

The Conditions of Human Behaviour in the Process of Changes

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Abstract

The article deals with various issues related to changes, mainly resistance to them. Basic premises of transformations and doubts that may appear among the organization's personnel have been discussed. Not only the issues concerning the resistance itself have been included, but also the reasons that determine its intensity and several methods that may be used in practice have been mentioned as well. The study is the result of materials analysis on the aspects of changes determinants and resistance to transformations that are permanently integrated into the functioning of each organization, also strongly hierarchical, which is the army.

Keywords: change, organization, personnel, resistance, the army.

1. INTRODUCTION

Determinants of the functioning of modern organizations are presented in a number of studies. Only a small part of them concerns the armed forces. The issues raised are presented through the prism of various criteria. A significant part of the publication has a context related to the personnel (people, soldiers), the importance of which is increasing, and the ability to use (manage) this particular type of capital

will determine the success of the organization and its future. This is consistent with the assumptions of international management, especially with the humanism it contains, which means that people are always at the centre of all reasoning. At present, the effectiveness of action must respect the respect for human values, and therefore treating them not in an instrumental way, as a tool to achieve goals, but treating them seriously as partners, recognizing their interests as rightful and their desires as important¹.

A reminder that the contemporary conditions for the functioning of an organization or the implementation of tasks are very complicated will not be something innovative. It is worth emphasizing, however, because many areas of human life and activity, similarly to modern organizations, have reached a high level of complexity. That is why every decision-maker (supervisor) has to solve sometimes very complex economic, technological and interpersonal problems. In such conditions, the activity of making decisions, including those related to making changes that directly and (or) indirectly affect people, becomes more and more difficult and responsible; they affect subordinates to a greater or lesser extent, regardless of what term they are given. Hence, the issues related to the effectiveness and efficiency of making decisions have become the basic research problems for scientists of many scientific disciplines, because efficient decision-making is the essence of all human activities. As a consequence of such a thesis, it is understandable that solving decision problems is of particular interest to: praxeology, decision theory, operations research, organization and management theory, psychology, sociology and military sciences, now social sciences. In any organization, including the military, subordinates will be the winners or "victims" of a change in the existing state of affairs. At this point, it is appropriate to recall the words of T. Peters, who noticed that *success comes to those who like constant changes, and not to those who aim at their elimination*².

People (staff) is a kind of buckle that binds together a number of areas of activity of individual companies or institutions. It is people who decide on the actions taken, as well as skilfully use the available resources and their competences on the way to achieving the set goal. Sometimes it is very complex, for example during the implementation of a specific combat task. However, contractors should always be

¹ Penc J., *Decyzje i zmiany w organizacji. W poszukiwaniu skutecznych sposobów działania*, Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa 2007, p. 50.

² According to: Machaczka J., *Zarządzanie rozwojem organizacji. Czynniki, modele, strategia, diagnoza*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa-Kraków 1998, p. 23.

convinced that it is real to operate effectively in a specific organizational structure, and that it is subject to evolution is something "normal".

Many organizations operate in the reality that surrounds us³. Each of them was created to achieve specific goals. It functions in a strictly defined environment and, regardless of its size, territorial distribution, specificity of activity, it fulfils a specific role. Particular organizations conduct various activities, not always aimed at earning money, which is clearly visible through the prism of organizations commonly referred to as "uniformed" and public institutions. One cannot ignore the fact that there are staff there for whom it is important that thanks to their professional activity they can develop and take up new challenges, be ready to act in difficult and unusual situations, which in today's world is becoming an increasingly valuable value. This corresponds to the new challenges posed by the increasingly turbulent environment for the functioning of organizations, which must be able to modify their behaviour and rationally react to the changing environment⁴.

It is important for superiors to notice the signalled changes, regardless of their place in the organizational structure. The present day clearly shows that even in highly hierarchical organizations, such as the military, changes are indispensable. However, when conducting them, one must not forget about the soldiers and employees of the army, even for a moment.

In every organization, superiors require their subordinates to think long-term, i.e. to think ahead, so as not to be surprised. The uncertainty of tomorrow plays an important role here. The results of many scientific and research works lead to one very important conclusion that the condition for the development of modern organizations is making changes and being flexible. Among other things, this means that change - in fact, its necessity - should not be something sudden, unexpected. Even Winston L. Churchill emphasized the dangers of not seeing change, saying, *if you don't grasp the hand of a change, it will grab you by the throat over time*⁵.

³ Według T. Kotarbińskiego organizacja to pewien rodzaj całości ze względu na stosunek do niej, jej własnych elementów, mianowicie taka całość, której wszystkie składniki przyczyniają się do powodzenia całości (Kotarbiński T., *Traktat o dobrej robocie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 1995, p. 68.).

⁴ Cf. Moczydłowska J. M., *Potencjał kompetencyjny pracowników jako źródło zmian w strategii organizacji*, [in:] *Zmiany w strategiach zarządzania organizacjami*, red. Szablowski J., Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Finansów i Zarządzania, Białystok 2009, p. 315.

