

Case Study: Deciding how to Change  
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This paper aims to discuss the case study *Deciding how to Change* (Hodges & Gill, 2015 pp. 97-99) by examining benefits and drawbacks of using Longbothams' approach to deciding how to change. The paper also presents the overall conclusion about the rationale and usefulness

of the approach. One of the most challenging responsibilities in leadership is to guide and facilitate the implementation of a change. The process can be hard if the organization does not present a powerful and persuasive vision. Yukl (2013) states that “in the hectic and confusing process of implementing change, a clear vision helps to guide and coordinate the decisions and actions of many people in widely dispersed locations” (p.89). Scandura (2016) presents the reader guidelines on how to guide and facilitate the implementation of change. One tactic refers to the ability a leader has to involve participants in the decision process as people tend to accept changes that they help plan. The author also states that positive relationships based on trust increase commitment to organizational change: “the most effective tactics for overcoming resistance and gaining support are communication and building relationships and support for the change” (p. 396). Longbotham and Longbotham (2006) argue that “organizations use the powerful methodologies of process improvement and design of experiments to determine *what* needs to be changed. It is prudent to extend these methodologies to find the most effective *how* to change” (p. 20). The authors state that change is a reality in the business world because of the advancement of globalization, use of new technologies and competition. Hodges and Gill (2015) invite the reader to think of a change management approach under a rational basis. The case study considers a company with 150 stores throughout the US; the company needed to replace the commission-based pay scheme that was discovered to be counterproductive with a salary-based scheme to reduce employee attrition and improve sales revenue. Through a fractional factorial design with replication, the participants involved in the change process identified important seven factors to reduce resistance to change and maximize buy-in. Using combinations of the seven factors identified in the fractional factorial design with replication and two treatment conditions and computations for sales and attrition, the participants were able to

calculate the effects of the factors. The approach in question presents both benefits and drawbacks to deciding how to change. A management and objective approach to implementing change is important as organizational change requires both leadership and managerial skills (Hodges & Gill, 2015). Although the terms *leader* and *manager* are often used indistinguishable, there are differences between them. Nelson and Quick (2012) explain the different attributes managers and leaders have. Managers administrate, focus on systems, stabilize an organization, minimize uncertainty, among others. Leaders mainly innovate, motivate and understand the big picture. Northouse (2015) recognizes that there are similarities between management and leadership processes. Both are concerned with effective goal accomplishment and both processes deal with people. Despite the acknowledgment that there are significant differences between management and leadership, the two constructs overlap. Both leadership and management processes involve influencing a group of members to achieve a goal. As stated by Yukl (2013), “defining managing and leading as distinct roles, processes, or relationships may obscure more than it reveals” (p. 7); both management and leadership can be integrated into an organization. Additionally, organizations need people with both managerial and leadership characteristics as they gain synergistic strength together and are capable of producing great results. Hodges and Gill (2015) tell the reader that change management and leadership of change can lead to a more effective and sustainable change when combined. Victoria Grady (as cited in Hodges & Gill, 2015) states that “change management focuses on the change process, the steps taken, and the tools used to facilitate change” (p. 95). Longbotham and Longbotham (2006) argue that “if change efforts are unsuccessful, it is more often due to the human element than to systems or technology failure” (p. 19) and affirm that statistical tools used at this stage help participants identify the most effective implementation plan under an objective basis. Longbotham and

Longbotham (2006) explain that “organizations have used rigorous methodologies to identify improvements necessary to remain viable and competitive in today’s turbulent business environment. However, they have rarely used the same level of rigor in the implementation of the identified improvement” (p. 22). One of the drawbacks of the use of statistical tools is that it can be time consuming; additionally, the approach provides an objective basis for a decision-making process only, but the combination of other approaches, such as the creative problem-solving approach that would give the participants a more effective basis. Scandura (2016) emphasizes the importance of the role of a leader in enhancing creativity by allowing, for instance, teams work on problems over time in order to have a creative solution. In periods of change, Hodges and Gill (2015) emphasize that a shared purpose is even more important. This author believes the rationale and usefulness of the approach in the case study are valid, but participants of the decision-making process should include other approaches as well. The approach in question is valid and useful because it uses statistical tools that can help the organization visualize important factors. In conclusion, this paper aimed to discuss the case study *Deciding how to Change* (Hodges & Gill, 2015 pp. 97-99) and reflect on benefits and drawbacks of using Longbothams’ approach. The paper also aimed to discuss the importance of both leadership and management in organizational change as the process needs mechanisms to turn vision and purpose into reality.

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