

PURE BLAST WATER
COMMUNICATIONS AS A TOOL TO SURVIVE
ORGANIZATIONAL REDESIGN

by

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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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ORGANIZATIONAL REDESIGN

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ABSTRACT

The first two sections of the project focus on the changes that Mr. White, the Regional Vice President & General Manager of Pure Blast made on April 1, 2004 when he changed the roles and responsibilities for some of the employees under his direct control. This involved the consolidation of some regions for employees who were ready for more challenges, the changing of roles and responsibilities for other employees to better utilize their respective strengths, and the termination of a select few employees. This change was done as a means of redesigning the organization in such a way as to promote a culture focused on sales and customer service. Mr. White was looking for information on how the change has affected his employees and seeks recommendations on how to improve the change process in the future. The third section of this paper is a literature review that is integrated with the experiences at Pure Blast and provides the basis for the recommendations that were made in section two, the presentation to the company. The fourth and final section is a document that covers my personal reflections and learnings on studying organizations.

DEDICATION

A special thanks to my parents whose unconditional love and support has enabled me to achieve academic successes beyond my highest expectations. Their inspiration has been invaluable and has motivated me to accomplish everything I ever dreamed of.

~Love Always

Melissa

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1 PROJECT CHARTER

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background¹

Pure Blast Water Company was started within the Greater Vancouver Area in 1986 by two entrepreneurs who succeeded in building the business to approximately 15,000 customers within the first decade. This was a significant accomplishment, considering that during this time the bottled water market for both home and office delivery was nearly non-existent. However, by 1996 the owners of Pure Blast were struggling to find the required capital and financing that was necessary for the continued growth of their business. As a result of these difficulties, the Pure Blast Water Company was sold to Bubbling Brook Water, an organization out of Halifax that, amongst its other business operations, acted as a product bottler for Betta Beverage Ltd. Although Betta later changed its business strategy insofar as it strove to purchase all of its independent bottlers, it decided that it did not want Bubbling Brook Water. As a result, Joe McMillan, the CEO of Bubbling Brook Water, was able to continue to operate the company independently of Betta Beverage Ltd.

At this time the bottled water market was extremely fragmented and made up many small independent bottled water companies. Like Pure Blast, many of these small companies had difficulties expanding their business because of the large amount of capital required for operations and the limited amount of financing available to small organizations (for example, it presently costs approximately \$100,000 to purchase a

¹ Please note all of the information for the Background section was gained through an interview with Jim White on May 14, 2004.

truck with the equipment necessary to deliver \$7 bottles of water). As a result of these financing difficulties, Bubbling Brook Water attempted to consolidate the industry by purchasing 28 companies around the world in countries including Scotland, England, Holland and the United States. This growth through acquisitions was coupled with a tremendous amount of growth in the actual industry itself; during the same time period (late 1990's), the bottled water market for home and office delivery was growing between 10 and 20 percent per annum. Surprisingly, this growth was not a result of intensified marketing efforts but rather solely based upon a natural increase in customer demand.

In 2002 the owners of Bubbling Brook Water made the decision to take the company public. After the initial prospectus was filed the owners determined that it was not a favourable time to complete an initial public offering due to the depressive economic environment. As a result of the release of the prospectus the financial information on Bubbling Brook Water was no longer private, which made them an attractive takeover target. In September of 2002, the owners of Bubbling Brook Water were approached by Quatroino, a French company with world wide operations specializing in dairy, biscuits and water, to see if they would be interested in selling. On January 27, 2003, Quatroino purchased Bubbling Brook Water. Until this time Quatroino had only been manufacturing small bottles of water under the name brand of Evian and so this acquisition was their first step into the home and office delivery market.

The acquisition by Quatroino represented a significant change for Bubbling Brook Water since they went from being an organization of approximately 1,000 employees to 100,000 employees world wide. Quatroino continued to acquire water companies in many different countries around the world, despite the fact that their limited knowledge in the bottled water market was beginning to create difficulties which were further compounded by the fact that natural customer demand for bottled water was finally

beginning to plateau. Additionally, large retailers (such as Canadian Tire and Costco) were beginning to sell water coolers at extremely competitive rates, so it was no longer economical for customers to rent their water coolers from companies such as Pure Blast. This meant that not only had product demand growth slowed, but also a significant amount of revenue from rental coolers was being placed at risk.

Up until this time Pure Blast was not forced to operate at maximum efficiency because of their high profit margins. This meant that as the growth within the industry stagnated there were many opportunities for improving profitability by finding and resolving inefficiencies within the organization. These changes have required the organizational culture at Pure Blast to evolve to not only better fit within the Quatroino family, but also to become more efficient, sales focused and customer service oriented.

At the present time, Pure Blast Water Company has 100,000 customers in British Columbia and Alberta. Of these customers, 60%-70% are located within the Greater Vancouver Area. Pure Blast currently employs approximately 400 employees with a total of 225 in the lower mainland and 105 in the rest of British Columbia. The industry currently has a significant amount of customer turnover and within the next year it is expected that 30,000 of Pure Blast's customers will cancel and that 40,000 new customers will signup. In the future, Pure Blast hopes to reduce its number of annual cancellations by differentiating themselves from their competition through superior customer service. Finally, Pure Blast does not attempt to obtain a competitive advantage on the basis of price.

On April 1, 2004 Jim White, the Regional Vice President & General Manager of Pure Blast Water changed the roles and responsibilities for some of the employees under his direct control. This involved the consolidation of some regions for employees who were ready for more challenges, the changing of roles and responsibilities for other

employees to better utilize their respective strengths, and the termination of a select few employees. This change was done as a means of redesigning the organization in such a way as to promote a culture focused on sales and customer service. Mr. White is looking for information on how the change has affected his employees and seeks recommendations on how to improve the change process in the future.

1.2 Scope and Objectives

1.2.1 Objectives

1.2.1.1 Business Objectives ²

As a result of the changing market conditions, Pure Blast Water Company is striving to create an organizational culture that is sales focused and customer service oriented. Their product is priced at the higher end of the market and they differentiate themselves on the basis of both quality and customer service. Finally, Pure Blast Water Company is aiming to increase the overall efficiency of their business operations as a means to decrease their operating costs.

Pure Blast's guiding principle is "We execute customer service to the extent that it becomes the single most important factor when distinguishing Pure Blast from its competitors."

1.2.1.2 Project Objectives

This project will provide Jim White, the project sponsor, with an update on how the change he implemented on April 1, 2004 is being received by the affected stakeholders who are involved in the change. The project team will then utilize this information to create recommendations and, if applicable, an implementation plan that will improve the effectiveness of the change.

² Please note all of the information for the Business Objectives section was gained through an interview with Jim White on May 14, 2004 and information he provided in internal PowerPoint presentations and communications.

1.2.2 Scope

1.2.2.1 The Project Scope will include:

- A project that is limited to the geographical area of British Columbia.
- The slides for a PowerPoint presentation and, if necessary, a report of the findings, recommendations and an implementation plan.
- Collection of information pertaining to the change that may be conducted through interviews or surveys.
- The data that is collected will provide Mr. White with an update as to how the changes he implemented on April 1, 2004 are being perceived by his team and other individuals who were affected by the change. This data will provide the basis for recommendations that will be made to overcome some of the resistance and barriers to the change process. Furthermore, this information will be used to identify potential areas where the change process may be improved.
- Information will be gathered through interviews that will be conducted with the following individuals:
 - Sales and Marketing Director
 - Customer Service Director
 - Distribution Director
 - Business Analyst
 - HR Manager
 - Regional Manager Alberta
 - Regional Manager North BC and the Interior

- 3 Distribution Managers
 - 2 Call Centre Team Leaders
 - A/R Manager
 - Customer Care Manager
 - Sales Manager
- Interviews will be conducted either over the phone or in person. The decision as to whether the interview will be conducted over the phone or in person will be determined by the project team at the time the interview is scheduled. This will largely be determined by the interviewee's geographical proximity to the interviewer.
 - A presentation (if required).

1.2.2.2 The Project Scope will not include:

- The actual implementation of any recommendations.

1.2.2.3 Project Assumptions

- Client provided details will be assumed to be accurate as all interactions will be via email and telephone.
- All interviews will not be anonymous or confidential.
- All surveys will be anonymous but not confidential.
- Client will return telephone calls and emails within two business days.
- The Project Team will return telephone calls and emails within two business days.
- The students will sign a non-disclosure agreement.

- Access will be granted to all stakeholders who need to be interviewed, which will be determined by the project team on an 'as needed' basis.

1.3 Project Organization

1.3.1 Project Team

- Project Sponsor - Jim White
- Supervising Professor - Gervase Bushe
- Team Leader - Melissa Cook
- Project Team - Melissa Cook, Johannes Saufferer and Shanny Tan

1.3.2 Stakeholders

1.3.2.1 Internal stakeholders:

- Initiating Sponsor - Jim White, Regional Vice President & General Manage
- Sustaining Sponsor – Jim White
- Change Agent – Jim White
- Targets - Affected employees

1.3.2.2 External Stakeholders:

- Customers

1.4 Project Management

1.4.1 Project Reporting

The status of the project and the associated updates will be provided in the following fashion:

- The Team Leader of the student project team will send weekly updates to the project sponsor on the status and progress of the project. This communication will be completed via email for the entire length of the project.
- Both parties will be available via email or telephone for anything else that needs to be communicated.

