

**Leading and Managing Change in Organizations:
Focus, Priorities, and Tools of OD Practitioners, Leaders and Managers**

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Abstract

The Assumption University Organization Development Institute (ABAC ODI) recently launched a new service called the OD Index which aims at “providing indicators and information; in-depth & practical insights; that shape and impact leaders and managers in their strategic decisions and directions.” This study is an initial attempt to start-up the service through an online survey using Survey monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). Forty six change leaders, managers, and OD practitioners participated in this survey conducted from January 31-Feb 15, 2014. The data shows that the current organizational issues of change leaders and managers are leadership, culture, and external and market environment. Top priorities include people dynamics, leadership, and business processes. An array of tools and approaches are utilized and respondents further design their own tools and approaches based on the needs and nature of the organizations. The survey also reveals that internal and external consultants play a significant role in the choice of tools and approaches used for change management. Top management leads and mid-level level management implements change. Insights as gleaned from the data are offered by the study.

Keywords: *change management, OD tools and approaches, organizational issues*

Introduction

The age of information has made data a valuable resource in the hands of decision makers. Tracking and driving change requires that the right data is utilized in decision making process. Leaders of organizations rely on valid, reliable and relevant data to power their change decisions. As Collins (2001) recommended “all good to great companies began the process of finding a path to greatness by confronting the brutal facts of the current reality.

Oracle which handles the Big Data cites the growing volume of the need and use of data in all areas of strategic decision making, such as: when big data is distilled and analyzed in combination with traditional enterprise data, enterprises can develop a more thorough and insightful understanding of their business, which can lead to enhanced productivity, a stronger competitive position and greater innovation – all of which can have a significant impact on the bottom line. For example, in the delivery of healthcare services, management of chronic or long-term conditions is expensive. Use of in-home monitoring devices to measure vital signs, and monitor progress is just one way that

sensor data can be used to improve patient health and reduce both office visits and hospital admittance. Manufacturing companies deploy sensors in their products to return a stream of telemetry. In the automotive industry, systems such as General Motors' OnStar® or Renault's R-Link®, deliver communications, security and navigation services. Perhaps more importantly, this telemetry also reveals usage patterns, failure rates and other opportunities for product improvement that can reduce development and assembly costs. The proliferation of smart phones and other GPS devices offers advertisers an opportunity to target consumers when they are in close proximity to a store, a coffee shop or a restaurant. This opens up new revenue for service providers and offers many businesses a chance to target new customers. Retailers usually know who buys their products. Use of social media and web log files from their ecommerce sites can help them understand who didn't buy and why they chose not to, information not available to them today. This can enable much more effective micro customer segmentation and targeted marketing campaigns, as well as improve supply chain efficiencies through more accurate demand planning. Finally, social media sites like Facebook and LinkedIn simply wouldn't exist without big data. Their business model requires a personalized experience on the web, which can only be delivered by capturing and using all the available data about a user or member. (<http://www.oracle.com/us/products/database/big-data-for-enterprise-519135.pdf>)

This study on a survey data serves as an initial approach to launch the OD Index and serves as a report of the summary of the responses of experts from 22 countries engaged in change leadership, management, and OD practice.

The research objectives and research questions are the following:

Research Objectives

1. To determine the priorities of change leaders and managers from various contexts.
2. To determine the concerns or issues which need to be addressed as important and urgent in 2014.
3. To determine the most preferred tools, approaches, processes, and models used in change management and how they are selected for use in organizations.
4. To present a set of insights that change leaders and managers could think through in order to creatively and aptly meet these challenges.

Research Questions

1. What are the current organizational issues confronting the change leaders and managers in 2014?
2. What are your top priorities (3-5) which need change management for sustainable organizational change?
3. How do the organizations select the appropriate tool and techniques to facilitate the change management process?
4. What are your preferred tools and techniques in change management?

5. Who is leading change in your organization/in the organizations you work with?
6. Who is implementing change in your organization/in the organizations you work with?

Methodology

The study utilized the online survey, the Monkey Survey (www.surveymonkey.com) in the data collection. The survey was sent via email link to the respondents who were pre-identified based on their OD practice and expertise. The online survey was made available from January 30-February 15, 2014. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of their identities.

