

THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION ' S COMMUNICATION

Elena Doval, "Spiru Haret" University of Braşov

Abstract: The understanding of the change process, the models and concepts utilization in strategies design, techniques learning to adapt to the volatile environment and the new capabilities acquiring to use the new technologies of communication represent some of the contemporary managers' objectives. The electronic revolution has influenced the speed and the direction of the changes and has transformed the global space into a cyber space. The Internet replaced the concept of the market with an electronic space that is leading to the consumer's power increase. In these conditions in which the traditional geographical dimensions disappear the organizations and their management need to understand the threats and the opportunities that the change process is challenging and to develop adequate strategies of adaptation. Nevertheless, the change is presuming a complex management process that has the ITC and innovation as the main drivers. This paper has the scope to emphasize the role of the ITC and innovation in the organization's change process and to offer a conceptual model of the change process. The applied methodology is based on the bibliographical investigation, the collection of some concepts in the field, the information synthesizing, personal deduction and conceptualization. Finally, a model of the organization changing process based on its communication system to the new requirements is presented.

Keywords: IT, innovation, change management, communication, conceptual model

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of the change process, the models and concepts utilization in strategies design, techniques learning to adapt to the volatile environment and the new capabilities acquiring to use the new technologies of communication represent some of the contemporary managers' objectives. The electronic revolution has influenced the speed and the direction of the changes and has transformed the global space into a cyber space. The digitalization has replaced the concept of the market with a cyber space that is leading to the consumer's power increase. In these conditions in which the traditional geographical dimensions disappear the organizations and their management need to understand the threats and the opportunities that this change is challenging and to develop adequate strategies of adaptation. Nevertheless, the change is presuming a complex management process that has the information technology and communication (ITC) and innovation as the main drivers.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

This paper has the scope to emphasize the role of the ITC and innovation in the organization's change process as the main drivers and to offer a conceptual model of the change process based on organizational communication. The applied methodology is based on the

bibliographical investigation, the collection of some concepts in the field, the information synthesizing, personal deduction and conceptualization.

CHALLENGES FOR CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Managing change into organizations

Change management is an approach to transitioning [individuals](#), [teams](#), and [organizations](#) to a desired future state (Kotter, 2011). Starting with Lewin (1951) who enriched the literature with the ‘analyze of forces field’ model, many authors presented different points of view, models and strategies regarding organizational change and the change management (Kotler & Schlesinger, 1979; Ansoff, 1988; Petigrew & Whipp, 1991; Hammer & Champy, 1993; Volberda, 1998; Doval, 2008; Weiner, 2009, Golden-Biddle, 2013).

The new driving forces for change in organizations are considered to be: ‘commoditization, the digital revolution, social mediaization throughout society, globalization, the turbulent world and acceleration (or running faster to stay in the same place)’ (Morris, 2013). Even if these six forces are not the single ones to influence the change process, they are not to be neglected, because, as the author is claiming, they have significant contribution to the process of change, such as:

- The commoditization brings low costs of goods and distribution and low prices due to the outsourcing in the cheap labor market countries;
- The digital revolution influenced about all industries by cutting the computers prices and facilitating the access to the digital market with important other consequences, such as: more jobs, increased IT high skills, improved businesses related to products offered and lower prices;
- The social platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter) influence businesses and markets;
- The globalization facilitates the opportunities of all companies to address to the world market;
- The turbulent world provides opportunities for innovation in all activities;
- The acceleration is a force that combines the other five forces to move on with much more speed.

The failure of some organizational change processes may be solved by using change managers or by additional knowledge acquired by the managers. ‘The process studies of change in organization and management take time seriously, illuminate the role of tensions and contradictions in driving patterns of change, and show how interactions across levels contribute to change. They may also reveal the dynamic activity underlying the maintenance and reproduction of stability (Langley et al., 2013).

