POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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WHAT IS POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT?

When change happens in the workplace, it can be either positive or negative. Poor organisational change management refers to a situation where a company fails to properly plan, implement, and manage changes within its operations or structure. When change is managed poorly, it can have a negative impact on workers, including feelings of anxiousness and job insecurity.

Poor organisational change management refers to a situation where a company or organisation fails to effectively plan, implement, and communicate changes to its workers. It can occur when an organisation makes a change without fully understanding the potential impact on employees or customers, or when there is a lack of communication or support throughout the change process.

Some common signs of poor organisational change management include resistance from employees, confusion or frustration among stakeholders, decreased productivity, increased turnover, and ultimately, failure to achieve the desired outcomes of the change initiative. Effective change management involves careful planning, communication, and collaboration to ensure that everyone is on board with the proposed changes and understands their role in the process. It also involves providing support and resources to employees to help them adapt to the changes and mitigate any negative impacts.

EXAMPLES OF POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

There are many examples of poor organisational change management in the workplace, which can vary depending on the type of work, industry and location of the workplace, including:

- Making changes without talking to or allowing workers and their representatives to have a say
- announcing changes at the last minute
- Not ensuring that workers and their representatives understand the changes that will impact them properly
- Using inappropriate communication channels to advise workers and their representatives about changes
- Not allowing enough time for the changes to take effect to give workers time to adjust.

- Lack of clear communication: Failure to communicate the need for change, the specific changes that will be made, and the expected outcomes can lead to confusion and resistance.
- Insufficient planning: Lack of planning can result in a lack of direction and resources, leading to delays, errors, and failures.
- Resistance to change: When employees feel left out of the change process or are not given enough time or resources to adapt to new systems, they may resist the change or even actively work against it.
- Inadequate training: Failure to provide adequate training and support for employees during the transition can lead to confusion and errors.
- Poor leadership: Lack of leadership or inadequate leadership can lead to poor decision-making, confusion, and disorganisation.
- When planning and implementing changes, not adequately assessing potential new hazards or impacts on performance.
- Lack of support and information provided during changes.
- Failure to communicate crucial information to employees during periods of change.

Indicators include situations where there is:

- uncertainty about roles, responsibilities, and expectations during the change process, leading to confusion and frustration.
- inadequate support or resources to adapt to the changes, leading to stress and burnout.
- feelings that they [the workers] are not being kept informed about the changes or their impact on the organisation, leading to anxiety and uncertainty.
- resistance to changes, if workers feel that their needs and concerns are not being addressed, leading to conflict and delays in the change process.
- demotivation or disengagement from workers if they perceive the changes as negative or disruptive, leading to decreased productivity and morale.
- increased turnover: If workers feel that their needs are not being met or that they are not valued during the change process, they may leave the organisation, leading to increased turnover rates.

IMPACTS OF POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The impacts of poor organisation change management on both workers and organisations is numerous. Some impacts to consider include:

ON WORKERS

Increased stress due to uncertainty, lack of support, and changes in their work environment or job responsibilities.

ON ORGANISATIONS

Decreased profitability from disruptions in workflows, decreased productivity, and increased costs, ultimately impacting the profitability of the business.

Decreased job satisfaction due to the negative effects of poorly managed change.

Reduced productivity due to disruptions in work processes, reduced efficiency, and decreased productivity.

Burnout due to overwhelm from the demands of poorly managed change and experience burnout, leading to decreased job performance and increased absenteeism.

Health issues: Prolonged stress and anxiety caused by poorly managed change can lead to physical and mental health issues, such as insomnia, depression, and cardiovascular disease.

Damage to reputation: Poorly managed change can result in negative publicity, leading to damage to the business's reputation and loss of customer trust.

Loss of competitiveness/loss of competitive advantage as the business struggles to adapt to new market trends and customer demands.

Reduced employee morale, to decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates.

Decreased customer satisfaction due to disruptions in customer service, resulting in decreased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Legal and regulatory issues due to non-compliance with employment laws, safety regulations, and environmental standards.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management involves identifying potential risks, assessing their likelihood and impact, and developing strategies to mitigate or control them. It is a proactive process that seeks to prevent risks from occurring or minimise their impact if they do occur.

No person should be injured in their workplace, including psychological injury. To meet their duties to ensure health and safety, employers must identify and eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks so far as is reasonably practicable. How long (duration), how often (frequency) and how significantly (severity) workers are exposed to psychosocial hazards impacts the level of risks. Hazards interacting or combining with each other may also impact this. Further guidance on the risk management process is available in the Code of Practice: ***How to manage work health and safety risks.*** For more information on the risk management process for psychosocial hazards, please view ***Section 2 of the Model Code of Practice.***

Mind Your Head advocates for *prevention* – that is, identifying risk, implementing or changing systems to prevent worker harm or injury *before it occurs.*

Examples of Risk Management Strategies for Poor Organisational Change Management include:

Prevention

Job design, safe work systems and procedures:

- Consult workers who may be affected by work health and safety issues, agree on consultation arrangements, and use them for changes that may impact safety.
- Modify and adjust work plans to accommodate changes (for example, KPIs or performance targets whilst a worker learners a new role)
- Ensure that changes to duties, tasks, objectives, and reporting arrangements are reasonable and fair.
- Encourage workers to participate in the creation of new job descriptions and work procedures.
- Encourage workers to engage in the consultation process and express any questions, worries or suggestions they may have.
- Acknowledge individual differences and be aware that workers may have diverse responses to change, thus requiring different levels of consultation and support.
- Workers must receive all the necessary information, training, instruction, and supervision to safely perform their work. For example, if new equipment is introduced, workers should be trained on how to use it safely.
- The person who communicates changes should have the necessary skills and authority to do so. Additionally, supervisors should have the skills to support workers through periods of change.

Physical work environment:

- Offer practical assistance, such as ensuring that workers have the necessary tools and resources to effectively carry out new tasks.
- Establish mechanisms, such as information or feedback sessions, to guide them through the process and address any concerns.

Managing and communicating organisational change:

- Provide reliable and accurate information about upcoming changes and options being considered as soon as possible. Keep workers informed and up-to-date on any developments, and ensure that they understand the changes being made (e.g., by providing updates at team meetings or on notice boards).
- Inform customers and suppliers about any upcoming changes and the potential impacts they may have.
- Provide workers with clear reasons for any changes being made.
- Provide support to workers who may experience challenges or frustrations as a result of the change and uncertainty.

Intervene Early

- Monitor the change management process closely: Keep track of how the change is being managed, including the communication process, the level of engagement with employees, and the extent of the impact on the workforce.
- Identify potential issues: Pay attention to signs of resistance, confusion, or dissatisfaction among employees. This can help you identify potential issues and address them before they escalate.
- Involve employees: Involve employees in the change management process by seeking their input, feedback, and ideas. This will help to increase their sense of ownership and commitment to the change.
- If current systems and control measures are not effective, take prompt action to identify and implement additional controls.

Support Recovery

- Provide early assistance and support to access treatment and rehabilitation services, from the time an injury occurs.
- Support timely and sustainable recovery at work (RAW) or return to work (RTW) through effective consultation, addressing any remaining work-related hazards and risks that may exacerbate the existing work-related psychological injury or cause a new injury.

WAYS TO MANAGE RISKS

Consult workers and HSRs. Establish Health and Safety Committees with at least 50% representation from workers. Encourage feedback, especially on any changes.

Consider how long, how often and how severely workers are exposed to hazards. The longer, more often and worse the low job control, the higher the risk that workers may be harmed.

Utilise surveys and tools to assess psychosocial risks in the workplace, particularly for businesses with over 20 employees.

Establish a system for workers to report their concerns, while ensuring anonymity and treating their concerns with respect and seriousness to encourage reporting.

Observe work and behaviours, such as prolonged work duration, excessive paperwork, or customer frustration, which may indicate low job control.

Review available information, including employee retention, incident reports, complaints, time-off records, injuries, incidents, and workers' compensation to identify potential hazards.

Identify other hazards present and evaluate how they may interact or combine to create new, heightened risks. For instance, low job control could pose a greater risk in workplaces with high job demands if workers are unable to take breaks or switch tasks to manage fatigue. Finally, consider the duration, frequency, and severity of workers' exposure to hazards, as prolonged and severe exposure to low job control could increase the risk of harm.

CONTROL MEASURES

Control measures are specific actions or procedures that are put in place to manage or mitigate identified risks. They are reactive measures that are implemented after risks have been identified and assessed as part of the risk management process. Control measures are designed to reduce the likelihood or impact of risks, and they can take many forms, including administrative controls, engineering controls, and personal protective equipment.

Establish effective communication: Communicate changes to workers early and often, and be transparent about the reasons for the changes. Encourage workers to ask questions and provide feedback, and be responsive to their concerns.

Provide adequate training and support: Ensure that workers have the skills and knowledge they need to adapt to the changes. Provide training, coaching, and other forms of support to help workers adjust to new roles or responsibilities.

Involve workers in the change process: Encourage workers and HSRs to participate in the change process, and solicit their input and feedback. This can help to build buy-in and ownership for the changes, and increase the likelihood of success.

Monitor and evaluate the impacts of the changes: Track the impacts of the changes on workers, customers, and other stakeholders, and be prepared to adjust course if needed.

Seek external expertise: Consider seeking the advice of external consultants or experts who have experience in organisational change management. They can provide valuable insights and recommendations for improving your change management processes.

DO	DO NOT
Involve workers and HSRs in the change process through consultation and communication.	Ignore the potential effects on individuals or teams, even small changes can have an impact.
Identify the main issues of the change and provide workers with relevant information.	Be disingenuous or withhold information from workers.

Keep workers informed about how the change will affect their roles as more information becomes available.

Choose appropriate communication methods to effectively inform workers about the change process.