Change management as a Key Organizational Tool to Gain Competitive Edge in the Global

Market Place

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Abstract

Business environment is constantly changing due to advances in technology, global financial crisis, shifting consumer tastes and preferences among other factors. Similarly there have been drastic changes in the power utility industry due to technology changes that has brought to the fore green energy, obsolete technology, pressure from activists for power utility firms to produce green energy, rising fuel costs, aging workforce, financial crisis and increased demand for energy worldwide to drive economies. Coupling of these factors has made the energy market very competitive, and characterized by thin margins. Consequently, power utility firms are seeking ways of surviving and enhancing their organic growth. One of the ways to do so is by implementing changes in their business process and organization-wide operations. Unfortunately, not all change initiatives yield intended results. Poor change implementation in an organization may yield catastrophic outcomes which may leave an organization worse than its earlier state. It is therefore prudent for an organization to effectively manage change in order to enhance outcomes. This supposition has lead organizations across the world to develop change management frameworks to facilitate their change management plans. This research study will seek to establish whether power utility firms in Canada gain competitive advantage from sound change management frameworks.

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1 Introduction

1.1   Introduction

The global market place is in constant change, putting pressure on organizations to constantly review their business process in an effort to compete effectively. Jones, Aguirre and Caldeone (2004) observe that the business environment has drastically changed, from a simple closed and underdeveloped market atmosphere to an open and complex market environment characterized by stiff competition. Similar views are held by Hudescu and Ilies (2011) who opine that, presently organizations are at the precipice of disintegration due to global competition, advanced technological innovations and dwindling national economies. As a result, organizations are continuously reinventing their strategies through organization changes. Historically, business managers had an easier time, as they would easily achieve set target with modest modification on strategic tactics and plans. However, advancement and sophistication of contemporary business environment due to advanced technology, labor mobility, market transparency and information efficiency has transformed businesses into an intricate arcade. Surprisingly, the harsh business environment is being witnessed across the board, from small to conglomerates. Similar observation is cited by Blokdjik (2008) who states that every company is effecting changes in its operations to survive. Present day business managers are required to constantly monitor and evaluate efficacy of their strategic plans, review and implement new strategies and tactics to survive the harsh environment. Jones et al. (2004) assert managers are aggressively implementing changes, a trend that in the past they avoided. The scholars document in their article recommendations of Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a Harvard Business School Professor, that successful organizations have change ingrained in their psyche, which keeps them moving.

Companies that have failed to reinvent themselves have been pushed to oblivion. For example, Kodak failed to embrace technology following the invention of digital cameras. Consequently, the firm lost significant portion of its market share as consumers shifted to digital cameras and films. Komaroni (2012) believes lack of innovation by Kodak resulted in the company going bankrupt and winding up its operations. Therefore, organizations that fail to implement changes in their operations or management do so at their own peril. East (2011) points out that change is driven by technological innovations, economic forces, environmental factors, political situations and social spheres. Therefore, changes in an organization take place to counter the retrogressive forces or to achieve higher levels of performance pre-meditated by the management before enactment of change processes. A good example is in the energy sector where power utility firms are realigning their strategies, processes and practices to counter the complexity of doing business (Laplante-Rottman & Bruffy, 2010). Realignment of business processes and strategies require effective organizational process changes which can only be achieved through effective change management. Shanker (n.d) opines that change management is concerned with optimizing benefits and reducing downside risk of failure during change implementation process.

Scholars unanimously agree that effective implementation of change helps an organization to adapt and react to unfavorable business environment (Hudescu & Ilies, 2011). Change management is an indispensable tool in maximizing organizational benefits and lowering risks that may adversely affect business performance, however, ineffective change management adversely affect business performance. Since change management involves the human side of change, it faces resistance if not properly structured to include participation and communication of set targets. This observation is echoed by Jones et al. (2004) who observe that senior

business managers are highly engaged in devising strategic tactics and plans and ignoring

coordinating the human side of management of change, which is critical in facilitating the

achievement of change initiatives. Therefore effective implementation of change management

requires realignment of people's behavior, values, customs and organizational culture. In

essence, though plans which effect changes are important in realization of organizational goals

and objectives, they are executed and implemented by employees. It is therefore critical that the

management understand the human side in implementation of change initiatives in an

organization. Poor change management breeds forces that pose resistance to change, thereby,

undermining envisioned goals that were set during the planning phase of implementation of

change. Hudescu and Ilies (2011) affirm that leaders respond to unexpected change through

devising and deploying the most effective change tactic. A vast number of change concepts,

change management styles and models that have been developed by both practitioners and

scholars; however, the success level that they have recorded is low. Nevertheless, the success of

a change initiative is dependent on accuracy in implementation process.

Organizational change or transformation has four major features; namely, a) scale, b)

magnitude, c) duration, and d) strategic importance (Jones et al., 2004). The first characteristic

of scale implies that change pervades the entire, or a large part of an organization. As effects of

change initiatives are only felt, if significant shift in the organizational structure and systems

takes place in an organization. The second characteristic is magnitude that implies effective

change initiatives upset the status quo in order to ingrain a new paradigm in organization

operations and culture. The third characteristic describing change is duration. Under the

duration characteristic, change as a transformation tool is short lived only lasting for few months.

