

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHANGE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The terms "change, transformation, evolution" are used a lot today. Change management methodologies, developed within organizations, have limits. Implementing change management requires an understanding of the environment and context. This is why it is necessary to address the concept of organizational change, the different types of change and the styles of change management that can be associated with them.

The organization is not static, but is a dynamic whole that evolves with its environment and that represents a collective whose properties are different from the sum of individual characteristics. Therefore, the organization must deal with "static/dynamic", "internal/external" and "individual/collective" tensions. These tensions place the organization in a spiral of change, which means that every action can be a form of transformation.

To better understand the dynamic and transformative logic, it seems important to describe the organization.

It is also important that all structures of the company feel concerned about this transformation, because a structure is not limited to fulfilling its task, but takes part in other cross-cutting processes with other structures.

Key-words: Organization, change, strategy, transformation, project management, process

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1. Literature Review

Management approaches are value-based. Indeed, common values for process, project and change management, such as sustainable development, contribute to an integrated management approach. Sustainable development, when incorporated by the organization, is called "corporate sustainability"; and contains, similar to sustainable development, all three pillars: economic, ecological and social, these three dimensions that interact.

The relationships between, projects and changes are already addressed in the specialized literature. For example, it has been suggested in the change management and project management literature that projects and programs are a way of organizing change. However, while research has been conducted in both change management and project management, there has been limited engagement between the two. It is a popular view in the project management community that project managers are change managers (Turner et al., 1996), while change managers are described to perform project and program management tasks (Gareis, Huemann, 2010). But there is a misperception about the relationship between changes and projects.

In fact, companies' changes are perceived to be managed within programs (Office of Government Commerce, 2009; Project Management Institute, 2009) instead of perceiving programs as change management organizations (Gareis and Huemann, 2010). "The relationship between change and projects, change management and project management is vague" (Gareis and Huemann, 2010). Furthermore, Lewin (1947) as well as Kotter (2007) refer their change management approaches to the use of projects to bring about change. "Without a sensible vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing and incompatible projects that can lead the organization in the wrong direction or nowhere" (Kotter, 2007). Consequently, change management is defined as a comprehensive, cyclical and structured approach to the transition of individuals, groups and organizations from a current state to a future state with intended business benefits (PMI, 2014)

According to Margaret Rouse, change management is a systematic approach to managing change, both from an organizational and individual perspective. A somewhat ambiguous term, change management has at least three different aspects, including: adaptation to change, control of change, and effect.

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Organizations often have strong, high-performing project teams that deliver results and achieve project goals. Such organizations have a success rate of over 95%, and yet, the failure of a single project completely nullifies these margins. This is interesting and forces us to investigate WHY the project failed and HOW do we prevent such a project failure that not only nullifies the efforts of other project teams but also erodes the image and profitability of the entire organization.

Most studies have pointed out that often project failure is not attributed to a lack of skills and abilities, but refers to a lack of application of risk management.

2. Change management by project managers

A topic of often passionate debate in the literature and in practice is the role and professional background of the person best suited to manage change. There are many who believe that this role should be filled by the project or program manager, who believe that they are the ones who manage the project and therefore the change that the project introduces (Obeng, 1994; Turner, Grude and Thurloway , 1996; Pellegrinelli, 1997; Frame, 1999; Pappas, 2006; Thiry, 2006).

Turner et al (1996) published a book describing the role of the project manager as being responsible for implementing change, positioning the 'Project Manager as Change Agent'.

Many other authors believe that the person managing the change should come from a less technical or project-based background and more focused on the behavioral sciences, such as human resources, organizational development and/or psychology (Cummings & Worley, 1993; French & Bell, 1999; Caluwé & Vermaak, 2003). The association of the failure of organizational change projects with the poor management of human factors provides further support for this view.

The roles of project and program managers are well established in the literature, in practice, in academia and by professional bodies, Change Managers, however, have not received the same academic attention as having a role called a 'change manager'. In reality, the requirement to have a role in change projects became explicit through the consistency of the objective to fulfill a "change manager" role. For the purposes of this study, any role with the primary purpose of managing change, other than a project or program manager, is referred to as a change manager.

To understand the role of the individual managing change, this research investigates the requirements for organizational change. These are organizational factors that are both influenced by the project and influence the project. Examples of organizational factors are culture, organizational structure, leadership, size, products, customers, and competitors. An example of a project impacting an organization is when the project requires a change in structure to implement a particular system. An example of how organizational or contextual factors influence the project is if there is resistance to change. The project must take steps to address this in order to achieve successful implementation. Contextual factors can positively influence the project. For example, if management supports the change, then the project has a better chance of success. All of these factors can influence decisions about who should manage change, which is the focus of this study.

The specialist literature records the following positions vis-à-vis the management of change by project managers as change managers.