The results of the data collection were summarized using survey monkey analytics. The researcher also made further analysis of the raw data and summarized them accordingly. The study was more qualitative than quantitative, and being an index study, the results were mainly summarized for presentation of major trends and tendencies coming from the data of the responses. Data were clustered according to themes. The percentages represented the number of responses found within a particular theme/ cluster identified as compared to the number of responses grouped in the other clusters.

Findings and Discussions

Demographics of the Respondents of the Survey

The forty six respondents of the study were organization development experts, consultants, practitioners, leaders and managers. Table 1 shows the various countries where the respondents work. Some of the respondents, especially OD consultants work across states or continents in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America.

Table 1. Countries where the respondents presently work as OD practitioners, leaders and managers.

Countries where the Respondents Work	
Africa	Ireland
Australia	Mozambique
Bahrain	Nepal
Brazil	Netherlands
Canada	Peru
China	Philippines
Colombia	Romania
Costa Rica	Singapore
El Salvador	Taiwan
Germany	Thailand
Hungary	USA

The respondents held various job positions in their organizations. Some respondents worked as full- time consultants, while others held job positions at the top and mid- level management. Some other held more than two job positions or job titles. Table 2 shows the various job positions of the respondents.

Table 2. Job positions of the respondents of the survey

Job positions of the respondents
President and Vice President
Director/ Manager
Consultant (Independent, International)
Dean, Professor
Specialist (Regional, People, Culture, OD, HR)
Corporate Owner
Non Profit Work/ Governance

Figure 1 shows the industry sector where the respondents work. Majority of the respondents are engaged in consulting work (53.7%); education (51.2%), and training (24.4%). The business industry reflects 26.8% and along with the other industries reflected on the data, one can see a varied engagement in multiple industries ranging from agriculture, sports, entertainment, tourism, travel, real estate, healthcare, information technology, and many others.

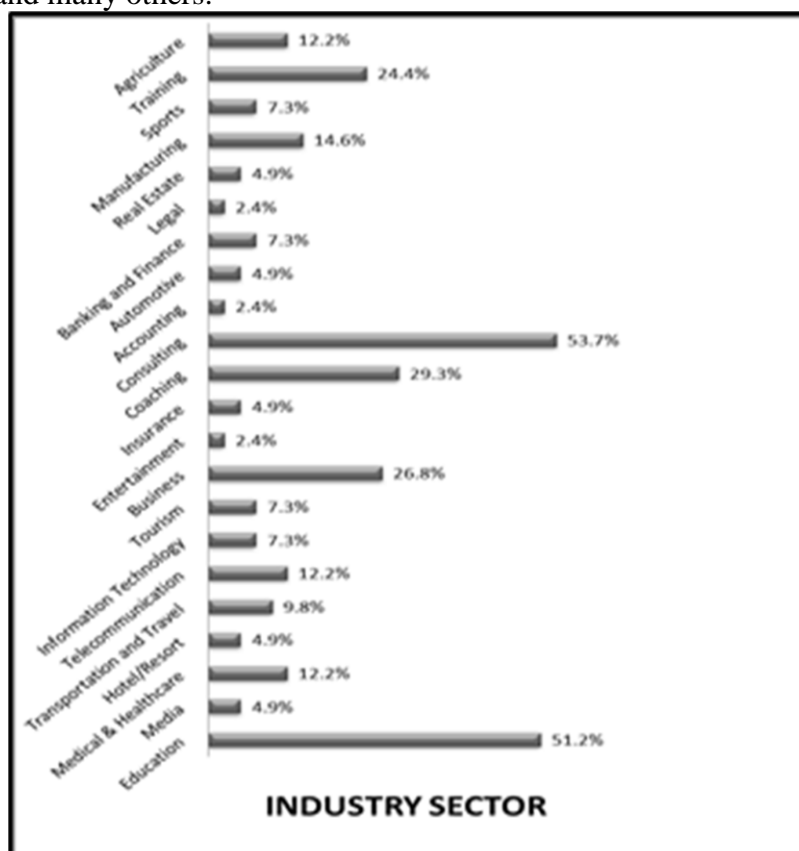


Figure 1. The industry sectors where the respondents work

Current organizational issues and priorities confronting the change leaders and managers