The fourth characteristic sum up that change is of strategic importance to organization striving to

thrive in the current harsh business environment. Jones et al., (2004) confide that change initiatives in an organization play a strategic role only if change permeates to a level of individual workforce. Consequently, organizational leaders who are concerned with transformation of an organization highlight biggest worry in devising strategies and tactics to effect change in an organization is the employee's receptive response to change initiatives (Jones et al., 2004). However, the phenomenon is further complicated by the lack of standard change implementation tools and strategies that leaders can use to implement change initiatives since uniqueness of every organization calls for its uniquely customized set of tools and techniques in change implementation. As literature implies change management influences the performance of employees by making change acceptable among employees. Evidently, change management is a vital implement that helps organizations achieve set goals through coordinating human capital resource, which is the most critical resource in an organization. Change management scholars, therefore, recommend that human aspects should properly be managed during implementation of change initiatives and change management in an organization (McCarthy & Eastman, 2010).

1.2   Background of Study

Though change is the only constant thing in a business, there is always resistance to change (Hiatt & Creasey, 2003). However, with effective change management styles, resistance can easily be overcome (Hiatt & Creasey, 2003). Poor change management is blamed for the low rates of success in change initiatives. Similar findings were later reported by Natalicchio (2008) in his study of success rates recorded by organizations implementing change initiatives. Recent surveys by management consulting firm, McKinsey & Company, in their McKinsey Global Survey (2010) found out results consistent with those of Natalicchio (2008) that only less than a third of change initiatives achieve desired objectives. Companies that successfully

manage their changes gain competitive edge in the market. In the power generation industry, there are numerous challenges; both internal and external challenges are continuing to undermine the performance of these utility companies (Laplante-Rottman & Bruffy, 2010). Some of the challenges include the financial crisis, regulatory frameworks, environmental impacts, and escalating operational costs, which has seen power utility companies' record substantial drop in their profit margins. Consequently, undermining business performance and threatening the survival of power utility firms. Reinderss (2010) observes that BC Hydro has developed an enterprise-wide change management framework in an effort to remain competitive in the dynamic power utility industry. Effective change management will help the firm to adapt and react to evolving business environment (Shanker, n.d).

1.3   Problem Statement

Utility companies in Canada are facing myriad challenges stemming from external and internal business environment. Externally, power utility companies are being demanded to go "green", and also facing escalating energy costs while internally power companies are having an aging labor force and obsolete technology. These industry specific changes require power utility firms to effectively manage changes that will be occasioned by the stated challenges. Effective change management by the power utility firms will provide a platform for the firms to create competitive advantage. Scholars posit that differentiation between successful and unsuccessful organizations in the dynamic business environment lies in effective change management. Consequently, there is need to investigate how power utility companies in Canada are implementing change management initiatives to improve their business performance and counter industry-specific dynamics.

1.4   Objectives

This research study will be guided by the following research objectives:

i.   To establish forces causing organizational changes in power utility firms.

ii.   To establish effective change management used by power utility firms to overcome these

forces.

iii.   To establish the effectiveness of change management as an implement to gain

competitive advantage as used by power utility firms.

iv.   To establish at which organizational level is change management highly integrated in

power utility firms.

1.5   Research Questions

This research study will be guided by the following research questions.

i.   How does change management help power utility firms achieve competitive advantages?

ii.   What change management styles are power utility firms using to gain competitive

advantage in the global marketplace?

iii.   How do power utility firms overcome resistance to change using change management?

iv.   Which departments in power utility firms are involved in the implementation of change

management?

v.   What are the forces, both internal and external, that are changing the energy market?

1.6   Rationale of Statement

The research will be of great significance to energy utility companies that are in the

process of implementing changes to counter the unfavorable energy market. Presently, power

utility companies in Canada are facing increasing challenges, both externally and internally,

which are undermining their service delivery and business performance; for instance, there are

pressure from environmental groups for the power utility companies to embrace green energy, b) power utility companies are facing increased operational costs due to rising global fuel cost and infrastructural material costs, c) technology used at power plant has deteriorated, resulting to inefficiency in the production and distribution channels and lastly d) power utility firms in Canada are grappling with aging workforce within their workforce. The interplay of these retrogressive factors in the energy industry makes power utility companies in Canada susceptible to implementation of change initiatives in order to survive and flourish.

Lack of effective change management to steer change initiatives in these power utility firms; pose risks to successful implementation of change initiatives in the power utility firms, consequently, undermining business performance of these utility firms. Successful completion of this research study will help managers of power utility companies in Canada establish the forces that are shaping the energy market, how they can use change management to effectively overcome these forces, change management styles that are effective in gaining competitive advantage in the present marketplace and ways they can use change management styles to overcome resistance, both internally and externally.

1.7   Statement of Project Deliverable

Due to the volatile energy industry in Canada, power utility firms are constantly deploying wide measures of change initiatives in an effort to thrive. However, change implementation without effective management of change is futile. Therefore the research study will be concerned with: a) establishing the forces, both external and internal, that are precipitating changes in Canadian power utility firms, b) establishing change management styles deployed by Canadian power utility firms to overcome both internal and external forces, c) ascertaining whether change management can be used as a tool to help Canadian power utility firms achieve competitive

edge, and e) establishing at which organizational level change management is highly integrated.

