

CHANGE

- “There is nothing so difficult as initiating change” Michavelli



Organisational Change Management Principles and Occupational Health & Safety

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Abstract

The only thing constant in business is change. This paper introduces the reader to general organisational change principles and suggests these principles can enhance safety change if they are applied to this particular type of organisational re-design. Results of an extensive safety benchmarking study and the role of leaders in transmitting change are explored. Communicating change is dealt with and practical tips given on this vital topic. The issues of management commitment to safety and the importance of building trust in safety change undergo examination. The oral presentation of the paper will be in the form of an inter-active discussion that explains some of the main organisational change theory and explores the features of successful and unsuccessful safety change processes. Participants will be given homework applying Kotter's 8 change principles to a safety change process of their choice.

A Safety Benchmarking

Over a 14 month period in 1994 -5 BHP Minerals carried out an extensive international safety benchmarking exercise with “best in safety class” companies throughout the world. 25 locations throughout the world participated in the study. An approximate 100 page report on findings is available should anyone wish to refer to it

The following were recurring themes in the world’s best safety performers.

1. Executive management provides the impetus for safety performance. This means that senior management is not only committed to and supports safety, but that it insists on safety performance in a manner that is clearly understood and echoed at all levels.

2. Management focus is a key to quality safety performance.

***1 & 2 above were seen as key factors**

3. Existence of a company-wide framework or systematic, standardised approach to safety. The approach has performance standards that receive regular internal and external audits

4. Objectives are set and organisations work towards set targets for implementation of the objectives.

5. Safety personnel report in at the highest level in the organisations. They have mainly an advisory function. Management and supervision drives the safety programme not the safety personnel.

6 Effective safety training targeted to identified needs at all levels. Induction training and detailed safety training for supervisors and managers was high on the priority list.

Regular safety meetings were seen as important.

7 Active personal involvement of senior management personnel in the safety programme

8 Safety is considered in performance evaluations of all staff

9 Regular, detailed audits of the safety management system

10 Formal approaches to hazard identification and risk analysis, employees were fully involved in this

11 Formal emergency response procedures that were practiced and audited

12 The best in class addressed contractor safety before contractors were allowed on site, they pre-qualified them based on safety and made safety performance a contract condition. Contractors were expected to perform at the same safety level as permanent employees

13 High on the list of the ways the best in class built safety awareness were management participation and leadership, dissemination of information, safety meetings and rewards or recognition of performance

14 Safety is a condition of employment and dismissals occur for non-performance

15 Well-managed rehabilitation programmes are in place

16 The best in class use medical examinations and testing to ensure fitness for duty

17 There were E.A.P’s in place

18 There were off the job safety programmes

19 There was an emphasis on vehicle / plant maintenance and driver / operator training programmes.

20 There were extensive PPE training, maintenance and audit programmes

21 Lock-out procedures were used instead of tag-out

22 Best in class managers and supervisors respond positively to safety issues that are raised

23 Best in class supervisors are responsible for safety auditing, investigating accidents, planned job observations and training

24 All levels in the organisation make decisions that reflect the philosophy “Safety first-Production will follow”

It is suggested Safety Management Systems be designed around these benchmarking findings.

Krause speaks of nine factors that predict positive safety outcomes

1 Procedural justice

Does the individual perceive that the supervisor’s decision-making process to be fair?

2 Leader member exchange

If employees believe the supervisor will provide support and look out for their interests positive results will be found

3 Management credibility

Do employees perceive that what management says is consistent with what it does?

4 Perceived organizational support

Do employees perceive that they receive the support they need to accomplish the organisation's objectives?

5 Workgroup relations

Do coworkers treat each other with respect, listen to each others ideas, help one another out and fulfill commitments?

6 Teamwork

To what extent do employees perceive that working with team members is an effective way to complete tasks?

7 Organisational value for safety performance improvement

The more employees perceive that the organization values safety goals, the more willing they will be to invest in those goals themselves.

8 Upward communication

Can the workers speak freely to their supervisor about safety concerns?

9 Approaching others

Do employees feel free to speak to each other about safety concerns?

SAFETY CHANGE

- KEEP IT SIMPLE
- REALITY TEST WITH THE WORKFORCE (MUST WORK IN THE "REAL WORLD")



B Introduction to change

Change has been around a long time.

