

Union opposition to management organizational change strategies and managements reluctance to involve unions in the change process results in reduced business value, negative publicity for the business, and decreased employment opportunities.

Unions Can Benefit Organizational Change

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Managers and supervisors implement change to increase overall organizational effectiveness and profitability which requires them to make decisions that impact their employees. Often employees who disagree with the change seek union representation. This clash can derail and in many cases delay organizational change strategies. Managers and supervisors can successfully implement and accelerate the change process by involving union representatives.

In many instances, management is reluctant to involve unions in the organizational change process. One reason for this exclusion is that union opposition to organizational change can decrease the organizations value. For example, Wal-Mart has attempted to expand by building new stores. Unions have reduced Wal-Mart expansion plans to

build new stores by citing violations to local zoning laws. This union opposition has cost Wal-Mart millions which has decreased its stock market value.

Businesses often merge with other businesses which results in some type of organizational change. Union opposition to mergers results in negative publicity for businesses. For example, the Atlanta-based Delta and Egan, Minn.-based Northwest planned to merger which was met by opposition from the flight attendants union. The International Association of Machinists supported the flight attendants union by asking its members to contact their elected representatives to voice the union's opposition to the Delta-Northwest merger. The International Association of Machinists represents ramp workers, customer service agents, and reservations agents.

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The machinists union extended the negative publicity campaign by asking members who attended the Democratic National Convention in Denver to voice their opposition to the merger to their representatives.

Management and union inability to work cooperatively has cost local and national communities employment opportunities. Businesses favor relocating to a right to work state rather than encounter union opposition. There are 22 such states where workers cannot be forced to pay union dues or agency fees. There are 27 other states that allow unions to negotiate with management

for the right to establish all-union shops where everyone pays union dues or agency fees. This has forced businesses to relocate overseas which has had an adverse impact on national and local economies.

Union opposition to management organizational change strategies and managements reluctance to involve unions in the change process results in reduced business value, negative publicity for the business, and decreased employment opportunities. This pattern develops an organizational culture that inhibits managers and unions from working together to successfully implement organizational

change. However, with the appropriate process management and unions can cooperatively work together to implement and accelerate productive organizational change.

Involving unions in the organizational change process decreases negative business publicity. According to Kris Maher (2008), confidential agreements between employers and two of the nation's largest labor unions resulted in the unions giving up the right to strike and posting derogatory language about companies on bulletin boards. The agreement is between the union that represents outsourced workers who provide food,

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laundry, and housekeeping services and Sodexo Inc. and the Compass Group USA unit in London. The unions agree to present issues before a labor-management committee before facilitating leafleting or rallies. This agreement will enable businesses to implement organizational change without the adverse impact of negative union publicity campaigns.

Union involvement in organization change can increase the profitability and effectiveness of the business. Unions and businesses in Europe agreed to cooperatively address the challenge that stress has on employees. The European Commission reported that 28% of employees in the EU are impacted by work-related stress which caused a 50 to 60 percent absenteeism rate for employees. This challenge is estimated to cost European businesses 20 billion a year in lost time and health costs. Union involvement in decreasing work related stress will provide savings for businesses which will increase organizational profitability and effectiveness.

Businesses can accelerate organizational change strategies by involving unions. Union representatives

are connected to all members in the union. This provides an opportunity to exchange information by word of mouth. Exchanging information by word of mouth is the fastest and least expensive process for accelerating organizational change.

In conclusion, management can successfully implement and accelerate organizational change by involving union representatives. Successfully including the union in the organizational change process is accomplished by:

- Collecting the necessary information regarding the specified organizational challenge.
- Developing a systemic diagram regarding the specified organizational change.
- Developing and facilitating a shared vision between management and union representatives.
- Involving and inviting union representative to participate in all discussions and decisions regarding the organizational challenge.

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