The five areas of study are client's expectations. The research will only apply to Canadian

power utility companies; however, some concepts of change management are applicable to a

wide range of industries.   The researcher envisages the following bottlenecks in the research

process: a) data collection method used in the study may fail to give a complete picture of

change management styles and effects of change management in the seven power utility firms, b)

non-response from study participants, who include employees of the seven power utility firms,

namely, ATCO Electric, Maritime Electric, ENMAX, Great Lakes Power, Hydro One, Hydro

Quebec and Manitoba Hydro. To delimit the stated limitations, the questionnaires will have few

and comprehensive questions in order to save time and as a means of encouraging increased

respondent participation.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

The literature review chapter will evaluate journals and other accredited sources of information in an effort to review, analyze, critique and enumerate works of other scholars on change management as a tool to gain competitive advantage, forces necessitating organization changes in power utility companies and the use of change management to overcome resistance to change.
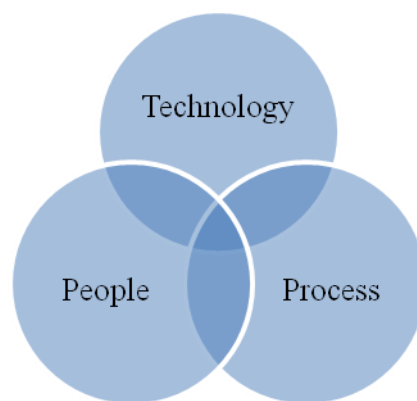
2.2   Organizational Change and Change Management

Organizational change is usually prompted by a crisis. Organizational change therefore has a tendency of being ad hoc and reactive. To coordinate this unpredictable phenomenon, organizations need to effectively manage change. Moran and Brightman (2011) describe change management as the process of reviewing organizational systems, which include structure and direction, in order to deliver on the set objectives and targets.

Different scholars propose different definitions of change management. Change management can be described as a structured process to shifting an organization and its stakeholders from one state to another desired state in the future (Change Management Institute, 2009). Society for Human Resource Management (2007) states that change management can be defined as the systematic use of organizations resources and knowledge to benefit from implementation of changes. Change management can be viewed as the process of implementing new strategies, corporate structures and procedures to effectively overcome internal and external forces affecting an organization (Hiatt & Creasey, 2002). Natalicchio (2008) points out that for an organization to successfully implement change management, there should be behavioral and organizational structural adjustment to align changes with the expected outcome. All this

definitions imply that change management is an indispensable tool that organizations use to implement change and achieve the desired business outcome. Nevertheless people are at the center of this change process since there is change of behavior, practice and attitude. Therefore, change management advocates for people's participation in the implementation of changes in an organization. McCarthy and Eastman (2010) found that people play a critical success role in hospitals implementing the use of electronic medical records in hospitals as change management strategies. Consequently, McCarthy and Eastman (2010) advocate that the central focus in change management should be people.

Figure 1.Implementation of change.

Source: McCarthy & Eastman (2010).

Hudescu and Ilies (2011) assert that organizations use change management to minimize chances of organizational malfunction caused by failure to adapt to changing environment conditions. Since change is the only certain thing in an organization due to it is ubiquitous nature, organizations should therefore be prepared to predict change and lay management structures to manage change. Rieley and Clarkson (2001) enumerate that organizational change follows organizational strategy and vice versa. Similarly Burnes (2004) agrees that organizational change and organizational strategy are complementary. The scholar expounds

that organizational strategy cannot be discerned from organizational change as they go hand in

hand. To steer organizational change, organizations need effective management of change.

Consequently, making ability and competency to manage change a critical skill among managers

in an organization (Senior, 2002).   Graetz (2000) conjectures that the ever evolving business

environment, which is caused by globalization, technological innovations, changing

demographic patterns and deregulations, is revolutionizing organization leadership making it

inclined towards organizational change management.

Despite cognizance being given to change management in enhancing organizational

performance in cotemporary set up, scholars maintain that failure rate of change initiatives

remain at all time high at 70 percent of all change implementation programs (Balogun & Hope-

Hailey, 2004). The real cause of this low success rate is yet to be empirically ascertained but

some scholars believe that, the poor show in change implementation initiatives is due to lack of a

workable structure on ways to initiate and manage change in an organization due to the

discrepancies that exist between theory and practical approaches (Burnes, 2004). Thus, change

management as a discipline has come under heated criticism. Doyle (2002) in critiquing failure

of existing theories and models of change management in supporting implementation of change

states that theoretical frameworks on change management are based on fundamentally flawed

assumptions. However, some scholars feel that the existing theoretical frameworks and models

have failed due to the robust scale, intensity and magnitude of the present day change. Carnall

(2003) in supporting this view opines that presently the business environment is being

characterized by sudden and radical change measures, rendering change management models and

frameworks ineffective. Another explanation posited by scholars on the inefficacy of change

management theories and models is that change comes in multidimensional forms and sizes

(Burnes, 2004). Though studies indicate that only less than 30% of change programs achieve

desired results due to fundamentally weak change management frameworks, Sirkin, Keenan and

Jackson (2005) blame the poor success rate on poor change strategies. The scholars argue

success rate of a change management framework is dictated by the accuracy of the strategy.

Different scholars hold different ways of classifying organizational change. According to

Dawson (1994) organizational change is mostly classified based on a) type of change or b) rate

of change. Burnes (2004) in his classification categorizes change into a) incremental and b)

transformational. Incremental change in an organization takes place when an organization

conducts piecemeal adjustments to its organizational system, structure ore processes.

Transformational changes, on the other hand, happen when an organization carries out overhaul

change programs in its organizational structure or system. Presently, organizations are inclined

towards incremental change as they continuously implement changes in their programs to realign

their strategies.