⁵ Machaczka J., *Zarządzanie rozwojem organizacji...*, op. cit., p. 23.

A number of people speak about what determines the success of a modern organization. They represent different environments. They generally unanimously emphasize that the present times are not only the age of the information age, computers or space travel. The world around us is also, or perhaps most of all, the world of organization. These people are probably right. It is enough to take a look to see that human activity is related to various organizations, which are ubiquitous, constitute the basis for the development of all processes. Each organization, if it wants to function effectively, must adapt to the requirements of the environment and make appropriate changes. Therefore, the dynamic development of science dealing with this issue is understandable. The science of directing or managing change is still alive and open - this is mainly due to the relatively short period of development and the exceptional complexity of the phenomenon that is the subject of its interest. The interdisciplinary nature of the studied phenomena often forces the use of specific solutions that can only be used in a specific organization.

2. MACRO TRANSFORMATION

Globalization and the accompanying internationalization are now a permanent element of processes related to the functioning of the organization. Today, no one argues with the statement that if an organization wants to operate efficiently and effectively, it must adapt to its operating conditions. It is necessary for the development of any enterprise. It requires adaptation of its elements and adaptation to the environment. As a result of the changes, new elements of organizational structures are created, new ties between the elements of the structure, a new process of division of labour is created and a new organizational culture is created, as well as staff employed in a given company change. In order to implement changes, not only is the climate necessary for transformation, but also the managers who can now be referred to as EurManagers. In order to effectively make a change, you need to grip the staff, you need to make them convinced of the legitimacy of this undertaking.

Nowadays, it is necessary to adopt a specific (international) perspective of considering a number of phenomena related to a specific organization. It must be remembered that there is no one universal style of management that "works" in all countries. The way in which superiors make decisions, formulate and achieve goals depends to a large extent on the culture they come from and in which country they operate. To be successful, you also need to be able to work in multicultural environments. Only the combination of various cultural elements will have a positive effect on

obtaining the synergy effect. Today, knowledge only in the field of running a business on a national scale is no longer enough. You need qualifications, theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of management methods and techniques in an international environment. Creativity, diplomatic skills and the ability to negotiate are of great importance.

The processes of globalization resulted in the overlapping and mutual penetration of management systems, which led to the emergence of new interrelationships and interactions in all areas of the life of organizations and societies. Events, decisions and actions occurring in one part of the world have significant ramifications for individuals, companies and entire societies, even in remote places on the globe. It is a detachment from national roots and a territorial dispersion of many nodal and strategic areas of the organization's activity⁶. The tightening of the interdependence bonds causes that we are dealing with the contraction of space-time (compression of time and space).

Globalization makes it necessary to constantly improve the management system in all its aspects. These processes require such solutions that will be adequate to the operating conditions, which clearly indicates the need to adapt the relevant transformations to the changing conditions of the functioning of enterprises.

Internationalization of economic processes, the course of production and sales, expansion of the service sector, development of information and telecommunications technologies, accelerated technology development, ever higher quality standards - these are the main reasons for abandoning the traditional understanding of the production system model (production). "Shrinking world"⁷ and emerging globalization are not very kind to many enterprises and public institutions. In times of progressing deepening of international integration, they often lose the fight against competition, and yet the globalization processes will proceed regardless of whether someone likes it or not, whether companies will collapse or not.

The present times require a number of changes in the management (command) strategy. Now it is no longer enough to just follow some proven principles that have worked in the past. The rule stating that certain decisions cause certain effects,

⁶ Małachowski W., *Outplacement jako narzędzie zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi*, Instytut Organizacji i Zarządzania w Przemśle ORGMASZ, Warszawa 2006, p. 12.

⁷ Janik R., *Spoleczno-ekonomiczne uwarunkowania kierowania gospodarką w warunkach globalizacji*, [in:] *Ekonomiczne i społeczne uwarunkowania zarządzania międzynarodowego*, red. Byłok F., Janik R., Wydawnictwo Politechniki Częstochowskiej, Częstochowa 2007, p. 13.

and the most often predictable ones, is not enough today. Today, the relationship between the cause and effect of decisions is more complex. The management of the organization is required to see many phenomena in a time perspective when acting, to think and act into the future. The uncertainty of tomorrow plays an important role here. There is practically no alternative for today's organizations. If they want to stay on the market and strengthen their position, they must learn the ability to use modern management methods aimed at strengthening the company's good position, adapting to external conditions and surviving crisis situations. As a result of adherence to the principle of survival, only those organizations that have the greatest ability to transform and are the most flexible will remain in the marketplace. This, in turn, means that when carrying out changes, one must see the conditions and environment for the functioning of the organization in a specific time perspective.

