

Change Management Strategies: A study at Guangdong Technology College, China

Pan Xinxin

Lincoln University College (LUC), Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

*E-mail: 279200928@qq.com

Received: 26th February 2023

Accepted for publication: 1st May 2023

Published: 27th June 2023

Abstract:

Change management nowadays is been treated as a norm in the organization. This study has been conducted at Guangdong Technology College, China. The change management that happens here was when the management decided to implement the Quality Environment/5S on the campus. While there was resistance from the staff in the beginning, slowly once the main committee has started their strategies, the staff began to accept the change. There were a series of strategies implemented in ensuring the activities be successful. This paper will be explaining on the steps taken during the change management and as a result the goal setting.

Keywords: Change management, communication strategies, college, quality, environment

Introduction

Guangdong Technology College is located in Zhaoqing City, Guangdong Province, China. It is a provincial full-time private undergraduate college with management and economics as its main focus. The school was founded in 2004, formerly known as Zhaoqing Vocational and Technical College of Science and Technology. In March 2014, it was approved by the Ministry of Education to be upgraded to a higher-level university. In 2018, it was approved as a bachelor's degree-granting institution by the Guangdong Bachelor's Degree Evaluation Committee. The university now has 9 colleges, 2 departments, Basic Teaching Department and General Education Center, with 34 undergraduate majors, covering 6 disciplines, including engineering, Economics, management, Literature, art, and Education. There are 19 engineering majors, accounting for 55.88% of the total number of majors. At present, there are more than 30,000 full-time junior college students and more than 2,400 teachers. Among them, teachers with senior professional titles account for 25% of the total number of teachers, 53% for intermediate titles, 90% for teachers with master's degrees or above, and more than 60% for "double-qualified" teachers. The school covers an area of 918,600 square meters, with a total construction area of 679,200 square meters. The campus experiment and training site covers an area of 59,800 square meters, the total value of teaching and research equipment is 215 million yuan, and the library has 2,280,300 copies.

Change Management Strategies

In the rapid changes that happen everywhere, organizations need to take some action to compete and at the same time remain attractive to the customers or their clients. Doug Stace and Dexter Dunphy (2001) in their book titled "Beyond the Boundaries: Leading and Re-Creating the Successful Enterprise", stated that communication is part of the strategy when doing organizational changes. There was a 4-communication strategy that involved which consists of developmental or incremental transitions, task-focused transitions, charismatic transformations, and turnarounds. Developmental or incremental transitions aimed for total involvement, ensuring face-to-face communication and specific teams supervising initiative and commitment. Task-focused transitions are performed so that all employee behavior is moving in the same direction as the management. Charismatic transformations will expose the employee to a new way of the working process and turnarounds are away from the management to make sure all employees are complying with the new direction of the organization.

When the management of Guangdong Technology College decides to introduce the Quality Environment/5S (QE/5S) to the employee, they decided that it will be coordinated by the Finance Manager and assisted by the Quality Assurance personnel. The first thing was to form a committee, which consist of the section head, unit head, and the Deputy Dean of academics as the advisor. This committee will be discussing the method and the channel used to inform all the employees on the QE/5S. QE/5S

is the other word for the Japanese most popular “Kaizen”, a management tool from Japan that focuses on establishing a quality environment in the organization, ensuring adherence to standards, and in the process, fostering the spirit of continual improvement. It is aimed to minimize all the actions taken and ensure that no redundancy workflow exists. Once the committee has decided to take the first step, an email from the committee to all employees was sent to inform them that the management has decided to implement QE/5S in the organization. Quality Assurance section, assigned as the task leader has been searching and were able to identify the training consultant for the purpose. The next step taken was conducting separate training for the management and the employee. The consultant has given a brief introduction to the management to ensure there will be continuous support received before the implementation date. The management team has been asked to explain in detail should there be questions asked later by the employees. After that, besides the main committee, there has been numerous sub-committee whose portfolios were set up and had their function such as a promotion unit that will email the newsletter to all employees. The training unit will assist employees with everything they need to know about QE/5S, the internal audit unit will arrange the audit schedule, and the zone head will be responsible for their zone area.

Within the zone area, there will also be a committee that will have a similar function as the main committee. Once the management team has been briefed, training for all employees at a later date will be done. There was a hand-out given to give a clear picture to all about QE/5S and employees were free to ask any question that they are not familiar with. Upon completion of the training, there will be specific training for the committee that holds the function of promotion, internal audit, and training. This is to enable them to perform their task more diligently and will be able to assist the zone head whenever required. The main committee will prepare a 12-month calendar on the schedule of conducting the QE/5S. There was an opening ceremony officiating the QE/5S by the Campus Head. Here, the employee will be informed that the organization is working towards getting the QE/5S certification from the Quality Agency. It was also announced that in conjunction with the QE/5S activities, the 1st Friday of the month will be considered a QE/5S day. The task for the day will be cleaning up unnecessary things that were supposed not to be within the workstation area, any faulty equipment being sent to the store, standardization of files arrangement, and the person in charge of the equipment/area/zone, etc. For the first month, during the opening ceremony, all staff with guidance from their respective zone head on doing the activities correctly. From the 2nd month onwards, while the first Friday of the month is considered to be the QE/5S activity day, then the next Friday will be the auditor day to perform the QE/5S audit. Any equipment/things that were present in the wrong place will be tagged during this audit exercise. These findings or results will be sent later to the zone head and the main committee to evaluate the level of understanding of employees on the QE/5S activities. This exercise and activities are repeated a few times and once the main committee has satisfied with the result, then an appointment or invitation with the agency are being sent for the Campus to be evaluated.

