New Normal Initiatives Prompts U.S. Business Schools to Enhance Curricula

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to seek an understanding as to how organizations are able to evolve despite the challenges attributable to the increase of competition and the reduction of resources. Studies have suggested that the lack of leadership is to blame for promoting misguided organizational change. Other experts suggest that corporate leaders who lack emotional intelligence (EI) are equally to blame for organizational failure. The "New Normal" continues to be a focal point of discussion among corporate leaders. Additionally, not only should leaders be critical thinkers and lead by example, they should have an understanding of internal and external factors associated with the overall organizational setting. Moreover, universities/colleges throughout America continue to expand their curricula to better prepare future corporate leaders. Additionally, the inclusion of EI initiatives within university/college undergraduate and graduate curricula is a high priority for most university administrators to meet U.S. job market requirements.*

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1. Introduction

Organizational leaders are faced with challenges due to scarce resources. The competitive nature of industry standards has led to misguided organizational change. At times, organizational expectations are inconceivable and beyond reach from an organizational setting perspective. Moreover, the lack of leadership to support organizational change initiatives continues to hinder certain organizational settings. It is understood that highly emotional intelligent leaders are much more successful as opposed to those who are not. In fact, colleges/universities throughout America have integrated (EI) contents into the curricula in an effort to better prepare graduates. Doing so will add value to their graduates, since they will then be better prepared to deal with the New Normal. The New Normal identifies three major leadership challenges when managing complex, rapid organizational change and making decisions to deal with organizational climate issues as well as conquering the market's uncertainties (Harris, Tracy, & Fisher). Harris further suggests that in order to succeed in the New Normal organizational climate, leaders must be able to think critically, lead by example, and be able to create a work environment conducive for employers/employees.

2. Misguided Organizational Change

Due to fierce competition, organizations throughout America continue to strive to reach their objectives to improve services rendered to customers. In certain cases, organizations are promoting misguided organizational change. Moreover, Hutchinson, Vickers, Jackson, and Wilkes (2005) point out that many organizations do not want to accept "that processes and pressures of organizational change might be an 'accidental trigger' for bullying by managers who may be in over their heads" (p. 57).

As a result of scarce resources and pressure to complete deadlines, managers become overwhelmed with day-to-day expectations.

Dreadfully, this type of behavior leads to the mistreatment of their employees/subordinates.

Most notable, the use of harsh intimidating tactics to encourage employees to perform at peak level is not conducive to modern management theories and practices. Studies have suggested that this type of behavior leads to a ragged, dysfunctional organizational setting. According to Rivero

Throughout the years, organizations have been forced to do more with less due to scarce resources. In some cases, employees are pushed to perform at peak levels with unrealistic expectations, which has resulted in a counterproductive work environment. The causes and effects of swift organizational changes have had an impact on the overall job performance of employees (2013, p. 241).

Unfortunately, this is a very common behavioral trait among inexperienced managers who are unable to deal with the ambiguous and rely on intimidation tactics to promote misguided change.

3. Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Studies have suggested that a leader who is emotionally stable is better suited to deal with the ambiguous within an organizational setting. According to Goleman (2011), an individual who is highly emotionally intelligent is aware of his/her surroundings, portrays empathy among employees/staff members, and has good social skills. As Stein & Book (1999) further point out, due to the complexity of organizational settings, an emotionally intelligent leader is better prepared to make difficult decisions affecting others in the workplace.

Moreover, Rivero (2014b), suggests that "modern organizational leaders are placed in difficult situations to act upon due to circumstances that are beyond their control. At times, expectations are unreachable/unrealistic and employers/employees are expected to perform despite the unlikeness of reaching those expectations" (p. 12).

This being said, it is recommended that extensive employment screening be conducted in selecting a manager/ administrator who is emotionally fit to deal with the ambiguous nature of an organizational setting. As a result, the organization is able to survive the murky depth of the unknown and adjust internal and external factors for successful execution.

4. U.S. Colleges/Universities

Modern management initiatives continue to evolve and most global organizations are required to adapt to rapid change due to the competitive nature of its industry's standards. Employees' productivity initiatives can be negatively affected if their needs are not met, leading to a dysfunctional organizational setting of disgruntled employers/employees (Singh, Manser & Dali, 2013). In most recent times, organizational leaders require staff to produce more, but with limited resources, which leads to a negative work environment in certain cases (Rivero, 2014a). Unfortunately, U.S. Colleges/Universities and Business Schools are ill preparing their graduates and are unprepared to deal with corporate sustainability factors.

In doing so, most U.S. College/University systems are reevaluating most of their MBA curricula to meet the needs of the New Normal. As Joyner & Mann suggest, "this trend is due in large part to the current/past business and economic environmental trends resulting in organizational failure" (2011, p. 10).

