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The Role of a Cosmopolitan Manager in Effecting Change: Insights from Kenyan Organizations

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Abstract
Organizational Change in Kenyan organizations has been manifested in form of investments by the developed world and internationalization of activities that calls for modern approaches to production and provision of services. Organizational managers are faced with unpresented challenges of actualizing organizational goals and objectives. Most especially, for the basic reason that businesses operate in dynamic environments that influences the level of operations and processes. In order, to cope with these underlying pressures, managers ought to have the requisite knowledge, skills, and experience that will enable them to effectively understand and improve the success of an organization. Managers are expected to have a good understanding of their business environment as well as the corporate culture of their organizations. However, it is empirical that the managers not only need to understand the environment, but should also be self driven and prepared to manage diversity. The identity of a cosmopolitan is beyond the local context since cosmopolitan managers ought to have the needed expertise and experience of managing human resources both within and beyond borders. For example, the effective management of expatriates and introduction of change programmes in the organization. This paper examines the role of managers in managing a multicultural environment and even the setbacks experienced by managers in managing multinational corporations.
Key words: Cosmopolitan, Culture, Environment, Challenge, Urbanization, Globalization

1. Who is a cosmopolitan manager?

A cosmopolitan manager is a person who has the ability, experience, skills, and knowledge to understand the culture of an environment and bring forth significant change in driving the achievement of organizations goals and objectives (Early and Ang, 2003).

All mangers have the responsibility of providing strategic direction on what the organizations vision, mission, and objectives envisages. This cannot be an easy process when the manager does not understand the business environment. As Early and Mosakowski (2004) assert, managers, need also to appreciate the underpinning dynamics of business for instance how to manage employees in a multicultural environment; how to lead by example and how to be able to accommodate and integrate all constituents in the business premises in order to ensure the smooth flow of work.

Organizations in Kenya and around the world are facing challenges brought about by the demand of time. The manager therefore, needs to understand the change process. The change process begins with the top managers or can emerge through a shared confluence of experiences with the employees at the place of work. Therefore, it becomes important that managers ensure that the change modeling process bears the perceived need to change i.e. determining the driving forces of change and the restraining forces of change.

Behavior modeling is a complex process and to effect change managers have the constant challenge of ensuring that they reinforce desirable employee behavioral expectations to the prescribed norm. These can be depicted by the need to create an elaborate organizational culture that defines the belief, values and expectations, shared norms and ways of doing things. Culture is developed, transformed, and transmitted through the conscious and unconscious activities of every member in the organization. It is however, the leader's driving force and ability to facilitate preferred mind-sets as well as preserve, create, and transmit the essence of existing culture as he leads his subordinates to new challenges. Culture and leadership augment each other in bringing excellence to the enterprise. (Kotter, 1996, Morgan, 1993).

Just as leadership and organizational culture have come to be known as critical to success, we now recognize that culture includes ethnic, racial and national cultures. Kenya is not an exception in embracing ethnic and racial cultures that is deep rooted in her population. Reis and Meryl (1983) reiterates that with globalization, understanding culture is even more important. Ignoring culture is unproductive. Culture exists whether we choose to see and acknowledge it. Ignoring cultural differences is problematic because we confuse recognition with judgment and it is judgment, particularly negative stereotypes, which feed discrimination, and perpetuate economic exclusion.

Whereas culture is learned, it is through this learning that leaders can cultivate this new domain of intelligence, which has immense relevance and effects upon an increasingly global and diverse workplace. Nurturing the capability to learn, adjust, and adapt helps raise the level of cultural intelligence.

2. Cultural Intelligence Development

Berry and Poortinga (1994) argues that existing research on intelligence fails to capture the essential richness of cultural context. Berry suggests that existing definitions of intelligence are largely western constructs, overly restrictive, and typically tested using western methods, having dubious value in non-western cultures. He suggests that cultural intelligence is best considered "adaptive for the cultural group, in the sense that it develops to permit the group to operate effectively in a particular ecological context; it is also adaptive for the individual, permitting people to operate in their particular cultural and ecological contexts. Cultural adaptation can be hereditary, especially in the yet primitive areas in Kenya. However, urbanization and globalization has greatly changed this norm. Managers are adapting based on what they hear and see happening in conferences, workshops, and even the mass media.