The survey respondents identified various challenges faced by organizations. The responses were clustered as:

1. **Leadership and Management** (54.34%): Issues related to leadership roles and functions such as planning, leading, organizing, and coordinating. There are also matters concerning succession planning, leading innovation, visioning and implementation, organizational alignment, leading in changing and volatile environments, employee related matters such as improving engagement, motivation, and organizational learning.
2. **External Market Environment** (28.27%): concerns on the changing market landscapes and increasing global competition, adaptation to evolving customers' needs, multi-layered change, environment of volatility, uncertainty and ambiguity, political unrests that impact employment, business development and economy, and changing job markets.
3. **Culture** (17.39%) challenges include inclusion issues, intergenerational collaboration in the workplace, increasing diversity in the workplace, cross cultural collaboration, evolving organizational culture, working globally, and breaking down silos.

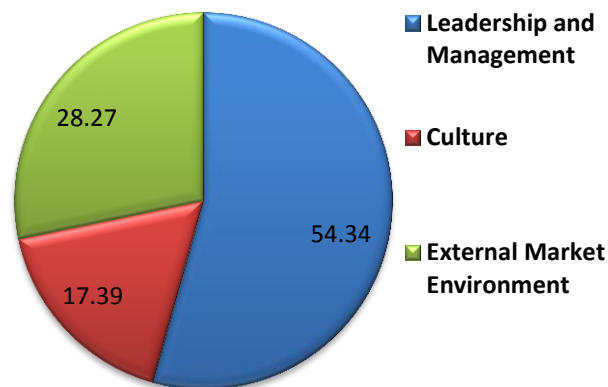


Figure 2. Current organizational issues confronting change leaders and managers

The responses on the top priorities which need change management for sustainable organizational change were also clustered into three (3) main groupings, namely:

1. **Leadership:** ability to create and lead with strategic alliances, good leaders as role models, forming the right leadership team to implement strategy,

leadership development with thinking tools and decision-making skills, continuous development of leadership teams, ability to lead and survive the changing internal and external landscapes of organizations, performance management, succession planning, innovation and creativity ; among many others

2. **People Dynamics:** engaging stakeholders in meaningful ways such that policies and strategies are crafted collaboratively and cascaded to the employee level, greater collaboration in the workplace, creating collaborative cultures in the workplace, talent retention, breaking down silos, and intergenerational collaboration; among many others.
3. **Business Process:** restructuring shift of power, job scope redesign, large scale restructuring, sense-making on changes-measuring impact of change , restructuring cash flow, alignment of vision , goals, and processes; among many others

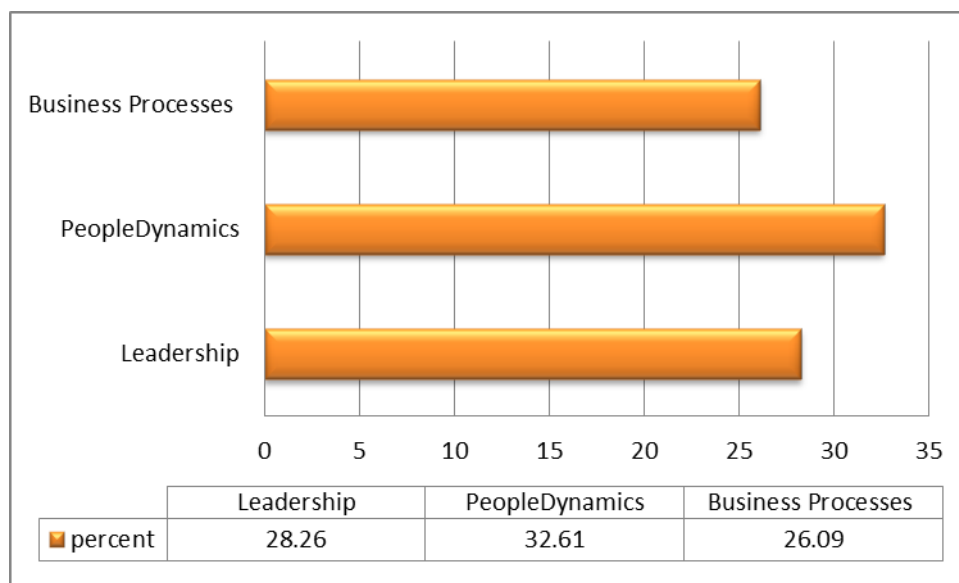


Figure 3. Priorities which need change management for sustainable organizational change

