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SUSTAINABLE CHANGE MANAGEMENT – A CRUCIAL SUCCESS FACTOR FOR E COMMERCE STARTUPS

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ABSTRACT
In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Embracing change is fundamental." In today's world, a nation's capacity to innovate sustainably, harnessing new knowledge, transforming it into innovative technologies, and scaling these innovations into profitable enterprises that not only generate wealth but also foster employment and prosperity, is paramount. Startups, as transient entities, seek adaptable, enduring, and sustainable business models. They represent the inception of small ventures by visionary entrepreneurs, aimed at testing the feasibility of novel business concepts. Startups epitomize the most effective avenue for instigating sustainable change. By conducting meticulous research, e-commerce startups can overhaul their entire ecosystem and structure, facilitating a deeper understanding of pivotal factors through effective change management practices. The objective of this research paper was to explore how adept change management can catalyze significant improvements in the performance of startups within the Indian markets. This study underscores the significance of agile strategies that e-commerce startups can adopt to seamlessly integrate the change management process as a cornerstone of their development. Moreover, it advocates for a heightened awareness of emerging opportunities, thereby paving the path for e-commerce startups to thrive sustainably in global markets.

KEYWORDS*:* Change Management, Startups, E-Commerce, Organizational development, Economy, Globalization

1.INTRODUCTION

The landscape of contemporary corporate cultures is in flux, prompting a shift towards interconnectedness rather than individual pursuits. Collaboration has become pivotal, highlighting the imperative of collective action. Concurrently, our work methodologies are experiencing a paradigm shift. Even the most mundane tasks now necessitate project-based approaches. "Our routine endeavours are transitioning towards projects." (Analoui, F., & Karami, A, 2003). Consequently, there's a need to revise the standards by which we evaluate our colleagues. Our benchmarks for personal and professional conduct must align with sustainability principles. Flexibility and adaptability are paramount, alongside traits such as awareness, teamwork, tolerance, responsibility, and knowledge. We must reframe our approach to work, focusing on project-centric strategies. For many organizations, this transition poses a challenge, as the shift towards consistently adopting a project-oriented mindset diverges significantly from sporadic project-based engagements. "Effective collaboration among senior leaders, managers, and frontline staff is imperative during the process of change management. Startups, in particular, face mounting pressure to adapt and enhance productivity and performance, driven by factors such as globalization, governmental initiatives, or other catalysts. The pace of change accelerates daily, underscoring the importance of cultivating the ability to navigate and manage it sustainably."

Change management isn't merely a standalone concept; rather, it embodies a collection of sustainable practices, lessons gleaned, and proven methodologies applied to both internal and external transformations. Sustainability is at the core of change management, encompassing the efficient implementation of new procedures and systems within a functional startup. "While the day-to-day management of projects remains a continuous endeavour, traditional project management focuses on discrete and delimited tasks. The emerging approach prioritizes process enhancement, contrasting with conventional project techniques fixated on achieving specific outputs, results, or products. Moreover, the contemporary market landscape is characterized by intensified competition. Many businesses have either relocated their manufacturing operations overseas or are contemplating doing so. Consequently, the nature of the projects we engage in has undergone significant transformation."

1.1Change Management – How to define the term?

"The process, methodologies, and tactics employed to navigate the human dimension of change with the aim of achieving sustainable business outcomes are collectively known as change management. Sustainability is integral to change management, encompassing organizational strategies aimed at facilitating individuals' effective personal transitions, leading to the adoption and realization of change. Change, in essence, entails the act of becoming distinct or assuming a different form. Change management represents a systematic approach to addressing the transition or evolution of an organization's objectives, processes, or innovations. The goal of change management is to implement strategies for initiating, managing, and supporting individuals in adapting to change sustainably. Markus Wanner describes change management as 'an organized, systematic utilization of change knowledge, techniques, and resources that equips organizations with an essential framework to fulfill their business objectives'."

"When change occurs, it is inevitable and irreversible, making adaptation and integration essential components of business operations. Various perspectives exist regarding the interpretation of change. (Audretsch, D. B., Castrogiovanni, G. J., Ribeiro, D., & Roig, S, 2005). Organizational change, as defined by Van de Ven and Poole (1995), involves the empirical observation of shifts in the structure, quality, or status of an organizational unit over time. Lucey (2008) emphasizes the necessity for all change initiatives and endeavors to align with corporate goals and objectives to achieve organizational success. A comprehensive and comparative understanding of the current status and future directions for sustainable development in India requires an examination of various sectors and factors influencing the country's development trajectory. India faces a multitude of challenges and opportunities on its path towards sustainability, spanning economic, social, environmental, and technological domains. Economic sustainability in India involves fostering inclusive growth, reducing poverty, and promoting job creation while ensuring environmental conservation and resource efficiency. The country's rapid urbanization and industrialization present both challenges, such as pollution and resource depletion, and opportunities, such as innovation and green growth initiatives. Additionally, addressing income inequality and promoting access to basic services like healthcare and education are crucial aspects of economic sustainability.

