International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)
ISSN (Online): 2319-7064
Index Copernicus Value (2015): 78.96 | Impact Factor (2015): 6.391

Challenges Facing Human Resources Departments in its Functions of Change Implementation and Management: Evidence from Telkom Kenya

Joan Bii

Kisii University, P. O. Box 9014-30100, Kenya

Abstract: ***In organizations change is an integral part of growth. Organizations that are able to respond effectively to change stay ahead of their competitors in the common market. The study was carried out to identify the contribution of the Human Resources Department to the management and implementation of organizational change at the Telkom Kenya. Based on the study, this paper examines the challenges that HRD faces in trying to implement and manage change. The study used a conceptual framework where the contribution of HRD was itemized as independent variable and change management as a dependent variable. The study employed a descriptive case study design. It targeted the entire management and staff of Human Resource Department of Telkom Kenya in North Rift Valley Region which was 66 in total. A census was carried out since the population was manageable. The research utilized a questionnaire and interview schedule as methods for collecting data. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used for data analysis and interpretation. Frequency distribution tables, bar graphs and pie charts were used to present the results. The study established that the HRD in Telkom Kenya faces numerous challenges, the leading of which was poor management support, lack of employee engagement and improper communication of change. It was therefore recommended that training of employees on change can enhance their participation and cooperation during implementation and management.***

Keywords: Challenges, Human Resources Department, Implementing, Managing Change, Telkom Kenya

1. Introduction

Contemporary organizations are under immense pressure due to many factors. To name a few, there are environmental pressures such as increasing globalization, rapid technological change, and tougher competition; organizational changes such as new organizational alliances, new structures and hierarchies, new ways of assigning work, and a very high rates of currency change; there are also changes in the workforce, including employees' priorities, capabilities, and demographic characteristics (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2005). Within these pressures, these organizations have the opportunity through their human resources departments to make strategic adjustments.

However, for HRDs to play their roles in change management, they must their real and perceived value. The roles of human resources in organizations have been expanding over time. The shift from personnel to human resources, for example, was part of the movement to acknowledge the value of employees as an organizational resource, and was an attempt to remove some of the stigma that was coming to be associated with slow, bureaucratic personnel departments. This shift in label was accompanied by a call for HR to become a strategic partner with the leaders of the business. Contemporary HRDs contribute to significant business decisions, advice on critical transitions, and develop the value of the employees-in short, to have a seat at the table (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2005).

Most companies say their most important assets are their people, but few behave as if this were true. Change projects typically devote the lion's share of their budgets to technology and processes, not staff issues. The question to ask is on what these organizations are spending on their human assets and what return are they getting, and it is not uncommon to get a blank look in return. As in any other business, strong leadership and good communications are essential (Merkle, 2005). Recognizing change as a continuous process means change management is an ongoing feature of the leader's job. But a frequently overlooked component is HRM.

HR is typically regarded as an administrative area, rather than strategic, and is rarely involved in a change project's leadership. Yet offering the right incentives to link corporate goals to individual career objectives is a critical success factor. What motivates people is an individual matter and needs to be addressed at this level. A recent survey by training specialists Discovery Learning shows that people react differently to change, and can be classified in four broad categories. Originators welcome dramatic change; conservers prefer gradual change; pragmatists are most enthusiastic about change that will address current problems and resisters dislike all change (Merkle, 2005).

Workforce flexibility that is developing multifunctional workers who can adapt to a range of job requirements is the centrepiece of many businesses that are trying to transform themselves to survive in the real economy (Dyer, 1985). Few business leaders are frightened by the idea of changing their organisation's technology or processes, but many wring their hands in despair at the prospect of changing their people's behaviour. But changing human behaviour is in fact more science than art. An increasing body of evidence shows that the process of organisational change has defined parameters that suggest what works and what does not (Dyer, 1985).