Most experts suggest that a weakened economy resulted from unethical behavior among corporate leaders (Elmore, 2010). Some organizations have exploited employees by mistreating and demoralizing them, which has resulted in a polluted organizational setting filled with doubts and discouragement among their stakeholders.

Equally important is the preparedness of MBA learners to adapt to modern management theories and practices (Rivero & Lemus, 2014, p. 49). According to Bennis & O'Toole "....business schools are graduating

students who are ill-equipped to wrangle with complex and unquantifiable issues" (p. 94). This being said, universities and business schools throughout the United States are faced with harsh criticism for not adequately preparing their graduates. Most notable are leaders who are ill prepared to lead their organization accordingly. As Bennis & O'Toole further point out,

Instead of measuring themselves in terms of the competence of their graduates, or by how well their faculties understand important drivers of business performance, they measure themselves almost solely by the rigor of their scientific research. They have adopted a model of science that uses abstract financial and economic analysis, statistical multiple regressions, and laboratory psychology (p.101).

This being said, it is vital that colleges/universities transcend to a more practical teaching perspective. Most importantly, this will further develop upcoming leaders aware of the harsh reality of a corporate setting (non-scientific model) as opposed to relying on the scientific model that is outdated for common management practices and purposes in the corporate environment.

5. New Normal Initiatives

In recent times, most organizations continue to work with fewer resources, which have led to counter-productivity. The New Normal initiative is a very broad term when attempting to categorize from modern management perspectives. According to Pash, "the New Normal is an emerging reality where the abnormal becomes the commonplace" (2011). In doing so, the New Normal has evolved the term commonly accepted as the extreme becomes the norm. The global financial crisis prompted the "Great Recession" period, 2007 – 2012, leading to the crippling of world financial markets (Wolff, 2014). From there, the "New Normal" in business evolved, which is commonly referred to as organizations working with minimal resources and having employees meet unreachable deadlines resulting in a dysfunctional work environment. According to Rivero "…at the end, investors are hurt as

well as employees who are misguided to the outer limits of unreachable goals and objectives due to scarce resources" (Rivero, 2013, p. 170).

Moreover, the New Normal initiatives have also affected corporate sustainability factors. Leaders are faced with tremendous challenges with increased work productivity leading to a dysfunctional work environment.

For example, from a local government point of view, it is expected that local government is able to operate efficiently with less resources, but be held accountable in achieving expectations. (Thompson, 2012, p.19).

6. Recommendations

Organizational change will continue to be the focal point for all organizations to stay competitive. It is important that a seasoned leader be able to embrace human capital and unfreeze the existing mindset of employees before/during/after organizational change from corporate sustainability perspectives. According to Rivero (2015), "Corporate sustainability continues to be embraced by most mid/large sized firms. Due to the complexity of the organizational change agent, corporate sustainability is needed in order to keep the organization on a steady course to meet expectations" (p.13).

Most importantly, U.S. Colleges/Universities have taken the helm to prepare their graduates for the New Normal of the competitive environment within corporate America.

The following are proposed recommendations for organizational preparedness for New Normal dilemmas affecting the overall organizational setting.

1. Organizations should reconsider hiring managers who are trained and able to deal with the New Normal dilemmas associated with organizational change.

2. It is suggested that firms start promoting the New Normal initiatives so that existing employees are aware of the new changes in their respective industries from a corporate sustainability perspective.

3. Organizations should promote soft-skill initiatives to train seasoned employees, particularly those who hold management positions. Winstead, Adams, & Sillah, (2009) point out, "Soft skills include a collection of communication, interpersonal, teambuilding and other business skills that today's employers value in hiring new recruits" (p.35).

4. College and University Administrators should continue to evolve their business curricula by including (EI) and the New Normal in business components to better prepare their graduates for management positions.

7. Summary

It is understood that American firms need to embrace organizational change initiatives in order to stay competitive. Misguided organizational change occurs when goals and objectives are not aligned or well presented to subordinates, which leads to miscommunication. In some cases, employees are overworked and mistreated by management. In certain instances, managers are not emotionally fit to deal with the day-to-day work responsibilities due to their lack of leadership abilities. This causes infighting among employers/employees preventing the organization from ever meetings goals and objectives (Rivero, 2013a, p. 1)

Although there are certain organizations that have embraced the corporate sustainability model, there are others that have not. Corporate sustainability should be incorporated by all organizations, regardless.

Additionally, it is vital that college and university administrators be able to readjust their MBA curricula with respective business schools. By doing so, this will lead to better prepared leaders to tackle the challenges of the New Normal dilemma and the embracing of human capital for the promotion of a positive work environment.   In the end, the organization is better fit to meet its goals and objectives.

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