

Providing Training to the Employees When the Change Involves Shift in Technologies or Processes

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Abstract

This paper examines the statement of 'provide training to the employees when the change involves shift in technologies or processes.' Furthermore, the paper explores mastering the new ways to do things in the organization. It considers the perceived change and how it is executed within the organization. Ways to communicate availability of training prior and during the change process while ensuring employees do not feel left out. The key change management concepts are explored through secondary sources and relevant practical examples from the various industries.

Keywords: Change management, training, practical examples, characteristics of training.

JEL Classification: D23, D83, J24, M14, M53.

1. Introduction

This research paper examines the dynamics of training and change management within the organizational settings. The key components and practical relevance are examined to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program at the workplace. I agree that we need to provide training for the employees when the change involves shifts in technologies or processes, so it can help them master the new way of doing things. Thus, training is essential for the employees to deal with the changes at the workplace.

The reason for agreement with this statement is in the light of previous empirical studies, such as work of Johnson & Proctor (2017) confirmed that training helps in skill acquisition so that tasks could be performed efficiently. Moreover, the work of Thomas and Thrower (2022) found that proper training leads to building and strengthening the confidence of employees at all levels of management because they use new systems and procedures without hesitation. It also helps with the reduction of resistance to change. Lastly, the disruption in the workflow reduces due to training as employees are promptly adapting new methods to commence tasks (Rudy, 2022). Thus, this research aims to investigate the role of training employees to prepare them for change in processes and technologies.

2. Empirical Research

Individuals need training in mastering new ways of doing things. The term "training" includes a wide range of elements and is frequently used in understanding the changes in the attitude and behaviour resulting from experiences (Thirunavukkarasu, 2017). On the other hand, according to Michel Armstrong (2001), "training is systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by an individual to perform adequately a given task or job." In simple terms, it could be stated that training is to develop skills and knowledge to complete tasks at hand, especially when the change involves shift in technologies and/or process. Hence, it is established that training enables the individuals within the workplace to deal with the changes and be adaptive to the situation. Training enables employees to perform well and enhance their organizational commitment (Haque & Yamoah,

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2014).

According to Spector (2013), in a change process, training could be most effectively used when there is participative process while roles, responsibilities, and relationships are adequately defined. The new behavior to learn the skills or adapt to new knowledge is a resultant of the commitment (Spector, 2013). Nonetheless, organization's role to help employees enact new behaviors (including role, responsibilities, and relationships) remain pivotal in learning new skills (Spector, 2013).

Organizational Change Management

According to Stobierski (2020), businesses must undergo organizational transformation to prosper and expand. The effective implementation and acceptance of modifications inside the company are driven by change management. It enables workers to comprehend the schedule, dedicate themselves to it, and perform well during it. Again, training helps in mastering new ways of doing things in effective and efficient ways.

The concept of change management process must be explained before utilizing the change management strategies to ensure effective transformation. Change management processes include several steps that enable the organization in bringing effective changes while reducing the disruption (Spector, 2013). Some of the key models for change management include ADKAR Model, Kotter's 8-step change model, and Lewin's Change Model (Spector, 2013). The summary of steps for change management is explained through Figure 1 below:

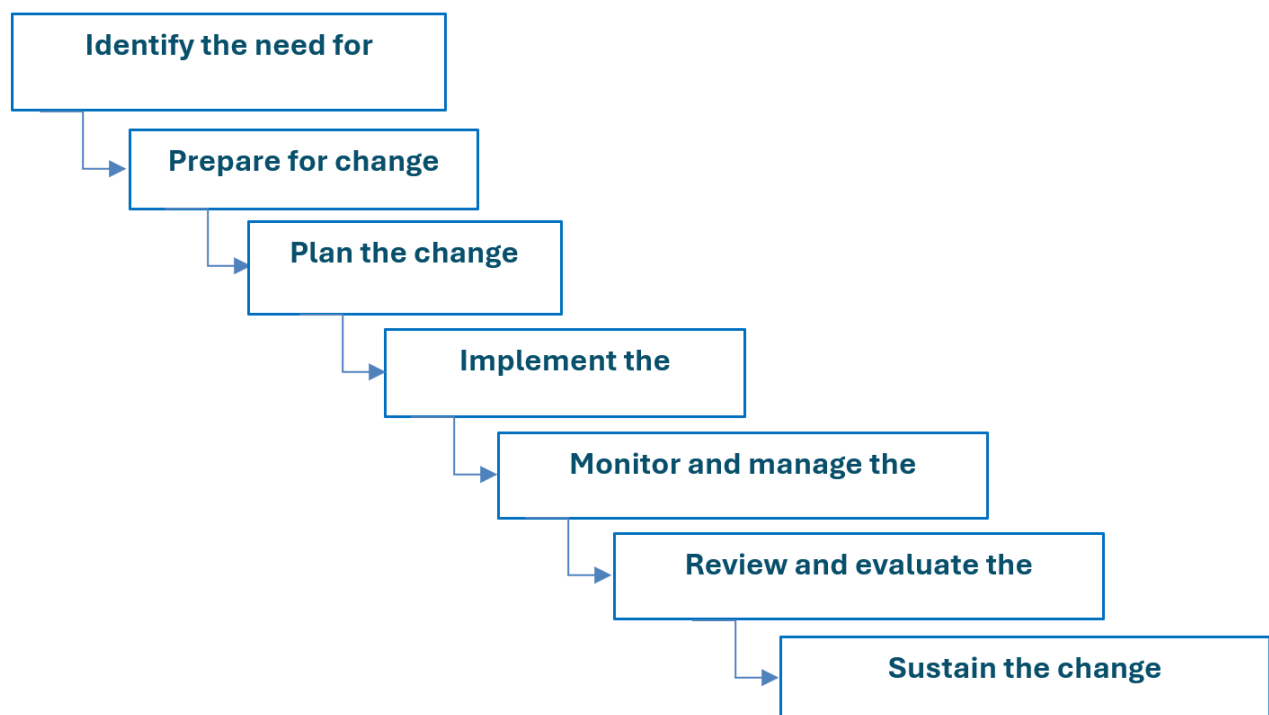


Figure 1: Change management process key steps.

Source: Own illustration based on different models of Change Management

For prescriptive streams and analytical streams, change management is essential for the implementation and development of strategy (Beatty, 2016). Training and ability to manage change effectively leads to gaining competitive advantage (Rigby and Bilodeau, 2013). It is widely accepted among the scholars and practitioners that training plays a pivotal role in the change management process (Zehra, 2016). Training is a barometer for change and measuring effectiveness of performance inside the organization (Zehra, 2016). Moreover, the work of Jose et al. (2018) revealed that in the budgeted hotels in India and Pakistan, training impacts the overall performance as well as ensuring smooth transition in change phase. Plethora of research confirmed that knowledge transfer,

building and enhancing confidence, alignment with cohesive change approach, feedback mechanism, skill development, support and strengthening a system are some of the new ways that individual master, resulting from training (Kotter, 1996; Jick, 1993; Hatt, 2006; Bridges, 2009; Besson and Rowe, 2012; Prosci, 2020).

Table 1: Aspects of Training and their role in Change Management

Characteristics of Training	Role in Change Management	Source
Knowledge Transfer	Training enables employees to understand the need for change and helps them in transforming their knowledge about new tools, techniques, and procedures while reducing resistance to change.	(Kotter, 1996).
Build and enhance confidence	Training builds and enhances confidence among employees during the change that could lead to demonstrating a higher level of engagement and lower resistance to changing process.	(Jick, 1993)
Alignment with cohesive change approach	Training ensures that there is alignment with the change initiative and the overall goals of the organization, thus leading to a cohesive approach.	(Hiatt, 2006)
Feedback mechanism	Training helps in adjusting required to the process because participants have a chance to provide feedback on the changes process. The effectiveness of training could lead to improvement in the change management procedures.	(Bridges, 2009)
Skills development	Required mandatory skills develop and nurture among employees due to adequate training, which helps in adapting to new procedures and systems so that it is facilitating smoother transitions.	(Besson and Rowe, 2012)
Support and strengthen system	Training program helps in addressing concerns and questions of employees regarding the structured support system.	(Prosci, 2020)

Source: Own illustration based on secondary research

It is confirmed in the light of empirical evidence (secondary sources that training has a constructive role in the change management process (Table 1). Thus, it could be said that training helps in mastering new ways of doing things in the organization and embracing change.

