

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm deeply honored to present the results of our discussion yesterday. Speaking about leaders as the agents of change we focused on four key questions:

- Activities to be undertaken for change initiation
- Activities to be undertaken for change implementation
- Quantities and skills needed for change initiation
- Qualities and skills needed for change implementation

We came to the following conclusions:

The process of change initiation must be preceded by a question: why change and what kind of change do we need? People in top positions should be visionary and see the problems beforehand. It is crucial for a leader to have a broad perspective on the current situation. By gathering information comprehensively from different sources we are able to identify the problem that calls for change.

The final success of change implementation depends on the involvement of stakeholders. The role of the leader is to come to people's minds and prepare them for upcoming changes. People tend to be reluctant to accept changes because they are afraid of them. The good leader will try to involve the stakeholders in the process of change, by giving them the opportunity to voice their fears, share their ideas, making use of their potential.

The next important step is to be aware of available resources which can be used in the process of change implementation. This knowledge will serve as the basis for preparing a plan which will describe in detail consecutive actions to be undertaken. It seems very important to have fixed targets, to keep timing (dates), indicators, and to make an adjustment to the plan if it is impossible to keep to our aims. Thinking positively about the upcoming challenges the good leader should also be prepared for the worst scenario and be able to react with suitable tools and right decisions for problems appearing.

The organizational aspect plays a key role at the change implementation level. Clear targets have to be set, the tasks and responsibilities have to be divided between stakeholders, a feedback system has to be developed in order to ensure the situation is monitored and to react at the proper time. In the hard process of change implementation resistance from some part of the team seems unavoidable. The role of the leader is to show his/her strong involvement and belief in final success, he/she has to encourage and support his team, explain benefits and when necessary use his power to wear opponents down.

The process of change implementation requires that a good leader have several personal skills. The person in the leading position has to be a good negotiator, be able to persuade people regarding goals which he wants achieved, he or she has to be stubborn (in a positive sense) and trust strongly in the sense of the undertaken challenge.

Having the ability to anticipate upcoming problems, the leader will be able to react on time. A positive and constructive approach – focusing on solutions, not on problems, will help in creating a positive and creative atmosphere. The role of the leader is to stimulate people's innovation and creativity. The role of the leader in an organization may thus be compared with the role of the conductor of an orchestra. Having the proper interpersonal skills and using the proper instruments he/she is able to make the whole team play single and beautiful music.

And finally there is one more secret as to how to make the process of change implementation successful. As a real leader of a group one really has to love what one does and share one's enthusiasm with other members of the team. Without real passion nothing can be done.

Thank you very much for your attention, and thank you also for giving me the opportunity to take part in the DISPA conference.

Wojciech Bednarek