Cultural intelligence reflects a capability to gather and manipulate information, draw inferences, and enact behaviors in response to one's cultural setting. In order to be culturally adaptive, there is a core set of cultural competencies which leaders must master. Adaptation requires skills and capabilities, which include cognition, motivation and behavior (Kotter *et al.* 1992). The possession of wide ranging information base about a variety of people and their cultural customs, Motivation (healthy self-efficacy, persistence, goals, value questioning and integration), Managers also need to be behaviourally adaptive The capacity to interact in a wide range of situations, environments and diverse groups (Earley and Ang,2003).

3. Kenya's view of culture development

The Kenyan nation, however, still has a deep rooted culture that even in the advent of globalization and more exposure, we still want to embrace our stone age cultures. Cultural intelligence reflects a capability to gather and manipulate information, draw inferences, and enact behaviors in response to one's cultural setting. In order to be culturally adaptive, there is a core set of cultural competencies which leaders must master. Adaptation requires skills and capabilities, which include cognition, motivation, and behavior.

4. What is an organization culture?

GeertHofstede wrote, "I treat culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another.' Culture, in this sense, includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture. Culture is to a human collectively what personality is to an individual." Based on the work of Hofstede, 1980, and other researchers, we could make the following conclusions about organization culture:

a) Each company has a unique culture built and changed over time.
b) Beliefs, assumptions, values and understandings and the actions and norms they produce are important components of culture.
c) We recognize culture by observing actions and artifacts (explicit factors).
d) While some call it a sub-culture and others a climate within the larger culture, there may be cultural differences within subgroups of an organization.
e) Observable behaviors and actions are easier to change than are beliefs and values.
f) The observable elements of culture affect the invisible elements and visa versa. Change

in one cultural element will impact other elements.

5. How can the people of Kenya change their culture

Organizational culture is socially constructed; it is created and changed through conversations. Each conversation makes meaning of observable actions and reinforces, builds upon, or challenges the current cultural norms and beliefs. The concept of social construction of organization culture is vital for leaders, offers them an opportunity, and poses two challenges. The opportunity is that if you change the right conversations, you can change the culture for the better. The challenges that need to be explored include:

- the need to change the conversations that can eventually change the culture
- conversations that do not support the desired changes will make progress doubly hard to achieve.

Organizational cultures are created by leaders, based on the organizations vision and mission One of the most decisive functions of leadership is the creation, the management, and destruction of culture. It is through conversations - talk, observed actions, listening, writing among others that leaders manage, reinforce, and create culture. Leadership is a social act and a leader's greatest tool for shaping culture is workplace communication.

6. Improving the Organization's Culture.

A workplace culture can enable or hinder success. Leaders can impact the alignment of the culture with the company's mission and strategies. Deal *et al*. (1982) asserts that culture is socially constructed and leaders need to initiate great conversations that tie cultural norms to the organization's goals. If the current culture is not in alignment with the new reality, leaders need to be the catalysts, or bridges, who create a new understanding and help individuals select new behaviors and, eventually, beliefs. Leaders must also define, clarify, and reinforce understanding of the actions and beliefs that build the desired culture.

The organizational culture is particularly important when implementing organization-wide change. A culture can either enable or be a barrier to nonstop changes. If the culture is nimble (in the habit of being realigned), change will be more fluid and effective.

Most large-scale changes need to be supported by complementary changes in the organization'sculture. Change plans, then, should address current and desired cultural elements. Leaders canplay a key role in facilitating change by aligning projects and development efforts to reinforcethe desired culture. A desired cultural element for any organization need to be presented, explained and reinforced in communication and actions; changing managerial regimens and messages to better present and reinforce the desired culture; having a system in which the communication tools and practices help build the organization’s team’s skills in participating in conversations about goals, changes and barriers that the organization is likely to face.

7. THE ROLES OF A COSMOPOLITAN MANAGER

7.1 Systems thinker

Today we are living in an age of intensive global interdependence, one where the old way of seeing the world no longer fits. Building on the new quantum physics of the twentieth century, a new model emerges where the whole organizes and even partly defines the parts". Within organizations, the new framework requires that we pay attention to the relationships between people, to the validity of each person's unique reality, and to the multiple creative possibilities that exist at any moment in time. Effective problem solving requires the ability to be a systems thinker.

