Managing change by managing the change of oneself

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It is not the purpose of this work to prove that changes in companies are necessary; we should treat change as a matter of fact.

To simplify the discussed matter we build up a model situation of two people standing face to face. One of them is smiling and the others face shows anger and dissapoitment. Even though the two do not talk the faces insure communication resulting in an unstable relationship that is a premise to change. The model situation described above may end up in three typical outcomes. The angry person will adopt the temper of the smiling person or the smiling person will feel annoyed by the anger of the other one and the situation will end up with a struggle. The third possible outcome is the abolishment of the communication. Using this simple model to organisational change will help us to understand how difficult change management is in fact.

Since Mr. Newton was hit by a falling apple, science began to grow upon a distinguishing principle of causality. Whenever a new process was examined it was understood as a black box with an input X and output Y. Scientific research could be understood as discovering the relation between the input X and output Y. Establishing the relation $Y= f(X)$ was resulting into scientific laws. This approach still prevails in the thinking of people and scientists have tried to apply such approach to human behaviour. Results have proven that upon a non-interventional input X the output from a human being equals exactly to that, what the human being decides to do at the specific moment. According to Maturana and Varela (1998) an organism is an operationally closed system interacting with its environment upon his own decision. This approach is known as autopoesis.

Going back to the model situation established in the beginning we may define a multiple communication between two people over time as relationship. For the purpose of this lecture we concentrate on three most existing relationships in the business environment: Employer – employee relationship; customer - supplier relationship; partner – partner relationship.

The traditional interface between a company and its employee is defined as "the job". This, by definition, affiliates the relation between employees and companies with a specific set of attributes. The most specific attribute of "the job" is its duality; the relation either exists or disappears. In a standard cultural and legal environment, employees may not have more or less employment depending on the demand. A decrease in demand on the open market leads companies toward cost reductions and the development of new products. In contrast, decreasing demand for a specific action of the employee forces the individual to struggle for his job involving lobbying forces, developing mobbing activities, generating

products that have no customers (activities, purchases of technologies, generation of analysis, etc.). This leads to the second attribute, dependency; very few employees dispose with a portfolio of jobs providing them with security and stability. Companies dispute the multi-professionalism of employees on the open market and misuse the duality of the mutual relation and the employee's dependency to restrict self-reliance of the individual. The frequently used term describing such activities is called "motivation". The third attribute is ownership of customers and processes by the company. The company openly inserts itself between the customer and the employee and between the process, performed by the employee, and the personality of the individual. This may lead the employee to act passively and irresponsibly. To overcome this gap, the company has to use many different and expensive tools such as data collection in vast software applications, complex management structures for decision making and internal legal systems employing sets of norms and rules and enforcement staff.

This activities known as job descriptions and specifications resulting in ISO 9000 systems, reporting and motivation systems such as Management by objectives, Balanced score card or 360° feedback, or supplier environment simulation such as TQM or the "psychological contract" are based on one common principle. These approaches conserve the employment principle with all the above limiting principles.

Relationships developed on a partnership background respect employees as fully adaptive and responsible individuals supplying them with an environment that allows the individual to provide his sovereign knowledge and capabilities inside the company in the same way or better than on the open market. Such approach in traditional companies faces many obstacles and an unforeseeable resistance that are very difficult to overcome. To understand the extent of the resistance basic paradigms and principles of the company existence have to be discussed.

The first source of resistance is the fundamental of the manager itself. The manager understands himself as the person who is responsible for the performance of his team or subordinates. Overcoming this resistance requires the manager to give up his responsibility to the employee and to take over responsibility for the company's culture and knowledge. The second source of resistance is the employee's mind itself. Employees expect their employer to lie out targets and await a stable salary inclusive or exclusive of bonuses depending on achievement of the targets. The bonuses depend more or less on the performance of the individual employee. Both the company and the employee transfer the responsibility for motivation of the employee to the managers. Breaking through this resistance is even more difficult. This mutual agreement between the company and the employee transfers the responsibility for the employee's future within the company to a third person. This paradigm has to be changed to enable companies to evolve a capability to employ a partnership approach in its strategies.

The transformation of an employment relationship to partnership may be performed in three ways. The first is a direct transition. This approach may fail often from its principle. The employment relationship designs the roles of the employer and employee in a very descriptive and hard way. These roles would have been abolished from both sides at the same time and speed which is difficult to arrange. Communication based on previous structures would have to be changed rapidly. The second approach is over a supplier relationship. This approach has been successfully applied in many outsourcing activities where previous employees have been helped to acquire a non-core part of the business. The third approach of the relationship transition uses the abolishment of the relationship. In many cases it may lead to a walk away of the employees seeking a more secure place elsewhere and their replacement by partners building up the relationship on new principles. Unfortunately many people carry employment ship deep in their minds and are not able to adopt the new culture even coming from the external market.

Bibliography

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