Organizational communication

Briefly, the organizational communication relates to the sending and receiving messages among people through different channels, but it means more, i.e. ‘a combination of people, messages, meaning, practices and purpose’ ([Shockley-Zalabak, 1995](#)). Considering the channels used in the multiplication of the receivers and the speed of messages transfer there is a significant difference between what communications has meant in the past (to inform) and what is today (to be involved) and more ‘to shape a strategy that is meaningful and, as a

result, effective, leaders should incorporate each of the four drivers (leading, involving, listening and informing), as appropriate to the situation' (Facey – Mercer, 2014).

The transformation of the communication is certainly due to the information technologies evolution that enables the communication by means of continuing innovated tools. That's why information and communication technologies (ICT) are mostly used together. 'ICT is any technology that enables communication and the electronic capturing, processing and transmission of information' (Apulu & Latham, 2011). 'These technologies include products and services such as desktop computers, laptops, handheld devices, wired or wireless intranet, business productivity software such as text editor and spread sheet, enterprise software, data storage and security, network security and so on' (Ashrafi & Murtaza, 2008). Thus, the technological innovation in communication amplified the channels of information spreading and created the opportunities to develop a global cyber space, including e-market, socialization and much more relations. The innovation and the new technologies facilitated the communication because the 'data-based reporting systems, e-mail, voice mail, intranets, bulletin boards, Websites, and video conferencing are cost effectively breaking down large distances and providing information to huge numbers of people in relatively inexpensive but fast ways. The information and communication technology (ITC) provides opportunities for businesses to offer products and services in the global markets (Apulu & Latham, 2011, p.56). Some people are not very happy of the digitalization, considering that this medium of communication is killing the personality and the group belonging's feeling. 'Unfortunately, these mediums of communication are rather sterile and impersonal, and not as powerful or meaningful to people as more personal modes of communication' (Judge Jr., 2012). Nevertheless, the communication is necessary in change management in any forms or mediums. 'The communication process and organizational change are inextricably linked processes', communication being considered to be 'an important predictor of the organizational change' (Jensen, 2003, p.61).

The change objectives and the change itself has to be clearly communicated (Klein, 1997). The manner of how the communication is used between the leaders and the other people influences the organizations' success. 'Communication includes timing, communication methods, and message content. What managers must understand is that without effective communication it is impossible to implement any change and make it a success' (Mutihac & Pollach, 2010).

Many change processes in organizations failed because of the weak communication even they have well skilled managers. Some of the mistakes often done by the skilled managers are highlighted by Dent (2013), among are the followings: communications are delivered in a caring manner but often lack key information, hesitant about communicating differing opinions, not forceful in knocking down barriers, not good at providing honest feedback, does not show confidence when delivering messages, hesitant to avoid conflict, and not succinct.

A study on the development of effective organizational communication strategies to improve organizational change outcomes shows that (a) face-to-face communication was preferable for important information and e-mail was appropriate for less important information, (b) continuing communication was important for long-term change endeavors and frequent communication was effective for communicating about short-term change processes, and (c)

effective communication of organizational mission and values allowed employee-organizational ethical congruency to develop (Nordin, 2014, p.1).

The communication system is helping the managers ‘in five areas that are especially relevant for performance and member relationships in contemporary organizations: (1) socialization and membership negotiation by organizational members; (2) employment expectations and processes of relationship development in the workplace; (3) use of advanced information and communication technologies; (4) reactions to the current job market and implications of their full-time employment; and (5) orientation toward achievement and their aspirations for engaging in leadership’ (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Providing a culture of openness and interpersonal relationships the communication system will create an environment of trust and the ability to rid the organization of its dysfunctional ways, thus providing a true ability to communicate amongst others at every level of the organization (Halpern, 2012). In the change management the ‘innovative solutions often emerge unexpectedly through informal and unplanned interactions between individuals who see problems from different perspectives’ (Cross et al., 2010). Because the ‘changes are produced on the basis of a number of interconnected causes and effects whose relationships are complicated to conceive of from an analytical framework based on linearity’ (Amagoh, 2008, p.10) the change management process needs an effective communication system.

THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS BASED ON COMMUNICATION MODEL

The organizational communication system became the heart of the change process in the ITC and innovation era. The system has to be planned, organized, managed and controlled in a manner that the psychological distances between the managers and the other people (employees, suppliers, clients or intermediaries and partners) are to be removed, by avoiding the mistakes in communication. The communication implies:

- The messages: the content (motivation, strategy, tasks, resources, responsibilities);
- The style of communication: information, interactive;
- The channels of messages delivery and receiving: oral (personal or in meetings face-to-face); written, using documents (memos, reports, information leaflets or others) or using the cyber space.

A communication system has to comprise at least the following issues (figure 1): the plan, the infrastructure the strategy and the beneficiaries. The plan emphasizes the entire activity of the system implementation: objectives, activities, the funding sources and responsibilities.

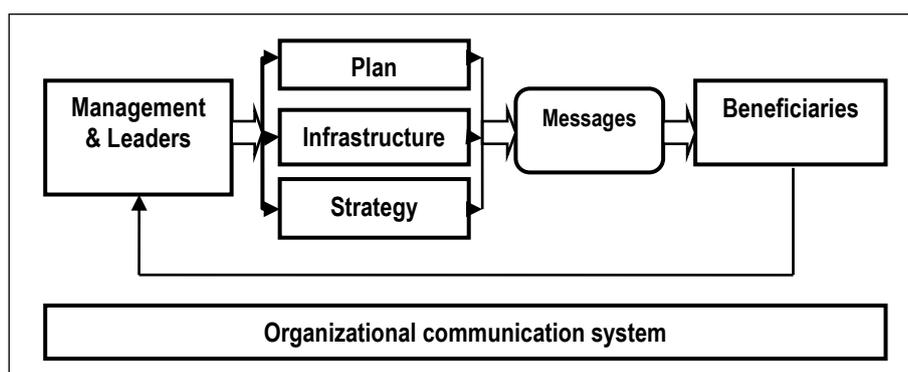


Figure 1 The organizational communication system

The infrastructure includes the investments in digitalization technologies, meeting rooms, devises. The strategy covers the modes of messages drafting, delivery, feedback receiving and analyzing according to the objectives. The messages are spread to the beneficiaries that are sending feedback. The list of beneficiaries is set according to the change process aim. In the same time, the communication system is used as the main tool in the change strategies to ensure the change process success. Therefore, a change management process based on communication (CMPC model) is conceptualized into a model (figure 2).