"I cannot say whether things will get better if we change, what I can say is that they must change if they are to get better" (Georg Christoph Lichtenstein, 1742-1799)

Dr. M. Wilkinson puts change into perspective when he says "Organisational change is a generic body of knowledge that is applicable across the board but only when contextualised into the particular workplace within the culture and people characteristics and professions etc. of the situation /workplaces"

There are many general organisational factors that impact on OHS, if an organisation has poor recruitment practices and consequent low employee skills, safety will inevitably be poor, if there is a low commitment to training safety will suffer, if communications lose their intent this will adversely impact upon safety, if responsibilities are not defined and monitored it will be very difficult to improve safety. In some companies analysing and improving the general organisational climate is a necessary pre-requisite to introducing safety change. In some cases introducing safety change can be the vehicle for broader organisational change. In some cases broader organizational change can be the vehicle for safety change.

Having spent two years recently undertaking tertiary study in the Management of Organisational change this author has developed the belief that Organisational Change principles are particularly applicable to Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Change. Successful safety change requires technical safety skills and change management skills. Refer to the paper “What Makes a Safety Management System Fly” by this author for a discussion on the required technical safety requirements. The safety professional or manager who is about to embark on major safety change is advised to keep the following discussion on change management in mind and to incorporate the principles into safety change.

Today’s enterprise must be able to react quickly to external change while managing internal change effectively. Change is a constant in the safety profession. If a safety professional can not adapt to and manage change their life will be very stressful. Technology is opening up new doors, thus adding to the potential for stress. Those who survive and thrive will be those who can adapt to the changes.

Change can be exciting, a welcome relief from the monotonous tedium of daily life and it may open new doors. On the other hand change may mark the boundaries of the comfort zone, beyond which lies unknown territory full of nasty surprises, signposts leading to hard work ahead and holding the real possibility of final failure.

Employees often resist changes which diminish skill requirements in jobs, personal status, authority, power or influence, personal or job security, remuneration, workplace communication and opportunities for social interaction. They also resist changes which are forced on them, are not fully understood, affect accepted ways of doing things, violate behavioural norms, disrupt established social relationships, make people feel ineffective or incompetent or expose personal weaknesses.

.Wood maintains the following are reasons why organisational change fails.

1. management following fashionable ideology not suited to their organisational change requirements
2. unclear or unrealistic organisational change expectations
3. not realising that successful organisational change takes persistent effort over many years
4. inconsistencies between management’s declared organisational change objectives and their change management behaviour and actions
5. assuming training employees or reorganising them is the only organisational change they need to carry out
6. not changing un- supportive organisational change and development systems

The following is a summation of the major principles of organisational change that the author believes can be applied to OHS work. Safety professionals wanting more information on change

management should type “change management” and “organisational change” into Google and search for other interesting and informative information about these important business concepts.

C Organisational change management theory

Experienced safety professionals will recognise the relevance to safety change in the three change management practices outlined by Perkins.

Managing cultural change requires three things-management commitment, universal approval and appropriate measures and rewards.

Management commitment-In order for anything to happen in an enterprise, including change, executives and managers must be consistently committed to make it happen. Only enterprise leaders can ensure the resources necessary to effect the changes are available. Leaders must continuously and obviously support the changes. The visibility of leadership support is a primary factor in achieving universal approval for change.

Universal approval-Internal change is successful only when the people involved approve of the change. They understand the need for change. They believe the change is good for the enterprise and for them. They agree that the change being undertaken is the right one.

Measures and rewards-Getting everyone to want change is difficult. It requires a level and degree of communication not found in many enterprises. The best way to get and maintain universal approval is to ensure the process and results of change are measured appropriately and accurately and communicated enterprise-wide. Good results and changed behaviour must be rewarded. At the same time, unchanged behaviour and poor results should not be rewarded. Employees will not work toward change if they continue to be rewarded for old practices.

Various writers have dealt with the vital nature of management commitment in safety. It is very easy for management to say it is committed to safety, it is harder to provide a high profile demonstration of that commitment. Safety will only be successful when all are on board and agreeing with safety change. Safety must be measured, preferably using positive performance measures and people must receive intrinsic rather than monetary awards for their successful performance.