There are several real-life examples of training that proved to be effective in the change management process. When the change involves shifts in technologies or processes, organizations are required to provide adequate training for their workforce. It helps with proper utilization of resources and helps the workers to understand the prospects of change initiatives. Some of the practical examples are discussed below:

Table 2: Practical examples of training being effective in changing management process.

Company	Change Initiative and Training Approach	Outcome	Source
Microsoft	<i>"Shift to a Cloud-First Strategy"</i> Microsoft invested in employee training to ensure they learn cloud technologies and the latest software platforms. Extensive internal training programs in the form of courses and certifications were provided so employees developed required skills for smooth transition.	Rapid adoption of cloud technologies led to higher growth in Azure cloud services and improved further business performance. Thus, it helped Microsoft in sustaining a competitive edge in the tech industry.	(Gates, 2006)
IBM	<i>"Transition to AI Focus"</i> Training in AI, data science and machine	As a result, AI Solutions and cognitive computing helped IBM to increase its market share.	(Bort, 2018)

Company	Change Initiative and Training Approach	Outcome	Source
	learning were done through IBM Skills academy. It does not only offer online courses and certifications, but also training workshops.	Hence, training played a vital role in changing management.	
General Electrics (GE)	<i>“Implementing Digital Transformation Strategies”</i> The “GE Digital” initiative launched to provide training programs, so employees have advanced digital skills through hands-on workshops and online training sessions.	The operational efficiency increased as GE integrated digital technologies into its core business processes.	(Kaufman, 2016)
Amazon	<i>“Adoption of a New CRM Platform”</i> Salesforce provided training to employees through the CRM platform (part of their Salesforce University). The focus was to enhance employee capabilities.	Training led to smooth transition for users adopting CRM, hence, the satisfaction of users increased because of the trained employees.	(Cory, 2017)

Source: Own illustration based on secondary research

From Table 2, it is evident that training played a vital role in the transformation of organizations and the adoption of advanced technologies. The change management process is likely to be successful due to proper training programs (Burns, 2019). A plethora of research confirmed that whether it is manufacturing or service industry, training plays a pivotal role in the change process (Sharma et al. 2022; Jose et al., 2018; Zehra, 2016). In banks, the introduction of new systems or software often requires employees to complete training, so they develop the required skills and overcome the skills gap. This helps in forming human capital for the organization.

3. Organizational Support, Occupational Stress, Training, and Performance

Jose & Kaur (2023) identified that organizational support helps in improving the performance of employees. On the other hand, the work of Haque & Yamoah (2014) also showed that employees’ organizational commitment tends to improve due to organizational support. There are traces in the literature that training helps in reducing stress and organizational support further play pivotal roles in the process (Haque, 2020; Haque, 2022; Haque, 2023; Haque, 2024). The quality of performance tends to improve due to training (Zehra, 2016). Interestingly, the work of Faizan & Haque (2016) also revealed that employee’s performance in female-owned enterprises tends to improve due to adequate support and training and development programs. Nonetheless, change not only requires preparation of a workforce but it also requires the support of leaders. Leadership styles play a vital role in the determination of project success (Kaur et al., 2024). Moreover, a plethora of studies confirmed that leadership is an important factor to train and manage changes while ensuring improved employee performance (Faizan et al., 2018; Javed et al., 2018; Haque et al., 2017; Haque, Aydin & Uysal, 2017).