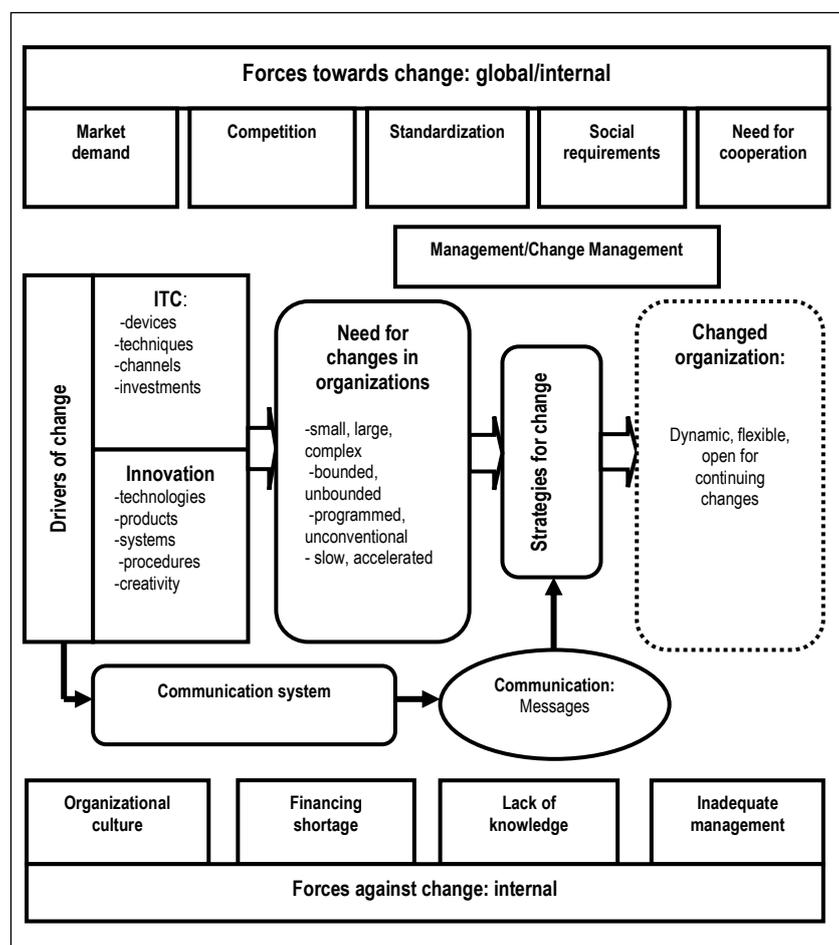


Figure 2 The change management process based on communication (CMPC model)

In the context of ITC accelerated evolution, briefly presented in this paper, the organizations and their managers have to adapt to the new global context, considering the ITC and innovation as the main drivers for change. The managers need to take into account all the benefits of the ITC as a driver of change (the devices, the techniques and the channels that have to be used, as well as the investments in physical and intellectual assets and the knowledge) and the of the innovation, defined by new technologies, new products, new procedures and systems, based on knowledge and creativity.

As in any change process intervene forces towards change and forces against change, the main of them are considered in the drafted model.

The main forces towards change, which may be global or internal, relate to: market demand, competition, standardization, social requirements and the need for cooperation.

- The market demand. The multiplication of the mass production and the variety of the products of the market is offering, the tendency for more personalized products and the price/quality more efficient report determined the increase of the consumers and beneficiaries' power that leads to change.
- The competition. The fight with their competitors for the market shares became the main organizations' strategy for survival or development and the most significant force towards change. In this respect the cyber market is going to cover more and more demands for products and services with lower costs and prices.
- The standardization. The standards imposed in production, storage and sale, international recommendations, European directives and the national legislation are making together one of the most powerful force for change.
- The social requirements. Promises for jobs stability, training programs, rewards, family support and other facilities for may be significant forces towards change.
- The need for cooperation. Innovation by research, production and sales in cooperation and partnership are increasing phenomena, facilitating the cost share and lower prices of products.

The forces against change, which are usually internal, could be: the organizational culture, financing shortage, lack of knowledge and the inadequate management.

- The organizational culture. In different organizational culture the people behavior may be a force against change.
- The financing shortage. The lack or shortage of financing the change may postpone it or may be a serious barrier.
- The lack of knowledge. The knowledge of the people involved in the change process may facilitate or put barriers to the process of change.
- The inadequate management. The management may be competent and well skilled but inadequate in terms of efficient communication.

From this process a changed organization is coming out, which is dynamic, flexible and open for further changes in the organization.

CONCLUSIONS

The role of the ITC and innovation in the organizational change process is elevating today and in the future, determining new approaches of the organization as a system and the change process. The model of the change management process based on communication (CMPC model) may be a useful tool for managing the organization transformation and adaptation to the new global context. The model has as its heart the communication system, which, if well designed, may contribute to the change process's success. The model has to be adapted to the particularities of any organization because the 'organizational change in practice is a manifestation of particularity' (Janson, 2013).

The limits of the model are related to the conceptualization of the ideas presented in this paper and it may not have taken into account some variables and details, but further research may contribute to its development.

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