The data show that Leadership and Management are rated as the issues that confront most change managers and leaders (Figure 2 and Figure 3). People Dynamics and Business processes are also priorities. Change Management involves building the capacity of organizations. The focus on leaders shows how much role and accountability organizational leaders have in increasing the performance capacity and driving transformational change in organizations.

Anderson and Anderson (2010) point out three critical focus areas of change leadership, namely: content of change, people in change and process of change. All three areas must be integrated into a unified change strategy that moves the organization from where it is today to where it chooses to be in the future. This implies leaders need to attend to and integrate all these to ensure that best results occur in each. Furthermore, they reiterate that creating breakthroughs or transformational change in organizations is also about three things: change, leadership and consulting approaches. Leading for transformation involves a number of very essential and unique dynamics that demand a new leadership perspective, skill and style. It calls for a deeper understanding of change and a new set of leadership skills and strategies. The quality of competencies and skills possessed by leaders in organizations determines how the various volatile internal and external forces (such as culture and external and market environments) challenging the organizations are navigated to achieve organizational productivity and effectiveness.

Preferred tools and techniques in change management

An array of many other models, techniques, approaches, and tools used as interventions for change management (Table 3) mentioned by the respondents include classic and emerging change intervention tools and processes at the individual, team and large scale levels. Mentioned were: Force field analysis team assessment, Kolb's preferred learning/problem solving style, Emotional Intelligence, Johari, transactional analysis, Open space, World Café, Think tanks, Dialogue meetings, performance coaching, mindfulness sessions, visioning workshops, action learning, group model building, strategic planning using SWOTAR, cross-functional team building. The models and tools of various organization gurus and experts such as Likert, Kotter, Tannenbaum, Barry Johnson, Weiss, Peter Block, Schein, Rothwell, and many others were also referenced.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) or Strengths-based tools, process, techniques in change management are among the most preferred "vehicles of change." AI and SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) are considered also as positive approaches to leadership. Appreciative Inquiry as a tool and process is used in various ways such as in the following: appreciative coaching, appreciative dialogue, developing a change management model with a critical mass of those affected by change by the change, appreciative inquiry synergy assessment, among many others.

Table 3. Preferred Tools, Techniques, Models, and Approaches for Change Management

Strengths Based Interventions	Techniques	Approaches	Models	Others
<p>Strengths based processes and tools using or based on Appreciative Inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative Coaching • Appreciative Dialogue • Developing a Model with the stakeholders using AI and SOAR • AI leadership • AI Synergy and Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive and participatory techniques • Role playing • Participatory strategic planning sessions • Workshops, dialogue, surveys, meetings, facilitated conversations • Coaching (individual and team) • Operational excellence workshops • Group model building • Learning histories, interviews, World Café • Team building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative Inquiry • Whole Systems Approach • Whole Brain-based Approach • Whole systems change tools and processes • Large system interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kotter's eight – step model • Whole Brain Literacy Model • KPS Model for Moral Recovery • Business Model Canvas • SWOT-SWOTAR • Levels of Perspectives (Kim Daniel) • Learning Organizations (Peter Senge) • Action Research Model Force Field • Theory XYZ • Bridges Change Model • Likert • Hofstede • OCAI 	<p>Customized tools, processes , techniques-know which one delivers the change intended to achieve</p> <p>Adapting tools and techniques to support the momentum of change</p>

These OD Interventions (models, tools, and processes) are further customized and adapted to the various contexts and cultures of the organizations; as well as to best deliver the objectives of the change management efforts. Thus, most often consultants craft or design their own tools and technique. In their comments the respondents made the following comments:

- This is the art to the science, knowing which methodology/technique will have impact at a certain point in time. Change management is not prescriptive.
- On-going adaptation of approaches and techniques to support the momentum of change in collaboration with the client