Kezar (2001) states that organizational change can be categorized using the following

domains; namely, a) degree of change, b) timing of change, c) scale of change, d) focus of

change, e) adaptive or generative change, f) intentionality change, which encompass planned and

unplanned change and lastly g) target of change. The degree of change can be categorized into

two sub-domains a) first order and b) second-order change (Kezar, 2001). First-order change in

an organization entails minor modification carried out on specifics of an organization, but

doesn't alter the organization's core systems. Second-order change can be described as

transformational since it radically realigns the organizational systems, processes, cultures and

values. Kezar (2001) reckons that second-order change is characterized by the following

features: a) it is multidimensional as it affects multiple aspects of an organization change, b)

multilevel as it impacts on multiple levels of an organization and lastly it is irrational and

sporadic since it is advanced by unknown logic.

Under the domain of timing of change, change can be categorized into the following sub-

domains a) evolutionary and b) revolutionary. Kezar (2001) observes that revolutionary change

is impulsive and sporadic similar to second order type of change. Evolutionary change, on the

other hand is gradual, tending to follow natural trajectory. Scholars, however, opine

organizational leaders are less likely to implement evolutionary change since it has a long

horizon, making it unresponsive to instant reflex to external environment. Likewise, scholars

argue that revolutionary change can damage an organization (Kezar, 2001). Todnem (2005)

categorizes change by scale. The scholar states that on the scale sub-domain, change can be

classified into a) fine-tuning or convergent change, b) incremental adjustment, c) modular

transformation, and d) corporate transformation (Todnem, 2005). Fine tuning involves constant

matching and aligning of the organization strategy, systems and structures. Incremental

adjustment entails adjustment, which are noticeable, on organizational tactics and management

procedures. Changes made at a given organizational level, which may be at divisional or

departmental echelon, is categorized as modular transformation. Since focus is on an

organization part, modular transformation can be radical or gradual. Some times modular

transformation is carried out on the whole organization, Todnem (2005) describes modular

transformation as corporate transformation as involves radical change on the organization's

processes and strategy.   Change, according to Todnem (2005) can be categorized based on the

origin of change. The scholar classifies change under this domain into: a) planned, b)

contingency or choice and c) emergent. Planned change is based on Lewin-three-step change

theory that postulates that change involves discarding old systems, processes and structure and

moving into a new order. Todnem (2005) asserts that planned change is an effective approach to

change. Nevertheless, scholars hold different views on the practicability of the planned change,

with some critiquing it over its weak assumptions that may not hold in a realistic world. One of

the suppositions of the planned approach to change is that conditions in an organization remain

constant, consequently, making it possible for organizations to pre-plan. Such assumption does

not hold since conditions in an organization are in constant evolutionary changes. While other

scholars and change practitioners criticize the approach on its diminutive and incremental

approach (Hudescu & Ilies, 2011).   Based on the weak assumptions and unrealistic approach,

Todnem (2005) explains planned approach to change is not suitable for implementing large scale

transformational changes in an organization. Hence, change management practitioners and

scholars developed emergent approach to change that addresses the weaknesses of planned

approach to change. The emergent approach to change is based on the premise that change is a

process. Unlike other approaches that view change as a final product of linear events. As a

process, therefore, emergent approach views change in an organization as multileveled events

that occur at different times, and over time transformational change engulfs the organization

(Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Burnes (2004) adds proponents of emergent approach to change

assert that change should be bottom up in approach and not top down. In the same light, Todnem

(2005) observes different people hold different perspectives on how emergent change occurs,

some argue that it should occur incrementally while others propose that change should occur

drastically when the need for it occurs. One of the controversies surrounding implementation of

emergent change in an organization is the differing and impractical sequence of steps that should

be followed in emergent approach to change. Burnes (2004) observes most of the steps as

recommended by proponents of emergent approach to change are cumbersome to follow, raising

the need for more realistic sequence of action. Among the most practical approach to emergent

change is Kotter's (1996) Eight-Stage Process for Successful Organizational Transformation

model (Hudescu & Ilies, 2011). However, some scholars argue over the categorization of

Kotter's model, with some postulating that it is analogous to Lewin's three stage model

(Kennedy, n.d). Beer and Nohria (2000) opine that change management can be categorized into

two theoretical frameworks: namely, Theory E and Theory O. Theory E framework asserts that

change is as a result of economic value while Theory O remarks that change is a product of

organizational capability. According to Beer and Nohria (2000), Theory E framework can be

deemed to be hard change initiatives. Theory E is the heavily used theoretical framework of

change characterized by downsizing, lay off and restructuring. This is done to enhance

shareholder's value. Theory O is construed as a soft strategy to change; as the theory is driven

by the aim of developing organizational culture through collective learning, both at individual

and organizational level. Beer and Nohria (2000) state that Theory O framework of

implementing change is effective in organizations with long term relationship standing with its

employees. At the end of it all the implementation of the theoretical framework endears

employees to the organization making it possible for the organization to achieve long term

outcome. Due to its long time horizon, scholars assert it is not the best approach to use in time

constrained change situations. Hudescu and Ilies (2011) note that the two change theories

underpin change initiatives in organizations.

   East (2011) explains that change in an organization is inevitable, however, its scale,

forces driving it and resultant effects vary greatly. East continues to state that change may be

managed in a proactive, reactive or strategic manner depending on the forces that the

organization is countering, which may be externally or internally influenced. Among the most

prevalent reasons for organizational changes are aligning business strategies to growth, trimming costs and benchmarking business operations to best operational model (McKinsey Global Survey, 2010). Moreover organizational change can also be caused by the constant changes in market structures and escalation in operating costs. Due to different reasons sparking change initiatives in organizations, scholars attempt to categorize change into different domains. Society for Human Resource Management (2007) categorizes organizational changes into five categories, namely (a) strategic change, (b) leadership change, (c) process change, (d) cultural change, and (e) cost cutting change.

