Change Communication Strategies, Model of Change Management Using in Organization, Change Management Competencies: A Study at Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia

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ABSTRACT: *This study gives an overview regarding change communication strategies, model of change management danchane management competencies in Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia (FRDM)*
KEY WORD*:Change Communication Strategies, Model of Change Management Using in Organization, Change Management Competencies,Fire And Rescue Department of Malaysia*

I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia (FRDM) popularly known as Bomba, is the federal fire and rescue services agency in Malaysia. The Malay term 'Bomba' is derived from the Portuguese word bombeiros which carries the same meaning.

In Malaysia, the fire and rescue services started in 1883 with the establishment of the Selangor state fire and rescue volunteers squad headed by H.F.Bellamy with 15 crews. After the World War II, in 1946 the Malayan Union Fire Services (MUS) was formed with Flight Lt. W.J Gerumandi being appointed as the Director of Malayan Union Fire Services. MUFS was based in Kuala Lumpur.Through the Federation of Malaya's agreement, the fire and rescue service was handed over to the state governments. The service was then integrated as a federal-level department on 1 January 1976, reporting to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. On 15 May 1981, the department was renamed as the Malaysian Fire Services Department.On 8 January 1997, the Cabinet has agreed to change the logo or insignia, flag and name of the Malaysian Fire Services Department to be known as the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department, which are officially announced and launched in a ceremony held in Genting Highlands Fire and Rescue Station, Pahang on 21 February 1997, by The Honourable Malaysian Prime Minister of that time, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad-the fourth Malaysian Prime Minister.

The objective of the FRDM is to provide effective and efficient fire prevention and fire-fighting services, enforcement of law related to fire safety and fire-fighting as well as humanitarian services. To improve on quality, the department is determined to excel through innovation and the M.S. ISO 9001-2000 quality certification.To achieve these objectives, the department implements its functions as stipulated under Section 5(1) & (2) the Fire Services Act 1988 (Act 341), among which are as follows:

1. Extinguish, fighting, preventing and controlling fires.
2. Protect life and property in case of fire.
3. Determining the fire exits, maintenance and regulation.
4. Carry out an investigation into the cause, origin and circumstances of the fire.
5. Perform humanitarian services, including protection of life and property during the occurrence of any disaster.

FRDM can be other than his duties under subsection (1), perform any other tasks entrusted to it by law or otherwise held by the minister to implement. In terms of quality objective, the department are determined to excel through innovation and the quality of MS ISO 9001-2000. Client charter is "To Plan and provide professional fire and rescue services to save lives, property and the environment and increase the level of fire safety and public awareness." Motto Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia is "Ready To Rescue", "Fast And Friendly". As at February 2013,they have 13,446 personnel in the department.

II.   CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Communication

Communication is the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver. It used to be that you only had to worry about the way you communicated face-to-face or on paper. Technology has changed this completely. It is important for people to take into account every aspect of how they are relaying information. This is where communication strategies come into play. Communication strategies are the blueprints for how this information will be exchanged.

Change communications

Change communications focuses more on the emotional, rather than the intellectual side of content. For example, resistance is an almost ubiquitous response to change. A communicator's instinct might be to send numerous emails explaining a change and detailing its benefits. In truth, there is no one email that is going to solve the problem of resistance. Designing a tactical messaging approach that has a strong emotive appeal will help ensure that you reach employees on an individual level.

Change communication success happens at an executive or leadership perspective, as opposed to on a functional level. This again is a significant difference from traditional communications. The line becomes blurred between what is effective change sponsorship and what is effective communication. The way I look at it, nothing can change without communication, so this is a fundamental aspect of successful change leadership.

Because the discipline of change communication differs significantly from other forms of communication, it requires a particular set of principles and best practices. These include the following:

1. **Not communicating is communicating something. The first casualty of change is often information.**

    Keep in mind that in the absence of communication, employees will fill the void – this will put the change initiative in a deficit situation in terms of communication, as you will first be forced to dig out of a hole of miss-information, and then establish messaging.

2. **Change is about energy, and energy is emotion.**

    Consider opportunities to shape the experience of the change, ensuring that the form and content of communication appeals positively on an emotional plane. It's vital to understand the key drivers of employees' intrinsic motivation and shape communication messages and activities to appeal on that level.

3. **Communicate through words, symbols and behaviours.**

    Change communication must go beyond mere information and words – employees can be reached more powerfully through symbols, and by watching behaviours around them. Consider change communication activities that go beyond words and that appeal at the emotional, experiential level through symbols and behaviours.

4. **Conversation is the smallest unit of change.**

    The organizational change process happens through conversations, most of which take place informally. A change communications initiative should focus on maximizing opportunities for conversations to happen through both structured meetings and spontaneous exchanges that happen day-to-day.