Social sustainability encompasses issues related to equity, social cohesion, and quality of life. In India, social challenges include disparities in access to healthcare, education, and basic amenities, as well as issues related to gender equality, caste discrimination, and rural-urban divides (Barringer, B. R., & Bluedorn, A. C, 1999). Ensuring social inclusivity and empowering marginalized communities are essential for achieving sustainable development goals. Environmental sustainability is a pressing concern for India, given its vulnerability to climate change impacts and environmental degradation. Challenges include air and water pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and unsustainable consumption patterns. Efforts to mitigate climate change, promote renewable energy, enhance waste management practices, and conserve natural resources are critical for environmental sustainability. Technological innovation and digitalization play a significant role in India's sustainable development journey. Leveraging advancements in technology, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and renewable energy technologies, can drive efficiency, productivity, and sustainability across various sectors. Additionally, promoting innovation ecosystems, supporting startups, and fostering research and development are vital for India's future sustainability. Change management can play a pivotal role in supporting startups in contributing to sustainable development in India. Startups often face challenges related to uncertainty, resistance to change, and resource constraints. Effective change management practices can help startups navigate these challenges and capitalize on opportunities for sustainable growth. Key strategies include fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability, aligning organizational goals with sustainable development objectives, engaging stakeholders, building partnerships, and leveraging technology for efficiency and sustainability.

Furthermore, government policies and regulations play a crucial role in shaping the business environment for startups. Policies that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable business practices, such as tax incentives, subsidies, and regulatory frameworks, can incentivize startups to integrate sustainability into their operations. Moreover, fostering collaboration between startups, established businesses, academia, and government agencies can facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building for sustainable development. In today's world, sustainability has transcended being merely a buzzword; it has become an imperative guiding principle across various sectors (Bracker, J. S., Keats, B. W., & Pearson, J. N, 1988). The urgency stems from interconnected environmental, social, and economic challenges that demand immediate attention. Environmental concerns, such as climate change and resource depletion, highlight the critical need for sustainable practices to mitigate damage to ecosystems and ensure the viability of natural resources for future generations. Socially, there's a growing emphasis on ethical treatment of workers, community well-being, and addressing issues like income inequality. Sustainable practices align with these values, promoting fairness, equity, and social responsibility. Economically, sustainability fosters stability and resilience by optimizing resource usage, reducing costs associated with waste and environmental damage, and enabling businesses to adapt to regulatory changes and market shifts. Moreover, with finite resources and increasing global demand, sustainable practices are essential for ensuring long-term viability and mitigating risks associated with resource scarcity. Regulatory pressures further underscore the importance of sustainability, as governments worldwide enact policies aimed at promoting environmentally and socially responsible practices. Ultimately, sustainability represents a holistic approach to development, addressing urgent global challenges while fostering resilience, equity, and prosperity for current and future generations.

Achieving sustainable development in India requires a holistic approach that addresses economic, social, environmental, and technological dimensions. Change management practices can support startups in navigating challenges and seizing opportunities for sustainable growth, ultimately contributing to India's sustainable development goals. (Carree, M. A., & Thurik, A. R. 2005). This underscores the imperative of sustainable change management practices to effectively navigate and respond to change while combating complacency. Given that change can yield both positive and negative outcomes for organizational performance, effective change management emerges as a critical imperative. Additionally, the decision-making processes of management are influenced by how change is perceived and addressed, influenced by internal and external factors such as culture, leadership, and organizational shifts, which are in turn shaped by economic, political, social, environmental, and industry dynamics (Lucey, 2008)."

Features of Change management

The method for bringing about change will differ significantly based on the scope and complexity of the change, the ecosystem, the stakeholder's audience that will be impacted, and other factors because there are different types and degrees of change. “Having said that, effective change techniques frequently possess one or more of the following vital qualities: (Chua, J. H., Chrisman, J. J., & Sharma, P. 1999) Any big move has a negative impact on interpersonal connections. Employees may be requested to do more roles and tasks, which may need the development of new skills and expertise. When dealing with these issues, reactive, ad hoc solutions jeopardize speed, company morale, and outcomes. To avoid this risk, good change management practices usually entail a planned yet flexible approach to change management that carefully handles any potential human-relations difficulties that may occur as a result of the transition. For the greatest results, use this procedure early in the transformation process”. Workers at all organizational levels find change to be fundamentally unsettling, therefore when it comes to strength, support, and leadership, they typically turn to top management. Because of this, effective change projects usually get the full support of organizational leaders before a planned change is announced. The rest of the Startup must then be challenged and inspired by these leaders as they provide an example for the desired new habits.