Strategic change is caused by changes in functional units of an organization, which may be caused by changes in business structures. Leadership change is caused by redesign of the organization's leadership hierarchy, which may be caused by transition, death, illness or retirement. Process change is influenced by reorientation to improve business processes. Cost cutting is associated with disbandment of certain operations in an effort to contain costs. Lastly cultural change is influenced by modification of human relations, which may be between the management and general workers or employees and customers. Seel (2002) categorizes organizational change into the following four domains, which include structural, process, system and structural. The management uses various models and approaches to reorient operations in response to changes in different ways. Organizations should approach change in three different ways (Byrnes, 2010). In the first situation, an organization should adjust its fundamental operations. This should be followed by piecemeal introduction of new ideas and embracing them fully if they prove successful. The last situation is overhauling business operations and changing working patterns of employees.

2.3   Effective Change Models and Frameworks of Implementing Change

Kezar (2001) argues that though changes are implemented in an organization, they do not necessarily provide solutions to problems afflicting an organization. Hence, leaders need to comprehensively undertake a thorough evaluation of change proposals and discern poor elements and ideas in a change scenario (Kezar, 2001). Thus, leaders must figure out what need to be altered and how to implement the necessary changes. Kezar (2001) indicates that though organization leaders drawing from research and experience are able to identify areas that need change implementation, they fail to craft a plans to drive change to enable their organizations achieve desired goals.

Todnem (2005) asserts most scholars hold the view that there is no proven or standard implementation rule of implementing or managing change in an organization. Therefore, leaders or people spearheading change in an organization should use a strategy that augur well with their organization setup and minimize inefficient utilization of resources and risks. Hudescu and Ilies (2011) propose that in choosing change model, a leader should be able to differentiate between the different conceptualizations of change through thorough analysis of change. Understanding the different concepts of change, such as scale, timing, degree, first and second order, change implementers are able to comprehend the relevance of the needed change. Hudescu and Ilies (2011) exemplifies that an organization in analysis of change requirement identifies a need to establish a change management unit within the organization, and needs to approach change using first order change strategy since the transformation is evolutionary. Change management units within an organization have lasting effects on the operations of an organization, and therefore the need to use planned approach, which has predictable outcomes and resources (Hudescu & Ilies, 2011). Another example given by Hudescu and Ilies (2011), an organization introducing change

through adapting new technology to match industry requirements ought to see this change as adaptive and first order (Hudescu & Ilies, 2011). According to Hudescu and Ilies (2011) classification of change is indispensable in successful implementation of change since it helps an organization evaluate cost, risks and benefits inherent in implementing the conceptualized need. Moreover, classification of change helps an organization compare industry benchmarks on the implementation of change through evaluating and analyzing how other organizations in the industry implemented the change, why they failed in implementation of the change and the benefits and risks that have faced those organizations since they implemented the changes. Organizations in their endeavors to survive the volatile business environment engage in cost cutting measures, diversifying and expanding market base and diversifying their products in their efforts to serve their customer needs should adopt emergent revolutionary change (Hudescu & Ilies, 2011). Since such measures alter an organization's core structure. Beer and Nohria (2001) opine that the Beer and Nohria model, which propose two theoretical frameworks in implementation of change, which include Theory E and Theory O, is the best change models for change implementation in organizations implementing downsizing measures, cost cutting measures and other fundamental organization change that alter and redefine an organization core structure.

Beer and Nohria (2001) posit that despite contradictory propositions of the two models, Theory E and Theory O, organization personnel charged with implementing cost cutting measures, which is change geared towards altering the organization core structure should commence with change strategies to alter context of an organization. The scholars propose economic value theory E approach. Once the organization context has been altered, Beer and Nohria (2001) propose that the leaders or change implementers should then implement

organizational capability theory O, which is geared towards changing organization's attitude. The scholars observe that this sequential approach should not be changed because implementation of theory E, which is aligned with changing organization context, is characterized by taking tough actions that lead to loss of trust. However, Beer and Nohria (2001) observe that the use of this sequential approach of first changing the organization context and then organization attitude is time consuming and intensive approach to change, in exchange Beer and Nohria (2001) propose an integrated approach that ensures effective creation of goals associated with organization economic value and development of organizational capacity. Scholars unanimously agree that an organization implementing change should observe the following tenets to ensure successful implementation of change initiatives in an organization. Among the most common tenets found in change management literature include: a) conformity to organizational goals and objectives; b) employee participation and inclusion in change implementation process; c) customer and stakeholder input; c) conducting risk analysis and cost benefit analysis to monitor the progress of change process, and d) effective communicating the change process. Sirkin et al. (2005) assert that different organization leaders and business executives have differing opinions on the factors that facilitate successful implementation of change programs. Most of the organizations that have been unsuccessful in implement change initiatives fail due to overemphasis they place on the soft side of change, which include employee motivation, leadership style, and corporate and organization culture, and undermining the critical role of hard elements of change (Sirkin et al., 2005). Hudescu and Ilies (2011) report that in a study conducted on 225 companies to assess the reasons for organization failure in implementation of change found that there exists causational relationship between outcome of change initiative, which maybe success or failure, and the following parameters: a) performance

integrity, b) capacity and competency of team members, c) commitment of organization leaders

and employees implementing change, and d) project reviews. Hudescu and Ilies (2011), note

that in the report these critical factors to implementation of change were termed as DICE factors

since they contributed to the outcome of a project. One of the recommendations of the research

that was carried out on the 225 entities was that conducting DICE evaluation was critical in

enhancing change effectiveness by helping organizations focus on critical factors and

successfully manage a large collection of projects.