1.4.2 Change Control

An informal process will be used to make amendments to the project scope. This process will include the following steps.

1. All members of the project team must unanimously agree to the change.
2. Gervase Bushe, the professor for BUS 999, must approve the change.

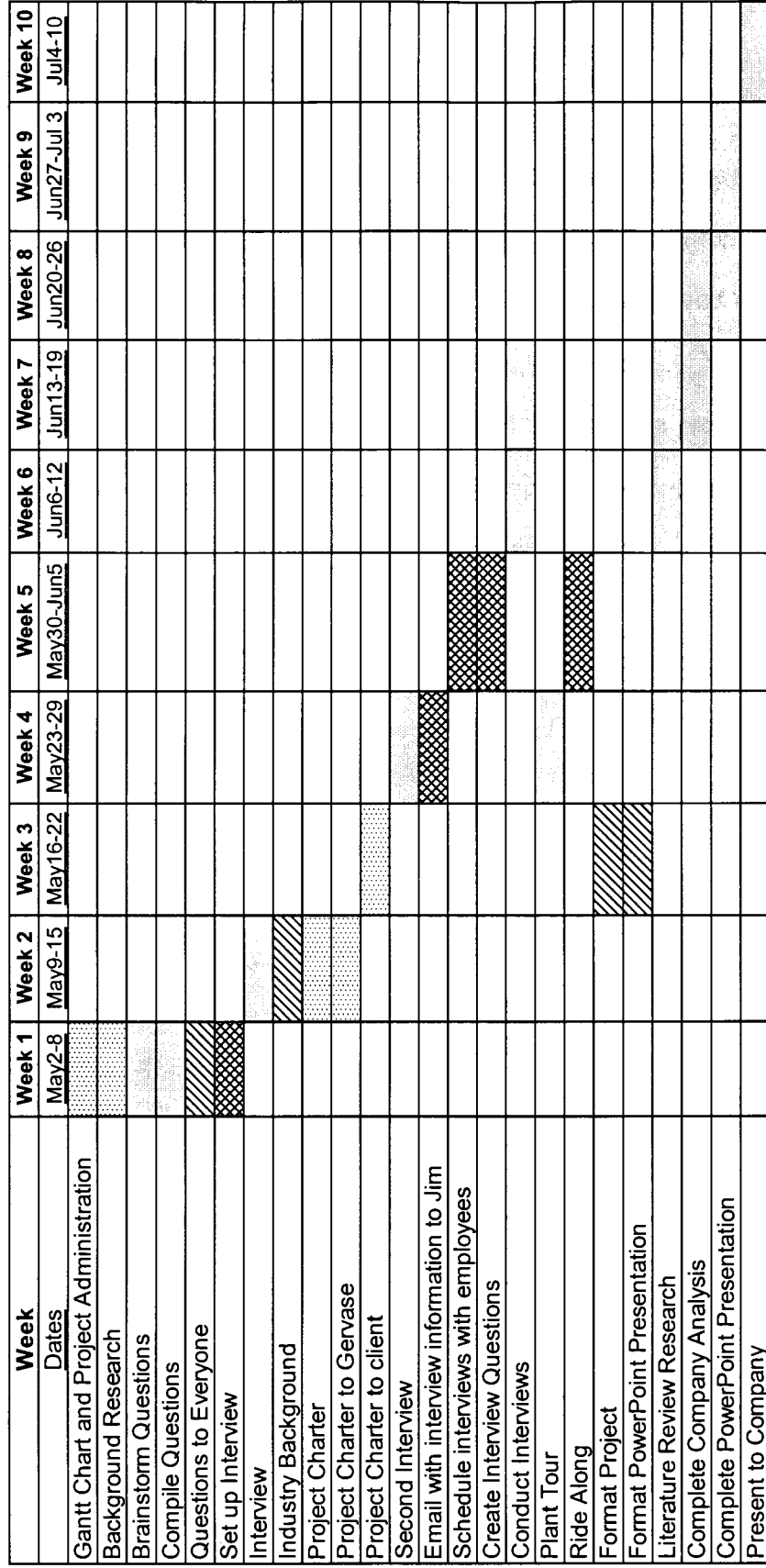
1.4.3 Risk & Issue Management

Any risks or issues that are found by any member of the project team will be communicated in the weekly email update.

1.4.4 Time & Cost Management

The Gantt Chart will be updated on a weekly basis by the Team Leader. Anyone associated with this project can request a copy of the updated Gantt Chart. There are no intended costs associated with the actual project itself. If there are any costs associated with printing documentation for Pure Blast the project team will provide electronic copies of the documents and Pure Blast will be responsible for printing the documents internally. All printing costs associated with publishing the document for Simon Fraser University will be incurred by the students on the project team. Any costs of the recommendations will be incurred by Pure Blast Water Company if they make the decision to implement them.

Chart 1 Project Gantt Chart



Last updated June 30, 2004

Legend

Melissa	
Johannes	
Shanny	
Everyone	

Note:

These dates are estimates and may change if extenuating circumstances arise.
All date changes will be updated in the ongoing project Gantt Chart.

1.5 Project Charter Signoff

Terms

The project team agrees to conduct research and analysis at the project company, upon the issue as outlined in this document. The project team agrees to present its findings to the project company on the dates as agreed above according to mutually agreed-upon project plan and statement of scope. The project company agrees to provide resources and access as agreed above. The project company agrees to allow a version of the project team's academic report to be published by Simon Fraser University and placed in the University's library, according to the terms specified in this document.

Approvals

Executive Sponsor: _____

Project Sponsor(s): _____

Project Team Member: _____

Academic Supervisor: _____

2 COMPANY DOCUMENTATION

The presentation and speaker's notes that was presented to the company is included in this section.



Pure Blast Water

Prepared By

**Melissa Cook
Johannes Saufferer
Shanny Tan**



Agenda

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Analysis
- ◆ Recommendation
- ◆ Implementation
- ◆ Conclusion

2

2.1 Agenda

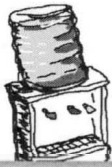
Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion



Introduction

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Purpose of Report:
Assess success of changes made April 1, 2004
- ◆ Problem Identification:
What can be done to improve the change process?
(present and future)

3

2.2 Introduction

Purpose

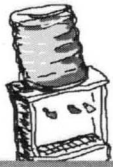
The purpose of this report is to assess the organizational changes that were made on April 1, 2004 by Jim White, in which he altered the roles and responsibilities of some of the employees under his direct control. This involved:

- The consolidation of some regions for employees who were ready for more challenges.
- The changing of roles and responsibilities for other employees to better utilize their respective strengths, and
- The termination of a select few employees.

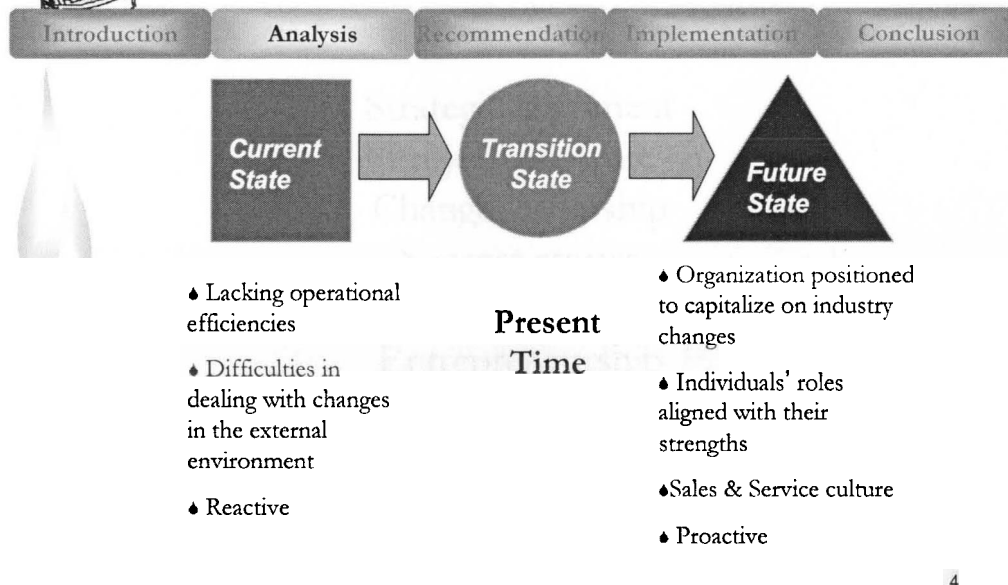
This change was done as a means of redesigning the organization in such a way as to promote a culture focused on sales and customer service. Mr. White is looking for information on how the change has affected his employees and seeks recommendations on how to improve the change process in the future.

Problem

The main problem concerns what can be done to improve the April 1st change and what can be done to in the future to improve the change process?



Change Evaluation



2.3 Analysis

"Current" State

Operationally Inefficient

- People were in positions not well suited to them.
- People within the organization had become stagnant in their positions.

Difficulties in dealing with changes in the external environment

- Difficulty in dealing with changes in how customer's purchase their product and the increased competition in the water cooler market.

More reactive than proactive

- Pure Blast had difficulty responding quickly enough to the changing market conditions, which has led to decreasing profitability.