The overall process may be defined, but the elements needed to motivate a specific person are variable (Dawson & Jones, 2000). A one-size-fits-all solution won't work when the fundamental issue to be addressed is that people have individual needs, wants and concerns. Human behaviour can be pushed and pulled in the right direction with an effective combination of incentives and disincentives if the desire for change is created in the individual. Constant upheavals in the business environment mean that leaders must learn to master the process of implementing change, just as their employees must learn to accommodate change.

According to Riches (2001), when organizations go through change, for example a restructure, a merger, downsizing, the installation of new information technology, outsourcing, a shift to customer focus or a new location many employees experience a sense of loss. This is obvious if it means losing a job. Yet often the reasons for the sense of loss are not clear but the effects may be just as profound - both for the individual and on the organization's bottom line.

Dawson and Jones (2000) report that about 75% of all organizational change programmes fail, largely because employees feel left out of the process and end up lacking the motivation, skills and knowledge to adopt new systems and procedures. Yet the recipe for successful change management is well known and deceptively simple: align the trinity of people, processes and technology with leadership and organizational strategy. The devil, as always, is in the details: how to implement a change program successfully when dealing with the vagaries of human behaviour.

Organizations do not adapt to change their people do (Schuler, 1989). Implementing the right technology infrastructure and streamlining the business processes that flow through it are essential ingredients for effective organizational change. These components are well studied, mechanized and reasonably standardized. Methodologies, measurements and best-practice guidelines are available to optimize their implementation. But the human element that needs to make use of these systems in order to supply the leadership, judgment, flexibility and innovation needed to achieve business success is the most critical ingredient and least understood. Understanding behavioural risk is particularly important in the current economic context the costs of ignoring it can be significant. Poorly managed change can gradually gnaw away at productivity on many fronts (Schuler, 1989).

2. Change in Organizations

Research has indicated that participation is a central variable to increasing acceptance of change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Lack of participation is a major cause of disappointing results with organizational renewal. Employees must believe that their opinions have been heard and given respect and careful consideration. More substantive forms of participation in the change process tend to be associated with higher commitments.

A study carried out by Lausen and Foss (2003) identifies a closer relationship between HRD and effective change management. It acknowledges that initiated of HRD to trigger acceptance to change leading to minimal costs. Although many studies have been carried out on change management, very few studies have tried to connect the interrelationship between the functions of HR and change management.

Wanberg and Banas (2000) opines that openness to change is influenced by record of accomplishment of successfully implementing major organizational changes. If organizational changes failed in the past employees will be reluctant toward new change initiatives. Reicher, Drury, Hopkins and Stott (2001) have found that the history of change is correlated with motivation to keep on trying to make changes. The researchers indicate that the higher the pre-existing level of cynicism about organizational change, the more executives need to control and discuss previous failures moving ahead. According to Reicher *et al.* (2001), participants' attitude towards the change, the threatening character of the change and trustworthiness of management were relevant as well.

Most managers and academics know that change is unavoidable. However, in most cases only a third of all change initiatives achieve full success. These initiatives involve many different types of change such as reengineering, downsizing, implementing oft total quality management, introduction of new technology or change of corporate culture. Moreover, many failed change attempts result in a sharp loss of motivation, job satisfaction and organizational commitments and arise in the level of cynicism (Beer & Nohria, 2000). A key element in many of the types of change is the openness of employees towards the change. Although organizational change is often about change in structures, hierarchy, reward systems and technology, it is mediated through individual change. Many change efforts can fail because they underestimate the importance of this individual cognitive-effect nature of organizational change (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

Reorganizations and downsizing are typical economic-driven transformations. They often result in lay-offs. Changes that threaten the job security of employees can have a destructive effect on morale and attitudes, even when it is not their own job that is threatened by change. Apart from the overall context of the organization, the way in which a specific change is implemented can certainly affect the reaction of employees. Implementation of change goes through different phases. Several models have described different phases. Theses phases are referred to as the change process (Kotter, 2011).