2.4   Resistance to Change

The success of change management is more often associated with achieving business

goals; however, change management success should also include optimal human capital

adjustment to the new environment. In this case, successful change means that employees are

able to work harmoniously and productively in changed work environment. One of the factors

that undermine success in change initiatives is lack of understanding by employees on changes,

resulting in lack of employees' participation in implementation of desired changes. Ash (2009)

advises change managers to enhance communication in implementation of changes. Change

managers should outline the reasons for implementing change, the processes or initiatives to be

taken and the consequences for non compliance. Ash (2009) foresees that the use of effective

communication planning strategy can be used to overcome resistance. Andrews, Cameron and

Harris (2008) observe that change management can be successfully implemented if change

managers do the following:

i.   Documenting the objectives to be realized through successful implementation of changes.

ii.   Designing structures, processes and procedures to be used by the stakeholders in

implementing changes.

iii.   Enhancing communication channels to train and encourage employees to participate in

implementing the desired changes.

iv.   Aligning the organization's structure to support change.

Change management scholars agree that managers who fail to impose changes on

employees are likely to face resistance (Harris, 2008)). Kotter (1998) highlights that resistance

to change is caused by the employees unwillingness to modify behaviors and structures.

Resistance is consequently manifested in the form of denial, idealization and rationalization.

Hiatt and Creasey (2003) observe that change management is affected by the two distinct

spectrums that managers and employees perceive change management. The two views are

organizational change management and individual change management. The organizational

change management is the perspective that business executives approach change that is

concerned with changing the organization's structures to accommodate changes in business

strategies (Hiatt & Creasy, 2003). To achieve this end, organizational change management

attempt to reorient business value systems, enhance communication and integrate training

program. Individual change management is the approach that employees perceive change.

Unlike top executive, employees are concerned with implementation of these changes;

consequently, necessitating non-management employees to possess required tools and

procedures to implement organizational changes. Thus, change management incorporates

different fields such as business, psychology, management and engineering.

2.5   Change Management in Power Utility Companies

Power utility companies in Canada are facing multiple challenges due to the evolving

nature of the business. For instance, Reinders (2010) reports that BC Hydro, which is the third

largest power utility company in Canada is witnessing immense changes and business

uncertainty, affecting both its business operations and employees. As a result, the power utility company has devised various approaches to support both pre-change and post-change phases in an organization. Reinders (2010) asserts the power utility in its endeavor to successfully implement and manage change in order to survive the volatile Canadian energy market, devised a flexible and scalable change management framework that highlights the tools necessary for implementation of change initiatives in the organization. Prokesch (2008) observes that successful implementation of change supported by training has enabled GE Power Generation Company to a) expand its market base to emerging economies, b) developed new products, and c) diversified its business. This shows that effective change management is fundamental to organizational success.

Reinders (2010) in enumerating key evolving changes affecting BC Hydro, which are also synonymous with the other energy utility companies in Canada states that the energy utility business environment is being characterized by complexity in change. Magnitude and scale of change been implemented at BC Hydro is ever increasing due to the broad and ever evolving mandate of the company. In essence, change at the energy utility company is shifting from being incremental and concentrated on a given business process, it is becoming transformational and wide in nature engulfing the entire power company. Therefore, calling for an optimized change approach to manage the transformational and company wide changes (Reinders, 2010).

3   Research Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The research methodology section outlines the steps that will be taken to conduct the

research study. It is a critical section as it aids the researcher to focus on the research process of

data collection, data analysis in order to achieve the research aims of the study. The research

methodology in this research proposal will cover the research design, the research strategy, the

population of study, sampling methods used in the study, data collection and analysis, ethical and

legal considerations and limitations and de-limitations of the research study. In this case, it is the

methods to be used to collect data on change management as a tool to gain competitive edge in

the global market place, with the research focus been on power utility firms.

3.2   Research Design and Methods

Research design is a framework that a researcher follows to guide him/her in collecting,

analyzing and drawing conclusion from the analyzed data (Kothari, 2008). Similar observations

are made by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) who emphasize that research design details

actions or plans to be taken by the researcher in collecting, analyzing and drawing conclusions in

order to explain the research questions. Walsh and Wigens (2003) categorize research designs

into two classes depending on time frame of the research study and number of contacts with the

research participants. a) Cross-section study, b) before-and-after study, and c) longitudinal study

are research designs based on number of contacts with research participants (Walsh & Wigens,

2003). Based on the time period of research investigation, Walsh and Wigens (2003) describe

research design into a) retrospective study, b) prospective study and c) retrospective-prospective

study. This research study will utilize two research designs; namely, cross-section and

retrospective study to establish whether organizations can use change management as a tool to

gain competitive edge in the global market place. According to Walsh and Wigens (2003) cross

section studies involve collection of data on a one time off period. This is congruent with this

research since collection of data on change management model and resistance to change will be

conducted on a single period. The research will be retrospective study because it will be based

on change implementation initiatives which were done in the past and experiences of

participants, (the participants are 7 middle level managers in the following power utility firms in

Canada: a) ATCO Electric, b) Maritime Electric, c) ENMAX, d) Great Lakes Power, e) Hydro

One, f) Hydro Quebec, and g) Manitoba Hydro), will be based in past as Walsh and Wigens

(2003) highlights retrospective studies study the past experiences of the research participants.

