that up to 80% of people who committed suicide had several depressive symptoms", which confirm the general findings of other studies (Rhodes et al., 2006;Awata et al.2005; Newman and Stuart 2005; Miller 2005; Chou 2005).In addition, having a positive attitude improves creativity and helps individuals make better decisions. In Spencer Johnson (2002) "Who Moved My Cheese", the two mice, on discovering that the cheese wasn't where it was supposed to be, immediately started to work on finding another piece of cheese. This response to the missing cheese was totally opposite to the two-miniature people, whose reaction was anger when they discovered the cheese had been removed. Instead of looking for solution they wasted time getting outraged and blaming each other. This scenario re-establishes the importance of a strategic vision in providing direction for the change process as well as the need for identifying or creating strategies to implement change.

The leadership style being used to instigate change in an organization is very important in order to change the institution's culture (Rashid et al., 2003; Ahmed, 1998; Lorenzo, 1998). This change can be achieved by implementing contemporary marketing ideas, technology and new personnel (Bass, 1985a; Bennis & Nanus, 1985cited in Bass, 2008). Bass (2008) postulates that for the organization's new vision to be realized theirs must be effective and

persuasive leadership in enacting the intended change. Reiss (1992) expressed that "As we approach the twenty-first century and ponder changes of the century almost past, it would be easy to conclude that the basic structural organization of policing today, resembles rather closely that in place of the beginning of this century" (p. 55), which justify the need for leadership in discussion of organizational changes of existing culture (Rashid et al., 2003). Furthermore, leaders who are concerned about organizational reformation must aim to create an environment that is hospitable and conducive for employees so they can be given the opportunity to mobilize their creativity, problem solving and experimentation that will aid in implementing the new vision. (Bass, 2008).

According to Bass (2008), in general change can be driven by opportunity as well as threat, which is no different in an organization. The business opportunities present in changing market demands and technological developments can bring forth calculated risk-taking and charismatic leadership of consequence and can result in necessary organizational change (p. 565). Efforts to instigate and new initiatives in the organization are sometimes futile because these entities fail to effectively prepare the organization for the impending changes.

Bass (2008) defines organizational readiness as state of psychological and behavioral preparedness of members to a change in the organization. When there are evident organizational readiness members are receptive to change and will make an effort to adapt and see that the change is supported despite the challenges (pp. 695-696). When organizational readiness is lacking when seeking to introduce changes, members are likely to be uncooperative and view the change as something negative and unnecessary.

In an article by Shea, Jacobs, Esserman, Bruce and Weiner (2014) they published the results of a psychometric assessment of a new theory-based measure called Organizational Readiness for Implementing Change (ORIC). ORIC was developed by drawing on Weiner's theory of organizational readiness for change and assessed its content adequacy, structural validity, reliability, and

construct validity in a series of studies. Shea et al. (2014) argued that given the potential impact of organizational readiness for change on implementation outcomes of change, a valid, theory-based measure would be useful for research and practice (p. 6).

The measure should reflect both facets of readiness-change commitment and change efficacy-and differentiate the facets from their determinants to ensure direct measurement of the readiness construct (p. 7). Content adequacy assessment indicated that the items that were developed to measure change commitment and change efficacy reflected the theoretical content of these new facets of organizational readiness and distinguished these two facets from hypothesized determinants of readiness.

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis in the lab and field study revealed two correlated factors, as expected, with good model fit and high item loadings. Reliability analysis in the lab and field study showed high inter-item consistency for the resulting individual-level scales for change commitment and change efficacy. Inter-rater reliability and inter-rater agreement statistics supported the aggregation of individual level readiness perceptions to the organizational level of analysis (Sheaet. al, 2014, p. 11).

Moss, Butar, Hartel, Hirst, and Craner (2017) explored "Strategic changes in organizations" and found thatchange is and always has been an inevitable part of life, for most people it is a difficult path to traverse. Especially in our organizations where change may abruptly alter the course of the employee career and lifestyle (p.1).According to Ersner-Hershfield et al (2009a)Employees fear losing their jobs, or getting transferred to unfamiliar positions. Little control over change triggers increased tension, uncertainty, anger and other forms of job stress.(Cited in Moss et. al, 2017, p. 2).Without a good grasp and understanding of change, anger is often manifested in counterproductive behavior. People expect life to be easy, and when it is not, they need assurances that employers are concerned and will do as much as possible to assist them during unsettling times (Moss, et. al, 2017). Change presents new challenges

and demands for employees. They often feel they are forced to implement changes in an effort for the organization to grow and survive. They are therefore not keen on being a part of a change that offers no prospect for their own future improvements.

Calculated transformations, however can activate perceptions that change is not necessary, leading to resentment or interference from employees. Two research inquiries concerned with the actual doing companies used to reconcile contradictions were conducted. The studies described precisely the plan of action managers make practical and effective use of establishing the idea that organizational principles or standards of behavior will perpetuate incrementally. Also, additionally the studies looked at whether the actual doings and established notions reject the challenges which usually impede the overall aims and interests and the means of achieving them. (Hrebiniak, 2006; Bartels & Rips, 2010 cited in Moss et. al, 2017, p. 3), such as resistance to change. The study assessed the belief that unpredictable behavior could weaken the worth or usefulness of people necessary for years to come and until insights are gathered from executives on their attempts to promote this sense of stability in the workplace after implementing different changes.

This indicatesprinciples and standards of behavior done in the same way over time is an important intervention for restructuring an organization. When implementing the process most workers are disbelieving of the firmness and state of stability of the organization. Restructuring of the organization can change the workplace principles of practice, philosophy, objectives and culture; suggesting change is inevitable and futuristic. (Sani et al., 2008, cited in Moss et. al, 2017). The result also showed that thewhen executives place emphasis on theexchange of information as well as actively taking part; which are necessary for the incremental concretizing of principles and standards. Exchange of information and actively taking part can precisely outline if established procedures or principles of action are believed to support or hinder organizational standards.

