

INDUSTRY:

Organizational cultural change on training to focus on skills

By Mwangi Wanjumbi

“Our challenge has actually been implementing the cultural change program. The whole company incidentally went through an elaborate training on the same in the recent past.” This was said by a Human Resource Manager of a major corporate entity based in Nairobi while explaining the extent to which they are addressing staff development needs. “But we now realize that we have deficiency in communication skills across the board coupled with decision making problems amongst senior staff,” added this sincere human resource manager.

Perhaps you may have come across or experienced a similar scenario. But what is certain is that this Human Resources Manager is not alone. His company’s frustrations are incidentally shared by many.

This is so because organizations must continually change the way things happen if they are effectively going to achieve their desired goals especially of growth and profitability. One challenge of our times is essentially embracing change that comes in different perspectives.

The change involves some important aspects such as ways of thinking and communicating this thinking. There must also be change in way of operating because technology keeps on changing. Inevitably, a company cannot continue operating the same way year after year.

The processes must keep on being improved if not overhauled altogether.

There must also be change on how people relate with one another within the organization and also with other important players outside the company.

These include the customers (buyers of goods and services), the competitors (industry) and above all, the investors especially in the case of public companies. It is no



Carpentry trainees at a workshop. Training should be focused on skills development.

wonder then that those companies today maintain public relations departments to manage relationships with the different stakeholders.

Even the government which is essentially supposed to operate as a company embraced the need of employing the services of a communications expert sometimes ago.

Of course, this was necessitated by changing circumstances. Matters of interest to a more information demanding public could no longer be left to politicians and departmental bureaucrats.

The same applies to communication needs even at our own individual entities. Change is therefore inevitable in our personal and organizational perspectives.

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This change comes with need to modify our beliefs, values and norms or even way of doing things. This includes how people dress, relate with one another and so on. The sum total of all this is called organizational culture. Two of the greatest attributes of culture are that it is dynamic or keeps changing as has been seen. Secondly, culture does not just happen naturally. It is learnt in different ways.

When there is no focused learning it is learned arbitrarily from the surrounding environment. The environment in this case may be by way or social cultural influences.

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A bank manager for example recently lamented of being frustrated by the behavior of one of the cashiers. She had habitually been reporting to work with an iPod.

This modern communication gadget

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