No organization can succeed until the individuals within it succeed. No group can achieve its objectives until its team members achieve theirs. Passmore an Woodman (1999) observes that most change managers will confirm how difficult it is to generate real change in organizations. Evidence of change failure suggests this is not only caused by employee resistance, but by a lack of senior management vision, a failure to integrate cultural considerations and business strategy and a lack of long-term commitment to communicating clearly the vision and importance of individual commitment to success. Organizational change has, in recent decades, become stuck in a rut. The organisation development approach, itself built on process-based change, remains the dominant methodology. Its focus can, at worst, ignore the people aspects of change and, at best, seek to use the 'medical model' which assumes that 'things are not working here, but if you just do this everything will get better'. Such approaches can offer salvation in failing businesses but, for many, OD should be just that: a development of what works best, drawing and building upon the value which makes things work already (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

Passmore and Woodman (1999) describes the contribution to employees' openness to change of the content, context, and process of organizational transformation. The threatening character of organizational change (content variable), trust in executive management, trust in the supervisor, history of change (context variables), and participation in the change effort (process variable) were predicted to have a positive effect on openness to change.

Challenges Facing HRD in Change Implementation and Management

There are a number of problems that arise as the HR department goes about its activities. They include problems in recruitment, remuneration and planning. Regarding challenges on recruitment, the department may sometimes be unable to adequately coordinate and incorporate all the employees needed in the company's operations (Katherine, 2002). Failure to include all employees may lead to poor acceptance of change.

Challenges of remuneration often stem from the need to put in place the appropriate rewards to motivate employees to accept change. In the process of trying to motivate members of staff to perform better, the Human Resource may make deals that eventually cause problems. A case in point is the Home Depot (Michael, 2007). The Company has an employee Compensation policy that requires that one should be rewarded for the time they have served the Company. However, because the Human Resource Department had put in place a policy that requires all members of staff to be given the incentive mentioned above, he left with a lot of money. It was reported that he had with him about two hundred and ten million dollars. The Company had no way out of this payment because HR had already passed that policy and they were bound by the law. This goes to show that sometimes policies made by the HR department do not benefit the Company especially if the parties involved are considered as losses to the Company (Michael, 2007).

Problems in planning involves alignment of both material and human resources to support processes both presently and in future. Sometimes, the HR department can employ people who may not contribute towards organizational principles. A classic example is the Arthur Andersen Company that fell apart in the year 2002. This was an American Company that dealt with audits. It was initially very successful in its operations prior to that fateful year. But in the latter years of its operations, the Company was involved in two accounting scandals that tarnished its name and subsequently caused failure. The Company failed to plan well for the kind of employees it recruited. This was witnessed when one of its employees in the Legal Department called Nancy Temple was fined in the Court of law for non-adherence to accounting laws. This problem could have been prevented if the HR department had evaluated this employee before hiring her and also evaluation should have been done during her performance. If HR had been extremely critical, then they would have realized that the employee did not adhere to Company principles and would therefore have terminated her employment. Besides, the Arthur Andersen Human Resource department also failed in its communication function to employees. The department should have ensured that they constantly communicate to members of staff about the goals and objectives of the Company on a day to day basis. This would have made them very clear in the minds of employees and would have prevented the downfall of the Company.

Statement of the Problem

According to Erica (2006), human resource departments of most organizations play a critical contribution in the management of change to enhance performance. However, often the overall management overlooks the HRD with dismal results. In Telkom Kenya, numerous changes have been introduced over time. The change implementation processes have in most cases not adequately involved and recognized the human recourse function as key to effective change management. When Telkom Kenya was privatized, the culture within which the employees served under the public sector continued to prevail. However, the new system demanded a culture that was amenable with the private sector. Therefore, the Company soon began to experience tension among employees; at some point they even contemplated going on strike. The level of productivity went low, compared to other telecommunication companies in the private sector.

The success of change in Telkom depends on a number of factors the most important of which is how the human resources are used in managing change process. Various aspects of change have been implemented by Telkom as a result of the government's policy towards triggering profit making in public operations. However, it is not clear how HRD was involved in ensuring effective management of change. Consequently, the study was designed to the role that the human resource department played in change implementation and management in Telkom Kenya.