Perceived Changes to be executed in organization - Executing Changes in Organization

To understand how one perceives changes in the organization, it is essential to critically elaborate the concept of execution strategy and interlinked variables (i.e., factors).

Perceived Changes to be executed in organization - Execution Strategy

Discuss the steps involved in planning and implementing training programs as part of the change process. This could include needs assessment, curriculum design, delivery methods (e.g., workshops, e-learning), and evaluation of training effectiveness. A recently published article in Harvard Business

Review, Cote (2020) explained that after formulation the carrying out (actual implementation) of a strategic plan is regarded as a strategy execution so that short, middle, and long-range business goals and objectives are accomplished. Training enables adequate execution related to systems, operations, and structures to accomplish individual and collective team goals for the organizations during the change phase (Cote, 2020). Training programs' planning and implementation has steps during the change process. The first step is a “need assessment”, followed by “curriculum design”, “delivery methods”, and “evaluation of training effectiveness” (Salas et al., 2012).

Perceived Changes to be executed in organization - Training Needs Assessment

According to Salas et al. (2012), during the change process, it is important to conduct adequate training needs assessment so it could be customized according to the requirements and specific skills are developed to fill the knowledge gaps within the organizational setup. There are several methods used by the organizations as approaches to assess training needs (Gupta et al., 2017). Most used effective methods include interviews, surveys, performance evaluations, and job analysis (Gupta et al., 2017). Below is table 3, reflecting the approaches used by various companies for training needs assessment, especially during the change process:

Table 2: Practical examples of approaches for training need assessment in change management process.

Approach	Example of an organization	Source
Survey	<i>“Cisco System”</i> Organization uses surveys to assess training needs for employees working at different departments (Chandrasekaran, 2022). The regular surveys help in gauging training program effectiveness and addressing the key areas requiring additional training, especially during the change process (Chandrasekaran, 2022).	(Chandrasekaran, 2022)
Interviews	<i>“SAP”</i> For assessing training needs, SAP opt to conduct interviews with managers and employees, so they are aware about input of key internal stakeholders in the change process (Vijay, 2023). Such interviews with the managers, employees, and teams are part of SAP's broader approach to analyse gaps in skills and training and development programs.	(Vijay, 2023)
Job Analysis	<i>General Electrics (GE)</i> Job analysis is applied by General Electrics (GE) so that the organization can determine the training needs required by its workers (GE, 2017). This approach enables GE to examine the changing job roles and develop required competencies by offering tailored training schemes and programs (GE, 2017).	(GE, 2017)
Performance Evaluation	<i>“Microsoft”</i> Performance evaluation is an approach used by Microsoft for identification of skill gaps and required training (Vorecol, n.d.). Microsoft uses performance appraisals as a strategic move to inform the workforce and adjust its training sessions and programs after receiving feedback from the employees and review of their performance (Vorecol, n.d.).	(Vorecol, n.d.)

Source: Own illustration based on secondary research

The work of Morrison et al. (2010) argued that within the organization, a comprehensive needs assessment and training program alignment helps the organization not only in achieving its strategic short, middle, and long-term goals, but also ensure training effectiveness and relevance during the different phases of the change process.

4. Designing and Conveying Training Program

Clark (2011) explained that the reason curriculums are designed at institutions and workplaces is because it serves a structural approach so that organization can decide whether training at workplace should be instructor-led, on-the-job (practical hands-on approach), self-paced, or a mix of two or more mentioned methods. While articulating training programs, it is highly crucial for the organization to have clearly defined training objectives because it contributes towards organizational success (Gagné et al. 2005). One of the clear training objectives would be that before the training program starts, the trainees are informed that the purpose of the training is to develop specific skills regarding processes or new technologies. For instance, when Yorkville University (YU) introduced the Flex YU program, they trained the professors about using new technology. There was a change in equipment and the workforce needed it to operate efficiently and effectively.

