Enhancing creativity for organizational change

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ABSTRACT

Today the demand for creativity and innovation is everywhere, due to the rapid pace of change. The explanations are familiar - new technologies, the reach of the Internet, the telecommunications revolution linking everyone everywhere. As the global playing field becomes increasingly level, many business forecasters are predicting that workforce creativity and innovation will be the most important factors in establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage. These concepts create a fundamental challenge for HR professionals. The recruiting and retention of highly talented workers has long been a cornerstone of strategic human capital management.With creativity and innovation considered such critical factors in organizational success, HR professionals must develop strategies to enhance the creative environment of the workplace. HR professionals will need to take into account a number of factors, including the best ways to identify creative tendencies, team vs. individual creativity, employee motivation and training.HR has a critical role in establishing an environment that communicates organizational values and creates management practices that respect and support the unique skills and creative potential of every individual. To fulfill this role, HR professionals will have to call upon their own creative and innovative abilities through training and development techniques.This article suggests the importance and ways and means to enhance creativity both at individual as well as organisational level to be at a competitive advantage.

Keywords: Human capital, Management, Creativity, Skills, Abilities, training and development

1. Introduction

India was at the time of independence, a socially, economically and politically underdeveloped nation. During the recent years, the stress on human development has been tremendously enhanced owing to the realisation of the fact that the educational and professional development alone can bring about a socio-economic transformation capable enough to place the country in the category of developed nations. There is a commonly held view that this approach can take India out of the viscous circle of poverty and underdevelopment and make it progressively strong technologically due to a continuous availability of scientific and industrial personnel.

As the global playing field becomes increasingly important, many business forecasters are predicting that workforce creativity and innovation will be the most important factors in establishing and maintaining a competitive advantageManagement practices that support creative and innovative thinking will undoubtedly be more challenging than managing task-oriented, routine jobs. However, they may ultimately prove to be more rewarding for HR professionals

because they produce an environment where creativity thrives and leads to greater employee engagement, motivation and productivity. Not incidentally, they also highlight the importance of effective human capital management.

2. Definitions

Before moving into the body of the literature review it is useful to define the terms creativity and organisational creativity. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines creativity as "Creativity is the ability to produce something new through imaginative skill; it can be a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form." Another term, innovation, is often used interchangeably with creativity. A convenient definition of innovation from an organisational perspective is given by Luecke and Katz, who wrote: "Innovation . . . is generally understood as the introduction of a new thing or method . . . Innovation is the embodiment, combination, or synthesis of knowledge in original, relevant, valued new products, processes, or services". Organisational creativity: "Organisational creativity is the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure or process by individuals working within a complex social organisation"....Woodman. Facing of the tide of globalization, one of the major challenges for human resource professionals is how to gain organizational competitive advantage in the rapidly changing environment. For any organization, an appropriate manpower structure in one approach to maintain effective organization performance. Although organizational change can include innovation, much of organizational change is not innovation. Similarly, even though creativity may produce the new product, service, idea, or process that is implemented through innovation, but innovation can also include the adaptation of pre-existing products or processes, or those created outside of the organization.

2.1 Need for Change

Significant organizational change occurs, for example, when an organization changes its overall strategy for success, adds or removes a major section or practice, and/or wants to change the very nature by which it operates. It also occurs when an organization evolves through various life cycles, just like people must successfully evolve through life cycles. For organizations to develop, they often must undergo significant change at various points in their development. That's why the topic of organizational change and development has become widespread in communications about business, organizations, leadership and management. Leaders and managers continually make efforts to accomplish successful and significant change -- it's inherent in their jobs. Some are very good at this effort (probably more than we realize), while others continually struggle and fail. That's often the difference between people who thrive in their roles and those that get shuttled around from job to job, ultimately settling into a role where they're frustrated and ineffective. There are many schools with educational programs about organizations, business, leadership and management. There are several phrases regarding organizational change and development that look and sound a lot alike, but have different meanings. As a result of the prominence of the topic, there seems to be increasingly different interpretations of some of these phrases, while others are used interchangeably. Without at least some sense of the differences between these phrases, communications about organizational change and development can be increasingly vague, confusing and frustrating.