Turner, Grude and Thurloway (1996), in positioning the "Project Manager as Change Agent", suggest the modern view of project management as change management. Although this view is accepted from a project management perspective, there are people with organizational behavior and development experience who can reasonably support similar claims. Therefore, there is a gap that needs to be bridged between the perception that both change managers and project/programme managers can manage organizational change effectively.

Program managers, who are essentially change managers, according to Pellegrinelli, must raise their game significantly to address the cultural, political and organizational challenges of major transformation programs. They need to learn skills and capabilities beyond those of a typical project to drive change. According to Balogun and Hope Hailey (1999), program managers need to develop analytical, judgment and implementation skills as well as their ability to manage complex, heightened sensitivity and self-awareness. They need to be able to assess and deal with power and culture in organizations, which is the same with domain changes and leveraging internal capabilities.

The many written works and studies conducted by Pellegrinelli, Partington and their collaborators suggest important insights into both what program management means and the role of the program manager. They argue that the phenomenon known as program management is more complex and diverse than indicated by the prevailing, predominantly normative literature, but they argue that program management is the vehicle used today to implement organizational change.

A challenge is that program managers are project managers who have been promoted to the role and who therefore in most cases do not have the organizational development skills necessary to deal with organizational requirements and examples (by focusing on business and people issues rather than technical solutions, creating a strong team environment, communicating with confidence at all levels, understanding the nature and differences of cultures and how they interact in the organization and ultimately being the enablers of competence). In their research, they identified two profiles that can differentiate successful program managers from unsuccessfulness.

These are what the authors call "high-level and low-level informants." The difference between the two is mainly in their knowledge and the way they work, that is, how they see their work and how they see and deal with the people around them, as well as their ability to work in chaotic, complex, and environments unstable organizations to successfully bring about the necessary change.

3. Typology of changes within the projects

Over time, change has been viewed from two points of view: according to its intentionality and according to its pace. Intentionality opposes both a change determined by a transformation of the environment (imposed change) and a change resulting from the choice of individuals (voluntary change). The time to make the changes is the pace. It can be brutal (global change of the organizational system) or progressive (evolution with transitional phases with the old system). Change management action must take this pace into account.

Organizational change is studied according to two approaches:

- The deterministic approach that "insists on the inflexible nature of the organization and sees in the structure, the system, the culture of rigidity and inertia that tend to keep the organization change. This deterministic conception emphasizes the permanence factors of the organization and sees environmental pressures (external factors) as the main engine of transformations.

- The proactive approach highlights the predominant role of the actor's strategic choices as a factor in transforming the organization. Action acquires a central role in the organization's ability to respond to the external environment and internal factors become the real factors of organizational dynamics.

Crozier and Friedberg consider these two approaches artificial, both having a common weakness: the refusal to consider change as a sociological problem, because "people are the ones who change, who not only do not change passively, but also in their relationships between them and in their organization".

Regarding the causes of change, several authors agree that it results from the difference between an experienced state and a desired state whose awareness comes from additional internal or external information that generates organizational stress. For the proactive movement, change arises from a situation of stress and tension in the organization that is materialized in the inconsistency between 3 levels: structure, culture and leadership, context.

4. Organizational change capacity

In summary, project and program managers are expected to manage and lead change in organizations, however, their ability to do so has been questioned and requires further investigation.

The answer to these questions is, firstly, the analysis of the value chain of the organization and, secondly, the diagnosis of the resources and abilities to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

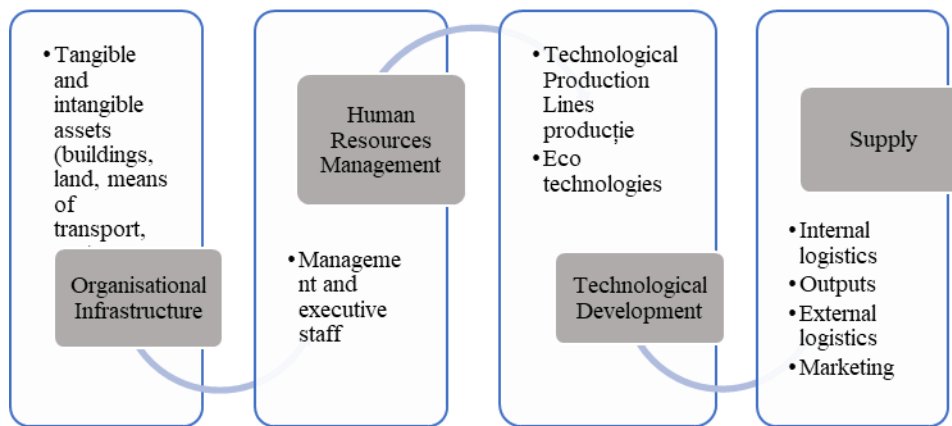


Figure no. 1. Value chain diagram (Porter,2011)

The diagnosis of human resources allows the organization to collect information about the different knowledge and skills available, about the study of qualifications and the analysis of the social climate. The theory of resources shows that this information, essential for any change, will allow the organization to rely on its fundamental skills that constitute a specific asset for it.