3. THE NEED FOR THE CHANGE METHODOLOGY

The features of the organization as an open system clearly emphasize the need and the possibility of making changes. This corresponds to one of the basic postulates of strategic thinking, which indicates anticipating the effects of changes. The 21st century clearly shows that **stagnation is a death sentence for an organization** that must constantly react to what is happening in the environment and to what is happening in the organization itself. A properly functioning information system is essential, and with it a number of different types of feedback. You have to notice the people who function in the organization and always participate in the process of change. The culture created by the staff is a sensitive element of contemporary organization, which is also subject to modification.

Organizations must boldly introduce changes, what is more, they must undergo a continuous process of various transformations. The necessity, not the fashion of introducing changes, gave rise to the need to manage them. It is understandable, because making a change - its preparation and implementation - requires the authors and contractors to know the methodology of the procedure. Today it is not enough to know the mechanism of change itself. The so-called "roadside" issues are also extremely important, which also significantly affect the successful implementation of the designed changes. This belief is mainly due to the fact that a lot of attention is usually paid to the design of changes, but the remaining elements of the change process are sometimes marginalized. Many people believe that a good idea (plan) supported by experience will bring success. Meanwhile, even a correct

design of changes requires careful development of implementation activities and efficient and consistent implementation. Otherwise, the changes may not bring the expected effects or may delay them significantly. You always have to set goals in order not to act chaotically and not to get distracted from the chosen path, and the plan should be somewhat open up, that is, to anticipate the possibility of doing better than what was assumed. It is a difficult task which not all are aware of. Often times, one does not notice a number of conditions that function from us at a fairly large distance - mental or temporal.

At the end of the second decade of the 21st century, the scope (size) and area of changes depend on many factors. In general, changes are extremely difficult to design and implement, because they require not only the target vision of the organization, but also a systemic, multi-faceted approach, taking into account the financial, information, material and human resources. They require knowledge of the process and principles of implementing changes and their conditions, as well as the ability to apply methods and ways of overcoming possible resistance or barriers and possible implications of the new organizational culture. I emphasize the issues of culture because globalization and in this area of organization functioning has an impact on employees' attitudes and behaviour.

As I have signalled, with so many conditions of the process of change, there is no one, universal method of transforming, there are no perfect recipes. This study also does not pretend to be a material that will provide people interested in the issues of change with a set of perfect solutions. In each case, the procedure to be followed must be different, and the wisdom of the superiors will be mainly in the skilful use of favourable circumstances. It is also important to enable employees to understand the purpose of the changes and to define a clear plan of joint action. Proper implementation of transformation consists in thorough and far-reaching actions, it requires a far-sighted approach to the issue of change management, perceiving it as a possibility of success, and not as a threat and attempt to violate the company's stability. And yet a correctly introduced change is of decisive importance for the existence of an organization, it is a kind of guarantee that the company will survive and will be able to face the challenges of the future brought by globalization. At this point, I would like to remind you of one of the theses of professor J. Kurnal: *Changes are a natural process that accompanies people and organizations every day, and the present day is one great series of changes.*

Currently, the complexity and growing dynamics of changes, as well as increasing uncertainty, make it necessary to make economic activity more flexible⁸. Therefore, in every situation, one should strive to maintain harmony with the changing environment, which has a significant impact on the company. It is also a shift of the organization to a higher level of functioning, with a simultaneous significant improvement in the efficiency and satisfaction of the members of the organization. Therefore, they must be an integral part of the company's global strategy. Today, one more condition has to be met - organizations have to face the challenges resulting from the internationalization of a number of phenomena (processes).

All components determine the effectiveness of the organization. The organizational structure plays an important role. It is commonly accepted that it is a system (set) of interrelated elements and processes of the organization and the relations between them that are important for the achievement of a specific goal. This, in turn, means that a properly designed structure of the organization, as well as timely changes in this structure, are one of the guarantors of the effective functioning of the company. This means that the organizational structure must meet three basic conditions⁹:

1. Ensure the implementation of the goals set by the group of people making up this organization.
2. Be durable enough to allow the uninterrupted operation of the organization.
3. Facilitate the adaptation of the organization to changing external conditions.
4. In the context of the approximate conditions, it is reasonable to remember that:
 - Change is inevitable and always ends in an adaptation phase.
 - The change process is simple and universal, so it is worth knowing and using it to move to the adaptation phase as quickly as possible.
 - When we live in constant change and experience several changes at once, it is worthwhile to observe which phase affects us the most. Appropriate change management significantly affects our efficiency.
 - The phases of change will shape differently on the timeline depending on whether we are the initiator or the performer of the change.

The presented conditions clearly emphasize several issues. First of all, they emphasize that the goals of the organization's functioning and its structure are subject to modifications (changes), which may be evolutionary or revolutionary. In turn,

⁸ Ziółkowska B., *Zarządzanie procesami tworzenia wartości w przedsiębiorstwie. Perspektywa wirtualizacji*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Częstochowskiej, Częstochowa 2013, p. 21.

