

Extended Working Hours – Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.

Mohd Hussin Mohd Ali

ABSTRACT :*Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. operates as a Wellness Support Services company, whose hospital support and facility management services are widely acknowledged to be industrial benchmark-setters in Malaysia. Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd believes that there is high demand from customers and plans to extend working hours for each team to 9 hours every day during the pick hours. This study will be underpinned by Lewin’s (1947) and Kotter’s (1996) change theories. I anticipate that the findings will provide insights about the actions taken by Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd, the communication strategies and competency of change management actions within a transformational change context.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Organizations continue to operate in a chaotic global business world, and therefore organizational changes representing first and second-order degrees of change will continue to be a major focus of company endeavors for organizational members (Cicmil 1999). However, as Burnes and Jackson (2011) state, there is evidence that as many as 70% of change initiatives fail. According to Cicmil (1999), utilizing a project concept in organizational change initiatives is an emerging perspective, which may influence the outcomes associated with organizational change. Turner and Cochrane (1993) define projects as endeavors in which resources are organized so as to achieve unitary, beneficial change.

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. operates the hospital in Malaysia. Edgenta Mediserve operates as a Wellness Support Services company, whose hospital support and facility management services are widely acknowledged to be industrial benchmark-setters in Malaysia.

The company serves more than 100 hospitals and over 300 healthcare institutions around the world. Edgenta Mediserve also provides integrated supports and facility management services to public hospitals, owned by the Malaysian Ministry of Health (MOH) in the Malaysian states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Sarawak and Sabah. The company was incorporated in 1983 and is based in Kuala Lumpur.

Growing together for almost 36 years in Malaysia, Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd has been producing quality 24/7 services not only to serve rising demand but to operate its businesses through professional, ethical and moral practices that have been well received throughout the world.

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd strong commitment to the '3-Benefits' principle has contributed to the organization's sustainable growth which is to be of benefit to all countries it has invested in, to be of benefit to the people of those societies and to be of benefit to the company that consists of shareholders, executives and employees.

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd operates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Divided into 3 working shift, currently each team works for 8 hours every day. In this study, Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd believes that there is high demand from customers and plans to extend working hours for each team to 9 hours every day during the pick hours. As the extension of 1 hour is only effected the first shift everyday. At present, there are 350 employees; 200 fulltimes and 150 part timers in Malaysia.

Change Communication Strategies

The concept of organizational change and the leadership skills required to implement such change have been a major concern of business leaders and academic researchers in recent years (Gilley 2005). Organizational change initiatives are often categorized according to types: organizational learning, further developing, transforming, and radical new positioning (Gareis 2010).

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd engraved the extended working hours in 4 strategic steps; communicating the change management plan, lay out 5 years strategic blueprint, creating evangelists and repeating communication.

Step One: Communicating the change management plan

Any arbitrary attempt to introduce a significant change in the workplace will meet resistance and lead to failure, usually very quickly. Employees are not the same as managers or owners, and they do not always share the same perspective. While the owner is charged with guiding the direction of the company and a manager is charged with getting results, an employee doesn't necessarily know what's going on in the late night management meetings or backroom discussions that take place without their input or involvement.

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd announced changes to staff by highlighting the 'Why' rather than first spelling out 'How' the changes are necessary in the first place. The management also highlighted the benefit via incentive for each team members during this very step. Communicating the extended working hours to the team members is less about telling them what to do and more about informing them why the changes that are being put forward are necessary, and explaining in detail why that is the case, which to provide better a quality services the prosper the client. Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd conducted several meetings with all different level of team members during this period. It's a two-way communication among all members.

Step Two: Lay out 5 years Stratetegic Blueprint

The unknown can be one of the greatest causes of anxiety for any individual. Not knowing what the future of a company looks like usually turns a workforce into a nervous and worried group.

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd provide the team with 5 Years Strategic Blueprint 2018 – 2022. In this strategic document, the extended working hours are clearly stated in 'Top-Notch Services' initiative. Other than the extended working hours; better working environment, worldclass industry parts readiness and 15 minutes response team also among the tactical plan stated in this focus. As listed as one of the innitiative, the management also presented the long-term benefit after the extended hours implemented in the organization. This involves cash insentive after the service team achived certain target stated in the blueprint.

Step Three: Create Evangelists

One of the best pieces of advice anybody involved in change management can get, is to make every effort at the earliest stage to create evangelists out of regular employees. Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd selected the best 5 team members among the all level of management to be the evangelists for this changes. The selected team members are welltrained and given full privillage to meet the other employee. These evangelists spread positive vibes about the changes that are coming down the line.

Step Four: Repeating Communication

The best solution for keeping people strong and emotionally healthy during organizational change is to constantly repeat information and the vision to them. Repetition helps solidify things.

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd organize several campaigns for the team members such as A+ Service Badge and Open Service Day. During this event, the management encouraging the team members to share their experience, suggestion for betterment, the ups and downs after the implementation and so on. As a result, employees are up to date with each change, talk about the successes that are happening and show examples of positive growth.

Repeating changes via online platform also taken by the management. Other than official Facebook page, the management also look into other paltform and keep on posting about the progress and recent achivement in various mobile application to spread the vibes.