3. Major Types of Organizational Change

Typically, the phrase "organizational change" is about a significant change in the organization, such as reorganization or adding a major new product or service. This is in contrast to smaller changes, such as adopting a new computer procedure. Organizational change can seem like such a vague phenomenon that it is helpful if you can think of change in terms of various dimensions as described below:

3.1 Organization-wide Versus Subsystem Change

Examples of organization-wide change might be a major restructuring, collaboration or "rightsizing". Usually, organizations must undertake organization-wide change to evolve to a different level in their life cycle, for example, going from a highly reactive, entrepreneurial organization to one that has a more stable and planned development. Experts assert that successful organizational change requires a change in culture – cultural change is another example of organization-wide change. Examples of a change in a subsystem might include addition or removal of a product or service, reorganization of a certain department, or implementation of a new process to deliver products or services.

3.2 Transformational Versus Incremental Change

An example of transformational (or radical, fundamental) change might be changing an organization's structure and culture from the traditional top-down, hierarchical structure to a large amount of self-directing teams. Another example might be Business Process Re-engineering, which tries to take apart (at least on paper, at first) the major parts and processes of the organization and then put them back together in a more optimal fashion. Transformational change is sometimes referred to as quantum change. Examples of incremental change might include continuous improvement as a quality management process or implementation of new computer system to increase efficiencies. Many times, organizations experience incremental change and its leaders do not recognize the change as such.

3.3 Remedial Versus Developmental Change

Change can be intended to remedy current situations, for example, to improve the poor performance of a product or the entire organization, reduce burnout in the workplace, help the organization to become much more proactive and less reactive, or address large budget deficits. Remedial projects often seem more focused and urgent because they are addressing a current, major problem. It is often easier to determine the success of these projects because the problem is solved or not. Change can also be developmental – to make a successful situation even more successful, for example, expand the amount of customers served, or duplicate successful products or services. Developmental projects can seem more general and vague than remedial, depending on how specific goals are and how important it is for members of the organization to achieve those goals. Some people might have different perceptions of what is a remedial change versus a developmental change. They might see that if developmental changes are not made soon, there will be need for remedial changes developmental vision to address the issues. In those situations, projects are still remedial because they were conducted primarily to address current issues.

3.4 Unplanned Versus Planned Change

Unplanned change usually occurs because of a major, sudden surprise to the organization, which causes its members to respond in a highly reactive and disorganized fashion. Unplanned change might occur when the Chief Executive Officer suddenly leaves the organization, significant public relations problems occur, poor product performance quickly results in loss of customers, or other disruptive situations arise. Planned change occurs when leaders in the organization recognize the need for a major change and proactively organize a plan to accomplish the change. Planned change occurs with successful implementation of a Strategic Plan, plan for reorganization, or other implementation of a change of this magnitude. Note that planned change, even though based on a proactive and well-done plan, often does not occur in a highly organized fashion. Instead, planned change tends to occur in more of a chaotic and disruptive fashion than expected by participants.

3.5 Techniques for enhancing creativity

The application of creativity techniques is a continuous process. Sessions of creativity within work groups normally take place at company facilities during normal hours and working conditions. The implementation of a creative technique includes the following costs:

- The fee of an external consultant for 4-7 days' work for undertaking a session of creativity (preparation, application, evaluation).
- The cost of software packages developed for personal computers or workstations (if necessary). Hardware and equipment must permit to deal with network communications.
- Training cost (2-4 days) (if necessary).

4. Conditions for implementation

Concerning the implementation of creative techniques, some of them are easy to apply, while others need some infrastructure, experts, work teams, training, collection of information, resources, etc. In this case, the assistance of an external consultant is required.Besides the support of external consultants, the company itself must encourage creative environment. This implies the participation of all workers in the concerns of the company, and an open and flexible attitude on the part of management. Factors to encouraging the creative work climate are:

- A secure environment with minimal administrative interference.

