Short Essay:Six images of managing change

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The image and understanding of an organization and its change management roles have a significant influence on our interpretations, expectations, and perceptions about change within it. There are two forms of images associated with the task of managing, which includes seeing management as a shaping or a controlling activity. There are further three main images of change outcomes as a result of managing, which include unintended, partially intended or intended changes (Palmer & Dunford, 2002). Among the six main images of change management, the key ones include the change manager as navigator, as director, caretaker, coach, and nurturer or as an interpreter. The paper will further explore these six images of change along with a discussion on how these images can affect organizations.

The image of the change manager as a director bases itself on the premise that any outcomes of change are achievable as a result of the management's ability to control. The change manager, therefore, works to steer or drive the organization towards the intended outcome. It is further based on the idea that change is a strategic decision which can ultimately determine the survival and wellbeing of the organization. Another related image to this is one that sees the change management in terms of navigation. This image also assumes that management actions involve control, however, only some intended change outcomes may be achieved from those actions, owing to the presence of external factors, such as competing processes or interests that may influence control over outcomes.

Another four types of images associated with managing change involve seeing the change manager to be a caretaker whose ability to control is impacted by a range of external and internal factors beyond their scope. Therefore, caretaker change managers only shepherd an organization to the best of their ability owing to different constraints (Palmer, Dunford, & Akin, 2007). The fourth image involves seeing the change manager as a coach who relies on developing particular skills, values, and abilities that members of the organization could adopt to achieve the intended change outcomes. In this regard, change management works similar to that of a sports coach who only shapes the capabilities of the team to help them succeed in a competitive situation. A closely related image is that of the interpreter which sees managing change to be the process of making sense of organizational events and actions. The change manager helps the organization derive a sense of these events and describe what they mean. These interpretations too can vary among groups within the organization (Moore & Buchanan, 2013). Lastly, the nurturer image of the change manager is based on the fact that organizations are impacted by even the smallest of changes that hinder its ability to solidly predict change outcomes. Yet organizations may facilitate certain qualities or nurture traits that enable positive self-organization to lead towards changes which emerge from such traits. Thus, any specific change outcomes cannot occur as intended but emerge from the capabilities and qualities within the organization.

The image one forms of managing change significantly affect the assumptions and images being held regarding change outcomes and its management. These images serve as mental frameworks to enable an easier understanding of organizational dynamics, and enlighten it to see how prioritizing certain things can affect its operations (Palmer, Dunford, & Akin, 2007). These models further enable us to carefully reflect over the relevance of certain actions, and the assumptions they based upon, to help organizations understand whether their decisions can lead them to specific organizational changes, or what approaches would be more suitable than others, to achieve such a change. They further illustrate a number of assumptions made by change managers regarding the change they intend to introduce while increasing awareness among members about the change by helping them interpret it, thus highlighting varying perspectives to change managers and other members.

# References

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