Transition State

- This is the present time within the organization.
- The organization has undergone several changes in order to rectify the aforementioned problems. This is the stage that the majority of the analysis of the change will focus on.

Future State

Better position organization to capitalize on industry changes

Ensure that individuals' positions are aligned with their strengths

Develop a Sales & Service focused culture

Become more proactive



Change Evaluation

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

Strategic alignment
Project structure
Change leadership
Success stories
Stakeholder commitment
Entrepreneurship
Resilient teams
Aligned performance
Transition management

5

Change Evaluation - The current change will be evaluated on the following elements, which will be described in detail in the proceeding part of this presentation.

Strategic Alignment

Project Structure

Change Leadership

Stakeholder commitment

Entrepreneurship

Aligned Performance

Transition Management

Resilient Teams



Strategic Alignment

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

The April 1st Change:

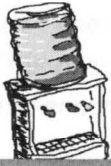
- ♦ Well aligned to corporate strategy
 - ♦ Creates a convincing vision of the future
- but...
- ♦ Dissemination difficulties

6

In order for a change effort to be successful it is necessary for it to be aligned with the strategy of the firm. Furthermore, the change must be something that creates a convincing vision of the future that the leaders within the business can own and advocate for themselves. **This change is aligned with Mr. White's strategy and it is a step in the right direction towards creating a convincing vision of the future.**

Dissemination difficulties

- Pure Blast presently uses its guiding principles as a substitute for a mission statement, vision, values and goals. In the interviews, the interviewees were asked if they were aware of Pure Blast guiding principles and if they agreed with them. Many of the staff said that they were aware of them but that they could not recite what they were. Something that was a little more problematic was that some interviewees said that they were not aware of what they were. This presents a few difficulties because it means that the guiding principles are not at the forefront of the employees' minds.
- Additionally, the project team asked the interviewees what they thought the top five priorities of Pure Blast Water Company were. The following slide shows the results which were tabulated using a content analysis, which looks for similarities within the content of a number of different interviews and tabulates these similarities to present the information in a usable format.



Strategic Alignment

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

Organizational Priorities

1. Expand customer base by providing a high level of customer service
2. Maximize operational efficiencies (reduce costs)
3. Create a fun work environment
4. Develop a clear strategic plan
5. Increase levels of employee T & D

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Strategic Alignment

Following the completion of the interviews the project team completed a content analysis of the interviews which identified the top five priorities of Pure Blast Water Company according to the individuals who were interviewed. The results were as follows:

1. Expand customer base by providing a high level of customer service
In terms of customer retention, attracting new customers and providing continuous customer service.
2. Reduce costs by maximizing operational efficiencies
This is done by finding either new, or better way to do things, and thereby increasing profit margins.
3. Create a fun working environment
Efforts should be made to increase morale and create a happier culture.
4. Develop a clear strategic plan
It is important to gain a better understanding of market conditions and create a strategy that aligns the company with market trends.
5. Increase levels of employee training and development
Efforts should be made to invest in employees.

These results had a significant amount of variation in both their order and content. Additionally, please note that any results that were mentioned by interviewees and

not repeated by a significant amount of other people were omitted from this list. This presents an opportunity for improvement because many of the managers have a different view of what the priorities of the organization actually are.



Project Structure

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

Initiating Sponsor	Jim White
Sustaining Sponsor	Jim White
Change Agent	Jim White
Target	Affected Employees
Stakeholder	Jim White, Senior Management Team, Junior Management Team, Front Line Employees, Quatroino
Advocate	Jim White, Customer Service Director, Distribution Director, S & M Director

Project Structure

In order for a change to be successful it is crucial to ensure that the structure of the project is aligned for success. In doing this, it is important to evaluate the organizational structure of the firm and reporting relationships to determine if the right individuals are responsible for implementing and sustaining the changes.

Initiating Sponsor

•In this change, Mr. White is the individual who as the power to both legitimize and initiate the change.

Sustaining Sponsor

•Mr. White also has the political, logistical and economic resources necessary to sustain the change.

Change Agent

•Mr. White also acted as the change agent.

Target

•The target consists of the individual employees who were affected by the change.

Stakeholder

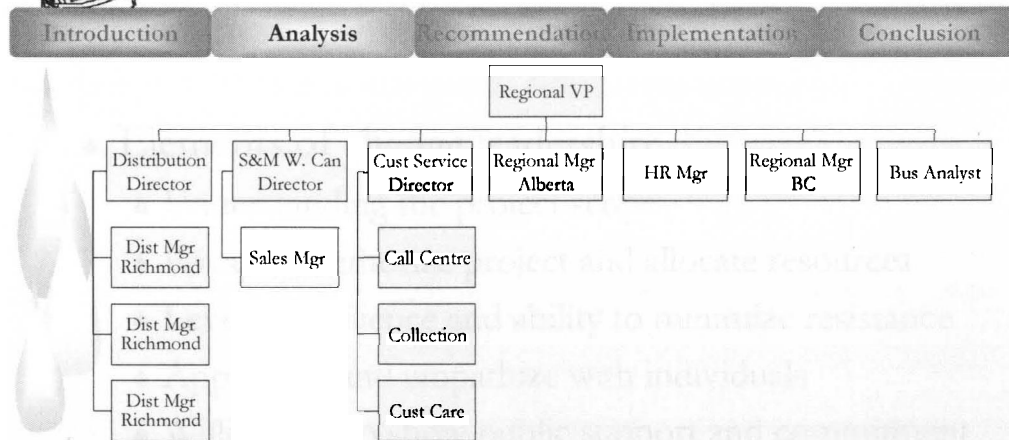
- All of these individuals will in some way be affected by the April 1st initiative. As a result, it is important to remember that their buy-in and support of the change can play a large role in whether or not it is successful.

Advocate

- In some cases Mr. White wants to achieve the change but he does not directly have accountability for implementing and sustaining the change. As a result, the new appointed Sales & Marketing Director, Customer Service Director, and Distribution Director are also advocates for the change and they will play an integral role in its continued acceptance.



Organizational Chart



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Considering the organizational chart is a key component in developing project structure. In order for change efforts to succeed, they should be implemented along linear, rather than triangular, reporting lines. An example of a triangular reporting line would be if the Regional Manager of Alberta attempted to implement a change that affected the Team Leaders in the Call Centre. This change would be unlikely to succeed because he or she would not have the power and influence necessary to enforce the change without involving the Customer Service Director.

The current change initiative was planned correctly as Mr. White was in a linear reporting relationship with all of the change targets. However, since Mr. White is not always the affected individual's direct supervisor, it is important to realize that he will require the assistance of the new appointed Sales & Marketing Director, Customer Service Director, and Distribution Director to both implement and sustain the change.



Change Leadership

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Elements of change leadership:
 - ◆ Understanding the project scope
 - ◆ Power to authorize project and allocate resources
 - ◆ Level of resilience and ability to minimize resistance
 - ◆ Appreciate and empathize with individuals
 - ◆ Willingness to show public support and commitment



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Change leadership involves identifying change leaders and ensuring that they have the competencies required to effectively implement and sustain the change. As Mr. White is the main leader of this change initiative it is important to evaluate his leadership on the following dimensions.

Understanding the scope of the project

- Mr. White has a good understanding of the scope of the project and realizes the implications of the changes on the individuals who are affected by it.

Power to authorize project and necessary resources

- Mr. White does have the power to authorize all elements of the project and to dedicate any resources that may be needed to either implement or sustain it.

Level of resilience and ability to minimize resistance

- Mr. White has made efforts to minimize resistance among his team members. These efforts include sitting down with all of the people who were directly affected by the change on a one on one basis in order to ensure that they understand the reason for the change and their role within it.

Appreciate and empathize with individuals

- Mr. White does appreciate and empathize with the individuals who are undergoing this change. In an effort to appreciate and empathize with these employees, Mr.

White wanted the interviews to uncover how the affected individual's were dealing with the April 1st change. Specifically Mr. White wanted to establish whether or not his employees perceived the increase in work load following the change to be temporary or permanent.

Ability and willingness to show public support and commitment

- Mr. White has shown public commitment to this change by advocating it and supporting it since implementation.



Success Stories

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ♦ Communication and implementation plans built around success stories
- ♦ Focusing on an appreciative approach to change

11

Communication plays an integral role in any change process because it not only keeps the affected individuals informed about the change but also provides them with the reasoning for the change. When individuals within an organization are aware of the reasons for a change they will be more likely to buy in and support it. When communication and implementation plans are built around success stories, they focus on the positive rather than the negative; in other words, this takes an appreciative approach to the change process. The communication titled "Organizational Announcement", a memo in which Mr. White described the changes that would be taking place on April 1st, effectively focused on the positive aspects of this change. As was previously mentioned, Mr. White also made an effort to sit down on a one on one basis with the affected individuals, which for the most part was a positive experience for the interviewees. Even more importantly, it is obvious that this approach is working because all of the interviewees felt that the April 1st change was one that would benefit the organization.



Stakeholder Commitment

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ “20-60-20 Rule”
 - ◆ Identify integral stakeholders
 - ◆ Create strategies for decreasing resistance

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During this change, Mr. White did identify, include, and manage, the stakeholders who were integral to the change effort. In any change effort the stakeholders will usually fall into the following categories: 20% that support the change, 60% that neither support nor object to the change, and 20% that resist the change. These categories of people can be used to create strategies to uncover and deal with resistance. With respect to this specific change, more could have been done around creating strategies for minimizing negative resistance and cultivating positive resistance. The latter type of resistance deals with utilizing resistance as constructive criticism to improve the change process.