- An organisational culture that makes it attractive and easy for people to discover and nsolve problems.

- Rewards for employee performance and enhancement of intrinsic motivation.

- Managerial willingness to take risks for creativity and innovation, as well as an open and flexible attitude on the part of management.

- Providing people with formal and informal training to enhance creativity.

Important conditions for implementation of creative techniques within work groups in a company are also the existence of well-trained human resources, a clear strategicdefinition of the company and to focus on the core competencies of the company. For solving complex problems requiring input by many areas, i.e. marketing, engineering, design, the company would preferably be one employing multidisciplinary teams.

5. Implementation Procedures

As mentioned before, there is numerous creativity supporting techniques. The description of various techniques in an illustrative manner for problem solving and implementing organisational change are as follows:

5.1 Brainstorming

This is one of the best known and most used in the business world group based creativity process for problem solving. It is a method of getting a large number of ideas from a group of people in a short time. It can be used for generating a large number of ideas or solutions for well-defined strategic or operational problems, such as for engineering design processes. It forms also a basic framework or constitutes the initial phase for the implementation of many other groups based on creative techniques. Brainstorming sessions take place in a group of 6-10 people. The presence of a leader is necessary to stimulate the generation of ideas, as well as a preparation phase to gather the necessary data and information to approach the problem. A recorder writes the problem statement and the idea generated by the group on a white board. The whole process takes normally one hour and can be conducted through several stages. The session begins with stating the problem and calling for solutions by the leader. The four basic rules of brainstorming are: a) no criticism and no prior judgement of any idea, b) all ideas, even the absurd, are welcome, c) quantity has value, the more ideas the better, if a large quantity of ideas is generated, then the idea pool very likely would contain high-quality ideas, d) sharing and combining ideas, and constructing ideas based on those developed by other members of the group for producing new ideas

5.2 Story boarding

It is a creativity technique for strategic and scenario planning based on brainstorming and used mainly by groups. It requires a leader, a secretary and takes place in a group of 8-12 people. The leader arranges the ideas generated by brainstorming in a logical order on a white board creating a story. This technique allows identify the interconnections of ideas and how all the pieces fit together. It can be used to identify issues, problems, solve a complex problem and determine ways to implement solutions. The story boarding process includes four phases: a) planning, b) ideas, c) organisation and d) communication. Each phase includes a creative session (it takes 45 minutes) and a critical session, in which participants critique their story board.

5.3 Checklists

This creative technique is used mainly for product improvement or modification. It involves applying a series of words, verbs, adjectives or phrases contained in checklists or tables to an existing product or service or its attributes. Osborn's Checklist is the bestknown and includes the verbs: put to other uses, adapt, modify, magnify, minify,substitute, rearrange, reverse and

combine. Each verb contains also an expanded definition in the form of questions. For example, the description of the verb substitute is: Who else instead? Other ingredient?Other material?Other process?Other power?Other place?Other approach?Other tone of voice? The method is to apply each of the verbs and its expanded description to a product or service.

5.4 Morphological Analysis

This method is another product improvement technique, permitting the in-depth analysis of products or processes. It involves applying a set of words to an item another set of words. Normally, one set of words is verbs and the other set are attributes of the product. Another way is that one set of words would be components of the product (breaking the product down into its parts) and the other set of words would be alternative solutions. The method is to combine each word of one set with each word of the other set. These two sets of words result in a two-dimensional matrix. A three dimensional matrix can be created by adding a third list of factors. The difficulty of this technique is the large number of ideas deriving of the multiple combinations that can be made.