5. **Communication is the drumbeat of change.**

    Through a tumultuous period of transformation, communication should be established as the drumbeat of change – a regular, predictable and reassuring touch point for employees. It's important for the communications drumbeat to keep the pace of change, speeding up or slowing down according to the phases of transformation.

6. **Trust is the currency of change.**

    A successful change initiative requires careful consideration of trust as an essential asset. Change leaders and agents must ensure that they nurture trust through authentic, honest and transparent communication.

Types of Communication Strategies

Communication strategies can be verbal, nonverbal, or visual. Integrating all the strategies together will allow you to see the most success. This allows a business to meet employee needs and increase workplace knowledge.

Verbal communication strategies can be broken down into the two categories of written and oral communication. Written strategies consist of avenues such as e-mail, text, and chat. Examples that fall into the oral category are phone calls, video chats, and face-to-face conversation.Nonverbal communication strategies consist of mostly visual cues, such as body language, facial expressions, physical distance between communicators, or the tone of your voice. These cues are typically not intended. However, it is important to realize the message you are sending. Otherwise, you may be saying one thing, yet the receiver is hearing another.Visual communication strategies can be seen through signs, webpages, and illustrations. These strategies are used in the workplace to draw attention and provide documentation. Human resources is required to post certain visuals throughout the workplace to comply with safety laws.

Objectives of Change Communication

Change communication should focus on addressing the issues of employees and provide a humane touch. Communication researchers have described the purpose of communication content in a change process as: spreading a vision, minimizing uncertainty (Klein, 1996), gaining employee commitment (Kotter, 1995), involving employees by seeking their input into the content and process of the change (Kitchen & Daly, 2002), overcoming barriers to change (Carnall, 1997), and challenging the status quo (Balogun& Hope, 2003). Few of the objectives of communication carried out during change management are as follows:

1. Tackle Queries of Employees

Communication must address the information of employees, the management of changes and the motivation of employees (Dolphin, 2005). Excellent communication means that everyone in the organization, at all levels, understands the need for change, what the changes are and how they will affect the business and each individual's work.

2. Generate Community Spirit

Organizational communication is considered as an important antecedent of the self-categorization process, which helps to define the identity of a group and to generate a community spirit, which fits into organizational requirements (De Ridder, 2003; Postmes et al., 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Communication to create a community within organizations shows in for instance high commitment to the organization of the employees, in trust of employees with management and in organizational identification (Elving, 2005).

Build Trust: The dominant perspective in literature (Dirks &Ferrin, 2001) is that trust results in distinctive effects such as more positive attitudes, higher levels of cooperation, and superior levels of performance (Jones & George, 1998; Mayer et al., 1995). Cheney (1999) suggested that values in the workplace can be evaluated by the role communication plays. Chia (2005) affirmed that "trust and commitment are byproducts of processes and policies which are designed to make the relationship satisfactory for both parties, such as open, appropriate, clear and timely communication". Trust can be conveyed through effective communication (Mishra & Mishra, 1994) via openness and concern. Communication practices within an organization are expected to have an important influence on the degree to which employees trust their managers and the organization's top echelon, as well as their commitment to the organization

3. Motivate Employees

Motivation is the influence or drive that causes us to behave in a specific manner and has been described as consisting of energy, direction, and sustainability (Kroth, 2007).Communication is also proved to be an effective tool for motivating employees involved in change (Luecke, 2003). Organization communication scholars have shown that the adequacy of information provided by the organization has also contributes to an employees' job satisfaction which encourages the staff. Carlisle and Murphy (1996) suggests motivating others to communicate effectively and address employees' queries. Motivation theories explore the numerous approaches to meet individuals' needs, including expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), need theory (Maslow, 1954), reinforcement theory (Skinner, 1971) and the broadly used goal theory (Karoly, 1993). It has been shown that predictors of motivation include job satisfaction, perceived equity and organizational commitment (Schnake, 2007). Motivation is either positively or negatively influenced by the experience an employee has inside a given work environment and with leaders (Gilley et al., 2009). Powerful motivations promote strong efforts to complete the action in spite of huge difficulties. Kantner (1983) says an important change requires a leap of faith into the unfamiliar. The higher the level of emotional experiencing, the higher will be the level of receptivity to a proposed change (Huy, 1999).