The Webtools newsletter identifies factors identified as fostering successful change regimes.

1. there is an executive commitment to change – a necessary condition
2. the plan is generally perceived to be well-developed and appropriate to the purpose
3. the organisation is amenable to change
4. individuals are willing to change (though some personality types resist change)
5. the need for change is readily acknowledged
6. the organisation has a culture of embracing change – linked to 3
7. employees trust management to act in their best interests
8. the organisation enjoys a history of successful change
9. management is capable of implementing change
10. there is effective management control
11. arrangements are flexible enough to accommodate structural change
12. clear direction and authority ensures that executive policy translates accurate feedback on progress of implementation
13. standards are enforced
14. there is systematic motivation – determined by:
15. equity – perceptions of inequity or double standards diminish morale and motivation
16. appropriate rewards for performance supporting change initiatives
17. expectations of successful outcomes
18. expectations that good employee performance will be recognised

Whilst the foregoing is written about general organisational change this author suggests all the factors above are applicable to safety change.

Wood outlines several organisational change principles

1. honesty is critical during organisational change
2. without knowledge of organisational change aims people can not participate
3. organisational change is unsettling for most people
4. when people participate in defining organisational change objectives the more they will be comfortable getting results
5. people value recognition for their change management endeavours more than material reward
6. traditional cultures do not recognise or respect mature individuality yet change management expects people to behave like adults
7. organisational change cannot be effective without the full commitment of every person involved in the change
8. it is the people's behaviour during organisational change linked to clearly defined values that promote the change management process
9. team work and interpersonal relationship are fundamental if the change management process is to be successful
10. for unity to be maintained during the change management process people need a clearly defined shared vision of the change aim
11. organisational change is more effective when people are empowered and given the time needed to build quality into the change process
12. organisational change needs individual behaviour and attitude change
13. to achieve individual behaviour and attitude change first the organisational change of culture must occur
14. the change management process must inspire and motivate people if it does then organisations enhance productivity

The Resilience Report looks at change management principles from another perspective.

- 1 Address the human side systematically-requires being in touch with the needs of the workforce.
- 2 Start at the top-Because change is inherently unsettling for people at all levels all eyes will turn to the C.E.O. and the leadership team for strength, support and direction. Leaders must embrace the new changes themselves and model desired behaviours.
- 3 Involve every layer-At each layer of the organisation the leaders must be aligned to the company vision, equipped to exercise their specific mission and motivated to make change happen
- 4 Make the formal case-The articulation of a formal case for change and the creation of a written vision are invaluable opportunities to create or compel leadership-team alignment.
- 5 Create ownership-Ownership is often best crafted by involving people in identifying problems and devising solutions.
- 6 Communicate the message-The best change programmes reinforce core messages through regular timely advice that is both inspirational and practical.
- 7 Assess the cultural landscape-Through cultural diagnostics can assess organisational readiness to change, bring major problems to the surface, identify conflicts and define factors that can recognise and influence values, beliefs and perceptions that must be taken into account for successful change to occur.
- 8 Address culture explicitly-Leaders should be explicit about the culture and underlying behaviours that will best support the new way of doing business and find opportunities to model those behaviours.
- 9 Prepare for the unexpected-Effectively managing change requires continual reassessment of its impact and the organisation's willingness and ability to adopt the next wave of transformation.
- 10 Speak to the individual-Individuals or teams of individuals need to know how their work will change, what is expected of them, how they will be measured what success or failure will mean for

them and those around them. Those promoting change should be recognised, those not promoting change should be removed or sanctioned.

Once again this author suggests the above principles are equally applicable to safety change as general organisational change.

Kotter speaks about the 8 steps for successful large-scale change.

1 Increase urgency-Those who are successful in change begin their work by creating a sense of urgency among relevant people

2 Build the guiding team-With urgency turned up the more successful change agents pull together a guiding team with the credibility, skills, connections, reputations and formal authority required to provide change leadership.