5.5 Mapping Process

The use of maps is particularly useful in strategic management thinking in organisations, helping to organise discontinuities, contradictions or differences, and bring pattern, order and sense to a confusing situation, acting as a spatial representation of a perspective. There are many forms of mapping, including computer-based tools to support mapping: Mind Mapping. It is an individual brainstorming mapping technique designed by Tony Buzan. It begins with a central focal point, a problem, an object, a name or issue, written in the centre of a piece of paper with a circle around it. Each major facet of the problem or the solution to the problem originating from the central idea is then brainstorming in order to generate new ideas. Each of those ideas are then written on lines drowned outward from the circle. The next step is to brainstorm those ideas in order to identify issues related to the problem, or solutions that are written on smaller lines that are drowned on the prime lines forming a branch. Additional perspectives such as implementation factors or further definition of the solutions could go on those lines. One branch may also be chosen in order to develop a whole new mind map based on that branch. When a mind map is completed, its possible interrelations and possible multiple appearances of issues, and its overall meaning in the context of the problem must be examined.

5.6 The Excursion Technique

Is a very useful technique for forcing a group to have new thought patterns to formulate strategies? The process involves five steps: In the 1st step - the excursion - the consultant asks participants to take an imaginary excursion to a physical location (a museum, a jungle, a city, another planet, etc.), which has nothing to do with the real problem. After the excursion each participant writes down 8-10 images, which he/she saw during the journey (things, people, places or items) in the 1st of 3 columns. In the 2nd step, the consultant asks participants to draw analogies or express relationships between what they saw on the excursion and the problem as defined, and to write them in the column 2 next to each of the items identified in the first column. In the 3rd step, participants are asked to determine what solutions to their problems are suggested by the analogies or the relationships in column 2, and write them in column 3 beside the items

and analogies identified in the other columns. In the 4th step, participants share their experiences from the excursion: what they saw, their analogies and their solutions. In the 5th step, as with brainstorming, participants may discuss on each other's ideas. Eventually the leader helps the group come to a common solution or a set of solutions to the problem.

5.7 Computer-based creativity techniques

Computer-based supporting techniques to stimulate the human creative process have an immediate and pragmatic aim, which is the implementation of computational models (computer software) for generate and organise ideas for creative work. They are used more frequently in research planning, product design, knowledge acquisition, decision making, motivation, etc. We can distinguish groups of computerised creativity techniques, such as AI models, Idea Processors systems and visualisation and graphical systems.

5.8 AI (artificial intelligence) models of creativity

AI deals with solving non-quantified, unstructured problems. Its task is about knowledge representation and reasoning and to build intelligent, rational, and autonomous agents.Current AI models of creativity involve different types and appropriate techniques of supporting the generation of new ideas. According to Margaret Boden (1998), in respect to the three types of creativity, there are also three main types of computer models that involve: a) The stimulation of the combination of ideas, mainly by using analogies in the sense that associated ideas shares some inherent conceptual structure. b) The exploration of structured concepts, so that novel and unexpected ideas result. It requires considerable domain-expertise and analytical power to define the conceptual space and to specify procedures that enable its potential to be explored. c) The transformation of a problem, so that new structures can be generated which could not have arisen before. New solutions to a problem can be created with transforming a problem into a new problem, solve the new problem and then adapting the solution back to the original problem.

5.9 Factors affecting Creativity

5.9.1 Personality Factors

The search for personality correlates of creativity has provided a diverse set of findings, depending in part on the specific field in which creativity is investigated. A core of personality traits that are reasonably stable across fields has emerged from divergentareas. These traits include "high valuation of aesthetic qualities in experience, broad interests, attraction to complexity, high energy, independence of judgment, autonomy, intuition, self-confidence, ability to resolve antinomies or to accommodate apparently opposite or conflicting traits inone's self-concept, and a firm sense of self as creative.Traits of persistence,curiosity, energy, and intellectual honesty were consistently identified byR&C scientists as being important for creativity. In addition, a number of studies have shown that highly creative people tend to have an internal locus of control. Although researchers are in general agreement that personality is related to creativity attempts to develop a personality inventory predictive of creative accomplishment in organizations are no more likely to be useful than were early trait theory approaches to explaining leadership. However, although we advocate moving well beyond a

focus solely on individual actors, theorists must nevertheless retain an appreciation for the creative person as a partial explanation for creativity in complex social settings.

