

**Book review**

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## CULTURAL CHANGE AND LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATION: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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Modern organizations often face the need to change their long-established patterns of behavior and operations, whether due to internal problems, challenges from the environment, or for other relevant reasons. In an effort to successfully implement strategic change, leaders primarily try to change organizational culture in various ways.

The monograph entitled: *Cultural Change and Leadership in Organizations: A Practical Guide to Successful Organizational Change*, written by Jaap J. Boonstra (professor at the ESADE Business School in Barcelona and the University of Amsterdam), linking theoretical conceptualization and numerous practical examples, provides relevant insights into the interrelations of cultural change and leadership in an organization, noting that the change of organizational culture is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of strategic change. The purpose of the book is to give

a comprehensive explanation of the cultural change process, by identifying the key success factors and providing practical guidance and advice to those initiating and leading change. It is targeted towards the leaders who are trying to contribute to sustainable change in organizations, employees, with the aim of understanding and the acceptance of organizational changes, students, as well as the scientific and professional community, interested in the issues exposed.

The book is divided into five parts. Each part comprises the introductory considerations, which indicate the essence and structure of the work, as well as the most important conclusions. Each part consists of several chapters. The integral elements of all the chapters are the sections, which present the examples of companies considered to be successful in implementing strategic and cultural changes.

The first part, entitled: *Cultural Change in Organizations* (pp. 9-56), encompasses three chapters. First, an overview of different perspectives on organizational

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cultures is presented. Also, there is an explanation of the developments in thinking about organizational cultures over the past fifty years. The author suggests that change in organizational culture does not represent a planned or programmed change in an organization's behavior, but is aimed at changing the identity of the organization, the realization of new ideas and creating value for customers. The second chapter presents the main reasons for strategic and cultural change, such as overcoming crisis situations, strengthening the legitimate position, international expansion, qualifying for the future, reinventing business propositions in order to create value for stakeholders, appreciating and valuing variety, breakthrough innovation and maximizing customer value. The third chapter contains the concluding observations regarding change in organizational culture.

Since there is no „one best way“ to lead change in any organization, the second part, entitled: *Strategies for Cultural Change* (pp. 57-114), aims to assist in selecting the right strategy for cultural change. It elaborates the basic principles and factors of successful approaches to change, where each of the six chapters is dedicated to one basic principle, and each section describes one of the factors of cultural change. The first chapter explains the internal and external factors affecting the generation of energy for change. Although these factors may contribute to the review of the existing situation, they do not always lead to change. Therefore, in the second chapter, the prerequisites for formulating a clear and challenging vision, which provide guidance to take a concrete action, are considered. The subject of the analysis in the third chapter is the process of creating a commitment of the leader to cultural change through posturing, a reduction in the distance between the management and employees, building the leading coalition and organizing involvement. As one of the key reasons for cultural changes is the creation of customer value, the next section is dedicated to the principle of focusing on clients. Thereafter, in the fifth chapter, the author explores the combination of the approaches to changes, including upwards initiatives, based on creating space for renovating and downwards initiatives, referring to issuing orders. In the sixth chapter, a special emphasis is put on the

importance of time, space and the rhythm in dealing with change, while the last chapter provides the conclusions regarding this part.

Due to the importance of the concept of leadership and particular leadership styles for successful cultural change, the third part, entitled: *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (pp. 115-176) analyzes the interdependence of these concepts. This part consists of six chapters, each of which is dedicated to one of the leadership styles that have positive implications for the process of cultural change. The subjects of the research in this part are the basic values and the leadership activities contributing to the successful management of cultural change. It is emphasized that the leaders of change are not always managers in high hierarchical positions, but also employees showing an initiative, regardless of the formal position. Special attention was paid to the essence of the leadership process in cultural change, and the conclusion is that the successful leaders of cultural change dominantly apply the transformational style and inspire other members to actively participate in the change process.

*Interventions for Cultural Change* (pp. 177-277) is the title of the fourth part. It thoroughly investigates a set of numerous interventions, i.e. the instruments and the activities aimed at fostering and maintaining culture change. The elaborated groups of interventions are embedded in the selected approaches to change. They do not represent the universal patterns of behavior, which can be used in every situation, but the nature of change, the perspective and the organizational context influence the selection of possible interventions.

The last part of the book is entitled: *Successful Cultural Change in Organizations* (pp. 279-307) and consists of two chapters. In the first chapter, the author approaches the problem in an original way, by posing the relevant questions about the reasons, the objectives, the content, the methods of the implementation and the agents of cultural change, and then defines the answers to these questions within each one of the eight initially analyzed drivers of changes, which also imply trajectories for change. The second and final chapter of the book contains a brief review of the previous parts, where the most important conclusions on the interrelationship of leadership and cultural change

are derived. At the same time, critical success factors in changing organizational culture are identified and highlighted in order to serve as guidelines for the leaders engaged in this process.

In addition to the impressive scientific bibliography, Jaap J. Boonstra has a wealth of practical knowledge, since he is involved in strategic change processes, as a consultant in international organizations such as the KLM, Bayer, Ahold and Arcadis. Therefore, in this monograph, the author finds a unique way to connect the theoretical basis with a number of empirical examples from successful organizations,

thus providing an inspiration and an instruction for the leaders of cultural change. However, given the importance of a national culture for the creation of organizational culture, and consequently for the attitude of leaders and employees towards its change, it would be useful to devote a special part to the relationship between national and organizational culture. In this way, it would be possible to perceive the eligibility for the application of different strategies and interventions in different national frameworks, as well as to carry out specific recommendations for leaders from different parts of the world.

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