4. Employee Commitment

Communication studies find commitment is linked to employee voice and argumentativeness, which concepts involve freedom to speak up about concerns and ability to argue the issues surrounding these concerns (Gorden&Infante, 1991; Gorden et al., 1988; Infante&Gorden, 1991). The effectiveness and commitment of employees depends largely on their knowledge and their understanding of the strategic issues of the company (Tucker et al., 1996). Communication needs to be well managed so that at any time during the change process confusion is avoided through clear, accurate and honest messages, by using a variety of media with high coverage and impact (Abraham et al., 1999). Pascale (1984) assures that people committed to a vision is more important than a well thought out strategy as they successfully accelerates the change process (Larwood et al., 1995). Allen (1991) tested a model of communication sources along with commitment and perceptions of support. Allen found commitment and support comes from communication with top management and superiors. Sincere and effective communication styles among organization members enable members to integrate the organization through internalization of the organization's objectives and rules by the employees. Thus,

commitment of the person who works in this atmosphere increases and as the rise of job satisfaction, employee contributes to the increase of organization's success. Miller (2003) also states that concentration and passionate dedication are necessary to achieve distinctive competence and success.

5. Employee Participation

A study by Parker et al. (1997) showed that employee participation was associated with higher job satisfaction and better well-being individuals tend to report higher job satisfaction when they have an opportunity to provide input into how decisions are made (Konovsky&Folger, 1987; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Hyo-Sook (2003) stated that excellent organizations enclose management structures that empower employees' participation in decision-making. According to Heller et al. (1988), increased participation in decision-making by lower-level employees has been found to have a positive effect on the efficiency of the decision-making process. Employees who participate in the decision-making process have higher levels of satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Involvement of employees increases workers' input into decisions that affect their well-being and organizational performance (Glew et al., 1995). A growing body of research suggests that employee involvement has a positive impact on change implementation (Sims, 2002) and productivity (Huselid, 1995). Specifically, relinquishing control and allowing employees to make decisions yields constructive results (Risher, 2003). Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) posit that those allowed to participate meaningfully in change are more committed to its success because their relevant contributions are integrated into the change plan.

6. Reduce Uncertainty

Information is not only a pre-requisite to the ability of influencing the outcomes (Terry &Jimmieson, 1999), but knowledge about the motives for change also facilitates reducing uncertainty and creating readiness for change. Effective change communication can be viewed as a way to manage uncertainty (DiFonzo& Bordia, 1998). Uncertainty of employees during change processes will reflect on the implications for the individual employee, or the environment that employee is doing his or her work in. It comes with questions like "will I still have a job after this change", "will I still have the same co-workers after the change", and "can I still do perform my tasks on the same way I used to do them". In this sense feelings of uncertainty are about the process of the change, the personal and social consequences of the change.

7. Job Security

Recent meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that employees who see their jobs as lacking security tend to have lower job satisfaction, less organizational commitment, and a stronger intention to turnover (Sverke et al., 2002). Prior research shows that those who remain after workforce reductions often believe their jobs no longer offer security (Armstrong-Stassen, 1998). The results of a cross-sectional study of 3881 employees from 20 organizations in Flanders and Brussels showed that organizational communication and participation were negatively related to job insecurity (Elst et al., 2010). Organizations can take measures to prevent the most negative impact of job insecurity from occurring by, by providing accurate information and enhancing communication, supplying retraining for alternative employment, and training their employees in how to cope with the stress created by job insecurity (Hartley et al., 1991; Heaney et al., 1994; Kets de Vries&Balazs, 1997).

8. Add Feedback

Appropriate communications provide employees with feedback and reinforcement during the change which enables them to make better decisions and prepares them for the advantages and disadvantages of change (Peterson & Hicks, 1996). Figure 1 depicts the change communication model derived from the literature review. It shows the impact of various variables on communication. The level of community spirit, trust, motivation, commitment, job security and participation must be satisfied and increased so that the employees may understand the idea behind the change and address the needs competently. This gives rise to the commitment to change which finally results in successful organizational change. Future researches can be test the model empirically to assess the individual role and impact of each of the variables in delivering appropriate communication.

III. MODEL OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT USING IN ORGANIZATION

Advancement of technology and globalization has resulted in an increasing need for organizations in both the private and public sectorespeacially to FRDM to embrace change as a way of enhancing service delivery to public or consumers. Organization change is critical for a firm to remain competitive, but the process of change is faced with serious challenges and barriers (Pieterse, Caniëls, & Homan, 2012). Similarly, Brown and Humphreys (2003) revealed that organizational change commitment is considered effective when leadership is clearly demonstrated. Apparently, successful change implementation is a problematic issue due to employees resistance for change. To enhance the success of change implementation, the management must actively engage

the employees and ensure effective relay of information between management and employees (Ford et al., 2008). The process of change is driven by a number of strategic considerations that feature operations integration and business performance.

The organizational setting in the public sector is facing bombardment to change due to disruptive nature of technologies and high demand for quality services. The ability of an organization in the public sector is shaped by its commitment to enhancing effective systems and structures (Pieterse, Caniëls, & Homan, 2012; Senior, 2002). Change is not easily implemented and managed to take into account that employees form a critical part of the process and have a high position in its implementation. For effective change implementation, there are various models that form an essential part of the process to address the various barriers to change (Cole, Harris, & Jeremy, 2006). One of the key change models was developed by Kotter in 1995 normally referred to as the Kotter's eight-step model (Kotter, 1995). The model has eight steps that ensure effective implementation of change at each phase. The theory is anchored on other theoretical frameworks such as dynamic capability and resource-based theories.

