Vehicles for change

Richard Scroggins[1]

[1] Walden University

Abstract

Projects, especially IT projects, can be very powerful vehicles for change. They can bring change to an individual, an organization, or to an entire community. Projects can be vehicles for desired changes, or required projects can bring changes that must be adapted to. Project management can be thought of as change management from the perspective that a project is simply a series of changes that combine to make the whole. From this perspective, part of the basis of project management theories are existing change management theories. A theory of change refers to the processes by which changes come about. Within an organization, changes can be considered as organizational change. Therefore, project management at that level is organizational change management. In fact and practice it is difficult to completely separate organizational change management from project management. Andrews, Cameron, and Harris (2008) write, ?"The skills and knowledge which managers found most useful were those that enabled them to "make sense" of the organizational change?" (p. 300).

Index terms—

1 Introduction

rojects, especially IT projects, can be very powerful vehicles for change. They can bring change to an individual, an organization, or to an entire community. Projects can be vehicles for desired changes, or required projects can bring changes that must be adapted to. Project management can be thought of as change management from the perspective that a project is simply a series of changes that combine to make the whole. From this perspective, part of the basis of project management theories are existing change management theories. A theory of change refers to the processes by which changes come about. Within an organization, changes can be considered as organizational change. Therefore, project management at that level is organizational change management. In fact and practice it is difficult to completely separate organizational change management from project management. Andrews, Cameron, and Harris (2008) write, "The skills and knowledge which managers found most useful were those that enabled them to "make sense" of the organizational change" (p. 300). Social aspects of projects and the changes that they affect are also a part of the overall view of project management. Social factors drive projects and technology adoption, and those projects in turn affect society on some scale. The Diffusion of innovations theory is a technology acceptance theory, being first proposed by Rogers (1962), and the Diffusion of innovations theory evaluates how the deployment of new technology relates to social systems. "Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" ??Rogers, 1962, p. 5). The social system drives the spread of the technology and the technology drives the evolution of the social system.

2 II.

3 Managing Change

What is change? Webster's dictionary defines change as, "to make a shift from one to another." ("Change", 2016). Change, therefore is a shifting from one state to another and this shifting involves a process. What

project managers and team members do is initiate change and manage to through this shifting process. This is why project management can be thought of as change management. Change management can include directing the processes and people that are effecting the shifting process or managing the expectations, acceptance, or understanding of the people within an organization that is changing. The project is the vehicle for change in the sense that the project contains or should contain all of the elements needed to properly complete the needed change, which may be a negative or positive change. However, being a vehicle for change also means that a project can be undertaken simply be the free will of an organization to be a purely positive endeavor that brings social benefits beyond the organization. The later idea is a more accurate way to envision the social construct of using something like a project as a vehicle for change. While change, especially social change is an integral part of modern life in a highly political and interconnected world, even change at the organizational level can have an impact on people's lives.

4   III.

5   Managing the Organization

How a project is managed and sold largely determines the perceptions of those involved or impacted by organizational change. Vakola (2014) writes, "The readiness level may vary on the basis of what employees perceive as the balance between costs and benefits of maintaining a behavior and the costs and benefits of change." (p. 195).Every person within an organization will be effected is some manner by organizational change, and will have some level of readiness to the change. Those closer to the change process or who may be impacted more by the change will likely also have a perception of the impact of the organizational change. These perception need to managed as part of the change management process as well as the actual impacts to people within the organization. Managing the attitudes, acceptance, and expectations of the stakeholders within an organization are as much a part of a project as are the functional steps that make up the project. The project team must provide support for organizational members to digest and accept change. For a project to be successful and meet all of the needs of an organization, the human elements cannot be ignored and to truly use a project as a vehicle for change a public relations element is needed. It could be considered as a wise choice to have someone from an organization's public relations department on the project team to champion the organizational change, relate it to the people, and provide counsel before and after the change. (Exploring the role of public relations in organizational change, 1994).1 Year 2017 ( ) H IV.

6   Managing Communication

In order for a project to connect with an organization's members, they must understand the impact of the change and see the benefit to themselves and the organization. One method to control the opinions, perceptions, and acceptance of the people regarding a project is through the use of public relations and managed communication. On the success of a project phase, Uta-Micaelaand Sriramesh (2004)write, "This was only possible because of the integration of the communication department right from the start of the strategy process. The management recognized that an integrated communication approach to the corporate identity process coupled with intensive public relations is a decisive factor in managing change successfully." (p.   372).Managing the relationship between the project team and the public, what is usually considered public relations, is in reality managing the communications related to the project. Managing these communications could be related to many elements of the project. One area for instance might be training. Negative perceptions about the project or change might be created when people are afraid that they will not have the knowledge to use a particular system after the changes are made.