Senge (1990) and others have forcefully illustrated the critical importance of this attribute for any leader (Kotter *et al*. 1992). Systems thinkers have the ability to see connections between issues, events and data points the whole rather than its parts. Systems thinking requires the ability of framing structural relationships that result in new possibilities rather than old answers is an inherent part of the action learning process. During action learning sessions, participants learn how to think in a systematic way and how to handle complex, seemingly unconnected aspects of organizational challenges (Marquardt and Loan, 2006)

7.2 Change agent

Kanter (2003) has long been a prophet relative to the crucial importance of leaders to be change agents, stating that all leaders must develop an understanding and high degree of competence in creating and managing change so that their organizations can survive. Wheatley (1992) notes how change is the essence of the new global environment, and new leaders need to order, not control, chaos. Since change is the function of leadership, being able to generate highly energized behavior is important for coping with the inevitable barriers to change. Just as direction setting identifies an appropriate path for movement and just as effective alignment gets people moving down that path, successful ensures that they will have the energy to overcome obstacles (Kotter, 1995).

7.3 Innovator and risk-taker

Twenty-first century leaders must be willing to take risks, for only through risk-taking can opportunities for creativity arise (Morgan, 1993). Although everyone is encouraged and expected to be creative, it is the leaders who can best create this environment, who can challenge the old ways, who can encourage risks as well as protect and encourage those whose risks have not been successful

7.4 Polychromic coordinator

Twenty-first century leaders will need to be able to manage and integrate many things at the same time, i.e. to be polychromic coordinators. They must also be able to work collaboratively with many others, often in unfamiliar settings on unfamiliar problems (quadrant 4 of action learning). They will be required to have the dexterity to focus on the big picture as well as the details.

Kiechel (2010) predicts that tomorrow's managers will need to be simultaneously and consecutively specialists and generalists, team players and self-reliant, able to think of themselves as a business of one and plan accordingly. The new leader is internetworked rather than a practitioner of the old-style, brilliant-visionary, take-charge approach. They will need to possess both analytic and strategic thinking skills. In the changing organization with its increased use of project teams, managers will more and more likely be leading and coordinating three, five, even up to ten different task-focused teams, each carrying out a variety of activities on totally different time schedules. The ability to quickly enter into and become a trusted partner of these teams is a taxing but highly important skill.

7.5 Visionary and vision-builder

Finally, the twenty-first century leader must be able to help build the company's vision and to inspire workers, customers and colleagues. The leader must envision together with his or her fellow employees, the type of "future world" the company desires, one that is exciting and challenging enough to attract and retain the best and brightest of know-how workers. To the extent that the leader is truly able to build a shared, desired picture for the organization or unit, o that extent are people willing and committed to carry out the vision. Leaders should attempt to blend extrinsic and intrinsic visions; communicate their own vision and ask for support; encourage personal visions, and keep visioning as an ongoing process.

Kotter (1996) makes the following distinction between the manager and the leader: Leadership is about setting the direction, which is not the same as planning or even long-term planning. Planning is a management process, deductive in nature and designed to produce orderly results, not change. Setting a direction is more inductive. Leaders gather a broad range of data and look for patterns, relationships, and linkages that help explain things. The direction setting aspect of leadership does not produce plans; it creates vision and strategies. These describe a business, technology, or corporate culture in terms of what it should become over the time.

8. Conclusion

Managers have the power to transform the organization to the greatest heights only if they embrace action learning and the desired kind of culture that will translate the results. It is important that the driving need for change should be embraced by the managers without fear because some changes may be instrumental to the organization. This can be achieved through integrative collaboration between individuals and teams in the organization. Proper communication channels to facilitate feedback and adequate organizational learning processes should also be aligned with the overall corporate strategy of the organization.

In addition, there are many roles that cosmopolitan managers can play in organizations which should not be ignored. For instance they play the roles of: a negotiator, a team builder, coach and mentor, planning among others. Cosmopolitan managers should be in a position to bring together all the stakeholders and constituents involved in and contributing to the organizations' objectives.

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