

Transformational Leadership Skills

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Abstract

This research study is based on three changes in organisation: The SAP project at Rhodia Silicones (Petrochemicals firm), The Étoile project at Renault Trucks (Automobile firm) and the Progress Project of the Rhône-Alpes region (French regional government). Based on case-study methodology, the study shows in what way piloting change is a specific form of leadership which requires specific skills.

Change leadership requires an arsenal of specific skills. The three changes studied bring to light these change leader skills set and behavior.

This study, which is based on an existing model to solve complex social problems, brings to light the specific skills used by change leaders.

Key Words:

Change – Transformational Leadership – Strategic Management – Skills – Emotional Intelligence – Solving Complex Social Problems

Introduction

Change is an integral part of life. It is omnipresent in companies. In a complex system, such as an organization, to last is not enough; the organization must adapt to transformations in the environment, and evolve.

In order to contribute to better understanding of the complex phenomenon of change management, we propose in this study to analyze in depth the skills and behaviors required by change managers.

The following question is raised: Is there a type of leadership that is specific to change management, and if so, what skills and behaviors does it require?

The study is based on the experience of three organizations that went through organizational change and interviews with the change managers.

We first of all present the context of the study, then the theory and methodology the study was based on. This is followed by the results, discussion and questions raised, and finally a conclusion.

I/ Context of the study

The starting point of this study was the opportunity to take part in a change management project during a six-month mission in one of the three organizations studied. To make the study more systemic, it was extended to two other international companies.

The first series of interviews was conducted between 2003 and 2004. Then in order to enrich the study (by making it a longitudinal study), further series of interviews were conducted between 2005 and 2006 and between 2007 and 2008.

The study concerns three organizations located in France. The first case is the implementation of an SAP system at Rhodia Silicones located in St Fons near Lyon¹. The second case also concerns the implementation of an SAP system at Renault Trucks² in St Priest near Lyon. The third case concerns the reorganization of « local

¹ This firm produces silicone mastic for various uses. The objective of the project was to set up a « global SAP system ».

² This firm constructs heavy goods vehicles. The name of the change project is « étoile project ». The objective of which was to transform human-resource management procedures using an SAP system.