

Lack of cultural sensitivity was a contribution to the resistance to change and is a factor that needs to be taken into consideration. Culture sensitivity is critical during change implementation as identified at Company X, especially for a multinational organisation operating with a diversity of race, religions, cultures, and languages such as that of Company X. The global culture of Company X should not have dominated the cultures of the BUs; but the change agents should have made it a priority to understand the cultural differences and be more cultural sensitive in communicating the change. An approach used in one location may not be ideal in another. For a multi-national company, the cultural context of different BUs should be recognized and respected. For example, in South Africa, hierarchy is deeply engrained in work culture, hence the resistance shown when 'cultural protocols' are ignored.

5.4 Resistance/Acceptance of Process of Change within Company X

The use and/or abuse of power was one poignant aspect which may have prevented a successful change management initiative at the BUs. Ritualisation of change, due to the continuous change programmes that had been introduced are no longer seen as much meaningful by employees; and the ivory tower change pitfalls, which is characterised by change driven by senior agents were all present. Lastly, for employees in managerial positions, the loss of control and humiliation felt contributed to the resistance. The research findings suggest better leadership, transparency and support could have helped ease resistance at Company X.

5.5 Effectiveness of Communication during the Process of Change

The lack of transparency and consistency in communication brought about some challenges for Company X during the change management process that resulted in resistance. Lack of consistent feedback may have fuelled the resistance. Feedback should be provided consistently to improve the quality of information disseminated and the manner in which the information is delivered. As described by respondents, a one-way communication is an ineffective way to work in an organisation and especially during change.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The current socio economic climate is increasingly unstable for company X. From reform in the global mining sector to issues of social risk in the South African labour market, the company should take this opportunity to learn and reflect and improve ways of working through localised solutions and meaningful engagement with staff teams. Light has been shone on this increasingly relevant topic and will contribute to further research studies on change management in South Africa and beyond. The recommendations put forward are listed below:

- Company X needs to produce a change management framework specific for each business unit concerned, including feedback sessions, and recommendations to management
- A communication plan about the need for change and its benefits can be used to persuade employees to accept the change programme.
- Townhall meetings should be held to increase participation and involvement – improved communication at all stages, transparency and shared involvement in the implementation of change.
- Facilitation and support should be provided to employees to reassure those affected by the change.
- This research report should be circulated within the mining sector to improve the sharing of change management best practice.
- Company X should review its change management processes at least yearly so as to capture the effect of the changes in the organisation and its impact on the diverse workforce

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Biography

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