If stakeholder commitment is not effectively managed it can greatly affect the culture of an organization. In order to determine the affect the change was having on the culture of Pure Blast, the interviewees were asked to describe the culture of the firm. The following results from a content analysis capture the interviewee's responses.

Culture

<div>Positive</div> <div>Negative</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fun oriented ✓✓✓✓ ■ Young ■ Energetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change; reinventing the wheel ✓✓✓✓✓ ■ Positive & upbeat ✓✓ ■ High energy ✓✓ ■ Connected to community ✓✓✓✓ ■ Fun oriented ✓✓✓✓ ■ Open door policy ✓✓ ■ Good sense of 'esprit de corps'
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Uncertainty ✓✓✓✓ ■ Fear ■ Attached to the past ■ Lack of communication (rumors prevalent) ■ Lack of fun ✓✓✓ ■ Hierarchic
	Then	Now

The comments in the "Then" column represent the interviewees' perception of the organizational culture prior to the April 1st change. The "Now" column represents the current perception of the organizational culture within Pure Blast. The check marks represent the frequency of the comments. In analyzing the data it is obvious that the interviewee's believe that at the present time there are more positive aspects of the culture than negative, which is in itself a tremendous accomplishment considering the significant amount of recent changes within the organization. There are quite a few negative comments, but they are in line with what would be expected in an organization that has experienced significant changes. Efforts should be made to address and rectify the negative aspects of the culture. Some recommendations for accomplishing this will be included in the latter part of the presentation.



Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Completing a SWOT analysis
- ◆ Committing to the project
- ◆ Focusing on success

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The elements under entrepreneurship include completing a project SWOT analysis, committing to the project, and focusing on success. Mr. White has done a good job of committing to the project and sustaining it since April 1st. In making the decision to complete the change he may not have officially conducted a SWOT analysis but he did informally evaluate the internal strengths and weaknesses of Pure Blast and the external opportunities and threats that were prompting the need for the change. This was explained to the project team by Mr. White in the first meeting. The interviews showed that Mr. White has done an excellent job of sharing this analysis with his team as all interviewee's were aware of the internal and external conditions that were creating the need to change. The change effort was aligned well with the results from the analysis.

Mr. White has also shown commitment to the project and has focused on the success of the initiative.



Aligned Performance

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

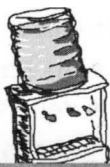
Conclusion

- ♦ Identify and cultivate the behaviors necessary for the change to succeed
- ♦ The change should correspond to the organization's performance management strategy

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The purpose of the April 1st change was to better align employees' positions with their respective strengths. Many interviewees indicated that they felt that their new positions better utilized their strengths and talents. Many of the people also felt that they had the training that they needed to do their jobs. For those who did not feel that they had the training needed for their position, most acknowledged that they were ready for a new challenge and felt that their new positions were intended to provide that challenge. As a result of this, prior to implementing the change, Mr. White identified and considered the behaviours that were necessary for the change to succeed and made an effort to put individuals in positions that naturally drew out those behaviours in his team members.

With respect to the organization's performance management strategy, Pure Blast is hoping that this change, along with a series of others, will work together to improve the financial performance of the company. As a result, although the results may not be immediately visible, this change does correspond to the organization's overall performance management strategy. However, one interviewee suggested that a possible opportunity for development for the organization would be to better track the results of change initiatives as a means to determining whether or not the change effort accomplished what it set out to do. This is a valid recommendation, and in the coming months efforts should be made to track the effectiveness of this change.



Transition Management

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Clarify and communicate the mission and purpose
- ◆ Recognize the endings
- ◆ Acknowledge the neutral zone

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Although Transition Management is not explicitly utilized in the change model our analysis is based upon, it does play an integral role in all change initiatives. Despite its importance, Transition Management is an element of the change process that is frequently neglected. There are several important aspects of transition management, but this project will only focus on clarifying and communicating the mission and purpose, recognizing endings, acknowledging the neutral zone, avoiding unnecessary changes and beginning to rebuild trust.

Clarifying and communicating the purpose of the change is an element of this initiative that Mr. White completed exceptionally well since all of the interviewee's were aware of and understood the reason for the change. In terms of addressing the mission of the organization, the guiding principle that states "We execute customer service to the extent that it becomes the single most important factor when distinguishing Pure Blast from its competitors," is probably the closest thing that Pure Blast has to a mission statement. As not all employees were aware of the guiding principles and not all employees could recite them, publicizing these principles represents an opportunity for development for the company.

Another important element of transition management is recognizing the endings. Within organizations, the individuals who are implementing the change often forget that they have had time to get used to the idea of the change and that many of the targets have not been afforded this luxury. As a result, the change agent is

frequently ready to move on with the new beginning when the targets have not even had time to prepare for the ending, which means that these targets often feel as though they lack closure. Change agents can overcome this by taking the time necessary to recognize endings. With respect to this specific change effort, some of the interviewee's said that they felt that the organization was like a family and that when the change happened they were not given the time to say good bye to the people that they worked with. For smaller scale changes, this can be done through something as simple as providing an opportunity for the people to get together and say good bye to some of the people they worked with, through something like a social gathering or a coffee and cake drop in session. For larger scale changes organizations have been known to hold parties, print up T-shirts or undertake team building activities. In the future, Pure Blast should make more of an effort to recognize the endings as a means of providing closure for some of the targets who may require it. Once this closure is provided, the targets will be much more likely quickly move forward with the change initiative.

The next aspect of transition management is the Neutral Zone, which is the area of uncertainty between the ending of the old ways and the beginning of the new reality. The Neutral Zone is a period where individuals within the organization often feel lost and confused because the old ways of the past are gone and the new ways of the future have yet to institutionalize themselves. As a result, individuals who are in the Neutral Zone often feel as though they are in a state of limbo. For many individual's the only thing that can cure this ailment is time, and usually the majority of them come out unscathed. From the project team's perspective, this was something that Mr. White handled quite well. Mr. White recognized that initially the target's new positions would be more difficult and would temporarily require more time and effort than their previous jobs. When the interviewee's were asked if this was the case, responses were mixed as some people experienced no change, some thought it was temporary and some thought that it was permanent.



Resilient Teams

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Take a 'team coaching' approach
- ◆ Focus on increasing team resilience and productivity
- ◆ Increase creativity, trust and performance
- ◆ Reduce conflict

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This topic represents a bridge between the analysis and the recommendations because it provides the basis for the latter part of the presentation. When companies go through significant and repeated changes a substantial amount can be done to cultivate resilient teams within an organization. At the present this area represents an opportunity for development within Pure Blast Water Company. This organization is going through a tremendous amount of change and it would be of great benefit for them to cultivate this resiliency within their employee. There are several ways to create this resiliency which include:

- Taking a team coaching approach
- Focusing on increasing team resilience and productivity
- Increasing creativity, trust and performance
- Reducing conflict.

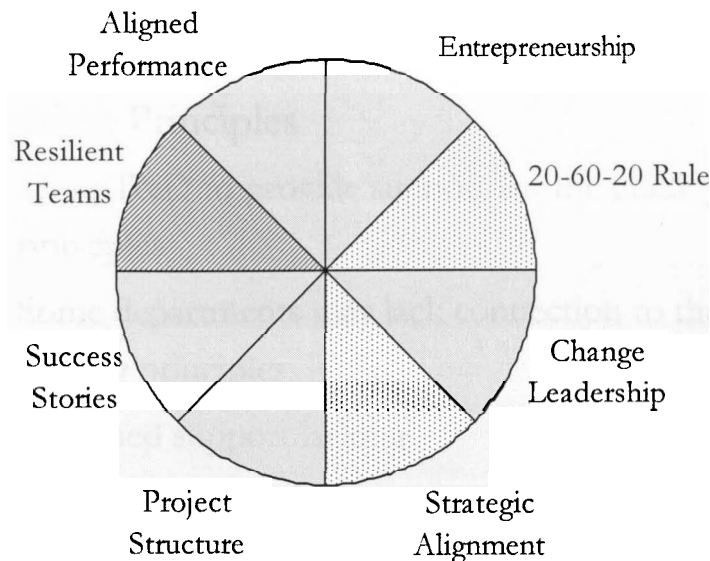
In order to be effective this resiliency needs to manifest itself within both the management team and the front line employees. The scope of this projected focused on the management team and so the recommendations will be based at the management level. If managers become more resilient themselves and understand the underlying principles of resiliency they will be more likely to encourage it within their direct reports. In terms of recommendations for Pure Blast there are several things they can do to cultivate this resilience, these include:

- Provide managers with training around creating resilient teams and managing transitions. This can be done by bringing in a third party to conduct a training

session on change resiliency skills and transition management. Alternatively, a lower cost solution can be achieved by asking a manager, who would benefit from a developmental opportunity, to conduct a Lunch 'n Learn or a series of Lunch 'n Learns for the rest off the management team.