Although Westinghouse dominated its markets, President and CEO Steve Tritch and other senior

executives were concerned that, in an increasingly competitive marketplace, they could not afford to rest on their laurels. What Westinghouse needed was a cultural transformation, and this goal became an important element of their corporate strategy in maintaining the company's relevance in the industry (Bacon, 2007). One strategy implemented to change the culture that existed at the hospital I work was to implement a scoreboard and this created a spirit of competitiveness and espirit de corps. Ultimately the wait between the time the Medical Officer determined that the patient was for admission and being admitted to the unit was reduced by almost a half. This change was not easy but with constant communication about the benefit of this change the hospital was able to achieve the change.

According to Bacon (2007) where they haven't been able to achieve effective behavioral changes, customers are saying, "It's the same old Westinghouse." However, where they have implemented the changes, customers are saying, "I'm seeing a difference in the way you treat me. In the past, you've said, 'We have this to sell. Do you want it, yes or no?' it's now moving in the direction of, 'can you tell me more about what you need, and let's see if we have some value to offer" (p. 353). To get people to 'buy-in' to new ideas and change their old habits, the idea, attitude, interests and shared values are critical components that must be consideration. This means that the new direction must be clearly articulated along with their personal benefits, and not only the organization's mission (Rashid, et al., 2003; Ali Al-Zu'bi, 2011). This helped to forge an alliance with the people and organization, and created a forum for one-on-one discussions (Bacon, 2007, p. 354). This showed that although the company was doing well the management was not happy with the few setbacks and as such a change was implemented. The change was met with some resistance because some employees felt that they were giving good customer service and there was no need for them to change. However, following the full implementation of the cultural transformation through behavior change the company reported receiving less complaint about customer service.

Bourne (2015) presents results of a qualitative phenomenological study that explored generational response to organizational change. Even though organizations recognize changing demographics as an important issue, most do not know how to adjust to the changing workforce. (p. 141). Many strategies and theories of change are readily available to organization leaders; however, Marshak (2004) claimed "the historical view of organizational change might limit leader's capability to address the most recent environment leaders' face" (Marshak, 2004 cited in Bourne, 2015, p. 143). The rapidly changing business environment often has a negative effect on employees. For example, many Baby Boomers report to Generation X or Y bosses who are younger than they; which further complicates matters as members of different generations respond differently to situations and may different viewpoints on how things should be done in the organization (Lesser and Rivera, 2006; Lancaster and Stilman, 2002, cited in Bourne, 2015, p. 142).

Organizations cannot avoid change, they cannot be immune to change, but must address change continuously as it is inevitable Kotter, (2002) as cited in Bourne (2015) posit that "change often requires questioning established organizational beliefs and routines and replacing them with new beliefs and practices" (p. 144). This means that employees are creatures of habit, which justify their preference for maintaining the status quo, and resistance to change. Price and Chahal (2006) indicated that ineffective communication or underestimating training requirements are a part of employees' resistance to change and an explanation failed new initiatives (Price &Chahal, 2006 cited in Bourne, 2015, p. 145). DeVibliss and Gilbert (2005) suggested that change is a process similar to any other function of business that leaders can model, learn, and execute more effectively with organizational preparedness (DeVibliss& Gilbert, 2005 cited in Bourne, 2015).

Employees are likely to ignore a change initiative when they lack clarity about what the change involves and the mission it seeks to accomplish. If they do not receive quality information, or do not believe their opinions are valued. Bourne (2015)

suggested that leaders who involve employees in the organization's decision-making process more likely to have a successful change process. In adding to the topic Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) posits that commitment from senior management along with other factors including resources, work relationships, incentives, training, and employee involvement is critical for preparing employees for organizational changes. (Vakola& Nikolaou, 2005 cited in Bourne, 2015).

Change is important and inevitable in today's business environment. However many change initiatives face big challenges and have a low success rate. It is therefore important for managers to be proactive and react quickly to changes taking place in the world. Masunda (2015) examined the nature of the resistance to change, the factors which cause resistance to change and its effect on employee productivity. Cummings and Worley (2009) adding to the topic, posit that the pace of global economic and technological advancements in different areas of society makes change an inevitable feature of organizational life (Cummings & Worley, 2009 cited in Masunda, 2015, p. 23. This is true because with globalization the organization need to keep current with trends in the world to remain successful in a very competitive market place. Therefore to ensure successful implementation of organizational change the leader must try to convince the employees by helping them to relate to the change and to see it as a sense of their own so that they will want to experience the change.

Conclusion

Implementing change is inevitable. However this is usually accompanied by resistance, fear and uncertainty from the employees. According to Boohene and Williams (2012) for change to be effective the leader should implore employees to participate the decision-making process, which adds in building employee confidence. It also allows the leader to be transparent while also being accepting of constructive criticism. A leader should also be an effective in communicating to employees the importance of the proposed change (p.135). The work of Kurt Lewin has influenced organizational development. Lewin argues that the analysis of the

forces that enable leaders to understand why people act as they do and what forces would need to be diminished or strengthen to bring about planned change is imperative (Lewin, 1951, cited in Boohene, & Williams, 2012). Therefore organizations should engage employees who are opposed to change, and ensure that their concerns are alleviated by listening and giving positive feedbacks. Bearing that in mind, leaders must acknowledge that change can often be short lived due to the high level of resistance and as such capacity building workshops are needed to reinforce the need for change.

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