Adapted from Dr John Kotter's 8 Step Process for leading change
http://www.kotterinternational.com/our-principles/changesteps/changesteps

1. **Creating an Urgency: This can be done in the following ways:**
* Identifying and highlighting the potential threats and the repercussions which might crop up in the future.
* Examining the opportunities which can be tapped through effective interventions.
* Initiate honest dialogues and discussions to make people think over the prevalent issues and give convincing reasons to them.
* Request the involvement and support of the industry people, key stakeholders and customers on the issue of change.

2. **Forming Powerful Guiding Coalitions**
This can be achieved in the following ways:
* Identifying the effective change leaders in your organizations and also the key stakeholders, requesting their involvement and commitment towards the entire process.
* Form a powerful change coalition who would be working as a team.
* Identify the weak areas in the coalition teams and ensure that the team involves many influential people from various cross functional departments and working in different levels in the company.

3. **Developing a Vision and a Strategy**
This can be achieved by:
* Determining the core values, defining the ultimate vision and the strategies for realizing a change in an organization.
* Ensure that the change leaders can describe the vision effectively and in a manner that people can easily understand and follow.

4. **Communicating the Vision**
* Communicate the change in the vision very often powerfully and convincingly. Connect the vision with all the crucial aspects like performance reviews, training, etc.
* Handle the concerns and issues of people honestly and with involvement.

5. Removing Obstacles
- Ensure that the organizational processes and structure are in place and aligned with the overall organizational vision.
- Continuously check for barriers or people who are resisting change. Implement proactive actions to remove the obstacles involved in the process of change.
- Reward people for endorsing change and supporting in the process

6. Creating Short-Term Wins
- By creating short term wins early in the change process, organiztion can give a feel of victory in the early stages of change.
- Create many short term targets instead of one long-term goal, which are achievable and less expensive and have lesser possibilities of failure.
- Reward the contributions of people who are involved in meeting the targets.

7. Consolidating Gains
- Achieve continuous improvement by analysing the success stories individually and improving from those individual experiences.

8. Anchoring Change in the Corporate Culture
- Discuss the successful stories related to change initiatives on every given opportunity.
- Ensure that the change becomes an integral part in your organizational culture and is visible in every organizational aspect.
- Ensure that the support of the existing company leaders as well as the new leaders continue to extend their support towards the change.

IV. CHANGE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

What is a Competency?

Competency is the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organizational success. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies.

- Knowledge is the cognizance of facts, truths and principles gained from formal training and/or experience. Application and sharing of one's knowledge base is critical to individual and organizational success.
- A skill is a developed proficiency or dexterity in mental operations or physical processes that is often acquired through specialized training; the execution of these skills results in successful performance.
- Ability is the power or aptitude to perform physical or mental activities that are often affiliated with a particular profession or trade such as computer programming, plumbing, calculus, and so forth. Although organizations may be adept at measuring results, skills and knowledge regarding one's performance, they are often remiss in recognizing employees' abilities or aptitudes, especially those outside of the traditional job design.
- Individual attributes are properties, qualities or characteristics of individuals that reflect one's unique personal makeup. Individual attributes are viewed as genetically developed or acquired from one's accumulated life experiences. Although personal characteristics are the most subjective of the components, a growing, significant body of research links specific personality traits to successful individual and organizational performance.
- Individually recognizing and rewarding any of these sources of expertise provides a strong basis for individual performance engagement. However, it is their combination that results in the unleashing of resources that are all too frequently untapped.

When utilizing competencies, it is important to keep the following in mind:
- Competencies do not establish baseline performance levels; rather they are used to raise the bar on employee performance. They provide employees with road maps to increase their capabilities incrementally.
- Competencies focus on an organization's culture and values.
- Competencies reflect the organization's strategy; that is, they are aligned to short- and long-term missions and goals.
- Competencies focus on how results are achieved rather than merely the end result. In this manner they bridge the gap between performance management and employee development and are an integral component of personal development plans.
- Competencies close skill gaps within the organization.
- Competency data can be used for employee development, compensation, promotion, training and new hire selection decisions.

V. CONCLUSION

In summary,change management is used for one reason, to ensure organization success. Without change management, the risks of missing project objectives, losing productivity, or complete project failure all increase and threaten anorganization in future. Lacking effective, thorough, and timely change management is extremely hazardous to an organization.It can be concluded that FRDM has applied this model in an effort to preserve this department to continue reliably in the mainstream.

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