3 Get the vision right-The guiding team creates sensible, clear, uplifting visions and sets of strategies.

4 Communicate for buy-in-Communication of the vision and strategies comes next-simple heart-felt messages sent through many unclogged channels. Deeds are more important than words. Symbols speak loudly. Repetition is the key

5 Empower action-Key obstacles that stop people working on the vision are removed.

6 Create short-term wins-Short-term wins provide credibility, resources and momentum to the overall effort.

7 Do not let up-Change leaders do not let-up they create wave after wave of change until the vision becomes a reality.

8 Make change stick-Change leaders make change stick by nurturing a new culture. Appropriate promotions, skilful orientation and events can make a big difference.

Kotter's text "The heart of change" is a recommended must-read for anyone undertaking cultural change. Safety professionals reading Kotter's book will quickly realise its relevance to safety change.

Adverse health and safety outcomes have been associated with poorly managed change. To achieve genuine organisational change it is essential to address the people issues. Cole gives eight stepping stones to introducing lasting change-

1 Sound preparation

Clarify what the change is intended to achieve. Establish clear, measurable and realistic objectives and outcomes. Identify risks and develop appropriate controls.

2 Create a common vision

Help people understand the need for change and provide a clear vision of what will be accomplished and how people will be affected.

3 Clear communication

Communicate the vision clearly and often to everyone. Establish processes so that people hear things through official channels.

4 Address concerns and enable participation

Develop processes to bring concerns out in the open and discuss them. Participation will help build ownership and commitment.

5 Develop a clear action plan

Involve people in developing clear plans about who will do what, when and how in order to achieve the vision and make change work.

6 Celebrate progress

Celebrate as stages are achieved to enable people to let go of the old and accept the new.

7 Create a climate of certainty

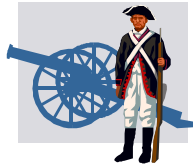
Tell people what you do know, explain what will change and what will not.

8 Follow-up

Monitor how the change is progressing and review the adequacy of risk controls. Modify in the light of experience.

LEADERSHIP

- Leadership advice from a Regimental Sergeant-Major
- “When you become a N.C.O. or an Officer, look after your private soldiers because you are stuffed without them”



D Key messages to leaders (Comcare)

In introducing change it is important to understand that-

Poor levels of employee adjustment to change can reduce productivity and increase accidents.

Employee adjustment to change is a partnership between the individual and the organisation.

The quality of change leadership and the communication of a clear understanding of the need for change and how change is to be achieved are crucial to the success of the change process.

Supportive leadership behaviours and the quality of an organisation's people management practice exert considerable influence on employee adjustment to change.

Supportive leaders are approachable, accessible, responsive, understand the problems facing staff and communicate well with employees.

Effective people management practices are characterised by effective delegation, treating people with consideration and respect, encouraging staff to take initiative, actively seeking staff involvement in decisions and showing confidence in their abilities.

Individual responses to change will vary, depending on past experiences, individual capacities and coping styles. Leaders should be prepared to expect a variety of responses to change and be trained to cope with them as they arise.

E The role of leaders in change

For about a year this author worked with a General Manager Operations who could best be described as a charismatic leader who had an overriding commitment to safety. This individual would turn up at operating sites in the middle of the night to see how safety was being managed. He would jump on a haultruck and go with the operator while the truck was loaded, the manager would question the operators about safety and tell them that he expected safety to be their top priority. This manager let his subordinates know he expected nothing less than 100% commitment to safety, those who did not comply were not around long. Word quickly got around about the manager's safety expectations, single-handedly he raised the profile of safety in the organisation.

Krause describes what excellent safety leadership looks like

1 Vision

The most senior executive must “ see” what safety excellence looks like. The leader must convey his vision in a compelling manner through action.

2 Credibility

When an excellent safety leader says something others believe it and do not question his motives.

3 Collaboration

Collaboration encompasses working well with others ,encouraging input, helping others, expressing confidence in others support others decisions and gaining commitment.

4 Feedback & Recognition

An excellent safety leader provides effective feedback and recognises people for their accomplishments.

5 Accountability

An excellent safety leader gives workers a fair appraisal of safety efforts and results, clearly communicates peoples roles in safety and fosters the sense that people are responsible for the level of safety in their organisational unit.

6 Communication

As a great communicator the leader encourages people to deliver honest, complete information about safety (even if unfavourable) ,keeps people informed and communicates frequently and effectively up, down and across the organisation.