⁹ Ścibiorek Z., *Uwarunkowania zmian w czasach globalizacji*, Wydawnictwo EMENTON, Warszawa 2014, p. 12.

the influence of factors on these changes is varied, as well as the frequency of this phenomenon. Only those enterprises that keep pace with the changes have a chance to survive and be competitive. In the future, as we see today, the global strategy of enterprises will continue to be based on finding ways to gain a competitive advantage. It is about crystallizing its strengths from the company's structure, focusing on key competences as well as searching for new areas of competitiveness and sources of strength.

Contemporary organizations, including public institutions, are under a very strong pressure of change, resulting mainly from the volatility and complexity of the economic environment. Changes are undertaken by companies both as a necessity and as a conscious strategy of increasing efficiency and gaining a competitive advantage.

Each organizational change has two main goals:

1. Increasing the company's adaptability to the environment.
2. Transforming employee behaviour patterns and attitudes in the desired direction.

The second goal is particularly important because the effective implementation of changes largely depends on the company's staff. According to Colin A. Carnall, 40% of positive change depends on the employees¹⁰. They are often wary of any innovation in advance. Changes as a phenomenon are a natural process present in the life of every human being, both at work and in personal life. The fear of them most often results from previous negative experiences. That is why many people fear change even before they come into contact with it. Therefore, the key task of superiors is to help subordinates to understand changes and to skilfully overcome resistance.

There are many factors that can significantly affect the transformation of individual organizations. These transformations are also influenced by the operating conditions of organizations, which are not very kind to companies and their managers. They require investing in areas not directly related to the conducted activity. In such a situation, the art of management must evolve in order to meet the requirements arising from the changing environment - the operating conditions of companies. We already have grounds for stating that the future, including the globalization implications, will cause us to deal with a variety of phenomena and processes that cannot be reduced to a common denominator. Every day we observe that the events, phenomena and processes that make up geopolitical changes take place in

¹⁰ Carnall C. A., *Managing change in organizations*, 4th Edition, Prentice Hall, New York 1990, p. 145.

different parts of the world with unequal intensity. Even if they are similar to each other, they do not have the same meaning.

Each time before introducing changes, it is necessary to consider their influence on the change of the behaviour of the organisation's staff. It should be remembered that the stronger the relationship between a certain attitude and its positive effects, the more likely it will be for staff to adopt such an attitude. In turn, the more positive results may be a consequence of adopting a given attitude, the greater the likelihood of accepting the behaviour that determines these beneficial outcomes¹¹.

The results of a number of studies lead to the conclusion that in many organizations, psychosocial barriers, defined as fears and fears of employees affected by this change, are often neglected barriers. These barriers are a source of workers' resistance to change.

4. HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGES

The employee is the most valuable asset of the organization. It is people who create an organization and it is thanks to their physical and mental work that it functions. In the context of the issues under consideration, the view of L. Kiełtyka is correct, who states *that employees with their experience are the most important resource of any enterprise, because so far only a human is able to manage knowledge. Employees are also the most valuable source of new ideas and technology for the enterprise*¹².

When considering the significance of changes for the contemporary organization, it is therefore justified to analyse people's behaviour in the process of change. This is an important issue because each change in the organization affects its members to a greater or lesser extent. Their reactions largely determine the positive or negative impact of changes on the further functioning of the organization. The staff's sympathy and acceptance of transformations facilitate their implementation and reduce the risk of failure. On the other hand, the lack of acceptance means that even the best planned and prepared change may bring about completely different

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 324.

¹² Kiełtyka L., *Transfer technologii i informacji w przedsiębiorstwach produkcyjno-usługowych*, [in:] *Rozwój i doskonalenie funkcjonowania przedsiębiorstw*, red. Kiełtyka L., Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa 2010, p. 402.

effects than assumed. Therefore, it is important to analyse possible behaviours and reactions that may accompany the process of changes in the organization.

The issue of barriers to introducing changes and the resulting resistance to them occurs regardless of the approach, area and depth of changes, because the interdependence of organizational elements means that transformations always affect people, and are also implemented by them. Hence, it depends on the behaviour of employees whether the change will be implemented efficiently and bring the desired results. However, it often happens that changes in organizations are perceived by their employees not as a condition for the efficient functioning of the organization, but as a source of threats having a negative impact on meeting their needs - in particular safety, social and recognition. These threats, real or imaginary, as emphasized by the authors of the literature on the subject, have a negative impact on the quality and quantity of work performed, and make it difficult or impossible to carry out a change.

These reactions can be very different. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, man can be a creator of changes, and on the other hand, he is their subject.

The dual role of man in the process of change also entails two levels at which we can consider responses to change. These are¹³:

1. Attitudes, including the emotional, internal relationship of a person to change (hostility, neutrality, enthusiasm);
2. Behaviours manifested in specific actions (resistance, indifference, cooperation).