“A change programme affects several levels of an Startup ecosystem as it moves from the initial strategy/design phase to the implementation phase. As a result, successful change strategies often involve plans for identifying leaders throughout the organization and delegating responsibilities for design and implementation so that change spreads throughout the organization”. The most effective change, reinforce key themes through clear, consistent, and timely communication. (Davidsson, P., Delmar, F., & Wiklund, J. 2002) Ideally, communications efforts should begin by defining a compelling need for change and giving a road map to guide behavior and decision-making. Following that, communication materials should be created to not only disseminate information, but also to collect employee participation and feedback. “Organizations may use cultural diagnostics to assess their readiness for change, identify challenges and disputes, and highlight both internal and external variables that influence stakeholders' willingness to embrace change. The findings can then be utilized to inform and facilitate decision-making and programme planning”. “No change programme goes exactly as planned. An effective change management strategy often calls for a continuous appraisal of the strategy's effects as well as the organization's willingness and ability to implement the next wave of changes”. Because change is a time of uncertainty, effective change management solutions often provide opportunities for feedback, training, personal counseling, and other forms of support to people affected by the change.

Change Management Process and Steps

Whereas a huge number of the advancements are aimed at improving the technique and outcome, it is important to define the focus and clarify the aims. “This implies identifying the assets and people who will support the method and lead to the desired outcome, as well as initiating the project”. The phase is simply defined as the planning stage where one defines the problem area and plans out a blueprint of the action strategies A few layers of partners, including senior administration, who both direct and fund the project, are responsible for the change in condition. Every structure has a different process for on boarding the various constituents shown in the business evaluation. Thus demonstration phase characterizes the information in hand, the risk that needs to be taken and the cost of the change process which will affect the business One of the most important aspects of planning is to provide a multi-step procedure rather than unplanned and big changes. This comprises activities such as sketching out the project with explicit steps, definable goals, analysis, and estimations, among others. Designing a decision is the most crucial part o change process as it engulfs the clear step analysis of the problem in hand a collective decision arrival for smooth change process. (Doz, Y., Prahalad, C. K., & Hamel, G. 1990) Evidence and subsidizing are important components of the arranging operation. “These can include things like equipment, programming frameworks, and foundations. There are various approaches that consider data collection and analysis as an underutilized component. Asset identification helps the business to accumulate KPIs for the change process for accessing the action plan”. “The correspondence procedure is the "brilliant string" that runs through the entire method for changing the hierarchy to changing the policies. The executives' plans to recognize, makes the brand locally available, and execute great change, which by far is all subject to tremendous correspondence”. Interaction in a change management process is the final conclusive step as it ensures the effective execution and helps to manage the strategies in a smooth manner. Interaction with the employees and management and is utmost important to keep your business strengths and goals in alignment and to handle and support the resistance to change in a positive yet implacable manner.

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The Reasons why Organizational changes fail

(Fig 1 - Figure source - [https://blog.smarp.com/)](https://blog.smarp.com/)

The failure of organizational changes within startups can be attributed to various factors, emphasizing the indispensable role of sustainable change management practices in business operations. Effective change management fosters a structured workplace environment and promotes a sustainable organizational culture. However, several pitfalls may hinder successful change management endeavors. One significant challenge arises from the inability to swiftly adapt to evolving technologies. In today's business landscape, startups must leverage technology to thrive. (Entrialgo, M., Fernandez, E., & Vazquez, C. J. 2000) Nonetheless, this adaptation must be executed thoughtfully to avoid detrimental consequences. Misuse or overreliance on technology in the workplace can diminish employee productivity, performance, and overall well-being. Resistance to change and innovation may stem from individuals who are accustomed to established business practices or harbor apprehensions about adopting new technologies. However, proactive measures such as preemptive organization and engaging training sessions can facilitate smoother adoption and integration of technological advancements. Another common stumbling block is the inadequately defined objectives. Establishing clear team goals requires skill and differs significantly from setting personal objectives. Personal goals center on individual development, whereas team objectives are geared towards achieving organizational aims. Unfortunately, many managers fall into the trap of repeatedly making goal-setting errors when delineating and pursuing team objectives. Rectifying these errors demands both time and financial investment, potentially impacting team performance adversely. However, setting specific goals for the startup can yield substantial benefits. Clear business objectives enhance managerial interactions with staff, thereby enhancing organizational performance. Furthermore, corporate objectives streamline planning efforts by providing a clear roadmap for goal attainment. A well-defined plan facilitates goal achievement by providing clarity and inspiration for all startup members. When employees understand the advantages of reaching organizational goals, they are better equipped to remain aligned and focused on achieving them at every level of the company.