Research process involve two methods; namely, qualitative and quantitative methods

(Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001). Qualitative research seeks to understand the feeling and

attitudes of the research subject while quantitative research entails the use of statistical

techniques to extract information from measurable variables (Kothari, 2008). The study will

utilize qualitative research method, as Kothari (2008) suggests that qualitative research method is

the best research method to be used in exploring feelings and attitude of the research participants

towards the phenomenon being studied. Moreover the research will use phenomenology

approach to investigate feelings and attitudes of the research participants; consequently, establish

whether organizations can use change management as a tool to gain competitive edge in the

global market place. Studies done using phenomenological qualitative approach sought to

understand the lived experiences of research participants (Finlay, 2009; Nitta, Holley & Wrobel,

2010; Aspers, 2009). The method will be appropriate in this research study since the aim is to

establish whether organizations can use change management as a tool to gain competitive edge in

the global market place using the experiences of the 7 middle level managers of the seven power

Canadian utility firms.

Phenomenology research design is used to describe human lived experiences (Creswell,

1998). Creswell adds that the number of research participants in a phenomenology research

should be between 5 and 25 participants to minimize saturation. Saturation is whereby

increasing the number of research participants in a study does not change the themes established.

Saturation happens in a qualitative study since it is concerned with establishing themes and

patterns. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) posit that in a qualitative study, six research

participants are sufficient to establish themes and patterns of the research.

3.3   Research Strategy

Research strategy refers to general approaches used in achieving the goals of a research

study. Creswell (2009) asserts that there are various types of research strategies deployed by a

researcher in conducting a research study; namely, a) descriptive research strategy, b)

exploratory research strategy c) diagnostic research strategy, d) non-experimental strategy, e)

correlation strategy, f) experimental strategy, and g) quasi-experimental strategy. Based on the

research questions, aims and objectives of the research, the study will utilize three strategies;

namely, a) non-experimental research strategy, b) descriptive research strategy and c) diagnostic

research strategy. Non-experimental research strategy will be used because there is no

manipulation of factors in the study. Descriptive research strategy will be used to describe a) the

lived experiences of employees, middle level managers, on how the seven power utility

companies; namely, a) ATCO Electric, b) Maritime Electric, c) ENMAX, d) Great Lakes Power,

e) Hydro One, f) Hydro Quebec and g) Manitoba Hydro), overcome resistance to change; b)

describe the lived experiences of employees, middle level managers, on what change

management styles and models the seven power utility companies use to achieve competitive

advantage and c) describe the internal and external forces specific to the power utility companies

in Canada. Diagnostic research strategy will be used to establish causation of change

management styles and initiatives on improving business performance in order to gain

competitive advantage in the energy market. Gravetter and Forzano (2011) point out that

descriptive research strategy does not establish relationships between variables but gives an in-

depth description of the variable under investigation. Kothari (2008) asserts that diagnostic

research is concerned with establishing association between variables. Descriptive research and

non-experimental research strategy utilizes three research methods; namely, a) observational, b)

survey, and c) case study. To facilitate deployment of the outlined three research strategies;

namely, non-experimental research strategy, b) descriptive research strategy and c) diagnostic

research strategy, case study, observation and survey methods will be used in the study will be

used to gather information on the use of change management models and styles as tools by

power utility companies in Canada to gain competitive advantage in the volatile global energy

market.

3.4   Population

Population in a research refers to all subjects understudy (Castillo, 2009). In this case,

population refer to all middle level managers of the seven power utility firms. The sample units

will be chosen from the entire population to achieve the research ends of the research study. 7

middle level managers, who in this case is one middle level manager from each power utility

firm, will constitute the sample to establish whether power utility companies can use change

management as a tool to gain competitive advantage in the volatile global energy market. The

sample of 7 middle level managers will be chosen to guard against saturation. Mason (2010)

points out that since in a qualitative research the researcher is interested with meanings the sample size should be small. Diamond, Luke and Uttal (2009) assert that sample sizes of a qualitative study should be small, mostly between 6 to 8 participants due to the cumbersomeness of data in qualitative studies.

3.5 Sampling Technique

A sample is a subset of a population with characteristics that reflect the entire population (Francis, 1998). Since it is cumbersome to involve all the units in a population to participate in a research study, researchers use a small sample to deduce characteristics of the entire population. The sample should be a representation of the entire population to render the research findings validity and objectivity. Researchers use sampling techniques to draw sampling units from the population. There are two types of sampling techniques, which include random sampling and non-random sampling. In random sampling every unit in a population has equal chances of participating in the research study since choosing of samples is random. Whereas in non-random sampling, the researcher chooses sampling units in non random way based on his personal choice.

Selection of research participants will be through convenient sampling. Convenient sampling is a technique used in market and social research to select a sample from a large population in a nonrandom manner. The researcher, therefore, will administer research instruments to research participants who are convenient to him to save time, money and speed up the research process. This method is simple, cheap and less time consuming; however, it suffers from biasness introduced by researcher's personal idiosyncrasies. The researcher will mitigate this setback by critically analyzing and evaluating data obtained.

3.6   Data Collection Methods and Instrumentation

Data collection and analysis section describes procedures that the researcher will use in gathering and analyzing data from research participants (Salkind, 2010). There are two data collection methods that researchers use in collecting data; namely, a) primary data collection method, and b) secondary data collection method. In this study, data collection will be through both primary and secondary methods. Primary data will be obtained through observation and questionnaires. Secondary data will be obtained from journals, books, magazines.