The representative of the agency or the examiner will be assessed in all areas. Upon completion and having fulfilled the requirement set by the agency, then the result of the certification will be announced. The Agency will send the certificate later which also includes the validity period. This exercise or task will be considered completed once the fee involved is paid and the certificate has been received. Later the certificate is displayed for public view. The Campus website will also display information about the certification. Although the evaluation process has been completed and the certification has been approved, the monthly exercise will still be going on, ensuring that the management and employee will continue to uphold the objective of putting a quality working environment. Every year, the main committee will come up with a list of activities to follow since the evaluation process is annual. Part of the QE/5S initiative is also involved in reverse parking. At first, yes there was little resistance but when informed about the goodness of it during the training session, staff began to accept the decision. From time to time, the committee will keep reminding staff about the parking order. At the same time, there was also assistance needed from staff to inform and educate the visitor on the reverse parking policy. Teamwork will play a big role here, as this will show the level of change management between the staff and the management. Although it might take a longer time for staff to adapt to changes with the cooperation between the management, the committee members and staff will ensure all the tasks assigned will be achieved.

As part of a continuous effort and to ease the burden/assist the main committee, a subcommittee that was then divided into a few zones was performed. This subcommittee will be ensuring that all tasks and activities that have been planned by the main committee can be followed by all the zones according to the timeline. Each month also, there will be activities planned for every first Friday of the month. During this time, the management for staff to do the QE/5S activities allocated one day. While some may not be able to join due to other work commitments, they either do it early or when they are free or they will do it at a later time or informing to the other members what should be done. By this time, the majority of the staff has accepted the decision of the management to implement the Quality Environment/5S at the campus. With continuous support from the management, encouragement on the activities, and rewards for some of the activities done such as best zone for the QE/5S, best staff workstation, and other types of rewards. The sum involved in this reward may not be much but the appreciation received together with the satisfaction gained will act as a stimulus for other zone/staff to achieve the same.

Conclusion

Based on the above, although the QE/5S project received a bit of resistance in the beginning, with continuous communication through email, flyers, posters, meetings, training, and discussion, finally were able to achieve the goal. Strong bonding supported by teamwork was able to ensure that the project where at first suspected to fail, succeed at last. Strong

encouragement, continuous support, and some small appreciation and reward from the management to the staff indirectly act as major factors for the success. Besides that, strong teamwork received from the subcommittee was also a big factor in the project. The mentor and mentee concept that unofficially started during this exercise and activities also plays a big role in supporting each other role. Hopefully, this type of cooperation between the management and staff will continue with other projects and activities in the future.

Reference

- Neves, P., Almeida, P., & Velez, M. J. (2018). Reducing intentions to resist future change: Combined effects of commitment-based HR practices and ethical leadership. *Human Resource Management*, 57(1), 249-261
- Ma. Regina M. Hechanova, Jaimee Felice Caringal-Go, Jowett F. Magsaysay, (2018) "Implicit change leadership, change management, and affective commitment to change: Comparing academic institutions vs business enterprises", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 39 Issue: 7, pp.914-925
- Maria Vakola, Ioannis Nikolaou, (2005) "Attitudes towards organizational change: What is the role of employees' stress and commitment?", *Employee Relations*, Vol. 27 Issue: 2, pp.160-174
- Nor Farah Hanis Zainun, Johanim Johari, Zurina Adnan, (2018) "Stressor factors, internal communication and commitment to change among administrative staff in Malaysian public higher-education institutions", *On the Horizon*, Vol. 26 Issue: 4, pp.291-306
- Rahman, Reezlin & Abdulah, Najmiah & Latif Ahmad, Abd. (2018). The Staff Readiness to Change in Sungai Petani Community College Organization: A Pls-Sem Approach. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*. 6. 10.18535/ijserm/v6i6.em02.
- Palmer, I., Dunford, R., & Buchanan, D. A. (2017). *Managing organizational change: A multiple perspectives approach*.
- Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (2010). *Predicting and changing behaviour: The reasoned action Approach*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Information on https://en.everybodywiki.com/Guangdong_Peizheng_College
- Graetz, Fiona, Rimmer, M., Lawrence, Ann, Smith, A. (2006) *Managing Organisational Change*, 2nd Australasian Edition