Deciding How to Change

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The case study question is: What are the benefits and drawbacks of using the

Longbothams' approach to deciding how to change?

The world we live in today is marked by accelerating, unpredictable change of which the

magnitude is greater than ever before, "even the concept of change itself has changed" (Hodges

& Gill, 2015, p. 4). Successful organizations are expected to adapt to rapid change and decision

making consisting of choosing from among many alternatives, a process of "directing behaviors

and resources toward organizational goals" (Shockley-Zalabak) 2015, p. 40). Yukl (2013)

discusses that most of the time confusion and emotionality describe decision process rather than

rationality, and that messages are mostly "distorted or suppressed to serve preconceptions and

biases about the best course of action" instead of careful consideration of what could be the

outcome of decision making (p. 26). Gail Longbotham and Roger Longbotham (2006) in Hodges

and Gill (2015) discuss how to determine, in decision making, what needs to be changed, and

most importantly, for this case study, deciding how to change (p. 98).

Gail Longbotham and Roger Longbotham (2006) in Hodges and Gill (2015) propose

efficient methodologies of "process improvement and experimental design. These methodologies

were applied to deciding how to change in this company that had 150 stores all over the United

States (p. 98). Just deciding how to make the change could be managed following a statement of

purpose according to Kim Kanaga and Sonya Prestridge (2002) in Hodges and Gill (2015) who

proposed key "questions that are subjected to a brainstorming process" (p. 61), but does not tell

us how deciding how to change is effected, especially in a case where the company wants to

decide to replace one compensation procedure with another one, to replace a commission-based

system with a salary based scheme, this case study is to find out how by using Gail Longbotham

and Roger Longbotham (2006) approach to deciding how to change, what will be the benefits and drawbacks.

A look at the methodologies used will show us the outcome that will give the answer to the question. The design used to experiment how the change would be made consists of two important elements; first a fractional factorial design with replication, which in turn consists of the identification of seven important factors aligned from A to G. And second, two performance measures were also used, employee attrition and sales, in the experiment that consisted of the combinations of both elements. Miksen (2017) gives a significant definition of attrition, explaining that "attrition is not a word many companies want to hear, unless it's associated with their competitors" for it is the slow decay of an organization, the shrinking of the workforce, or employees leaving the company and consequently reducing production and sales. Attrition versus sales are the second element used for the above-mentioned experiment that Gail Longbotham and Roger Longbotham (2006) in Hodges and Gill (2015) call performance measures; the combination of performance measures and the factors that were identified to be helpful in minimizing resistance to change and maximizing buy-in, resulted in the actions used in implementing change as follows, with the sign + being preferred:

"Factor		Reason
A+	Personal visit from top management	Increased sales revenue
B+	Staged implementation	Minimized employee attrition
C-	Longer lead time	Increased revenue
D+	Do the celebration	Helped morale
F+	Conduct one-on-one meetings	Minimized attrition" (p. 98)

This experiment results show that the benefits of using the Longbothams' methodologies to deciding how to change are in the reason why implementing change: the sales revenue would increase, the employee attrition would be minimized, the revenue would increase. Even offering celebration incentive may not significantly affect the revenue, but it will help morale. The benefits are so significant that the drawbacks are not seen, which gives the Longbothams' approach to deciding how to change significant consideration.

Hodges and Gill (2015) state that "Organizations have used rigorous methodologies to identify improvements necessary to remain viable . . . However, they have rarely used the same level of rigor in the implementation of the identified improvements" (p. 98). I can conclude that change in organizations appear to be a challenge that leaders of change need to understand and work it out, knowing "how to mobilize support and how to respond to resistance to change" (Hodges & Gill, 2015, p. 69). Deciding how to change using the Longbothams' approach would benefit effective leadership and organizations.

References:

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