- Consulting stakeholders formally or informally whenever feasible ; agree on top managers and influential team members , constant follow up
- Designing a KPS model for the Moral Recovery of the Philippines
- The interventions depend on the projects I do. These consists of tools interviews, storytelling, business mode canvas, target operating model and business architecture
- Most interventions are highly customized to meet the agency or project, and I have a large number of tools to draw on. Some foundation tools are Future Search/PROSCI and the Learning Organization.
- No specific tool as much depends on the objectives of the change effort, the organization culture and available resources
- I design a variety of OD interventions using multi - media resources, in depth interviews, group discussions for highly interactive learning.

Broad –based, fast paced change is the new norm. We must learn healthy ways to shift from relatively predictable, stable conditions of old to turbulent conditions of today. The benefits of adapting are great: more personal choices, better business opportunities, and higher quality of life - if we can adjust to the pace and scope. We think that's a big "if", based on how most organizations and communities are approaching change. While many tolerate it, few can make it an ally. (Holmann and Devane, 1999)

Who decides the choice of tools and techniques?

Figure 4 shows that both internal and external consultants play significant roles in the facilitating the management's choice over which tools and techniques would be employed for change management in organizations. Only 34.4 % of the responses indicated that top management solely decides for the choice of tools and techniques used in change management. The 59.4 % of the respondents agreed that the choice of interventions is based on recommendations of a team of internal consultants while 53.1% also mentioned that the selection of appropriate tools and techniques are made through the recommendations of external consultants.

Brown, D. (2011) explains that one of the approaches in creating a climate of change in organizations is using a team of an external practitioner working directly with an internal practitioner to initiate and facilitate change programs. The partners (external and internal consultants) bring complementary resources to the team; each has advantages and strengths that offset the disadvantages and weaknesses of the other. Their collaborative relationship provides a sharing and an integration of abilities, skills and resources.

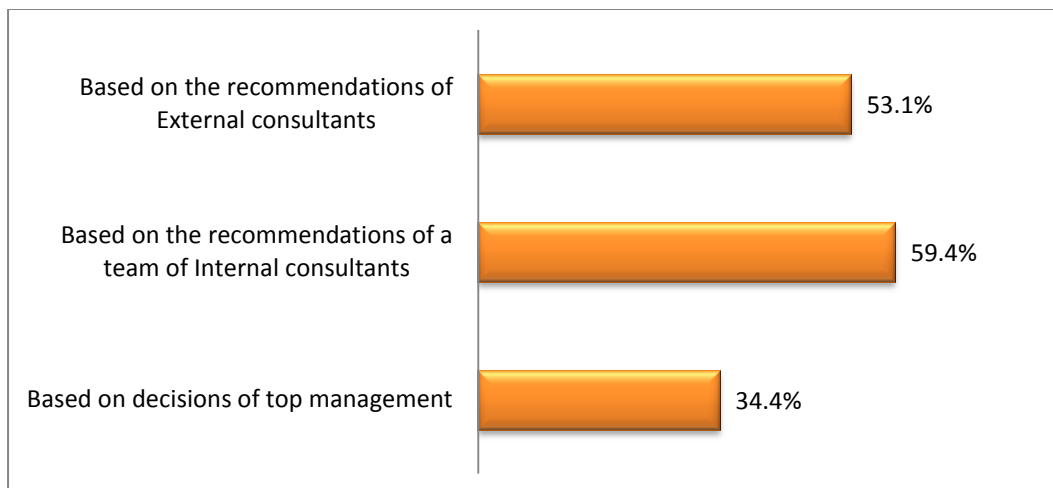


Figure 4. The team that selects the appropriate tools and techniques to facilitate change management in the organizations where they work or work with

Leading and Implementing Change in Organizations

Figure 5 shows that 81 % of the respondents mentioned that top management take on the role of leading change in organizations. The top management comprises the CEO, CFO, COO, President, and Vice Presidents. However, data also show that mid-level and lower-level managements are also considered as having a stake in change in the organizations.



