Human Resource Management During Change Initiatives

The over-looming uncertainty and pressures to stay competitive on modern-day businesses have stimulated the need to integrate organizational adaptiveness as a way to adopt change initiatives within an enterprise for it to stay contemporary and competitive when it comes to the operational methods, techniques, and strategies it employs. In such cases of implementing organizational change effective Human Resource Management is crucial as constructive communication with employees is often a deciding factor for any change initiative.

Human Resource Managers during such critical times in a business cycle must seek to mediate the angst and turmoil that emerges among employees as a result of the change. Effective HRM should aim to convert these resistors of change by communicating the benefit sought by the change initiative within the organization, the organization's post-change vision as a whole as well as the management's reasoning behind the change initiative. A study by KPMG further validates the significance of HRM by citing poor managerial leadership and communication as a common pitfall for most change initiatives by suggesting that 83% of mergers and acquisitions (example of a change initiative) fail to enhance shareholder value (Kleimann, 2020). In contrast, Hewlett Packard's (HP) acquisition of Compaq is a great example of a successfully integrated change initiative whereby HP evolved and emerged as a new enterprise in terms of its business approach, working ethos, and overall problem-solving philosophy following its acquisition of Compaq. HP's success was largely credited to effective HRM as a clear well-defined vision of creating a new entity that represented the best aspects of both organizations was set out from the beginning and through effective communication was conveyed to employees as the "change mantra" which in turn reduced employee resistance and angst by eliminating the employee uncertainty of the future.

While HRM led by an ecosystem of leaders throughout the organization can effectively facilitate a successful organizational transformation, this is often not the case. Several hindrances to change initiatives like lack of participation, under-communication of a powerful vision, over-communication of a poor vision and a weak culture that isn't aligned with the mission can be identified. This section of the blog seeks to explore one such roadblock to effective change management that must be overcome through diligent Human Resource Management for most change initiatives to be deemed a success, that of Change Battle Fatigue.

"Change Battle Fatigue can be described as the repercussions of several elements such as past failures plaguing the minds of employees and the sacrifices made during the arduous change process yielding little to no success in the past." (Gleeson, 2018) Change initiatives are now more frequent than ever before some of which are successful while most are not, this causes the change battle fatigue to set in whereby employees often get discouraged and give up on participation, this kind of fatigue can derail even the most valiant efforts for change. While this phenomenon is bound to pose challenges to Human Resource Management now more than ever, I'd like to stress upon a two-step technique to mitigate change battle fatigue – by identifying and celebrating early successes and creating cultural experiences. The former technique prioritizes the first 12-24 month period of the transformation process to identify early milestones during the mission planning stage. In doing so, HR managers can validate the vision for transformation giving employees adequate ammo to support their arguments and shut down

naysayers. Furthermore, periodic celebrations nullify associations of failure with change initiatives thereby providing the needed momentum to counteract the Change Battle Fatigue as hearing about progress and understanding how this progress stimulates the transformation process ensures employees are emotionally invested with the cause.

In addition, the later technique starts with a culture-driven transformation model whereby HR managers must seek to identify what aspects of the organizational culture support as well as detract from the change vision by doing so managers can exhibit and reinforce organizational values that are consistent with the change initiative while eliminating conflicting values.