5.9.2 Cognitive Factors

Researchers have identified a number of cognitive abilities that relate to creativity. Fluency, fluency of expression, figural fluency, ideational fluency, speech fluency, word fluency, practical ideational fluency, and originality are the cognitive traits for creativity. In addition, field dependence also has been related to creativity. People with high field independence are able to analyse the relevant aspects of the situation without being distracted by the irrelevant aspects, whereas field-dependent people have difficulty separating less important aspects. The cognitive processes of fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration are essential for divergent production. Divergent production has long been considered the cognitive key to creativity and has continued to be a major consideration in creativity research. Thus, for a creative person to produce socially useful products, his or her divergent thinking must come hand in hand with convergent thinking.

5.9.3 Intrinsic Motivation

An intrinsic motivational orientation has been postulated by many researchers as a key element in creativity. The primary function of motivation was the control of attention. Indeed, much current research on motivation in industry has focused on attention self-regulation Motivational interventions such as evaluations and reward systems may adversely affect intrinsic motivation toward a creative task because they redirect attention away from the heuristic aspects of the creative task and toward the technical or rule-bound aspects of task performance. Though it is expected that actual positive evaluation would enhance creativity due to positive effects on self-efficacy, such evaluation may adversely affect subsequent creative performance because it leads to expectations of future evaluation. A person's extrinsic reward interacts with his or her choice. Monetary reward given for performance on a task for which the individual has no choice can enhance creativity, but when the individual is offered a reward for consenting to perform the task, creativity may actually be undermined. The choice regarding how to perform a task can enhance a person's intrinsic interest and creativity. Thus, task restraints that limit an individual's choice of task strategies, or redirect a person's attention away from the heuristic aspects of the task, may have detrimental effects on creativity. This provides yet another example of the importance of contextual influences (CI) on creative behaviour.

5.10 Role of HR Manager

The role of the HR manager must parallel the needs of his or her changing organization. Successful organizations are becoming more adaptive, resilient, quick to change direction and customer-centred. Within this environment, the HR professional, who is considered necessary by line managers, is a strategic partner, an employee sponsor or advocate and a change mentor.

5.11 Change Champion

The constant evaluation of the effectiveness of the organization results in the need for the HR professional to frequently champion change. Both knowledge about and the ability to execute successful change strategies make the HR professional exceptionally valued. Knowing how to

link change to the strategic needs of the organization will minimize employee dissatisfaction and resistance to change. The HR professional contributes to the organization by constantly assessing the effectiveness of the HR function. He also sponsors change in other departments and in work practices. To promote the overall success of his organization, he champions the identification of the organizational mission, vision, values, goals and action plans. Finally, he helps determine the measures that will tell his organization how well it is succeeding in all of this.

5.12 Employee Advocate

As an employee sponsor or advocate, the HR manager plays an integral role in organizational success via his knowledge about and advocacy of people. This advocacy includes expertise in how to create a work environment in which people will choose to be motivated, contributing, and happy. Fostering effective methods of goal setting, communication and empowerment through responsibility, builds employee ownership of the organization. The HR professional helps establish the organizational culture and climate in which people have the competency, concern and commitment to serve customers well. In this role, the HR manager provides employee development opportunities, employee assistance programs, gainsharing and profit-sharing strategies, organization development interventions, due process approaches to problem solving and regularly scheduled communication opportunities. Hence, as much of organizations' creativity is embedded in their individual members, there has been a progressively greater emphasis on the role of the human resource management (HRM) practices in order to identify qualified people who possess the skills, the competencies and the creative potential necessary for enhancing organizational results. Scholarly work has investigated the practices that allow managing and fostering employees' creativity. However, harnessing creativity means not just developing ways to allow employees to be creative, but also retaining employees so that creative momentum can build over time and not be disrupted by the constant need to recruit new personnel to fill vacant positions. If this consideration is certainly valid for every organizational context, it is especially true for creativity-driven organizations, where a continuous generation of novelty is required and a high turnover rate could reduce the speed of firms' response to the competitive environment.

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