It is important to note that all training in one-size-fit-all training does not suit and work for all types of organizations and it does not fit for employees on different levels of managerial hierarchy. Thus, customization of training is also important to address the training needs. Employees working in different groups have their own roles and responsibilities, thus, their skill levels should be taken into consideration for developing customized relevant and effective training programs (Knowles et al. 2014). It is very important for the organization to convey the importance of training programs prior to commencement because a sudden announcement could hinder not only the training outcomes, but also impact on the confidence of the workforce. If an employee feels that he/she is left out or their voice and views are not taken into consideration, this will hamper the organization in the long run.

Blanchard and Thacker (2013) argued that no matter how well the training program is designed and articulated, effective execution is key for success. For rolling out an effective execution training plan, the key ingredients are allocation of resources, scheduling, and selection of a professional training facilitator (Blanchard and Thacker, 2013). Noe (2020) stated that for adequate implementation, it is vital to select an appropriate training mode (methods). Some of the most common methods for training during the change process are simulations, e-learning platforms, and even blended learning approaches could be employed depending on the needs of the organization (Noe, 2020). Hence, in this regard, timeline is a critical factor. Kotter (1996) argued that smooth transition regards well-planned timelines that are adequately aligned with the change management schedules. Again, taking example of YU implementing a new registration system (Paragon). Adequate training was required and hence, the timeline was crucial for the success of the project Paragon.

It is also important to understand that ongoing support and feedback mechanisms are equally important for incorporating training in the change process (Rosenberg, 2001; Prosci, 2020). Focus groups, surveys, and one-on-one interviews are some of the essential feedback mechanisms for assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of training (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2016). Nonetheless, flexibility is also required for adjustment and advancement of the training program. One of the key aspects to be considered is that peer support networks can help the organization in reinforcing learning and creating awareness for organizational change (McLagan, 2002). In addition to that, long-term evaluation of training programs is used frequently for measuring the impact of adaptability and job performance (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2016).

No matter how good the training program is, the most important thing is to ensure the need and availability of the training should be informed in a way that it is taken in a positive manner. When change is announced and employees require training, it is essential to consider the feelings of the individuals. If employees feel they are left out or unheard, there will be resistance and unwillingness to enthusiastically participate in the training sessions. Even, there is a likely possibility that some individuals might feel that they were not taken into confidence prior to training commencement because they lack certain skills or experience. The worst could be if employees develop self-doubts. Since, it is noted by various studies that human capital is equally important for the organization as financial capital and if not properly managed could lead to stress at the workplace (Jose and Kaur,

2023; Kaur, 2023). Thus, training should be properly communicated to the parties concerned.

Communication is key to success in the organization (Haq & Faizan, 2023). Although the focus of the paper is on providing training and exploring the key concepts of change management, it is equally essential to consider the role of leadership during the change management process, from designing and implementation to communicating the necessity and availability of the training. The maximization of learning among team members is part of leaders in training (Crowley, 2021). This is the reason there are programs specifically designed to help leaders learn how to manage change and ensure effectiveness in training programs, one such program is called “Leaders in Training (LIT) program” (HVNA, 2024). The research of Afzal et al. (2010) confirmed that leadership plays a pivotal role in the efficiency and effectiveness of training and development programs. The involvement of leaders in training sessions increases team satisfaction, motivation and overall communication skills. Some of the common channels for communication the availability of training is through “meetings”, “emails”, “memorandum”, and “internal platforms” (Kulina, 2022). However, it is always good practice to have dedicated channels and communication tools for informing the workforce about training sessions and changing processes. Note that training sessions are also a wonderful opportunity for the employees to socialize and know about the latest trends and techniques related to their profession.

The awareness and education spreads while teamwork develops. Clarity of message is required thus clear communication from the top leadership/senior management is pivotal about training availability because it helps in the reduction of anxiety and stress while ensuring employees remain engaged and demonstrate higher organizational commitment (Clampit, 2005; Kaur, 2023) during different phases of change. Setting an agenda in meeting minutes could be an effective way of letting the employees know. Regular meetings should be held to communicate the needs for the training program. Early communication helps employees prepare mentally for upcoming changes and a reduction of uncertainty and anxiety when they are informed earlier about the upcoming changes.

