

Everything is in Flux

The Secret of Successful Change Management

Frankfurt, January 1st, 2019 – A company is a complex system of close collaboration and interaction of people and ideas, connected by and dependent on various social, economic and financial factors. A system that, like a mobile device, depends on many conditions which influence each other and is constantly changing. To successfully lead such a live organism into the future means, above all, understanding the people who support the system and from which the system originated. Involving them in the evolutionary company processes is the secret of successful management. The drastic process of changing a corporate structure must always be mastered by it first: new structures change familiar processes, developments must be processed structurally and anchored in the psyche and corporate workflow. For a company to be able to live the flexible change, the first step is to let go of the illusion of being able to change a complex company structure based on a defined workflow. Probably the biggest challenge in adapting corporate structures lies in the fact that the company itself is in a continuous process of change. Companies develop through a changing workforce, adaptive customer structures or, for example, through market developments. Companies that want to be successful have to understand, as a first step, that continual change within a company cannot be stopped, but instead that its flowing dynamics should be used for progress. The heart of change beats in the employee. Companies must therefore ensure that they can find and take their place in the new environment. Proper change management is therefore a smooth organizational development in which people in the company are actively involved in the change process.

Thinking in Systems

The complexity of a company structure knows few limits. After all, corporate systems are not spatially limited and do not only affect single individuals. On the contrary: every factor that makes up a company influences another factor. There can be no isolated solutions to further develop a system. The company as a whole must be seen and processed as a system. People determine the high degree of complex dependencies within a company. Therefore, a company structure can only be developed and directed if people are ready to be led. However, that makes things complicated, because people live their own, unpredictable dynamics with which companies have to become engaged.

The Systemic Portrait

In order to grasp the dynamics, the systemic portrait first shows the status quo of the company system. It makes sense to create this portrait, for example, prior to a project to identify any possible obstacles in advance. To generate it, companies need to find answers to questions such as: what goals should be achieved through a targeted project. It is also fascinating to get an overview of which developments groups or people are interested in and how they relate to the planned project. A systemic portrait works out the future challenges for a company as clearly as possible and also generally offers the possibility to better anchor people and individuals who want to be understood as part of the entire system in the organization. Notably, such a portrait shows not only positive developments. It also shows where possible challenges may lie. For this reason, opposition to the project is interesting, as is the nature of the concerns that are raised.

Useful Tool: Opposition

At first glance, the term opposition is negative, but counterpoints are vital for companies. After all, a system can only change when it encounters opposition. It occurs automatically when familiar structures and processes change: many people quickly feel ignored; management may not be

sufficiently involved in structural changes or may not support the changes; new skills need to be acquired; there is poor communication between the departments and IT... Fears for livelihood quickly arise.

Companies have to accept that opposition is emotional in many cases. It must be acknowledged in order to provide room for further development. Joint agreements that come about through dialogue and communication are much more successful than working against them all the time.

Communication in Systemic Organization Management

This dialogue is crucial for the success of a change management process, because communication is the most important area of change. There are various ways for companies to enter into dialogue with their employees. A positive example is to inform employees about developments using various roll-outs: for example, let employees follow the current state of development in the cafeteria; inform them about internal media. The most important task of internal communication is to keep employees informed; because the less they know, the more they will suspect.

The Principle of Systemic Questions

Systemic management also emphasizes the necessity and great significance of communication.

Various techniques are available that enable company management to break new ground.

Circular questions or the principle of multiple points of view is a questioning technique that illuminates a problem from the perspective of third parties. The pharmaceutical company should ask themselves what the customer expects and put themselves in the situation of the "other" side. The change of perspective can create new thinking and even allow for new thought patterns.

Other systemic questions are the positive connotation (what might be the good thing about not having an assignment?) Or the paradoxical intervention that provokes and offers the opposite of a possible solution (what other options do you see to prevent a solution to this problem?).

It is often the only means when opposition to change seems insurmountable.

WorkCafé: Bringing Employees to the Table

The so-called WorkCafé approach fosters reciprocal communication for and with the employee. The session's message: There are good reasons for the change. Why are we doing what we are doing?

The WorkCafé is planned in the so-called founding board. For this purpose, various project teams are formed within a company, which work on different areas that are important for the company's further development. The results are presented to the employees in the WorkCafé: questions can be asked and suggestions can be included. In this way, facts come to the table and are addressed openly and worked out together. The WorkCafé is an example of how reflection and dialogue can be established in the corporate culture and make it possible to deal constructively with opposition, to take systemic perspectives and to coach and qualify managers and multipliers for successful, collaborative change management.

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About: Dr. Adam Sobanski, who has a doctorate in chemistry with over ten years of industrial experience, knows both worlds: that of a consultant and of a consultant manager - and, therefore, he can offer solutions that work in the real corporate world.

About MAIN5 (www.main5.de)

MAIN5 was established in 2013 as a Management Consulting firm and focuses on strategy, process and solution consulting with international life science companies in the regulated R&D and Regulatory Affairs and Quality Management sectors. The consultants at Main5 combine their methodical and systematic approach with years of experience in the industry. The holistic approach, which places the primary focus of the route to the digital future on people, is also used to implement complex ideas from leading industry customers.

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