Resistance to change: status quo for the personal development

Change is an integral part of our everyday life and often creates fear, disturbances, and forces young people to act or think about their current and even more importantly their future situation. In the process of change there are two basic forces that clash - the pursuit of change and the resistance to it. Everything that is new and different from the current state raises anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Resistance to change is a way for the individuals to deal with the uncertainty of the change that has to be implemented in life or at the workplace.

Nowadays we are functioning in a constantly growing and not always predictable global environment, where change has become a normality for all types of organizations and its employees, a crucial process that is needed to sustain existence, success, and growth. However, the changes introduced often cause resistance from employees, which can be defined as conscious opposing what surrounds us, opposing what brings change. Resistance to change is a natural, almost obvious reaction to the introduced changes.

Each organization, just like every small unit is unique, thus depending on the type of implemented change, development phase, or internal or external conditions, the sources of resistance to changes identified within it may be different. Resistance to change is a more or less active response, generated in response to actions that change the individual or organizational status quo. When we are working in an environment where changes happen often, resistance occurs as a natural state of every individual or group, entire organizations, or even societies.

It might even be said that resistance is almost an integral part of the change management process. It is important in the process of effective change management to be aware of the existence of resistance to changes, the reasons for their occurrence, as well as possible methods of levelling them or eliminating them. The resistance depends primarily on individual predispositions, but also on socialization experiences in the current organization as well as in previous workplaces (Grabus, 2013). Therefore, it seems senseless to fight with it or to avoid it. The better solution is to try to understand it and to evaluate the causes, symptoms, and possible solutions to overcome it. This long, and not easily manageable process will allow to focus on the existing situation in the process of change management, draw constructive conclusions, and in the later stages will also affect the efficiency of the entire process.

Harrison argued that long-term change rarely, if ever, is achieved without powerful leaders (Harrison, 2011), meaning that the relation of the leader with the members of the team should not be overestimated, but fully integrated on every level. Employees are more open to

changes when they receive accurate information about changes and their consequences, and when they have the opportunity to participate in the implementation of changes and trust those who manage change (van Dam et al., 2008). Bennett and Segerberg (2012) believed that large-scale change requires high levels of organizational resources, which can be found also among the team members. Small-term change is much easier to manage, and might not require the level of leadership and inclusiveness needed for a big scale change.

Among the possible reasons for strengthening the resistance to change can be mentioned:

• insufficient feeling for the need for change;

• lack of support from the top management (strengthens passive resistance or lack of commitment to change);

• analysing the change process only in terms of benefits for the organization and treating employees only as change factor, but not as change entities;

• perception of the effects of change;

• the possible need to construct a new organizational identity (new position, modification of the area of responsibility, new colleagues, superiors or subordinates);

• the possibility for changed or new professional identity (change in the type and scope of tasks), seen as a reason for a higher level of resistance by Kotter (2008).

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