Early and informative communications about the changes to that system, details about the training that will be given, and a positive spin could eliminate these negative perceptions before they are able to for or take hold. This concept is applicable to many types of projects or scenarios. Aubert, Hooper, and Schnepel(2013) write, "Communication quality is repeatedly listed among the top success factors to consider when implementing an ERP system." (p. 64).

V.

7   Managing the Outcome

Whether it is described as change management or project management, the goal is the same, to manage the outcome. Regardless of the title that it is given, both of these ideas are related to managing the outcome. Managing the outcome means using all of the tools available and the elements that relate to project management to set a goal and achieve it. Setting yourself up for success in a project is like stacking the deck in your favor. This starts by understanding the change and the organization undergoing it. It includes understanding the needs of the organizations stakeholders through collecting data from them. It means finding the right people for the project team and then setting realistic goal and keeping the project of track to meet those goals. And it also means managing the scope of the project and protecting the organization from themselves and their own management in terms of unrealistic goals or timelines. Much of this falls on the shoulders of the project manager and as such the choice of project manager can make or break a project, so it is an important role. Anantatmula (2010) writes,

"In spite of advances in the project management profession, research studies have shown that many projects fail, underlining the importance of the project manager's role as manager. Specifically, the manager's leadership role is of great importance in motivating people and creating an effective working environment in order for the project team to meet greater challenges in today's global economy." (p. 13). While the specific traits of what makes a good and successful project manager might be difficult to separate as valid independent variable related to project success, the leadership role of the project manager is important to success factors related to project performance. Project success and the success of the project manager do vary, for instance you can perfectly manage a project and not meet every goal because of the technology and variations between each organization. While project success and project management success are not the same thing, success in project management or a successful project manager contributes to project success. Regardless of the elements of what makes a project successful, managing the outcome requires the full understanding and attention to all or them.

8 VI.

9 Summary

There are many factors that make a projects successful and many factors that can make a project a vehicle for change. It is the direction that the project is given, the quality of the management, and the intent of the organization that determine the value and success of each project. Change in any form can be positive or negative, it can be constructive or destructive, it can be outward facing or inward facing, and it can be reluctant or purposefully undertaken. It is when change is purposefully undertaken with the goal to have a positive and constructive outcome that the world moves forward and progress is made. Often real progress is made slowly and takes many working together to accomplish. However, when people do work together in a common goal and through teamwork, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished by the human mind, spirit, and will. Linnartz2008 writes, "Teamwork includes cooperation, collaboration and coordination plus it greatly increases interactions of support and a sense of belonging and pride. Working as a team provides maximum opportunity for contributions to be made by individuals that benefit the team and organization. It also creates a powerful dynamic of synergy of sharing, creating and productivity." (p. 1). Managing outcomes through teamwork is an important element in ensuring a successful project and in using a project to drive change.

10 Global Journal of Computer Science and Technology

129 [Aubert et al. ()] , B Aubert , V Hooper , A Schnepel . 2013.

130 [Andrews et al. ()] 'All change? managers' experience of organizational change in theory and practice'.
131 J Andrews , H Cameron , M Harris . 10.1108/09534810810874796. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/
132 09534810810874796 *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 2008. 21 (3) p. .

133 [Rogers ()] *Diffusion of Innovations*, E M Rogers . 1962. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

134 [Exploring the role of public relations in organizational change The Public Relations Journal ()] 'Exploring the
135 role of public relations in organizational change'. http://search.proquest.com/docview/195921162
136 *The Public Relations Journal* 1994. 50 (8) .

137 [Linnartz (2008)] B Linnartz . http://search.proquest.com/docview/251673651 *MANAGEMENT
138 CORNER: TOOLS FOR WORKING AS A TEAM. The Taos News*, 2008. Mar 06.

139 [Merriam-Webster. (2016)] 'Merriam-Webster Online'. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/
140 change *Change* Merriam-Webster. (ed.) June 8, 2016. (Def. 2)

141 [Anantatmula ()] 'Project manager leadership role in improving project performance'. V S Anantatmula .
142 http://search.proquest.com/docview/734620101 *Engineering Management Journal* 2010. 22 (1)
143 p. .

144 [Uta-Micaela and Sriramesh ()] 'Public relations and change management: The case of a multinational com-
145 pany'. D Uta-Micaela , K Sriramesh . http://search.proquest.com/docview/232917086 *Journal of
146 Communication Management* 2004. 8 (4) p. .

147 [Revisiting the role of communication quality in ERP project success American Journal of Business]
148 'Revisiting the role of communication quality in ERP project success'. 10.1108/19355181311314770.
149 http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/19355181311314770 *American Journal of Business* 28 (1) p. .

150 [Vakola ()] 'What's in there for me? individual readiness to change and the perceived impact of organizational
151 change'. M Vakola . 10.1108/LODJ-05-2012-0064. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-05-2012-0064
152 *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 2014. 35 (3) p. .