Figure 5. Management Level that leads change in organizations

Implementation of change in organizations mainly rests in the middle management (67.50%). These are persons with position titles such as Directors, Assistant Directors, Regional Directors, Division Managers, Deans, Branch Managers, Site Managers, among many others (Figure 6). Respondents (50%) also mentioned that top management are also involved in the implementation as well as lower level management (35.00%) who are persons operating as accounting managers, academic affairs managers, human resource managers, head of financial operations, sales leader, among many job examples.

It may be concluded from the data that the team-based approach is used by many organizations to increase effectiveness, productivity, and performance. The coordination of individual efforts into the task accomplishment is most important when members of a team are interdependent, that is, where one's performance is contingent upon how someone else performs. (Brown, 2011) Thus, high performing teams could turn around the direction of organizations in meeting their goals. Bolman and Deal (2013) presents Katzenbach and Smith's six distinguishing characteristics of high quality teams:

- High performance teams shape purpose in response to a demand and or an opportunity placed in their path, usually by higher management.
- High performing teams translate common purpose into specific, measurable performance goals.
- High performance teams are of manageable size.
- High performance teams develop the right mix of expertise.
- High performance teams develop a common commitment to working relationships.
- Members of high performance teams hold themselves collectively responsible.

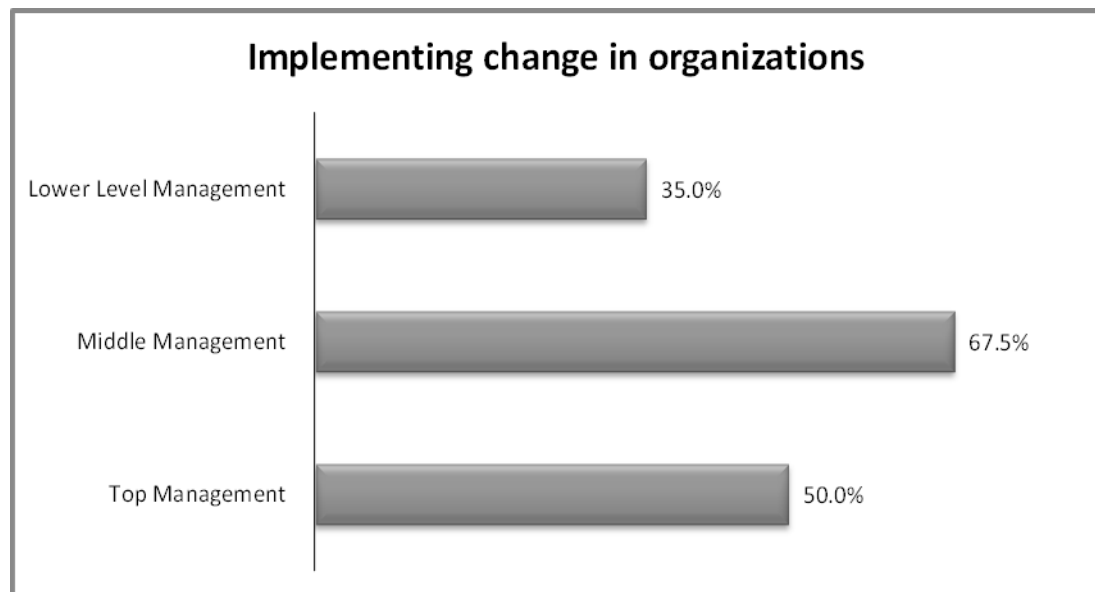


Figure 6. Management Level that implements change in organizations

Summary

The summary of the data from the survey are the following:

1. The current organizational issues of change leaders and managers are leadership and management; culture; and external and market environments.
2. The top priorities which need change management for sustainable organizational change are leadership, people dynamics, and business processes.
3. The tools and approaches are varied and most often change leaders and managers design their tools and approaches to meet the various contexts and needs of the organizations they work with.
4. Internal and external consultants play an important role in recommending the choices of tools and techniques for change management in organizations.
5. Top management leads and mid-level management implements change in organizations. The team approach involving all the levels of management in the process of deciding, leading, and implementing change is also gleaned from the data.