- Institute a team coaching approach to managing team members
- Rewarding the management team for showing resilient behaviours

Change Assessment



This pinwheel represents a summary of our assessment of Pure Blast' performance in each of the eight different key aspects of successfully leading an organizational change. Shaded areas of the pie represent change components that were fully addressed or considered during the change process; the dotted patterns represents parts of the change where some consideration was given but where there exists room for improvement, and the flannel pie slices are those components of the change process that were not, or inadequately, addressed.

We can see that the majority of the issues necessary to successfully implement a change were addressed. Although Strategic Alignment and the 20-60-20 Rule (Commitment) were addressed, we felt that certain areas within these components could be improved upon; more specifically, picking - and sticking to - an explicit corporate strategy, and more proactively dealing with resistance through increased communication.

In regards to resilient teams, we felt that given the organizations history of mergers and acquisitions, more could be done to increase individual and team resilience levels to make them more accepting of change.



Employee Feedback

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

♦ Guiding Principles

- ♦ More T&D to provide support for the guiding principles
- ♦ Some departments may lack connection to the guiding principles
- ♦ Sustained support lacking
- ♦ Lack of driving energy

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2.4 Recommendation

In the interviews, the interviewee's were asked if they had any recommendations on how to improve the change process. The results were compiled into this list of opportunities for improvement which include the guiding principles, communication and tunnel vision.

Guiding Principles

- At the present time many of the interviewee's have not fully internalized the guiding principles. If Pure Blast is going to continue to use these principles, it is important that they provide training and development to assist their employees in gaining a better understanding of the principles and how to apply them to the organization.
- At the present time, some departments may lack connection to the guiding principles and fail to see how these principles pertain to their specific job.
- Finally, the interviewee's feel that sustained support for the guiding principles is lacking and that there is insufficient driving energy behind those principles.



Employee Feedback

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Communication ✓✓✓✓✓
 - ◆ Importance of transparency
 - ◆ Consistency in communication
 - ◆ Solicit feedback
 - ◆ Two-way communications

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Communication

- It is important that all communications are transparent, which means that everything should be disclosed in a timely and honest fashion. If efforts are made keep communications transparent, this will not only increase the credibility of the communication, but will also increase employees' trust in those communications. With respect to this specific change initiative, some interviewee's thought that the information was kept a secret for too long. In fact, many of them knew that there were secret changes happening but they were not allowed to discuss them, resulting in the circulation of rumours. Some individuals felt as though they were caught in the middle because not only did they have to manage their own fears, but also the fears of their subordinates, making it a very stressful time for many managers and employees. It was also mentioned that now whenever the management team goes into a closed door meeting, ripples of fear resonate through the entire organization. All of these negative repercussions can be reduced through increasing both the quantity and quality of communication.
- In the event that the communicator is not able to fully disclose some element of a change initiative, they should be careful to never lie but rather they should state that they are not at liberty to discuss a certain issue at the moment. Furthermore, communication should also be consistent, solicit feedback, and encourage two-way communication.



Employee Feedback

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Avoid Tunnel Vision
 - ◆ People focused on their own department
 - ◆ Lack of synergy
 - ◆ Ensure employee buy-in

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Tunnel Vision

• Efforts should be made to increase communication between departments and reduce interdepartmental boundaries. During the interview process, a number of individuals mentioned lack of synergy between units of the organization because of employees' strong focus within their own respective departments. For example, in order for Distribution to operate in a manner that best serves the organization as a whole, input must be sought from Customer Service (e.g. specific customer requests regarding delivery). In order for interdepartmental communication and cooperation to increase, employees need to have a better understanding of how their actions impact, and are impacted by, employees in other departments. Furthermore, employees must not only be aware of the relationships that exists between departments, but must also be willing to strengthen those relationships by making positive contributions to other departments.



Short Term Recommendations

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Strategy
 - ◆ Establish a mission, a vision, values and goals
 - ◆ Turn the statements into a physical reality
 - ◆ Publicize the strategy
- ◆ Change management
 - ◆ Avoid unnecessary changes

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The following recommendations were created by the project team as a result of the information provided in the interviews:

Establish a mission, a vision, values and goals

Many organizations find it useful to have a mission statement, vision, values and goals. These are intended to guide the behaviours and actions of all employees. They tell the employees where the organization is going and tie the strategy of the firm to each individual position within the firm. Given the wide range of answers the interviewee's provided on the organizational priorities and their ambiguity in answering the questions around the guiding principles it would be beneficial to firmly establish these statements. When going through the process of establishing the organization's mission, vision, values and goals, it is beneficial to involve individuals from various levels within the company and different geographical locations. If this diverse range of individuals is brought together to jointly create these statements, these individuals will be in a better position to act as advocates within their own departments.

Turn the statements into a physical reality

Once these statements have been established, it is crucial to spread them throughout the organization by placing posters, plaques and pictures in visible locations. Additionally, laminated copies of the mission, vision, values and goals can also be printed up and distributed to all employees, which will allow employees to

post them somewhere that will be of benefit to them. These will serve to publicize the positive aspects of the organizational culture that the organization hopes to cultivate and maintain over time.

Publicize the strategy

Management should also make an effort to publicize the strategy and sell it to the lower levels of the organization. Not only will this assist the management team in internalizing it, but it will also increase the buy-in among the lower ranking individuals. This will assist all employees within the organization in gaining a better sense of how their specific role benefits and contributes to the overall success of the firm. This can be done by having the managers present the new mission, vision, values and vision to their employees or by having open door sessions whereby employees can drop by and ask Mr. White questions.

Avoid unnecessary changes

In environments of frequent or continual change it is possible for employees to hit their change threshold. Once they hit this threshold, their capacity to assimilate new change is significantly diminished. In order to prevent this from happening with Pure Blast, change initiatives that do not directly tie to this element of the strategy or this particular change should be delayed until the dust settles from the current change initiative.



Implementation

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

August 15

- ◆ Clearly define vision & mission statements, values and goals

August 30

- ◆ Articulate a corporate strategy
 - ◆ Input from employees, customers, competitors

September 5

- ◆ Communicate strategy to employees
 - ◆ How does it effect each individual?

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2.5 Implementation

Although Pure Blast currently has a few guiding principles, the importance of clear, concise vision and mission statements cannot be understated. Some individuals that were interviewed felt that the current values of the organization were created in a somewhat *ad hoc* fashion. Furthermore, given Pure Blast' history of mergers and acquisitions, there appeared to be some confusion as to who 'owned' specific principles: were they Quatroino's, or Pure Blast, or one of the previous company's taken over by Pure Blast?

Given the recent changes that have taken place in the bottled water industry, it is understandable that Pure Blast may not want to 'pin' itself to a business strategy that may prove to be ineffective within a relatively short period of time.

Nevertheless, having a strategy - even an inaccurate one - may be preferable to having no explicit strategy at all. The direct input from employees and customers, and even indirect input from competitors, may prove to be invaluable in creating a strategy capable of serving the organization well in the long term. We believe the current direction of providing a high-quality product with exceptional customer service has the makings of a promising corporate strategy.

A strategy is only useful insofar as employees know that it exists. As such, the strategy should be clearly communicated to employees, with specific emphasis on

making clear precisely how the strategy ties in with the organizations vision and mission, as well as how it impacts each individual employee in the company. The following slide makes recommendations around how increase the effectiveness of communications at Pure Blast Water Company.



Future Opportunities

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ◆ Rebuild trust and confidence through communication
 - ◆ Create a communication plan
 - ◆ Utilize different mediums
 - ◆ Maintain transparency
 - ◆ Tell the truth
 - ◆ Evaluate the process

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Communication plays an integral and essential role within the change process. It not only illuminates individuals within the organization as to the reasons for the change but it also assists in alienating the fear associated with the change process. In order to rebuild trust and confidence through communication the following steps should be taken:

Create a communication plan

- Each and every major change should have a formalized communication plan which should include what information will be communicated when, how and to which audience. Once a template is created for a communication plan it can be re-used for future change initiatives.

Utilize different mediums

- Utilizing different mediums is an essential element of effective communications. When employees are told of changes they immediately begin to wonder how that change will affect them and so following the initial communication many of the details of the communication are selectively filtered out. As a result, often employees need to hear the details of a change initiative multiple times and often multiple different mediums before, during and after the change process.
- Additionally, different employees respond to different types of communications, which can be divided into two major categories that include visual and auditory. Richer communications typically take advantage of both of these mediums, which

means that they will have a much higher likelihood of reaching a large number of individuals. Visual communications include emails, posters and memos. Auditory communications include voicemails and speeches. Communications that are a combination of both of these types typically have an opportunity to be interactive and participative, these include open door sessions, lunch 'n learns and videoconferencing.

Maintain transparency

- Essentially, maintaining transparency is all about reducing barriers and communicating in an open and honest manner. Reducing barriers includes removing anything that may be a hindrance to open communication within the firm. This can include things such as inefficient communication methods or detrimental organizational hierarchies. Inefficient communication methods include but are not limited to using an inefficient or inappropriate communication medium or style to convey major organizational changes. Detrimental organizational hierarchies can be dismantled by looking for more creative ways to communicate and receive feedback. This can be done through scheduling regular "Open Door Sessions" or "Fireside Chats" in which employees from all over the organization can drop into a question and answer session with a senior leader in the organization and ask them questions about pending change initiatives.