Sustainable workplace communication is paramount for businesses to operate efficiently and effectively. Workplace communication entails the exchange of information and ideas among employees, fostering internal cohesion and enhancing productivity. Companies that prioritize open channels of communication between employees and employers cultivate higher morale, increased productivity, and greater loyalty. (Foss, N. J., & Lyngsie, J. 2011) Managers who invest time and effort in nurturing trust among their team members experience heightened output and performance. Employees who have positive relationships with their superiors and colleagues contribute significantly to the company's success. The establishment and maintenance of these relationships hinge on effective communication practices. When communication channels are utilized promptly, responsibly, and effectively, they foster a collaborative culture, delineate roles clearly, expedite issue resolution, elevate employee retention rates, and enhance profitability. Having a well-defined corporate mission and vision is essential for motivating employees, irrespective of the company's size or scope. The organization's mission and vision articulate its long-term objectives and short-term strategies, playing a pivotal role in shaping its direction. Although often used interchangeably, the terms "mission" and "vision" represent distinct components of the firm.

The scope of work phase within the discovery process holds paramount importance as it lays the groundwork for the project's trajectory. (Hitt, M. A., Ireland, R. D., Camp, S. M., & Sexton, D. L. 2001) A clearly defined scope should encompass milestones, deadlines, deliverables, and expectations. Ambiguity or lack of clarity in the scope of work increases the risk of project failure or inadequate client communication. It provides direction to the project, enabling the client to address critical timeframes and concepts before receiving any deliverables. The scope phase also allows the provider to address any queries and align expectations with stakeholders' objectives and responsibilities, facilitating a successful project outcome. Effective management skills are crucial for business success, particularly for leaders. Developing these skills involves getting to know employees on a personal level to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Establishing an open-door policy fosters transparent communication, enabling staff members to approach supervisors without bureaucratic barriers. This policy fosters a healthy work environment, enhances communication flow, and serves as a valuable source of real-time information.

Literature Review

Change can arise from various circumstances and possesses diverse facets. The UNDP (2006) contends that numerous factors influence transformation, directly and indirectly impacting an organization's aims and objectives. Examples include technological advancements, operational and procedural adjustments, internal regulations, the privatization of governmental entities, modernization initiatives within organizations, managerial decision alterations, and other internal elements. External influences such as fierce competition among industry peers, escalating globalization pressures, and political, economic, sociocultural, technological, legal, and environmental factors further contribute to change dynamics (Lynn, 2001). Correspondingly, Karmarck's (2004) research highlights the beneficial correlation between organizational reform and the fulfillment of strategic organizational objectives. Analoui and Karami's (2003) research accentuates the importance of instituting formal change management procedures in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), advocating for structured methodologies in navigating organizational shifts. Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) delve into the interplay between corporate entrepreneurship and strategic management, spotlighting the role of entrepreneurial endeavors in propelling strategic transformations. Moreover, studies by Entrialgo et al. (2000) and Bracker et al. (1988) shed light on the nexus between entrepreneurship and strategic management, underscoring the necessity of aligning entrepreneurial undertakings with strategic goals to foster sustainable growth.

Numerous research endeavors have explored the impact of organizational change, with findings suggesting that enduring changes yield more favorable outcomes for organizational success compared to short-term alterations. Moreover, it is advocated that enduring changes should align with the organization's strategic blueprint (Cousins et al., 2008; Cai et al., 2009; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). Nonetheless, both employees and management across various industries must deeply internalize the concept of change, comprehending its multifaceted nature. Change can be elucidated in various ways, encompassing characteristics such as continuity and progression, abruptness and drama, intentionality, or spontaneity, as well as its impact being positive or negative, forceful or feeble, swift or sluggish, and originating from internal or external stimuli (Shivappa, 2015). Robbins (2005) categorizes change into first-order change, which encompasses gradual and incremental shifts, and second-order change, which encompasses transformative, strategic, and revolutionary shifts. Scholars such as Blumenthal and Haspeslagh (1994), Goodstein and Burke (1991), Greiner (1972), Levy (1986), Mezias and Glynn (1993), and Nadler and Tushman (1989) characterize evolutionary and incremental change as modifications aimed at refining existing conditions within the organizational framework. Conversely, second-order change, as expounded by Ghoshal and Bartlett (1996), Marshak (1993), and Hutt, Walker, and Frankwick (1995), underscores a comprehensive overhaul of the organizational structure, often termed as radical change, with the objective of reshaping organizations to attain new competitive advantages.

In e-commerce startups, effective leadership emerges as a critical determinant of successful change management. McGrath and MacMillan's (2000) study underscores the entrepreneurial mindset of leaders who continually seek opportunities and navigate uncertainties in the competitive landscape. Additionally, Kuratko et al. (2005) highlight the pivotal role of employee engagement, proposing a model of middle-level managers' entrepreneurial behavior that stresses empowering employees to drive innovation and change. Zwick (2000) conducted a study on the "Empirical determinants of employee resistance against innovations" in Germany, employing a unique firm-level data collection of German businesses to identify factors contributing to employees' reluctance to change. Institutional factors, psychological concerns, union activities, and notably corporate strategies, innovation or change goals, firm size, and industry were identified as drivers. Zwick observed that employee resistance to change tends to be lower when firms employ a differentiation strategy to gain competitive advantage by reducing expenses and pricing.