5. Communication Strategies

Training during the change process requires clear communication. It is essential to identify the need for training, prepare training manuals, design communication plans during change, execute the training sessions, and sustain the communication process to ensure training remains effective. Understanding the objective of the training session is pivotal prior to commencement of training while assessing the new skills and knowledge learned after completion of training is required (Bishop House Consulting, 2014). Two things that must be addressed through communication related to training include “WIFM” (*What's in It for Me?*) and “WIFO” (*What's in It for the Organization?*) (Bishop House Consulting, 2014). This will help the employees understand why the training is relevant to him/her and how it contributes to the bigger picture, which is organizational goals. Note that transparency is also important in all types of training programs. Some of the commonly used communication strategies regarding training in general and training specifically for changes involving shifts in technology or processes. One of the finest communication strategies is to communicate early and frequently, whether the medium is auditory, written correspondence, or visuals (Bishop House Consulting, 2014).

Timely and early communication enables the employees to be mentally prepared for the changes (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). In addition to that, detailed information strategy is about ensuring a comprehensive training program (i.e., having proper content, clear objectives, and up-to-date schedules) enables employees to understand the importance and relevance of training sessions (Kotter, 1996). Hence, they embrace training as a growth opportunity rather than seeing it merely as an obligation. Reassurance and continuous updates help both employees and organizations in the long run.

The reassurance strategy is about ensuring that employees understand the commitment of an

organization and in return support and welcome the changes, and thus, willingly participate in the training program to embrace changes of ideas, technologies, processes, and operations. Thus, leaders communicate reassurance by ensuring everyone is on the same page (Noe, 2020). Moreover, the channels and lines of communication should not be rigid. It should be open throughout the change process and during commencement of training so that employees can reach out and ask questions while continuing to receive latest updates on the training program (Clampitt, 2005). It is also essential to consider the support and follow-up in ensuring employees are adequately informed and prepared for the training needs. Thus, the use of mentorship, refresher courses, and even peer networks could be very invaluable approaches to ensure employees continue with confidence and feel the support towards adoption of a new process or new system.

Involving employees in the planning process could be another effective strategy to ensure they do not oppose or resist the change. Moreover, incentives to complete the training could also be an effective way to ensure they do not feel left out. It is important to engage them and educate them about the benefits of participation in training programs such as acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities to operate and manage systems, technologies, and processes.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the above critical discussion is that training plays a pivotal role in the change management process. Training integration enables the organizations in effective and successful implementation of necessary steps during change processes when there is a shift in the technologies or processes. The empirical evidence and plethora of research confirmed that well-structured and comprehensive training programs led to developing knowledge and required skills, enhanced confidence, improve employees' organizational commitment and engagement, and reduce hesitancy and resistance to change. All this forms a win-win situation for both employees and organization. Various practical examples incorporated in this research revealed that adequate and comprehensive training programs enable the organizations to remain competitive.

The effectiveness of providing training to employees relies heavily on a systematic procedure by first assessing the needs for training, followed by development of curriculum, and lastly ensuring the appropriate delivery methods are incorporated. For organizations, it is essential to gain the employee's confidence by properly communicating the training initiatives while offering continuous support so that employees do not feel left out or low on confidence – thinking that they lack the required skills or experiences. The channels and strategies do vary for the organizations as some might prefer open and early communication, some might opt for detailed communication. The use of emails, memos, auditory, and visual are all options, depending on the preference of the organization. However, the main aspect is that employees receive clear instructions and are informed in a proper manner. Sudden change is often a shock for many individuals within the organization, thus creating and fostering the environment where changes are welcome remains important for the organizations. Nonetheless, from the plethora of research, it is evident that training is an investment rather than an expense and this strategic investment ensures smooth transition and adoption of the new technologies or processes. Moreover, it leads to strengthening organizational adaptability and developing resilience to ensure it remains competitive in the changing dynamics. Thus, providing training to employees when the change involves shifts in the technologies or processes enables them to master new ways of doing things.

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