Tell the truth

- Telling the truth is an essential element of communication and manager's should ensure that all of their communications are as truthful as possible. In the event that a manager is asked something that they are not at the liberty to disclose they should respond to the question by stating "At the present time I am not able to share that information but I can tell you...". This sentence can be finished in several ways, which include statements such as "the change does not directly affect your job", "that I will update you as soon as I am able" and "that this change will be a positive one for our organization".

Evaluate the process

- The communication process should be evaluated on a regular basis in order to determine which communications are the most effective and special consideration should be taken to ascertain which communication methods work the best with the organizational culture of Pure Blast.
- Additionally, it is important to remember that communications frequently provide subtle symbolic messages and efforts should be made to ensure that these messages are consistent with what the firm wants to portray. For example, if Pure Blast's believes that environmental sustainability is an important value of the firm then efforts should be made to ensure that all communications are environmentally friendly. So in this case rather than issuing a paper-based memo

to everyone in the organization, emails should be sent out or the communications should be placed on the company's intranet.



Conclusion

Introduction

Analysis

Recommendation

Implementation

Conclusion

- ♦ A strong foundation for future growth
- ♦ Capitalizing on strengths
- ♦ Leverage opportunities for development
- ♦ A promising future

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2.6 Conclusion

In order for organizations to succeed in this ever changing business environment, it is crucial for them to build a strong foundation for future growth. This foundation can be built on solid change management principles that govern all change management initiatives within the organization. Effective change management principles will capitalize on the strengths of the organization while concurrently mitigating its weaknesses. They will leverage opportunities for development in order to facilitate the progress of the organization. Through utilizing these change management principles, Pure Blast Water Company will increase the ease with which changes are instituted within the organization. These changes will ultimately enable Pure Blast to build a promising future built upon proactive business decisions and increased profitability.



References

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3 CAPITALIZING ON COMMUNICATION: A GUIDE TO SUCCEEDING IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

In the last century, the pace of change within our modern day business environment has increased at an exponential rate. In the past it was possible for organizations to thrive by being good at what they did, but now in order to be successful it is necessary for them to not only advocate for change, but also to actively seek it out. Simpler times are gone, replaced by the need to continuously change in order to capitalize on changing market conditions and increasingly competitive market trends. If companies are to survive in today's challenging business environment, it is not only essential for them to learn how to change faster but also more efficiently. Change initiatives within organizations often fail for a multitude of reasons but the most important of these is communication, or rather, the remarkable lack thereof in the vast majority of organizational changes. Ironically, many of these organizations believe that they have done a good job of communicating during these organizational changes. However, research indicates otherwise. An astounding 90 percent of leaders believe that they are good communicators but only 30 percent of their subordinates agree with that assertion (Clarke and Crossland, 2003). As a result of statistics such as this one, management scholars and practitioners alike have taken an interest in the role that communication plays in the change process. This document will focus on utilizing this information in order to establish practical suggestions and alternatives for how management practitioners can better utilize communications to support change management while concurrently comparing findings in the literature to our group's experience at Pure Blast

Water Company. The information on Pure Blast Water Company was obtained from a series of interviews with Jim White the Regional Vice President and General Manager for Pure Blast Water Company and fourteen of the fifteen employees who were directly affected by the change initiative. These recommendations will be widely applicable to a multitude of business environments and will improve the effectiveness of communication efforts, which will ultimately assist both managers and leaders in capitalizing on communication as a means to succeeding in the change process.

3.2 Communication Experience at Pure Blast Water Company

As was mentioned previously, managers and leaders often believe that they are effective communicators and that they spend a sufficient amount of their time communicating with their followers. However, research indicates that this is not true as communication efforts are often hindered by many errors. This was the case at the field site, Mr. White stated in the initial meeting the he was particularly pleased with his communication efforts surrounding the change initiative. Once the details of the change had been finalized, he sat down with the fifteen employees who were directly affected by the change. All of these employees were advised that they must keep all of the details of the change initiative in the strictest confidence. This requirement of confidentiality was difficult for many of the middle managers because some of them had been told a lot and some of them had been told next to nothing. These managers were then forced to manage their own emotions and feelings of uncertainty regarding the change without being able to discuss it with their peers until the change was announced across the organization. These emotions were exacerbated by the fact that many of their direct reports were aware that something was happening but as a result of the confidentiality requirement these managers were not allowed to answer their employees' questions or address their concerns. As a result, many managers felt torn between their company

obligations, their own emotions and their employees. When the change was finally rolled out it was announced in a memo sent from Mr. White to all staff which provided high level details of the change. Following this memo the changes occurred immediately and many of the employees felt that the change was poorly communicated.

3.3 Recommendations for Improving Communication Efforts in the Change Process

This section of the paper will focus on communication made within the context of change management efforts that are directed at employees. These recommendations will be compared and contrasted with the field study experience at Pure Blast Water Company. Additionally, these recommendations will be applicable to numerous business environments while concurrently being as all encompassing as possible so as to be applicable to many different situations. All of these recommendations should be considered within the context of the organization and the specific challenges that face the firm. Not all communication recommendations will be applicable to all situations but these are practical guidelines for managers and leaders to use to communicate with their followers before, during and after a change initiative. The purpose of these communication recommendations is to increase the chances of success in a large number of organizational changes.

3.4 Common Communication Errors

In order for managers to communicate effectively they should avoid several common errors. These errors "...include using vague, obscure language; failing to perceive others' wants and needs; relying on unchecked assumptions; trusting predetermined ideas and stereotypes; and conveying verbal messages that are inconsistent with nonverbal behaviour" (Conner, 1992, p. 202). If managers are to

become successful communicators, they must have both the ability to communicate to their followers and the willingness to dedicate their time to the process (Conner, 1992). In the case of Pure Blast Water Company, Mr. White was willing to dedicate the necessary time to the process of communicating, however he was not aware of the amount of time required to ensure an adequate amount of communication. This was coupled with the fact that he did not have sufficient knowledge of communications and transition management tactics to effectively communicate the change to his staff.

Kotter (1995) points out that change leaders always seem to be astonished when change initiatives do not work out as planned and argues that these failures occur as a direct result of three errors. The first of these errors is that managers often seem to think that the one memo sent out or presentation they gave is sufficient to transform the organization. This is ludicrous considering that these one time communications frequently only comprise 0.001 percent of the firm's annual communications. The second error is when managers do spend a significant amount of time giving presentations, holding meetings and really selling the change however once again their efforts fail to transform the organization. In this case the cause of their failure is that they still only succeed in utilizing 0.005 percent of the firm's annual communications. The third error these organizations make is when managers at the lower levels of the organization really make an effort to communicate the change but senior executives with the firm are constantly and consistently behaving in a way that is in direct conflict with the values being espoused in the change initiative. To emphasize this point Kotter states "Communication comes in both words and deeds, and the latter are often the most powerful form. Nothing undermines change more than behaviour by important individuals that is inconsistent with their words" (Kotter, 1995, p. 64). This means that managers communicating during a change initiative should make sure that their actions

are consistent with what the change is attempting to accomplish. For example, if a company is undergoing a change initiative associated with reducing costs throughout the firm then it would be extremely detrimental if the CEO continued to spend lavishly and take trips on the private corporate jet. This is just one example of inconsistent behaviour that could be extremely damaging to a change initiative. As a result, managers need to ensure that the actions of their direct reports and others in the organization are consistent with both the communications and with what the change is attempting to accomplish. Accordingly, it is important for change leaders to realize the role these three errors play in causing the inevitable failure of so many change initiatives (Kotter, 1995).

With respect to these common errors, it was evident from the interviews that Mr. White struggled with the first error Kotter discusses. Although Mr. White felt that he had spent a sufficient amount of his time and effort communicating, his efforts still fell short of what was required for the change initiative to be a success. In order to improve his chances of success in this area he should have attempted to increase his volume of communication. When increasing the volume of communication it is important that managers realize that increasing the volume of ineffective communications is not sufficient to ensure the success of the change initiative. In order to accomplish this, the volume of effective and well thought out communications must be increased; these will be discussed in later sections of the paper. As Kotter suggested previously this can be done through holding meetings and giving presentations to people who are both directly and indirectly affected by the change initiative. Mr. White's probability of success in the change process might have improved if he had attempted to vary his communication methods and the amount of communication rather than just sending out a memo. Even after these efforts have been made, Kotter believes that managers must realize that they

are still probably not dedicating a sufficient amount of their time to communicating throughout the change process.

3.5 Inclusive Communications

Furthermore, efforts should be made to make the communication process as inclusive as possible. This means that communication efforts should be focused at all levels of the organization. In order for this process to be successful, communication should be both a top-down and bottom-up process (Zimmerman, 1995). Top-down communications are typically comprised of communications from an authority within the organization that provide the details of a change initiative. Bottom-up communications involve feed back processes, either formal or informal, whereby individuals from all over the organization communicate their thoughts and comments on the change up the corporate ladder. Allowing for these two types of communications is important because when communicating around a change initiative, "Providing employees with information is only half of the obligation. The other half is to listen to their concerns, views and feelings. By doing so, you can look for ways to correct any negative impacts of change" (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 16). In some instances, bottom-up communications will manifest themselves in the form of resistance, which can greatly assist managers in identifying many of these negative impacts which can then be used to foresee potential barriers to success and improve the overall change process.