7 Values safety

An excellent safety leader acts to support safety values and principles. He leads by example and clearly communicates that safe behaviour is expected.

8 Action-oriented

An excellent safety leader is proactive rather than reactive in addressing safety issues. He gives timely, considered responses to safety concerns, demonstrates a sense of personal energy and urgency to achieve safety results and demonstrates a performance driven focus by delivering results with speed and excellence.

Schein relates how leaders embed and transmit change

The most powerful mechanisms for culture embedding and reinforcement are-

What leaders pay attention to, measure and control

Leader reactions to critical incidents and organisational crises

Deliberate role modelling, teaching and coaching by leaders

Criteria for allocation of rewards and status

Criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement and ex-communication

What leaders pay attention to, measure and control

One of the best mechanisms leaders have for communicating what they believe in or care about is what they pay attention to (What is noticed and commented upon, to what is measured, controlled, rewarded and in other ways systematically dealt with)Even casual remarks and questions that are consistently geared to a certain area can be as potent as formal control mechanisms and measurements. Other powerful signals that subordinates interpret for evidence of the leaders assumptions are what they observe does not get reacted to.

Leader reactions to critical incidents and crises

When an organisation faces a crisis the manner in which leaders deal with it creates new norms, values and working procedures and reveals important underlying assumptions.

A good time to observe an organisation is when an act of insubordination occurs. No better opportunity exists for leaders to send signals about their own assumptions about human nature and relationships than when they themselves are challenged.

Criteria for recruitment, selection etc

Leaders who are trying to ensure that their values and assumptions will be learned they must create a reward, promotion and status system that is consistent with those assumptions. Whereas the message initially gets across in the daily behaviour of the leader it is judged in the long run by whether the important rewards are allocated consistently with daily behaviour. One of the most subtle ways culture gets embedded is in the initial selection of new members. Basic assumptions are further reinforced through criteria of who does or does not get promoted, who is retired early and who is excommunicated.

Design of physical space, facades, buildings

This category is intended to encompass all the visible features of the organisation that clients, customers, vendors, new employees and visitors would encounter.

Stories about important events and people

As a group develops and accumulates a history, some of this history becomes embodied in stories about events and leadership behaviour. The storey reinforces assumptions and teaches assumptions to newcomers. Leaders cannot always control what will be said about them in stories, though they can certainly reinforce stories they feel good about and launch stories that carry the desired messages.

Formal statements about organisational philosophy, values

The formal statement is an attempt by leaders to state explicitly what their values and assumptions are.

F Management commitment to safety

It is not unusual in companies with high profile safety management systems for senior and middle management personnel to spend over 30% of their time directly on OHS issues. Key personnel conduct safety meetings, they personally participate in safety inspections in their area of responsibility, they have safety as a first high-profile agenda item of every meeting they conduct and they make it clear that they expect those below them to place a high priority on safety. It is not enough for top management to be committed to safety; it must be a clear and high profile demonstration of commitment - you get the performance you demonstrate you expect. This is one area where positive action by management can have an overwhelming influence on the culture of the organisation. The BHP-Minerals benchmarking study emphasises the importance of management commitment. The C.E.O. must elevate safety to number 1 on his personal priority list and he must constantly deliver the message about the importance of safety and create an expectation to perform in the safety area. Sacking or demoting a supervisor or manager because of non-performance in the safety area will help to focus the attention of other managers and supervisors on the area, you will probably only have to do this once. Do not be afraid to spill a bit of blood for the greater good.

COMMUNICATION

- Nothing is more central to an organisations effectiveness than its ability to transmit accurate, relevant, and understandable information among its members.



G Communicating change

Most safety professionals will have experienced the launch of a new, major safety initiative. Deep and meaningful meetings are held about the launch and the brainwave is presented that we must communicate the initiative to the troops. Stories are written for the company newsletter, the boss addresses the troops and sometimes we video the boss's speech and play the video to the troops.