Insights

Leadership effectiveness is the one of core of the priorities which affects both performance and productivity. The respondents have enumerated and prioritized the leadership qualities, skills, and competencies that today's leaders have to hone in order to be effective, namely: ability to create and lead with strategic alliances, good leaders as role models, forming the right leadership team to implement strategy, ability to lead and survive the changing internal and external landscapes of organizations, performance management, succession planning, innovation and creativity. Corollary to these, the respondents cited the need for a leadership development with thinking tools and decision-making skills, and the continuous development of leadership teams.

There is a mandate that today's leadership style should be able to inspire people engagement and motivation. Kayworth and Leider (in Wang, et.al, 2006) discovered that the highly effective leaders act in a mentoring role and exhibit a high degree of understanding (empathy) toward other team members. Other researchers suggest that making other team members enthusiastic about the project, developing trust, building confidence and commitment, and acting as a role model are the critical behaviors in team leadership. Wang, E., et.al. (2006) studied 300 companies listed in the Top 500 Taiwan Companies and indicated that leaders that are capable of motivating and engaging their teams resulted to improved team cohesiveness towards better team performance.

Another priority cluster involved people dynamics which includes the following: engaging stakeholders in meaningful ways such that policies and strategies are crafted collaboratively and cascaded to the employee level, greater collaboration in the

workplace, creating collaborative cultures in the workplace, talent retention, breaking down silos, and intergenerational collaboration; among many others. This means excellent organizations have competent leaders who are capable of shaping the future and making it happen, acting as role models for its values and ethics and inspiring trust at all time. They are flexible, enabling the organization to anticipate and react in a timely manner to ensure the ongoing success of the organization. (Gill, R., 2011). Furthermore, there is a need for leaders to focus on contribution which Peter Drucker describes as a shift away from one's own specialty, skills, and department and to what constitutes performance for the entire organization. The focus on contribution is the key to effectiveness. The focus on contribution needs performance in three major areas: it need direct results; the building of values and their reaffirmation; and the building and developing of people for tomorrow (Drucker, P. and Maciariello, J.A., 2006)

Leaders are called to hone their competencies in order to respond to this demand. Thus, the area of leadership development is one of the top priorities and today's leadership competencies are the concern of many organizations. The Center for Creative Leadership of the United States (in Gills, R., 2011) cites that part of leadership strategy should be leadership development strategy. A leadership development strategy should cover the assessment and development of leaders in line with the vision, mission, values and business strategies of the organization. Furthermore, Gills (2006) cites three strategic principles for leadership development as promoted by the Leadership Development: Best Guide for Organizations. These principles are:

1. Leadership development must be driven from the top: if the CEO is not involved and committed to it, it is not worth starting.
2. Leadership development supports and drives the business: if it is not core to an organization strategy, it will not happen
3. A leadership model must be culturally attuned: it must reflect the culture of the organization.

Another cluster of the priorities dealt with Business Process such as restructuring shift of power, job scope redesign, large scale restructuring, sense-making on changes-measuring impact of change, restructuring cash flow, alignment of vision, goals, and processes; among many others. Basically these refer to the quality of productivity which delivers the bottom line of the organization. Peter Senge's (1994) Systems Thinking, i.e. seeing the "structures" that underlie complex situations, and for discerning high from low leverage change is an important discipline for leaders and consultants in this regards. Seeing the whole, according to Senge, shifts the mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them, as active participants shaping their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future. It is the antidote to the sense of helplessness that many feel as we enter the age of "interdependence" The demands of the changing environment and business markets require using this discipline together with Creativity, i.e. the mindfulness to emerging realities and possibilities and offer something different, and Courage which means both the tenacity to meet the challenges and at the same time manage the risks. This is the balancing act that change leaders and managers would have to hone and engage in driving change in organizations.

In sum, leaders and managers of change know that these findings and insights would inevitably be significant and strategic only if and when they influence the most

crucial driver of change: the mind-set of individuals in the organizations. Anderson and Anderson (2010) discussed that the mind-set is causative. The mind-sets we hold as change leaders influence (1) what we see in our transformations; (2) our internal experiences; (3) our decisions; (4) our impact on others; (5) our performance results. The significant impact of mind-set calls for the ongoing pursuit of self-mastery; that learning, self-management, and personal transformation are critical aspects of successful organizational change for breakthrough results.

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