Model of Change Management

AKurt Lewin wrote, "An issue is held in balance by the interaction of two opposing sets of forces - those seeking to promote change (driving forces) and those attempting to maintain the status quo (restraining forces)". This study will use the three-phase change model developed by Lewin (1947) as a theoretical underpinning. This change model is based upon three sequential steps in a change initiative: un-freezing, moving, and re-freezing (Lewin 1951). Gareis (2010) applies the Lewin change model to the processes of the organizational change type, "transforming", and develops a practical three-stage process for transformation: planning the transformation, implementing the transformation, and stabilizing the organization. Ford and Greer (2006) identified a set of change process factors linked to Lewin's three phases. Goal setting was identified as a measure of unfreezing. Skill development was identified as a measure of movement.

Lewin spoke about the existence of a quasi-stationary social equilibrium. For change to happen the status quo, or equilibrium must be upset – either by adding conditions favourable to the change or by reducing resisting forces. What Kurt Lewin proposes is that whenever driving forces are stronger than restraining forces, the status quo or equilibrium will change. There will always be driving forces that make change attractive to people, and restraining forces that work to keep things as they are.

Successful change is achieved by either strengthening the driving forces or weakening the restraining forces. In Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd, weakening the restraining forces is vital. Several activities to minimize these forces successfully look by the management. For example, to overcome the work stress, the time spent on specific task is adjusted accordingly to the current performance and productivity. Other than that, redesign the working atmosphere to be more conducive is also to tone down the level of stress among the employees.

As for the second restraining forces, fear of unknown, the management team (lead by human resource) develop a campaign throughly in the organization to clear the wave among employees and by the sametime disburse special incentive for them.

The third restraining forces, group inertia, by the involvement of all fulltime employees in the early stage, the domino effects easily can spread to other remaining 150 part timers in Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.

The force field analysis integrates with Lewin's three stage theory of change that work towards unfreezing the existing equilibrium in Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, moving towards the desired change, and then freezing the change at the new level so that a new equilibrium exists that resists further change.

Step One - Unfreezing:

Lewin's theory of change suggests that old habits must be unfrozen to create a state that allows for experimentation with new behaviors. Unless the unfreezing step is consciously considered, the change process is like trying to force water into a bottle that is already full.

The unfreezing process involves the steps of exploring the need for change, diagnosing the issues and forces (both driving and restraining), planning a strategy for change, and finally, building commitment for the change. This is where all aspects need seriously to look into by Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd before implementing the new working time for their employee. For this step, the head departments and top management sit together to breathe the changes before every employee involved. One of the most powerful approaches to unfreezing behavior applied is by involving the participants themselves in gathering data about the situation, analyzing the data, and most importantly making a decision about what should be done.

Step Two – Change or Movement:

The second stage, or moving stage, concerns the actual movement or change. This second step is the time where Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd implemented the new working hours for their employee. By involving managers during the implementation, using evangelists and small group of employees to monitor for change, and by linking employees among departments with a support system for new extended working hours, Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) strengthen the power of the change steps by these three main strategies.

Step Three - Refreezing:

The third phase in the overall change process is called refreezing. Lewin recognized that there is a fundamental difference between knowing what to do, and doing it on a long-term basis.

For longterm change, new habits practiced by all team in Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd through regular opportunities and reinforced on a consistent basis. Longterm change is not only dependent on the 'freezing' of the new working time. Structural changes can significantly refreeze behavior.

Change Management Competencies

The objective of the standards for organization change is to increase the competencies of employees and thereby increase the rate of success for task undertakings. The Competence Management (CM) process in Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd is established as part of the organization's strategic change process.

CM is defined as keeping informed on the existing competence situation; defining future competence needs related to strategy plans, visions, goals, and scenarios; and continuously working on filling the competence gap. In addition, CM encourages continuous competence development. The CM process in Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd is divided into three stages:

Analysis

- i- Identifying the organization's strategic (long-term), critical (short-term), and obsolete/declining ("phasing out areas") competence requirements by analyzing future market and technology demands, based on the Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd Strategic Blueprint.
- ii- Assessing the present competence situation (i.e., the organizational and individual competence levels).
- iii- Personal development discussions used for individual assessments, where managers and employees come to an agreement about the present situation.

iv- Defining the competence gap between the competence requirements and the present competence situation.

Planning

i- Preparing a competence development plan for the organization as well as each individual, based on the competence gap. The development plan describes the competence requirements, the present level, the competence gap, and the actions to be taken to bridge this gap. The plans are updated and reviewed regularly.

Implementation

i- Establishing a more detailed plan for competence development, concretizing different action programs in terms of the theoretical courses, further education, practical learning, job rotation, and project participation in different locations. Outcome evaluation is important in this stage, implementing follow-up and corrective actions where needed.

Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. constantly faces new competence requirements. People and units move frequently and projects are often run across organizational as well as national boundaries. This creates an urgent need for sharing competence and communicating on competence issues in a structured and flexible way, and has resulted in the development of a common competence model.

This model provides a structure and terminology that support the communication on competence issues throughout the organization. The model includes dimensions of professional, business, and human competencies as the main categories. Examples of professional competencies include technical expertise related to certain operations or tasks, financial expertise, or quality management. Typical business competencies involve understanding the core businesses of Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd, knowledge about the customers, and mastering the business language. For human competencies, the employees' interaction and communication abilities are important, emphasizing their attitudes towards teamwork, knowledge sharing, and cultural awareness.

II. CONCLUSION

The study from Edgenta Mediserve (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. has highlighted the effective change communication management for supporting strategic organization change. The 5-implemented strategies by the management play a vital role to make sure the change processes went smoothly. The management plan, control, monitor, evaluate the change to their employee strategically through out the process. This also increases teamwork spirit and stimulates new working experience to all team members.

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