5. The process for determining change management requirements

We will present a practical process and decision-making matrix so that managers and project staff can put the findings into practice. Figure 2 represents a decision-making process based on the results of this study

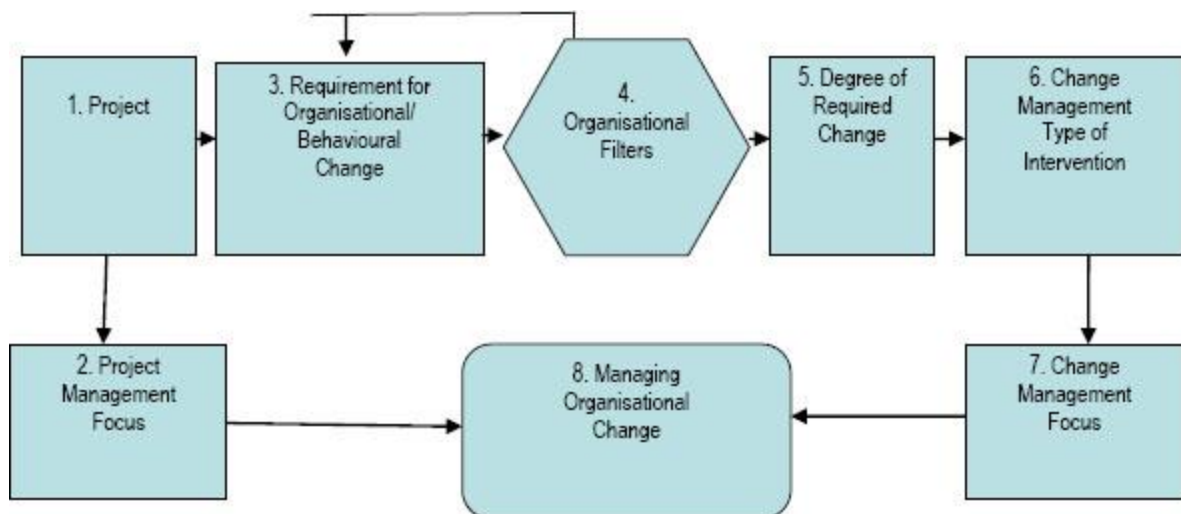


Figure no. 2. Suggested process model for engaging project and change managers in organizational change

The model involves the following steps:

1. The organization decides it needs a project based on a technical requirement and the project is initiated.
2. The project then decides who the project manager is and what the project's "technical" deliverables are.
3. The project determines whether any organizational or behavioral change is needed. For example, if the project implements a system that relies on two departments to communicate with each other, but these departments operate in silos, then this would require a change in organizational behavior that would raise a requirement for change management.
4. The project assesses contextual factors such as culture, leadership and teamwork that act as filters for decision-making. The continuous loop between step three and four represents the continuous relationship between the organizational and behavioral change requirement and the organizational factors/filters. Whenever a requirement for organizational and/or behavioral change arises, organizational factors should be assessed as described in steps three and four.
5. The project evaluates the degree of change. For example, is organizational restructuring necessary? Or is the change just about facilitating discussions between the two departments?
6. The project assesses which specific change management activities or interventions need to be carried out. The project must gain support and commitment from all affected parts of the organization to carry out the agreed changes, taking into account the factors that will negatively influence the execution of these changes. The activities must also be those that will help you arrive at the new factors necessary for the organization and success of the project.
7. Based on all the above steps, the roles, responsibilities and focus of the project change management aspect emerge.
8. Finally, the project proactively pursues both the implementation of its technical requirements and the organizational changes that will make technical implementation possible and successful

6. Conclusions

Instability often forces the company to adapt its strategic plans with the difficulty of implementing them through operational activities.

The concept of organization can also be explained by connecting two axes: the individual / collective axis and the present / future axis. In these axes we find action and strategy. Action is individual and present, while strategy represents the future and is collective. Action and strategy, opposite by definition, lie at the heart of organizational processes. Their management can be likened to a transmission belt that connects action with strategy. Becomes a change manager when he adapts action (resourcing and reorganization) to strategy and encourages managers to question the achievement and merits of this strategy.

Here we see the need for change for business sustainability. We can add that this change can take place on each of the four components: the physical component, the human component, the structure and/or the management systems. Thus, these definitions associated with the basic principles allow us to better understand the concept of organizational change.

Thus we can conclude that change is a process of transformation of structures, management methods, physical and human components (i.e. the 4 components of the organization) and that its perception generates stress at the level of individuals.

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