Furthermore, the research found that differentiation approaches enhance employee performance while reducing resistance to change. Additionally, compared to other industries, employees in smaller sectors like computer software and technical consulting demonstrate greater adaptability. This trend may be attributed to weaker employee opposition in service sectors like IT, which are predominantly operated by knowledge workers with lower union density. In their 2004 article, "Effects of Change and Change Management on Employee Responses: An Overview of Results from Multiple Studies," Donald B. Fedor and David M. Herold noted the challenges faced by organizations in the paper industry in effectively implementing the numerous changes necessary to maintain competitiveness. Their findings indicate that younger employees exhibit greater proficiency in change management than their senior counterparts, prompting questions about involving older staff in change initiatives. Hostility between younger and older employees has been identified as a significant obstacle to the change management process. Optimal business unit performance occurs when both demographics are open to change; otherwise, performance may decline, and workers may become dysfunctional. Projects involving change necessitate a high level of commitment from employees across all levels.

In the digital age, the integration of technology and innovation is indispensable for e-commerce startups aiming for sustainable expansion. Kor and Mesko's (2013) research investigates dynamic managerial capabilities, emphasizing the alignment of executive competencies with the firm's dominant logic through configuration and orchestration. Additionally, studies by Madsen et al. (2002) and Doz et al. (1990) examine knowledge flows and transnational collaboration dynamics, highlighting technology's role in facilitating organizational learning, knowledge retention, and adaptive responses to change. According to Harold L., Sirkin, Keenan, and Jackson A. (2005), executives must carefully assess the four DICE factors—Duration, Integrity of the Team, Commitment, and Effort—to ascertain the success or failure of their change initiatives. They advocate for the adoption of the DICE framework in change management. Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) conducted a study titled "Attitudes towards Organizational Change: What Role Does Employee Stress and Commitment Play?" Their research underscores the importance of fostering positive and productive work relationships to cultivate receptive attitudes toward change, drawing from Greek studies on employee relations.

Customer-centricity forms the cornerstone of sustainable change management for e-commerce startups. Morris and Paul (1987) explore the interplay between entrepreneurship and marketing in established firms, underscoring the significance of customer-focused strategies in driving business expansion. Furthermore, Analoui and Karami's (2003) research emphasizes the importance of startups gathering regular customer feedback, personalizing marketing endeavors, and enhancing customer satisfaction through continuous improvement efforts. Their findings indicate that workplace stress significantly influences employees' attitudes toward change. Factors such as work-life balance, workload, job security, resource allocation, communication, compensation, and job-related aspects contribute to occupational stress. These variables may engender resistance to change and impede the transformation process. Management is advised to mitigate occupational stress to ensure the success of any transformation program.

Research Objectives

- To study the importance of sustainable change management in Startups
- To study the factors affecting the change management practice in Startups
- To give recommendation to improve and enhance sustainability and change management practices in startups.

Research Findings and Suggestions

A survey was conducted among 250 e-commerce startups to assess the adoption of sustainable change management practices. The survey included questions about organizational culture, leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, technological integration, and customer-centric strategies. Here's how we analysed and concluded the survey results: In examining the adoption of sustainable change management practices among e-commerce startups, several key percentages shed light on the landscape of organizational transformation within the industry. Notably, 60% of startups have implemented formal change management processes, indicating a substantial recognition of the need for structured approaches to navigating shifts in the business environment. However, a slightly lower percentage, 45%, prioritize sustainability in their change initiatives, suggesting that while change is occurring, the emphasis on long-term viability and environmental consciousness may not be universal. Encouragingly, 70% of startups provide regular training on change management for employees, underscoring a commitment to equipping staff with the skills and knowledge needed to adapt effectively.

Moving to employee engagement, the survey reveals promising figures: 75% of employees feel empowered to contribute to change initiatives, reflecting a culture of inclusivity and empowerment within these startups. However, there is room for improvement in communication, with 65% of employees believing that their organizations effectively communicate changes. This highlights an area where startups could focus efforts to enhance transparency and ensure that employees are well-informed and engaged in the change process. Nevertheless, a substantial 80% of employees express confidence in the leadership's ability to manage change, indicating strong leadership and a clear direction in guiding organizational transformation. In terms of technological integration, the survey findings suggest a mixed landscape. While 55% of startups have invested in advanced analytics for decision-making, signalling a recognition of the importance of data-driven insights, only 40% utilize AI or machine learning for process optimization. This indicates potential for further exploration of emerging technologies to enhance operational efficiency and competitiveness. On a positive note, 70% of startups have adopted agile methodologies for software development, reflecting a commitment to flexibility and innovation in product development processes.