This was one of the biggest opportunities for development for Mr. White since his communication efforts were largely top-down. When he sat down with his employees to explain the changes there was some opportunity for bottom-up communications but he mentioned in one of the interviews that he was worried that they would not give him their honest feedback in a face to face discussion. Achieving this bottom-up communication was also what he hoped to achieve by bringing the project team in to complete this

project. However, these efforts were reactive rather than proactive and much could have been gained by obtaining more honest feedback earlier in the process. In order to avoid this in the future he could have open door sessions with employees in a much more informal environment or alternatively set up some kind of system where anonymous suggestions could be submitted to management throughout the change process. This could be something as simple as a suggestion box or more complicated like an intranet site where anonymous messages can be submitted to management. Additionally, he could also look at bringing in a third party to conduct focus group sessions around how the changes are going (Suran, 2003). Of course with this last recommendation efforts would have to be made to maintain anonymity and confidentiality if honest feedback were to be obtained from employees. Although this last step may be more difficult in large organizations that are undergoing significant organizational changes, some bottom-up feedback is better than none.

Another common communication error that typically inhibits the change process is when communicators do not sufficiently articulate and share the vision of the firm (Coulson-Thomas, 1992). In a change initiative it is imperative that efforts are made to show how the change specifically ties to the vision and overall strategy of the firm. A survey conducted by Coulson-Thomas (1992) found that 86 percent of respondents thought that a clear vision and strategy combined with the commitment of top managers played a role in the success of change initiatives. 71 percent of respondents felt that sharing the vision was extremely important in change initiatives. Finally, 65 percent of respondents felt that it was very important to communicate the purpose of the change (Coulson-Thomas, 1992).

Communicating the vision can be accomplished by providing employees with convincing reasons for the change (Zimmerman, 1995). The more convincing the

rationale, the more likely the employees will understand and accept the change initiative. For example, if an organization needs to reduce costs then the reasons for that change should be explained to the employees. Reasons for change may include responding to changing competitive forces in the market (Zimmerman, 1995) or positioning the organization as a low cost provider to better capitalize on changing customer preferences. This research proves that if managers are to increase the success of change initiatives within their firms, the aforementioned elements should all be communicated, if not over communicated to all involved employees. If a change initiative is to be successful, employees need to know what is expected of them at every step of the change process (Zimmerman, 1995).

In our experience at the field site, this was something that Mr. White did extremely well. Although Pure Blast Water Company does not have a vision, everyone that we talked with during the interview process was aware of the reasons for the change and how it tied to the strategy of the firm. Many of the respondents mentioned that they did in fact understand the necessity of the change and reasons for it. This helped them to understand that their personal sacrifices, which included things such as extra hours, increased effort, new roles and expanded responsibilities were necessary to ensure the future viability of the firm. As a result, not only was the purpose of the change and how it tied to the vision important in terms of increasing the employees understanding of the change but it also encouraged them to help make the change a success.

3.6 Symbolic Communication

When leaders communicate with their followers it is important for them to remember the symbolic connotations associated with their communications. Symbolism is something that is not often immediately apparent especially to management types who

are used to dealing in numbers which are quantifiable rather than subjective. Whereas most responsibilities that managers deal with on a day to day basis deal with matters that are black and white, symbolism exists entirely in the grey. Effective communicators are able to operate in the black and white and shift into the grey in order to increase the effectiveness of their message. There is nothing worse than a manager who takes the time to prepare and send out a communication, only to find out that it contradicts the intended message. Effective communicators utilize symbolism to their advantage, as a tool to support their message and persuade their audience.

Clarke and Crossland (2003) identify three channels of effective communication, of which symbolic communication is the third channel. Communicators who successfully utilize this channel use "... analogies and stories, to communicate their most important messages about brand, vision, values, and strategy...leaders must dare to tell stories, use analogies, and communicate in the symbolic channel" (Clarke and Crossland, 2003, p. 7). This channel has the power to persuade employees on a level that is more emotional rather than tangible, which has a tremendous power to motivate, influence and mobilize massive amounts of people. Effective communicators realize how to harness this symbolic power in order to increase the likelihood of success in the change process. For example, if a company is undergoing a significant and stressful change in response to market forces that are threatening the very existence of the firm, it may be helpful for the leader to rely on stories to communicate and motivate their followers. In a more specific example, when Ogilvy & Mather's, a famous advertising agency, was losing market share to other firms because of their antiquated image and out of date ideas Charlotte Beers, the new CEO, drew on exactly this type of communication. In her communications she leveraged the ethos of David Ogilvy, the founder, and told stories about him in order to make her communications more effective and inspiring. The end

result was successful and Charlotte Beers ended up turning around the ailing advertising agency (Sackley, 1999).

Symbolism can also be used to effectively choose a medium that compliments rather than contradicts the content of the message. Marshall McLuhan created the phrase "The Medium is the Message" and this speaks directly to the concept of symbolic communication. McLuhan believed that the medium that an individual used in order to communicate with their audience has as much if not more meaning than the actual content of the message. This is because every medium has different personal, social and political consequences associated with it (McLuhan, 1964). Some of these consequences are more evident than others but they all carry serious ramifications for modern communicators. This is because each medium is a product of the social, technological, economic and political processes that both created it in the past and sustain it into the future. These processes carry meanings for audiences, which ultimately affect how the content of the message is interpreted. Effective communicators understand these consequences and know how to use them to their advantage rather than their detriment.

To illustrate this point, consider an organization that is undertaking a series of changes that focus around cost cutting measures as a means to respond to increasingly competitive market conditions. In order to become more competitive it is necessary for the firm to dramatically reduce their costs at every level of the value chain. As a result, these external changes are forcing a series of internal changes that are necessary if the firm is to be a success in the future. If this change is to be a success within the firm, it is necessary that it is communicated using the correct medium. Efforts should be made to ensure that the medium is consistent with the message that the communicators are attempting to impart on their audience. In this case, it would be prudent to send out

lower cost communications that utilize mediums such as voicemail, email or intranet postings. Conversely, if the communicator was sending out communications in expensive printed publications this would directly contradict what the message was attempting to portray to the audience, which has the potential to undermine the success rate of the change.

3.7 Communications to Manage Transitions

In William Bridges' Managing Transitions, he provides realistic recommendations for managers that wish to ease the personal difficulties that their employees go through in the change process. Whereas change management focuses on the tangible aspects of the change such as planning, organization, processes and implementation, transition management focuses on the personal transitions that all people directly affected by the change go through in response to the change initiative (Bridges, 1991). These personal transitions greatly impact the individual's ability to accept the change and its implications and can adversely affect their ability to operate effectively within the organization.

Bridges believes that communication plays an important role in transition management. This is because affected employees often over react to change announcements, once they hear the basic details of the change, they usually start wondering how that change will specifically affect them and their position with the organization. As this complex inner dialogue continues, they often stop listening to what exactly is being said about the change initiative. This is exacerbated by the fact that communications are often too rich in information and as a result many people begin to suffer from information overload, at which time they only hear what they want to hear (Bridges, 1991). In order to overcome this, communication efforts must be all

encompassing and provide the targets of the communication with all the details of the change process (Barrett, 2003). Furthermore, effective managers must ensure that they communicate important details of the change repeatedly utilizing multiple channels so as to reach as many employees as possible. Although this method risks being repetitive, the important details of the communications should be rephrased so that they continue to catch the attention of the intended audience. Timing of these communications must also be strategically planned so that details of the change are not only released at the beginning of the change but also during the change to account for individuals who may have selectively overlooked some of the previously mentioned details in the earlier stages of the communication process.

Bridges believes that in change initiatives managers typically under communicate rather than over communicate. In doing so they use many reasons to account for this under communication but it really does undermine the success of the entire change process. Managers often believe that they do not know all the details yet or that employees should only be advised on a need to know basis. However, Bridges argues that for every half-truth and every delay in sharing the details, rampant distrust and bitterness festers among employees (Bridges, 1991). Additionally, in every organization, the grapevine is always very active and if employees do not hear about the changes from management first, they risk hearing it through informal networks (Bridges, 1991). Often the information that travels through these networks is over dramatized and incorrect, which only contributes to fear mongering and feelings of resentment.

This withholding of information can have a disastrous effect on a change initiative. In the case of Pure Blast Water Company, the delay between the time when the change was first announced to the managers and when it was first announced through the memo to the remainder of the employees caused many of the

aforementioned negative feelings to fester. During the interview process, one person mentioned that she really struggled with the fact that she knew she was not allowed to talk about the changes but she was aware that her direct reports were feeling a significant amount of uncertainty and anxiety around the “change” and “secret meetings”. She struggled with the fact that the requirement of confidentiality prevented her from resolving their concerns and dispelling the untrue rumours. She said that many of these rumours were far worse than the actual change and she felt extremely frustrated because she could do nothing to stop the destruction caused by the rumour mill. She believes that if senior management had been more forthcoming much of this could have been avoided. As a result of incidences such as this one many interviewees mentioned that they believe that rampant distrust still exists within Pure Blast Water Company.

When communicating around the change process, Bridges argues that losses should be acknowledged openly and honestly. This can be done in a sympathetic fashion by openly acknowledging affected individuals and expressing sympathy for their situation (Bridges, 1991). This represents another opportunity for development for Mr. White as very little was done to acknowledge the losses that his employees experienced. One interviewee stated that she felt like Pure Blast Water Company was a family and that prior to the implementation of the change they were required to not discuss the details and ramifications of the change. Once the change was publicly announced it was implemented immediately and she felt as though she never had an opportunity to say good bye to those that she worked closely with who were directly affected by the change.