3. Materials and Methods

The study employed a case study design. The use of case study allowed a lot of detail to be collected that would not normally be easily obtained by other research designs. The data collected was also a lot richer and of greater depth. The study targeted the entire management and staff of HRD of Telkom Kenya in North Rift Valley Region who were 66 in total. To enable gather data that is comprehensive and representative, the study used the entire population. This was deemed necessary because most of them are based at Eldoret town and sampling this population would not have provided detailed information that could be generalized for the entire organization.

Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data pertinent to the study. The questionnaire was used to collect data from different cadre of staff working in HRD based in Telkom North Rift Region. Open and close-ended questions were used as they were most suitable in providing detailed information. Likert questions were also used. This type of questions provided a list of responses, which the respondents chose one, that is right according to her. This allowed all possible responses by the respondents. To ensure reliability and validity, the instruments were given to two experts in strategic management and two professionals in research and methodology of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and their suggestions implemented. The research instruments were also subjected to thorough examination by specialists in research and methodology in the Faculty of Commerce to ensure they met both content and construct validity.

A pilot study was conducted using 10 employees on Telkom Nakuru who were not part of the study sample. Cronbach alpha test was used to test reliability of questions. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. However, there is actually no lower limit to the coefficient. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. Based upon the formula _ = rk /[1 + (k -1)r] where k is the number of items considered and r is the mean of the inter-item correlations the size of alpha is determined by both the number of items in the scale and the mean inter-item correlations. George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb: "_ > .9 – Excellent, _ > .8 – Good, _ > .7 – Acceptable, _ > .6 – Questionable, _ > .5 – Poor, and _ < .5 – Unacceptable" (p. 231). While increasing the value of alpha is partially dependent upon the number of items in the scale, it should be noted that this has diminishing returns. It should also be noted that an alpha of .8 was obtained which is probably a reasonable goal.

The data collected for the purpose of the study was adopted and coded for completeness and accuracy. Descriptive statistics method was used for data analysis and interpretation. SPSS version 17.0 was used to analyse data using multi-regression analysis. The collected data was analysed quantitatively. Inferential statistics (Spearman Rank Correlation) was used to analyse the relationships between the variables. Descriptive statistics (mean, weighted averages and frequency) was used where measures of relationships did not apply. The level of significance for statistical analysis was 0.05. According to Aiken (1994), this level of significance is most commonly used in behavioural science, hence its adoption in this study.

4. Results and Discussion

Areas Telkom Kenya has experienced Change

The research sought to establish the areas in which Telkom Kenya has experienced change. Therefore, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on five sections of organizational change, namely: policy, new technology, expansion in departments, job description and departmental changes. It was established from the study that, on policy changes, 70% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 6% neutral and 4% disagreed. On new technology, 60% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 4% neutral, 6% disagreed. On expansion of departments 10% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 20% neutral, 20% disagreed and 50% strongly disagreed. On job description, 50% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 10% neutral, 10% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. On department change 10% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 15% neutral, 30% disagreed and 35% strongly disagreed. These results were as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Areas Telkom Kenya has Experienced Change

Areas of change	SA		A		U		DA		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Policy changes	42	70	12	20	4	6	2	4	0	0
New technology	36	60	18	30	2	4	4	6	0	0
Expansion in departments	6	10	18	30	12	20	12	20	30	50
Job description	30	50	12	20	6	10	6	10	6	10
Department change	6	10	12	20	10	15	18	30	22	35

The research findings shown above indicate that much of the change in Telkom Kenya has occurred on policy changes, new technology and job description. The results from the interview schedules indicated the common areas of change which have taken place in Telkom include restructuring of policies and functional systems, branding and re-branding of products, venturing into new market areas, change in technology and organizational culture.

Relationship between HRD and Change Management

The study sought to establish the relationship between HRD and change management in Telkom Kenya. The results of data analysis were as tabulated below.

