Make lasting business change with employees’ involvement

In order to alter efficiency and improve customer relations, employees need to change their behaviour. So, the first indicator of institutionalisation entails knowledge. What extent have employees understood the behaviours associated with an intervention? It is concerned with whether members know enough to perform the behaviours and to recognise the consequences of that behaviour.

As an example, Jepkemoi could try job enrichment for her staff that would include a number of new behaviours, such as performing a greater variety of tasks, analysing information about task performance, and making decisions about work methods and plans. Gauging the employees’ knowledge of their new tasks could give an indicator as to whether the behaviour will stick from the change initiative.

Second, judge the change initiative by performance. The performance will show the degree to which intervention behaviours are actually performed. Jepkemoi may measure performance by counting the proportion of relevant people performing the behaviours. As an example, if 70 per cent of her staff members perform the particular job enrichment behaviours in order to improve efficiency and customer service following only six months, then Jepkemoi might consider that a success. However, after a full two years after the change initiative, only 70 per cent would be far too low to be considered successful.

Another measure of performance is the frequency with which the new behaviours are performed. In assessing frequency, it is important to account for different variations of the same essential behaviour, as well as how institutionalised behaviours are performed. Then, account for variations from what you desire.

Third, utilise preferences. Assess the degree to which organisation members, like Jepkemoi’s employees, privately accept the organisational changes. If you only observe employees, you may see them behave in the desired manner commensurate with the change initiative because of the organisation’s rules or sanctions and due to group peer pressure. However, if you ascertain the degree to what staff surreptitiously feel in their hearts, you may judge the success of your change initiative.

Private acceptance usually manifests in employees’ involvement in their hearts, you may judge the success of your change initiative. You may glean staff preferences by conducting surveys while guaranteeing that staff answers will be kept confidential. Often third parties prove ideal for surveying staff on sensitive issues.

Fourth, expand beyond personal opinions and behaviour and focus on groups within the organisation. Normative consensus entails the extent to which people agree about the appropriateness of the organisational changes. Such an indicator of institutionalisation reflects how fully changes have become part of the normative and social structure of the organisation. Changes persist to the degree members feel that they should support them. As an example, a job enrichment program would become institutionalised to the extent that employees support it and see it as appropriate to organisational functioning. Jepkemoi could ascertain normative consensus through focus groups and reinforcing it through intentional team building activities.

Fifth and finally, determine value consensus whereby the social harmony on values line up relevant to the organisational changes. Values are beliefs about how people ought or ought not to behave. They are abstractions from more specific norms. If Jepkemoi desired her workers to behave like East Asians at work, then her aspirations would fall short. Values must line up.

More typically in an example like job enrichment which is based on values promoting employee self-control and responsibility, different behaviours associated with job enrichment, such as making decisions and performing a variety of tasks, would persist to the extent that employees widely share values of self-control and responsibility. Assessing the level to which your change initiative became institutionalised utilising the five techniques should prove invaluable to your business. Whether you operate your business in Kisumu, Narok, Lokichogio, Mombasa or everywhere in between, you want your change schemes to last so that you may increase profits and sustain the reliability of those profits.

Ever achieved lasting change whereby your employees modified their behaviour willingly and not because they were forced? Have any techniques to share with other Business Daily readers? Share your experiences at #KenyaEconon Twitter.

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