The research will use both primary and secondary methods of data collections. Primary data will be obtained through questionnaires. Questionnaires to be administered on the 7 middle level managers of the seven power utility firms to establish change implementation initiatives in the seven power utility firms. Questionnaires to be used will utilize both open ended and closed ended questions. Open ended questions will help the researcher capture the feelings and opinions of research participants.

The researcher will also obtain data by following and observing changes in the seven power utility firms and the resultant effects on their operations due to change management. Secondary data will be obtained from business books, journals, magazines, previous case studies, companies' websites and articles with relevant information on change management in power utility firms.

3.7   Data Analysis

Data analysis describes the procedures the researcher will use to draw inference from responses of the respondents (Hair et al., 2011). In this research, qualitative approach will be employed analyzing data from the respondents. Qualitative data analysis methods to be used

will include: a) descriptions, b) explanations, c) arguments, and d) matching of themes and congruence.

3.8   Ethics and Legal Considerations

Ethics in research are observed to ensure that the researcher throughout the research does not engage in harmful activities. According to Mertens and Ginsberg (2009) ethical research is conducted in a manner that ensures utmost objectivity, integrity, confidentiality, intellectual property, competencies and human subject protections are upheld. Researcher conducted according to ethical code of research ensures that results are credible and valid.

The researcher will submit the draft manuscript, interviewer's guide and questionnaire to the ethics committee before beginning the data collection phase to ascertain that they meet the required ethics standards. The researcher will only obtain information from a respondent once he/she consents to be part of the research. His identity and information obtained will be treated with high levels of secrecy and confidentiality, and will not be divulged to any party or be used for any other purpose apart for this research. Moreover, a research participant can voluntarily withdraw at any point of the research. This will ensure that the information is openly obtained and used solely for the purpose of this research.

3.9   Limitations and De-limitations of the Study

The use of questionnaire as the main data collection tool may pose challenges and eventually affect validity of the research outcome. The closed questions in the questionnaire will limit respondents in expressing their feeling, resulting to inconclusive finding. However, this limitation has been de-limited by the researcher as the questionnaire has been designed in a manner that objectively answers the research questions of the study. Another challenge that may affect the research is non responses from research participate. To mitigate this limitation, the

questionnaires will have few and comprehensive questions in order to save time and as a means

of encouraging increased respondent participation.

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	1 week	1.5 week	1 week	3 week	3 week	1 week	1 week
Description and Project	▓▓						
Soliciting Literature review		▓▓					
Data Collection from secondary sources.			▓▓				
Collect, review, and compile data.				▓▓			
Data Collection and analysis.					▓▓		
Drafting of the Research Report.						▓▓	
Proof Reading and Submission							▓▓

Appendix 1

This is a questionnaire to be administered on middle level managers of the seven

Canadian power utility firms, namely, ATCO Electric, Maritime Electric, ENMAX, Great Lakes

Power, Hydro One, Hydro Quebec and Manitoba Hydro. Please indicate the correct option as

honestly and as correctly as possible by putting a tick on one of the options. For questions that

require your own opinion, please fill blanks (….). You are requested to respond to all items.

Section I

1. Please indicate the power utility company you work for

   (a) ATCO Electric [ ]

   (b) Maritime Electric [ ]

   (c) ENMAX [ ]

   (d) Great Lakes Power [ ]

   (e) Hydro One [ ]

   (f) Hydro Quebec [ ]

   (g) Manitoba Hydro [ ]

2. Please indicate for how long have you been in the power utility firm?

   (a) Less than One year [ ]

   (b) 1-5 years [ ]

   (b) 6-10 years [ ]

   (c) 11-15 years [ ]

   (d) Over 16 years [   ]

Section II

3. From your experiences, does the power utility you indicated in 1 above implement

    change initiatives?

    (a) Yes [   ]

    (b) No [   ].

4. From your experiences, does the power utility firm have a change management

    department/unit?

    (a) Yes [ ]

    (b) No [ ]

5. From your experiences, please indicate the type of change approach used by the power

    utility company?

    (a) Planned [ ]

    (b) Emergent [ ]

    (c) Contingency [ ]

    (d) Choice [ ]

6. From your experiences, what are the forces that lead to change implementation?

    (a) External Forces

    ………………………………………………………………………………........

    ……………………………………………………………………………………….

    ……………………………………………………………………………………….

    ……………………………………………………………………………………….

    (b) Internal Forces

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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…………………………………………………………………………………………………..…

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

7. From your experiences, do the change initiatives help the power utility firm overcome the

    forces?

    Yes [   ]

    No [   ]

8. From your experiences, describe the resistance to change that the power utility firm faces

    in implementing change?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. From your experiences, describe how the power utility firm overcomes the resistance to

    change?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. From your experiences, describe the implementation of change initiatives at the power

    utility firm

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11. From your experiences, describe the theoretical change management models used at the

power utility firm?

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10. From your experiences, do you think that the change management model is effective?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ].

Please give reasons for your answer:

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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11 From your experiences, do you think the approach taken by the power utility in

implementing change has affected its competitiveness?

(a) Yes [   ]

(b) No [   ].

Please give reasons

………

………

………

………

…………………………

12. From your experiences, are you satisfied with the change management framework being

utilized by the power utility firm?

   (a) Yes [ ]

   (b) No [   ]

13. If, no, describe based on your experiences, the alternative framework that the power

utility company can use to achieve competitiveness?

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Thank You for Your Participation