Larkin says most of the advice to senior managers about communicating change is wrong. This advice usually boils down to more videos, more training, more senior manager road shows, more briefing meetings, more newsletters and more employee surveys. Frontline employees distrust information from senior managers, do not believe employee publications, hate watching executives on video and have little or no interest in corporate-wide topics. The boundary of the frontline workers world is his or her local work area. If the communication does not break through this boundary it is wasted. Typically our communication comes from the wrong source (senior managers instead of first-line supervisors) using the wrong method (print or video instead of face to face) carrying the wrong message (corporate instead of local work area performance) Larkin says "If it's not face-to-face it is not communication"

Larkin's text "Communication Change" contains simple yet powerful advice about communicating in times of change-It is essential reading for those leading any type of change. After reading this text the safety professional will recognise many mistakes that are typically made in communicating safety change.

H Building trust

Introducing OHS change inevitably upsets the established order in organizations and forces people to question their existing role in the organization. Often people will be asked to do something that is different from the norm and to do that which they do not agree with. Persons introducing and leading OHS change must ensure they are trusted by those they are seeking to join them in the OHS change journey.

Self-disclosure

By letting you know me I allow you to like me. By disclosing yourself to me ,I create the potential for trust, caring, commitment, growth, self-understanding and friendship.

If you cannot reveal yourself, you cannot become close to others and you cannot be valued by others for who you are.

Self-Disclosure may be defined as the act of revealing how you are reacting to the present situation and of giving any information that is relevant to an understanding of your reactions to the present. Self-disclosure does not mean revealing intimate details of your past life. A relationship is built on disclosing your reaction to events you both experience or to what the other person says or does. Self-disclosure enables others to get to know you. Knowing you better is likely to result in a closer relationship but learning too much may result in alienation. The amount of self-disclosure you engage in will influence the amount of self-disclosure the other person engages in. Self-disclosure must be relevant to your relationship with the other person and appropriate to the situation you are in.

Trust

Trust is essential for a relationship to grow and develop. In order to build a relationship you must learn to create a climate of trust that reduces your own and the other person's fears of betrayal and rejection and promotes the hope of acceptance, support and confirmation.. There is a risk involved in trusting.

In order to build a relationship, two people must build mutual trust. This is done during a commitment period in which they risk themselves either by disclosing more and more of their thoughts, feelings and reactions to immediate situations and to each other, or by expressing acceptance, support and cooperativeness toward each other. If, when disclosing they do not get the acceptance they need, they may back off from the relationship. If they are accepted, they will continue to risk self-disclosure and continue to develop the relationship. As both people continue to trust and be self-disclosing, the relationship continues to grow

There are three types of behaviour that will decrease trust in a relationship. The first is the use of rejection, ridicule, or disrespect as a response to the others disclosure. The second is the non-reciprocation of self-disclosure. The third type of behaviour that will decrease trust in a relationship is the refusal to disclose your thoughts, feelings, and reactions after the other person has indicated considerable acceptance, support and cooperativeness

The above taken from Johnson D.W. "Reaching Out" Chapters 2 & 3 . This text is recommended reading for those involved in safety change

I Planned / unplanned changes

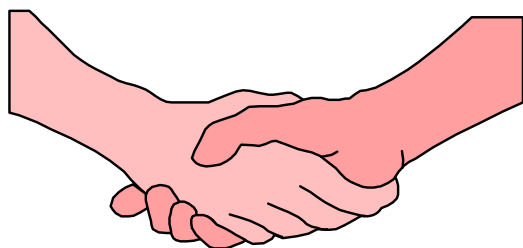
One aspect of safety change not covered in the general organisational change literature is ensuring systems are in place to assess safety risks prior to planned changes or when unplanned changes occur. Systems must be in place to ensure authorised employees or contractors approve changes once the safety risk has been demonstrated to be acceptable. The duration of a temporary change is not exceeded without review and approval. Changes must be communicated to all those who may be affected and training is provided as required. Systems must be in place to ensure that all change management actions have been completed and documentation is updated to reflect the changes (BHP Billiton H.S.E.C. Standards)

J Conclusion

The principles of organisational change management must be examined for their applicability to OHS Change. Safety Change will be much more effective if these principles are put into practice. During my organisational change studies I discovered the concept that "People support what they create". It is suggested this motto is directly applicable to safety change.

INITIATING CHANGE

- When initiating change remember “People support what they create”



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