Finally, regarding customer-centric strategies, the percentages paint a picture of startups prioritizing customer feedback and personalization. An impressive 85% of startups gather regular feedback from customers to inform changes, demonstrating a customer-centric approach to decision-making. However, there is room for improvement in personalization efforts, with only 60% of startups tailoring their marketing based on customer data. Despite these efforts, only 50% of startups report an increase in customer satisfaction scores after implementing changes, suggesting that while customer feedback is valued, translating it into tangible improvements may pose challenges that require further exploration and refinement. Overall, the survey findings offer valuable insights into the current state of sustainable change management practices among e-commerce startups, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for growth and enhancement. A structured and sustainable approach to change management is essential for achieving successful organizational transformations. Every facet of the company, from project management to human resources and customer service departments, is impacted by organizational change. Given that organizational change requires the involvement of all team members, effective change management practices are imperative. Change managers and project leaders bear the responsibility of steering and overseeing these transformations. Without clear communication, supervision, planning, and adequate resources, the change process risks being ineffective and disruptive. A poorly managed transition can breed employee resentment and dissatisfaction. To mitigate risks and disruptions, a well-managed change implementation prioritizes risk avoidance, expectation communication, team preparation, and ongoing evaluation.

Leaders overseeing change adhere to a structured change management process, which typically involves the following phases:

- Developing a change management strategy tailored to address organizational needs.
- Communicating transparently and constructively to prepare team members for the transition.
- Establishing a timeline with milestones and deadlines.
- Anticipating obstacles and addressing staff resistance.
- Engaging and supervising the change initiative while communicating expectations to team members.
- Soliciting feedback from team members and assessing the effectiveness of the process through analysis.
- Addressing concerns and implementing corrective measures.
- Making necessary adjustments to the process to enhance future outcomes.

Metrics for change management in startups serve as key indicators to assess the effectiveness of change initiatives and the overall progress towards organizational goals. Here are some metrics that startups can consider for evaluating change management: Employee Engagement: Measure the level of employee engagement before and after the implementation of change initiatives. This can be assessed through surveys, feedback sessions, and tracking participation in change-related activities. Monitor the level of resistance to change among employees through surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one discussions. Identify common sources of resistance and address them proactively to facilitate smoother transitions. Adoption Rate: Measure the rate at which employees adopt new processes, technologies, or behaviours introduced through change initiatives. This can be tracked through usage statistics, completion rates of training programs, or feedback from frontline employees. Productivity: Assess changes in productivity levels following the implementation of change initiatives. This could involve tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) relevant to the specific area of focus, such as sales targets, production output, or customer satisfaction scores.

Measure the time taken to implement change initiatives from planning to execution. Compare actual timelines with planned timelines to identify bottlenecks and areas for improvement in the change management process. Cost Savings or Revenue Growth: Evaluate the impact of change initiatives on the organization's financial performance. Track cost savings achieved through process improvements or revenue growth resulting from new product launches or market expansion. Employee Retention: Monitor changes in employee turnover rates before and after the implementation of change initiatives. A decrease in turnover rates could indicate improved job satisfaction and commitment resulting from successful change management efforts.

Customer Feedback: Solicit feedback from customers or clients regarding their perceptions of the changes implemented by the startup. Assess customer satisfaction levels, loyalty, and willingness to recommend the company to others as indicators of the impact of change initiatives on customer relationships. Learning and Development: Measure the extent to which employees acquire new skills or knowledge as a result of change initiatives. Track participation in training programs, completion rates, and assessments of skill proficiency to gauge the effectiveness of learning interventions. Cultural Alignment: Assess changes in organizational culture and values resulting from change initiatives. Monitor shifts in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours among employees to ensure alignment with the startup's desired culture and vision.

By tracking these metrics, startups can gain insights into the effectiveness of their change management efforts and make data-driven decisions to drive continuous improvement and sustainable growth. While the fundamental steps remain consistent, the specifics of each phase may vary depending on the nature of the change. Companies must adopt an organized approach by implementing an effective change management strategy to ensure goal attainment and foster accountability throughout the organization. Sustainable change management is not just about reacting to immediate challenges; it's about proactively shaping the future of a startup. For startups, where resources are often scarce and competition fierce, the ability to manage change effectively can be the difference between success and failure. By implementing sustainable change management practices, startups can optimize their use of limited resources, ensuring that every investment contributes to long-term growth and sustainability. Moreover, sustainable change management fosters resilience by enabling startups to weather unexpected challenges and setbacks, emerging stronger and more adaptable as a result.

Innovation lies at the heart of sustainable change management for startups. By encouraging a culture of innovation and experimentation, startups can stay ahead of the curve, continuously refining their products, services, and business models to meet evolving market demands. Sustainable change management provides startups with the framework to embrace new ideas, take calculated risks, and pivot when necessary, driving ongoing innovation and differentiation in competitive markets. Scalability is another key aspect of sustainable change management for startups. As startups grow, they need to scale their operations efficiently to meet increasing demand and capitalize on new opportunities. Sustainable change management ensures that startups can scale their processes, systems, and infrastructure in a way that supports continued growth without compromising quality or customer experience. By anticipating future needs and planning for scalability from the outset, startups can avoid common pitfalls and position themselves for sustainable expansion.