Human behaviour in an organization¹⁴ during changes has its source, apart from the general regularities presented, also from more detailed factors. Of significant importance here are, inter alia, personal characteristics and predispositions of a given person. It is also important what the change concerns and what its expected effects may be, and whether and how it will affect the shared norms and values. Conclusions resulting from the current situation of the organization are an important factor. The issues related to the presentation of the change process and the expected results for the entire organization and individual employees are also of great importance.

¹³ Czerna M., *Organizacja przedsiębiorstw*, cz. II: *Metodologia zmian organizacyjnych*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 1999, p. 126.

¹⁴ Kożusznik B., *Zachowania człowieka w organizacji*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 2014.

People's attitude to change and all kinds of innovation also depends on their value system. From an axiological point of view, the following five attitudes¹⁵ towards change can be distinguished:

- risk takers (a few percent) - they highly value courage, become the first to join the process of change;
- prestigious people (about 25%) - agree to assimilate the new value, but at a certain price;
- cautious (around 40%) - they appreciate prudence, caution and distance;
- sceptics (about 20%) - they are characterized by a lack of faith in improving anything, therefore they are reluctant to change;
- traditionalists (a few percent) - their main value is attachment and careful protection of long-proven norms and patterns.

J. C. Maxwell, who also lists five categories¹⁶, gives slightly different proportions and degrees of intensity of attitudes towards change:

- innovators (2%) - visionaries who are the authors of new ideas;
- quick adopters (10%) - they successfully recruit other people;
- recipients after some time (60%) - considerate and slow;
- recipients after a longer period of time (20%) - generally opposed to changes, succumb to them if the majority support them;
- conservatives (8%) - defend the past, reject all changes.

On the basis of the indicated divisions, it can be concluded that the members of the organization assess the changes in terms of their ability to meet their own needs. The changes carried out may increase the level of meeting these needs or significantly lower it. This, in turn, will increase or decrease the efficiency and commitment of employees. In connection with the above, two basic types of people's response to changes can be identified¹⁷:

- positive,
- negative.

Each of the employees' reactions consists of several stages. The first element of a positive attitude of people to changes in the organization is high, though not always unfocused, optimism. People have the feeling that when changes are taking

¹⁵ Holstein-Beck M., *Jak być menedżerem*, Centrum Informacji Menedżera, Warszawa 1995, p. 39.

¹⁶ Maxwell J. C., *Być liderem, czyli jak przewodzić innym*, Wydawnictwo Medium, Warszawa 1994, p. 39.

¹⁷ Bratnicki M., *Zarządzanie zmianami w przedsiębiorstwie*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Karola Adameckiego, Katowice 1997, p. 70.

place, they need to be joined. Later, however, a more pessimistic element emerges. Many questions, fears and doubts arise. Appropriate preparation and explaining to people the essence of changes allows them to replace pessimism with a more realistic view of the entire process. The next stage is optimism, this time already focused. The members of the organization become confident that, although change is a difficult undertaking, they are able to face it together. The positive reaction is complemented by a satisfactory level of implementation of the change process. A belief is born that introducing changes is the best solution for the organization.

A characteristic feature of resistance, apart from the variety of sources of its formation, are the forms in which it can occur. Subjecting the phenomenon of resistance to the general classification, the following types can be distinguished:

- active and passive resistance¹⁸,
- open and hidden resistance¹⁹,
- immediate and delayed resistance²⁰,
- emotional, rational and political resistance²¹.

Due to the nature of the article, I will emphasize only a few points. Active resistance is clearly visible, which makes it easier to notice it early and take appropriate preventive steps. It reveals itself, inter alia, in by refusing to act, blocking the flow of information, deliberately committing mistakes in order to show the defects of the proposed solutions. Passive resistance, in turn, is of a secret nature, which makes it difficult to fight it. Most often it manifests itself in the form of clearly manifested dissatisfaction and even aggression. In most cases, it is accompanied by a marked decrease in efficiency, apathy, isolation. Particular attention should be paid to passive resistance, because due to the fact that it is not expansive, it is very often omitted in the initial stages of change management, and it reveals itself, most often with a big "bang" at the least expected moment, when it is practically eliminated. impossible.

We deal with immediate resistance immediately after launching changes implementation activities, while deferred resistance occurs at further stages of this process. Emotional resistance ignores the substantive approach to changes, relying solely

¹⁸ Czerska M., *Klasyfikacja zmian*, [in:] *Zarządzanie organizacjami*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Organizacji i Kierownictwa Stowarzyszenie Wyższej Użyteczności Dom Organizatora, Toruń 2003, p. 129.

¹⁹ *Zmiana warunkiem sukcesu. Opór wobec zmian. Szansa czy zagrożenie*, red. Skalik J., Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Oskara Langego, Wrocław 2000, p. 286.

²⁰ Loc. cit.