Bridges believes that acknowledging the losses will not only facilitate the healing process but that it will also assist in creating the appearance of transparency. This transparency can also be created by using a selling approach that focuses on sober fact

sharing when communicating with affected individuals. It involves honestly informing individuals of the true costs of the change initiative, which may be difficult but it will be worth the effort when employees move beyond the idealistic optimistic phase (Conner, 1992) and realize that the managers had enough respect to realistically inform them about the ups and downs of the change process. It also lets people know up front what will be expected of them so that they can not only prepare accordingly by ensuring they have the resolve to complete the change but also to set aside sufficient physical and emotional resources to ensure that the change initiative is a success (Conner, 1992).

When considering which types of communications will be the most effective, Bridges believes in utilizing mediums that have the ability to portray emotions such as sympathy and concern while concurrently providing the opportunity for feedback. He believes that in reality, sending out a memo detailing the specifics of the change process actually has very little value (Bridges, 1991). Rather, Bridges argues that more efforts should be made to talk about the transition process and give managers training in transition management so that they can utilize some of these softer skills when communicating the details of the change to their employees. Training in transition management can be done by bringing in a third party to provide the training or alternatively employees can attend external courses on the subject. If firms are attempting to provide this training on a somewhat tighter budget they should consider having one individual attend the training session or read up on the topic and then they can conduct a Lunch 'n Learn or series of Lunch 'n Learns on the topic. A Lunch 'n Learn is where someone in the organization gives a presentation on a topic that would be beneficial to a specific audience, typically during the lunch hour however this is not a requirement.

3.8 Conclusion

If organizations are going to thrive in the next century they will have to not only learn how to change faster but also to change more effectively and efficiently than their competitors. Communication is a key tool that organizations can utilize as a means to facilitating their development in the area of change management. As was witnessed at Pure Blast Water Company, managers typically believe that they sufficiently communicate their changes, however the reality is often exactly the opposite. By improving both the quantity and quality of communications surrounding change initiatives, managers will be able to utilize communications as a means to help rather than hinder the change process. This can be done by using communication tactics that are inclusive, participative, transparent, information rich, concise and inspiring, which will ultimately assist change leaders in capitalizing on communications as a means to succeeding in the change process.

4 REFLECTIONS AND LEARNINGS ON STUDYING ORGANIZATIONS

4.1 Introduction

I found the process of completing the project for BUS 999 to be an extremely valuable experience. Not only did I learn a lot about myself and my own leadership abilities but I also learned how valuable of an experience it can be to lead others. For the purpose of this project my team members were Johannes Saufferer and Shanny Tan. Working on a project of this nature also has several other challenges that include gathering information and staying on track with the plan. This essay will focus on what I learned throughout the semester while being the team leader for our BUS 999 project team.

4.2 Creating and Cultivating Support for the Goals and Vision

My past experiences with leading a team have not been positive ones. Previously, whenever I have been the leader of a team I have always come up with the project goals and vision, and then have personally ensured that they were achieved. The problem with this system was that the goals and vision that I created for the team were always my vision and not the group's vision. In fact, I often did not take the time to even tell them what I was hoping to accomplish and then I became frustrated when they did not work towards my goal. This meant that I often ended up completing the large majority of the project myself in order to achieve what I originally set out to accomplish. Not surprisingly, I found this to be quite frustrating and would often choose to never work with the same team members twice. On the occasions that I did work with the same

team members multiple times it was because my goals and vision were the same as theirs and therefore we were all able to work towards accomplishing them. After gaining this insight into my behaviour throughout the school year I decided that I would operate this team quite differently and would adjust my behaviour. In the first meeting I began with a discussion about what everyone wanted to get out of this project. We decided on several goals which included finishing the project early, obtaining experience that would be applicable to our future careers and providing the company with something that they could actually use. After an extensive discussion we all agreed that these goals would act as our vision for the project as they were something that we would all work towards accomplishing. I believe that cultivating support for the goals and the vision greatly increased our ability to act as a well functioning team. In this case, I felt that we were all working towards accomplishing what we set out to do and if ever a member strayed, the others would remind them of what we were hoping to accomplish. As a result, from this project, I learned that tremendous benefits can be gained when a leader takes the time to include their team members in deciding what the goals and vision for the group should be. I also learned that the only way team members can all work towards accomplishing the group's goals and the group's vision is if they are all aware of what they are and if they all buy-in to the importance of achieving them.

4.3 Stakeholder Management

In this project I also learned the importance of managing stakeholders in a way that helps rather than hinders the project. For the purpose of this project I identified the primary stakeholders to be the project team, the company we were working with, their employees and our supervising professor. As the team leader of the project team I learned that in order for the project to be a success for all of the stakeholders, these individual relationships must be managed effectively. As for managing my relationship

with the project team, I learned that it is important for the team leader to treat all team members differently. This is because each team member has different needs in terms of how they hope to be involved in the project and how they like to be communicated with. For the purpose of this specific project I learned relatively early on that Shanny likes to feel as though she is contributing to the group and not holding up the group's progress. As I quickly ascertained this fact, I was able to provide Shanny with reassurance in this area and also assist her in feeling that she was a valuable asset to the group by assigning her with specific responsibilities. With respect to Johannes' tendencies, I quickly realized that he preferred a straight forward, open and honest communication style. In order to adapt to his needs, I learned that by communicating in a style that was most preferable to him, our interactions went much more smoothly than in the past. Thus by learning to adjust my style to those that I am working with, I discovered that intra-group dynamics can function far more effectively.

Part of the difficulties associated with leading a project of this nature is that the project team must really answer to two different bosses with differing interests and expectations. Gervase our supervising professor was interested in having us do a project that would reflect well on the school, be completed on time and provide us with a valuable learning experience. Our contact at the company was interested in having his staff interviewed regarding their responses to a specific change initiative and getting a PowerPoint presentation that he would be able to share with his staff and other people in this organization. I found that it is sometimes difficult to reconcile the interests of two different stakeholders. In order to overcome this I learned that the best thing to do is to communicate with both parties on a regular basis and keep each of them informed of the other's interests. This way interests that may be in conflict with one another can be immediately addressed and resolved.

4.4 Gathering Information

In this project I was challenged by the fact that people often do not know what information will be of benefit to them. In the case of this project, the project liaison knew what he hoped the project would accomplish but some of the information that he wanted us to collect would not provide us with the information we needed to meet and exceed his expectations. In order to overcome this I learned that it is important to have open communication with the client and notify them of information the project team needs to successfully complete the project. In this case, it was decided that we would collect the additional information that the project liaison requested but that we would also gather the information that was necessary for the success of the project. As a result of this I learned that if the project is to be a success and the right information is to be gathered, it is absolutely necessary that the team and the company liaison partake in open and honest communication.

The problem with gathering information is further exacerbated by the fact that interviewees often do not answer the questions that they are asked. Sometimes they start off by answering the question and then stray off course and other times they start out on the wrong path entirely. I found this difficult when we first began conducting interviews because it was often necessary to alter the interview from the original script during the actual interview if the necessary information were to be gathered. For example, in our interview guide we asked a question on the organizational culture of the firm. When some of the respondents answered this question they strayed significantly off track. In order to overcome this it was often necessary to define terms for them and re-ask the question in a different way that increased their understanding of the question and its meaning, which ultimately allowed us to collect much more reliable information. As a result, from this experience I really learned to hone in my interview skills so that I

was able to extract the information that was both valuable to our project and answered the interview question that was posed to the respondent.

4.5 Staying With the Plan

The last major learning experience for me in this project was that it is very difficult to manage a project when you have to take into consideration many different people's schedules and commitments. This is exacerbated by the fact that often at the beginning of the project when the Gantt Chart is created; it is sometimes not known how much time each step will take. As a result, the timeline ends up being based largely on arbitrary numbers that will most likely change as the project progresses. This was difficult for me because I originally aimed to complete the project by July 2, 2004. However, one thing I did not account for was that nearly a third of our interviews would need to be rescheduled due to no-shows, illness and communication difficulties. This meant that by the time the interview was rescheduled, the project had to be delayed by a week since the interview process took three weeks instead of two. This was made even more difficult by having to manage the schedules of the project team, the company liaison and the sponsoring professor. In order to overcome this, in future projects I will build in more buffer time to account for any extenuating circumstances that may interfere with our ability to complete the project on time.

4.6 Conclusion

I believe that this project was a very valuable learning experience for me and I am sure that the skills I have acquired working on this project will be transferable into whichever career I decide to pursue. I also found this project to be very personally rewarding, which can largely be attributed to my role as the team leader. When we were nearing the end of the project Shanny told me that at the beginning she was somewhat

worried about working with me because she thought that she would not be able to live up to my expectations. She then said that she thought I had done a great job of leading the team and organizing the project, while concurrently ensuring that all members were involved in a way that best used their respective strengths. I found her comments to be extremely moving and it made me realize that everything I have learned about groups and leadership in the past year has really made a difference in how I operate in a team environment. Ultimately, I believe that this project has served as the culmination of my year long learning experience and I hope to take the knowledge I have acquired in the past year and apply it to the new and challenging business settings of my yet unknown future.

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