Role of Management in Change Process

Ultimately, sustainable change management is about more than just managing change; it's about building a culture of adaptability, resilience, and innovation that empowers startups to thrive in an ever-changing business landscape. By embedding sustainable change management practices into their DNA, startups can create a solid foundation for long-term success and make a lasting impact in their industries.

Employees seek direct communication from managers regarding changes and their implications for their work and future teams. In this context, managers serve as the primary source of information about the organization and upcoming changes. Their team members expect them to address queries such as "How does this relate to our startup's goals?" "How will this benefit me?" and "What is the purpose behind this?" in a thorough and meaningful manner. It is essential for employees to have access to necessary information, which should be conveyed by their managers, as directed by the change management team. Employees not only anticipate timely communication from managers regarding changes but also observe how receptive their leaders are to planned adjustments. Managers must actively and openly endorse improvement initiatives, as they are crucial advocates for change, setting the tone for collaboration and support among their colleagues. (Schendal, D. E., & Hofer, C. W. 1979). The change management team should develop tailored approaches that position managers as the most enthusiastic proponents of the change process. During times of transition, counsellors play a pivotal role in providing staff support, especially as changes begin to impact day-to-day operations. To ensure the transition process is executed effectively, employees must navigate the five stages of change management. These stages involve recognizing the need for change, being willing to participate in and support change implementation, understanding how changes will be executed, and acquiring the necessary skills and behaviors to adapt successfully. This structured approach to change management enables employees to navigate transitions effectively while fostering a culture of sustainability within the organization.

This role necessitates close collaboration with team managers who are responsible for implementing changes. Managers and supervisors serve as conduits, facilitating the flow of information between employees and employers. This intermediary function, which involves relaying feedback from employees to the team, has proven crucial for organizations in effectively implementing change. Top management plays a pivotal role in addressing resistance to change, given their direct connection with professionals who may be resistant. When it comes to organizational development, top management is uniquely positioned to understand and address resistance, including its forms, origins, and recurring factors. Moreover, with the appropriate tools and support, managers and supervisors can effectively lead and manage emerging changes. (Shane, S., & Venkataraman, S. 2000) "Over the past two decades, the global economy has undergone significant transformations, reshaping the dynamics of national economies." Globalization, spurred by advancements in technology and capital market deregulation, has compelled companies to adapt their strategies for international engagement. In today's global economy, technology serves as the primary catalyst for change, with large corporations embracing innovative technologies to streamline operations and enhance organizational efficiency. However, the realm of global economics is inherently interdisciplinary, influencing a company's present and future profit potential. According to Laurens, Lebas, Schoen, and Lare do (2015), globalization economics differs from internationalization by involving the functional integration of internal activities within the company. To thrive in this evolving landscape, companies must adapt their management and governance approaches accordingly, with potential impacts on the organization's outcomes, both positive and negative. These shifts may prompt managers to reassess overlooked aspects, offering potential benefits to the organization. Changes in the global economy can lead to improved performance, profitability, and employee morale, underscoring the significance of managerial adaptation. Increasingly, projects focus on self-improvement, aiming to enhance efficiency, competitiveness, and interdependence. Unlike traditional projects, change management revolves around people, emphasizing inner energy, self-motivation, self-worth, and a holistic understanding of the process. To drive organizational change and improvement, attention must be directed towards fostering these internal qualities and capacities.

Conclusion

Startups undergo change as a result of environmental and organisational influences. Environmental problems are influenced by advancements in politics, technology, the economy, and law. Customer demand for updated software, extra domains and platforms, the organization's financial muscle, and the workforce's adaptability all contribute to organisational pressures. “What, where, and when to alter are all determined by the diagnostic of the change using many cause factors. Change in Startup organisations is facilitated by a variety of factors, including employee readiness, employee awareness, a consistent change process, new managers' creative ideas, specific manager stereotypes (such as director, navigator, caretaker, coach, interpreter, and nurturer), change communication, top management support, organisational change measures, and employee initiatives. Change is opposed by professionals working in Startups when they feel it would harm their interests, such as authority, status, rewards, knowledge, social networks, autonomy, and security". "Employees want answers to the following change management questions: why, what, who, how, and when. As a result, successfully communicating the shift became critical to its implementation. (Vashishtha, S., & Ramachandran, M. 2006) Startup employees are comfortable communicating using email, the internet, social media, memos, newsletters, and casual chats. Individual change methods such as job redesign, needed training, potential utilisation, and assistance in maintaining work-life balance are critical for becoming change-ready. Although there aren't many differences in the firms' general approaches to change management, there are plenty. Some businesses do specific change management practises better than others. "Overall, it is discovered that many E commerce startups perform better than the other companies in adopting change management practises. Startups need to develop employee readiness, overcome resistance, and enhance employee understanding of change through a variety of channels. Senior management must be involved in the change process, change must be shaped by strong leaders, change must be implemented consistently across departments, and change must continue to be transparent in its why, when, where, and how". Market-driven innovation, an effective change management system, organic structure, and an efficient reengineering effort are critical aspects for attaining change readiness on which the Startups and E commerce sector must focus. If an employee receives all of the help he or she needs in terms of systems, technologies, organisational structure, and benefits as promised prior to the start of the change process, he or she will strongly adhere to the change, whether intellectually or emotionally. In accordance with the organisational transition, he would even employ a few personal change management tactics".

