

A Qualitative Exploration of the Strategic Management of Employee Resistance to Organisational Change

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Abstract : Change in organizations is viewed as a conversion process of the organizational functioning. One of the crucial elements of this conversion process is the employee resistance to organizational change. The existing literature on change resistance has generally treated resistance as a barrier or an opportunity for successful implementation of change. However, there is little empirical research exploring how resistance to change is managed. This may be partially due to difficulty in getting information on resistance to change. The top management does not divulge such information to avoid negative evaluation whereas employees face huge risk in sharing information related to resistance. The focus of the study is to understand how the organization under study dealt with the employee resistance to change. The conversion process is a story of how the organization went from one stage to another. We used narrative approach to change. Data was collected through company visits and interviews. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and themes were identified. We focused on the strands that left huge scope for alternative interpretations than the dominant narrative of change prevalent in the organization. The study reveals that the top management strategically uses the legitimacy of leadership, roles of key employees, and rationality of change to manage resistance.

Keywords : employee resistance, legitimacy of leadership, narrative analysis, organisational change

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