²¹ *Zmiana warunkiem sukcesu...* op. cit., p. 321.

on the negative emotions associated with them. The opposite of this behaviour is rational resistance, which consists in presenting specific arguments. In turn, political resistance is based on the will to maintain the current position and the power²² associated with it. It mainly refers to the management method, the strategy adopted by the organization, methods and tools used.

The changes carried out do not always evoke a positive reaction from employees. Their negative attitude is still an even more frequent phenomenon, mainly due to the emerging question marks.

The first stage in an employee's negative reaction to change is stillness. Members of the organization do not show interest in the change and are sceptical about it. This is usually due to a feeling of powerlessness and inability to take any action. As a rule, this approach turns into a denial. It is characterized by people negating the need for change. Such manifestation of refusal, in consequence, leads to anger, which is accompanied by active counteracting changes. The next stage is the so-called making a deal. It consists in scrupulous identification of all weaknesses of the proposed changes in order to achieve solutions that will be the most beneficial for a given individual or group. In a situation where the organization is still striving to change, a person, as a result of the perceived pressure, enters the stage known as depression. The next stage, due to the inability to stop the change process, is to check the organization's operation based on the new rules. This stage is accompanied by a thorough understanding of the essence of the transformations made. Calmly considering the causes and goals of change makes people understand the transformation that is taking place, and see the real benefits associated with it. As a rule, the initial and positive results of the changes inspire support and acceptance for the related activities.

In addition to the discussed positive and negative reactions to changes in the organization, people in connection with this process may exhibit attitudes such as²³:

- conservative,
- reception desk,
- pioneering.

²² Ścibiorek Z., *Ludzie podczas zmian w organizacji*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2005, p. 211.

²³ *Zarządzanie innowacjami technicznymi i organizacyjnymi*, red. Brzeziński M., Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa 2001, p. 261.

We deal with a conservative attitude when a person is reluctant to change and shows resistance to them. This behaviour is mainly due to the change in anxiety. People are afraid of losing their current position and the related authority and material benefits. They also feel reluctance and fear in connection with the anticipated need to improve qualifications or change of profession, as well as the implementation of new tasks and duties. Such an attitude is usually accompanied by a decrease in effectiveness and commitment to seeking additional benefits resulting from the current state of the organization.

The receptive attitude can be interpreted as a positive approach to changes already implemented in the organization. It can take the form of a receptive attitude²⁴:

- active, manifested when the subject undertakes or initiates the effort to search for patterns of change;
- waiting, meaning the reception of appropriate patterns under the influence of external factors.

The pioneering attitude consists in searching for creative solutions. This behaviour is particularly conducive to the development of the organization, as it enables achieving a competitive advantage and maintaining a leading position in a given industry.

Individuals may have different attitudes to the ongoing process of transformation, which is manifested primarily in their attitudes. The following attitudes of the members of the change process can be distinguished²⁵:

- acceptance, manifested by a high level of commitment and motivation in the process;
- indifference - a state of disengagement;
- passive resistance resulting from the lack (loss) of motivation to act, manifested by general discouragement and frustration;
- lack of trust towards people, entities initiating the change, as well as those implementing and managing it;
- lack of conviction as to the correctness of the course and effectiveness of the implemented change process;
- generally prevailing atmosphere of distrust and inappropriate interpersonal relations between the participants of the change process.

²⁴ Loc. cit.

²⁵ Penc J., *Innowacje i zmiany w firmie Transformacja i sterowanie rozwojem przedsiębiorstwa*, Agencja Wydawnicza Placet, Warszawa 1999, p. 262.

The change acceptance cycle turns out to be useful when considering issues related to the possible behaviours of personnel in the process of organizational transformation²⁶. It shows the level of employee involvement in organizational activities during changes in the organization. The analysis of this cycle shows that the decline in involvement is already visible at the stage preceding the changes. The reason for such a state of affairs may be weariness resulting from the regularity and routine of actions.

The first phase of this cycle is negation. It occurs immediately after the formal introduction of changes. People are preoccupied with efforts to translate changes into the future. As a result, there is a further decline in commitment to one's own responsibilities. The next phase is counteracting change. At this stage, employees devote their full attention to activities aimed at hindering the change process and excluding their own workplace from it. The third phase is acceptance. People perceive the need for change and try to find themselves in a new situation. They slowly give up their fears and negative emotions in favour of participating in the implemented transformations. Adaptation is the next link in the cycle. In this phase, employees strive to fully adapt to new solutions, and at the same time constantly try to improve them. This action also entails increased involvement in the organizational roles performed. The final phase of the change acceptance cycle is their assimilation. People begin to perceive the implemented changes as a normal state of the organization, and their commitment to work stabilizes at the normal level for the tasks entrusted to them.

The presented cycle of acceptance of changes is a generalized concept, within which there may be shifts and jumps between phases according to the individual predispositions of individual employees.

5. RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The considerations so far clearly indicate that changes in an organization meet with a specific reaction of people (staff). It is not always beneficial for what takes place in the company (institution). At this point, it is reasonable to ask the question: Why do workers resist? P. Schlesinger and co-authors break down the causes of resistance to change into five groups²⁷:

²⁶ Czerna M., *Organizacja przedsiębiorstw...* op. cit., p. 133.

²⁷ Schlesinger P. F., Sathe V. et al., *Projektowanie organizacyjne*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1999, pp. 362-365.

1. *Politics and the struggle for power.* This is the first reason people resist organizational change. There is a belief that as a result of implementing the changes, they will lose something that has a specific value for them. Resistance in such cases is often called "politics" or "political behaviour" because people focus on their own interests and not on the organization as a whole.
2. *Misunderstanding and distrust.* People resist change when they feel the balance of the potential benefits and costs of the change is negative. Such feelings may arise from misjudging the situation or not being able to understand all the effects of a change. Additionally, the lack or low level of trust between employees and supervisors can lead to misunderstandings during the implementation of changes.
3. *Different assessments of the situation.* This is due to the fact that there is a difference in analysing the situation from the point of view of the employee and the initiators of changes.
4. *Fear.* Some workers show resistance to change because they fear they will have to learn the new skills required. Sometimes this fear is compounded by too fast and too broad changes that require employees to quickly change their behaviour or gain extensive knowledge. Another source of concern may be the need to give up certain aspects of the current situation, e.g. leaving a team with good relations.
5. *Other reasons.* They may be related to the pressure of the environment, the attitude of the superior, or the need to admit a mistake.

As the pace of development and the changes taking place in the world increase, research is conducted to understand employees' reactions to changes. One of the friendliest classifications was created by R. M. Kanter, who, based on his research, described six main sources of resistance to change²⁸:

1. Vague goals and expectations.
2. Reluctance to resign from the current privileges.
3. A sense of threat, fear, fear of dismissal.
4. Awareness of the weaknesses of the proposed changes.
5. Feeling that the situation is getting out of control.
6. Reluctance to strenuous effort (laziness) and negative experiences.

Theorists and practitioners especially emphasize the role of the organization's staff resistance to changes, as they are often perceived as a threat. Regardless of the purpose, type and area, changes always affect people. Already John Harvey-Jones in

²⁸ Kanter R. M., *The Change Master*, Simon & Schuster, New York 1994, p. 34.

1988 stated that people are ... *the engine of change is dissatisfaction with the current state, and the brakes - fear of the unknown and the future*²⁹. Each change requires both accurate design and proper implementation, which requires, among other things, overcoming economic, bureaucratic and psychosocial barriers to change - factors determining the efficiency and costs of change. Theorists and practitioners especially emphasize the role of the organization's staff resistance to changes, as they are often perceived as a threat.

The results of a number of studies confirm the presence of fears and fears in some work environments. It is not known whether these fears are actually a source of resistance to changes, but it can be assumed with high probability that they have a certain negative impact on employees' attitudes towards the work performed, which may have an impact on its results. These data also indicate the importance of this issue and the need for managers to take appropriate action - diagnosing barriers to change and counteracting them. Organizational changes, unfortunately, are also associated with the liquidation of positions, lowering the salary group (grade) or a change of specialization. That is why it is not uncommon to say that losing a job or changing it is one of the most stressful factors in the life of every human being.

The number and level of psychosocial barriers to change varies due to the employees' individual perception of the scope and depth of change. J. A. F. Stoner and Ch. Wankel lists three basic barriers to change: uncertainty as to the cause and effects of change; reluctance to give up existing privileges and awareness of the weaknesses of the proposed changes³⁰. M. Armstrong³¹ thinks similarly, giving the following possible barriers:

- Newness shock - people tend to be concerned about changes that may violate established terms of employment, working methods, and procedures. This causes a loss or a reduction in the sense of security. Subordinates may not believe management that the changes will be beneficial for them and the organization.
- Economic concerns - loss of income, threat to job stability.
- Discomfort - changes will make life difficult.
- Uncertainty - change can give rise to anxiety about its uncertain outcomes.
- Symbolic fears - change can affect a cherished, symbolic value.

²⁹ Ścibiorek Z., *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Wydawnictwo Difin, Warszawa 2010, p. 326.

³⁰ Stoner J. A. F., Wankel Ch., *Kierowanie*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa 1994, p. 310.

³¹ Armstrong M., Taylor S., *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi*, Wydawnictwo Wolters Kluwer, Kraków 2001, p. 204.

- Threat to interpersonal relationships - change can disrupt customary social relationships and group standards.
- Threat to the position of the individual - a change may result in the loss of a lucrative managerial or expert position.
- Threat to the competences held - the change may deprive the employee of the possibility of using the skills and experiences, often acquired with difficulty.
- Fears of new requirements - the change may force the acquisition of new professional competences, perhaps difficult to master.