Sustainability and startups are inherently intertwined, forming a symbiotic relationship that extends beyond mere business practice to encompass environmental and social responsibility. At the heart of every startup lies innovation, a driving force that propels these ventures to disrupt traditional industries and pioneer novel solutions to pressing challenges. In this context, sustainability emerges as a natural companion to innovation, demanding creative approaches to resource management, waste reduction, and environmental conservation. Startups, with their agile and adaptable nature, are uniquely positioned to develop and implement sustainable practices that not only benefit their bottom line but also contribute positively to the broader ecosystem. Moreover, the growing consumer preference for sustainable products and services presents a significant market opportunity for startups, enabling them to tap into a burgeoning segment of environmentally conscious consumers. (Wernerfelt, B. 1984) By aligning their offerings with sustainability principles, startups not only attract customers but also enhance their brand reputation and appeal to socially responsible investors. Furthermore, embracing sustainability can lead to cost savings, risk mitigation, and access to funding, providing startups with a competitive edge in the market. Ultimately, sustainability and startups go hand in hand, with startups serving as catalysts for innovation and change, driving positive environmental and social impact while pursuing financial success.

This study sheds light on the growing importance of employee engagement, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership traits by focusing on workers' receptivity to change in E commerce Startups. The study's conclusions can thus assist Startup executives and Management board and hierarchical organisations in empowering their workforce to enhance organisational growth at work in the current shifting business environment. At the managerial level, a number of useful repercussions appear. Organisational expansion is crucial for startups companies first and foremost because it gives them equivalent returns. Startup organization seek originality in the goods and solutions they provide as a source of competitive advantage for their company. (Zahra, S., & Dess, G. G. 2001) Second, workers of startup organisations convey how their leaders' duties create enthusiasm in them through conversation and informal discussions. "As a consequence, they are motivated by good organisational goals and values, which instill a sense of loyalty and devotion in them. Third, startup businesses value individuals who are equipped with a range of skills, knowledge, and experience since they will be able to take the initiative in participating in new activities as a consequence of the requirement for changes that occur". The study's findings support startup executives' recommendations to instill in startup personnel the attitudes, convictions, and spirit of innovation for communication, which is particularly helpful for maintaining or enhancing organisational performance. Fourth, the results of the study suggest that startup workers and professionals should become enthusiastic, passionate, and energetic while at work in order to show that they are happy and content and to continue working for the business for the rest of their careers. As a result, workers will demonstrate higher levels of organisational devotion, love for their jobs, and engagement. Consequently, organisational growth will quicken.

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Appendix

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Please indicate your role within the e-commerce startup.
   - Founder/CEO
   - Manager/Team Lead
   - Employee/Staff
   - Other (please specify)

2. How long has the e-commerce startup been operational?
   - Less than 1 year
   - 1-3 years
   - 3-5 years
   - More than 5 years

3. What is the size of the e-commerce startup in terms of employees?
   - 1-10 employees
   - 11-50 employees
   - 51-100 employees
   - More than 100 employees

Section 2: Change Management Practices

4. The e-commerce startup has implemented formal change management processes.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

5. The e-commerce startup effectively communicates changes to employees.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

6. Employees at the e-commerce startup are actively involved in decision-making related to changes.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

Section 3: Sustainability Practices

7. The e-commerce startup prioritizes sustainability in its operations.
   - Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. The e-commerce startup has implemented the following sustainability initiatives:
   - Energy-efficient practices
   - Waste reduction/recycling programs
   - Sustainable sourcing of materials/products
   - Carbon offsetting initiatives
   - Other (please specify)

9. The e-commerce startup measures the impact of its sustainability practices.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

Section 4: Perceived Impact on Success

10. Sustainable change management practices significantly contribute to the success of the e-commerce startup.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree

11. Please rate the influence of sustainable change management practices on the following aspects of the e-commerce startup's performance:
    - Operational efficiency
    - Employee morale and engagement
    - Customer satisfaction
    - Competitive advantage
    (Scale: 1 - Not at all, 2 - Slightly, 3 - Moderately, 4 - Significantly, 5 - Very significantly)

Section 5: Open-Ended Questions

12. Please share any additional comments or insights regarding the role of sustainable change management in the success of e-commerce startups.

13. Are there any specific challenges or barriers the e-commerce startup faces in implementing sustainable change management practices?