Table 2: Relationship between HRD and Change Management

			Contribution of HRD	Crises
Spearman's Rho	Contribution of HRD	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.357(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	60	60
	Change management	Correlation Coefficient	.60(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	60	60

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the Spearman Rank correlation (Rho) suggest that there was a significant relationship between HRD and change management (Rho=357, P<.05). This implies that if the HRD is actively engaged, the implementation and management of change would be more effective.

Challenges HRD face in the Implementation and Management of Change

The study sought to identify the challenges that HRD faced in the management and implementation of change in Telkom Kenya. The results challenges identified were as summarized below.

- Reluctant and poor management support
- Lack of capacity to conceptualize issues related to change
- Strong organization culture impending change in organizations
- Lack of enough finance to finance the change dimensions

Paper ID: 1091710 DOI: 10.21275/1091710

- Time lag between change implementation and the results of change leading to discontent among the affected persons
- Lack of co-ordination on retirement benefits for the retrenched employees affected by change
- Poor preparation and planning for change implementation which leads to failure to convince the existing employees and management to embrace change.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The research results show that change management at Telkom faces a number of challenges which include poor management support, lack of capacity to conceptualize issues related to change, strong organization culture impending change in organizations, lack of enough finance to finance the change dimensions, time lag between change implementation and the results of change leading to discontent among the affected persons, lack of co-ordination on retirement benefits for the retrenched employees affected by change and poor preparation and planning for change implementation which leads to failure to convince the existing employees and management to embrace change. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that Telkom Kenya should train employees to embrace change as a means to enlisting their full support for implementation and management of change. Moreover, more studies should be conducted to document the factors leading to resistance to change by staff in organizations, challenges facing management of change in devolve government units and methods of unfreezing change causes in private organizations.

References

[1] Aiken, L. R. (1994). *Psychological testing and assessment*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
[2] Beer, M., & Nohria, N. (2000). Cracking the code of change. *Harvard Business Review*, *78*(2), 133-41.
[3] Dyer. L. (1985). Strategic human resources management and planning. In K. Rowland, & G. Ferris, (Eds.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management. vol. 3* (pp. 1-30). JAI Press.
[4] Erica, W. (2006). *Strategic public relations management planning*. University of York Publishers.
[5] George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference. 11.0 update* (4^{th} ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
[6] Jiménez-Jiménez, D., & Sanz-Valle, R. (2005). Innovation and human resource management fit: an empirical study. *Int J Manpow*, *26*(4), 364-81.
[7] Katherine, W. (2002). *From County Hospital to NHS Trust: the History and Archives of NHS Hospitals.* Harvard Press.
[8] Kotter, J. (2011). Change Management vs. Change Leadership – What's the Difference? *Forbes online*. Retrieved December 21, 2011 from https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2011/07/12/change-management-vs-change-leadership-whats-the-difference/#203e80fd4cc6
[9] Laursen, K., & Foss, N. J. (2003). New human resource management practices, complementarities and the impact on innovation performance. *Cambridge Journal of economics*, *27*(2), 243-263.
[10] Merkle, J. A. (2005). *Management and Ideology*. University of California Press.
[11] Michael, B. (2007). *Embattled Chief Executive Resigns at Home Depot*. New York.
[12] Pasmore, W., & Woodman, R. (Eds.), Research in organization change and development (Vol. 12, pp. 97-128). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
[13] Reicher, S. D., Drury, J., Hopkins, N. & Stott, C. (2001). A model of crowd prototypes and crowd leadership. In C. Barker, A. Johnson, & M. Lavalette, (Eds.), *Leadership and social movements*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[14] Riches, A. (2001). The Four Emotional Stages of Change. *The CEO Refresher*. Retrieved August 4, 2017 from http://www.refresher.com/Archives/!stagesofchange.html
[15] Schuler, R. (1989). Strategic Human Resource Management. *Human Relations*, *42*(2), 157-184.
[16] Wanberg, C. R., & Banas, J. T. (2000). Predictors and outcomes of openness to changes in a reorganizing workplace. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*, 132-142.