Also J. Penc indicates the above-mentioned barriers to changes and supplements this list with factors: excess of simultaneous changes and too high frequency of changes. The author also points out that the behaviour of the superiors themselves - those who lack the ability to think creatively and the appropriate organizational and planning skills - may constitute barriers to change. He also emphasizes that inflexible organizational structures, improper management of the organization, negative motivational factors and insufficient qualifications of managers increase the barriers to change.

In order to overcome resistance to change, the management (superiors) should first of all find answers to the following questions³²:

1. How do people who create organizations perceive changes?
2. How will employees experience transformations, that is, how will they affect their work and functioning in the company?

The knowledge of the barriers present in a given organization allows superiors to direct actions limiting resistance to changes. Hence, it is desirable to learn about these factors by survey research when preparing the implementation of changes. Especially that overcoming resistance to change and more broadly - for the efficiency of changes - are the responsibility of managers (managerial staff) who design changes and staff that implement changes in subordinate institutions, and not unspecified employees.

The aforementioned **barriers cause** active or passive **resistance** to changes, expressing a certain mental state of employees, which may be externally manifested by low commitment to the work performed, conscious or unconscious reduction of the quality of performed tasks or even taking actions delaying the introduction of changes. As E. Długosz-Truskowska points out, one should not try to avoid

³² Cf. Armstrong M., *Zarządzanie zasobami ...* op. cit., pp. 100-117.

resistance³³. A more effective approach is to carry out the change in a way that encourages open - not hidden - resistance from workers. There must always be resistance to change, and the trick is to expose it and overcome it quickly.

6. THE NEED FOR A DIALOGUE WITH PERSONNEL

Several studies show that **communication** is one of the most common ways of dealing with resistance to change. This tactic is designed to help employees see the need and logic of change. Communication is the best tactic when the source of resistance is inadequate or imprecise information and erroneous analysis, and the initiators to implement the changes need the help of the person or people who resist.

In the event of major changes, communication may consist in organizing information and discussion meetings of all employees, during which persons responsible for the implementation of individual stages of the project have their say. The idea is to avoid the so-called "word of mouth", in which information is not conveyed directly from its sender, and employees acquire it through informal channels, often with numerous intermediaries, distorted or even untrue. Such false information may cause unnecessary stress, and the lack of direct communication gives the impression that some "librarians" are removed from the process of change.

Threats to personal interests are the main cause of employee resistance to change, but not the only one³⁴. The reason for the emergence of resistance is also the insufficient amount of clear and reliable information on the causes and goals of the changes. Therefore, the first stage of planning changes by the company's management should be the preparation of an approximate profit and loss balance of individual employees or teams, so as to identify those for whom the result of the analysis of the individual effects of changes is uncertainty or the prevalence of losses. This will allow for early identification of possible sources of resistance and preparation of a counteraction strategy.

Resistance to change cannot be completely avoided, but it can be effectively prevented and weakened. A basic strategy for eliminating resistance is a good internal

³³ Długosz-Truszkowska E., *Zarządzanie zmianami*, [in:] *Doskonalenie zarządzania zasobami ludzkimi*, red. Zbiegień-Maciąg L., Uczelniane Wydawnictwa Naukowo-Dydaktyczne, Kraków 2002, pp. 43-44.

³⁴ Cf. Zimbardo P. G., Leippe M. R., *Psychologia zmiany postaw i wpływu społecznego*, Wydawnictwo Zysk i Spółka, Poznań 2004, p. 51

communication plan that ensures:

- Involving employees in the change process at the earliest possible stage;
- A thorough explanation of the full context of changes (causes, goals, effects, duration);
- Realizing the effects of abandoning changes;
- Taking into account the opinions and suggestions of employees;
- Active participation of employees in the entire process;
- Mitigating the negative effects of changes (e.g. downsizing).

7. INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS

Each organization is specific. It has "its" employees who are different from others, even in the same industry. In this situation, we can list other factors that reduce the resistance. It may be smaller when the superiors support the thesis that change is a normal state in the organization, and its transformation will offer new, more attractive conditions for its participants. As a result of this process, the disadvantages of the existing forms of work may be reduced, everyone will find "something for themselves" in this change.

It is advisable to use primarily information and persuasion methods, without resorting to "force" (compulsion) solutions. If possible, you can also introduce motivational stimuli (rewarding desired behaviour, celebrating success).

Encouragement and patience and opportunities to exchange experiences are helpful. In this way, the new situation gradually becomes normal, and the first successes (in learning) make employees gain self-confidence. System performance slowly increases and becomes higher than the original level. Now you can evaluate the course of the process - "What went well and why?" and "What went wrong and why?" to learn lessons that can be used in future change projects.

In any case, it should be remembered that people will change their behaviour if the change is forced on them, presented as a "fait accompli" without any consultation or only explained from our point of view. In that case, however, we only get compliance - not acceptance - on their part, and the resistance will remain. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that workers will only change their attitudes when the sources of their resistance are clearly considered. This approach provides acceptance that is harder to obtain, but that carries lasting and genuine commitment.

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