

## Reengineering Leader

Reengineering is potentially a powerful turn-around approach to improve operations of an organisation, by going back to square one as though there was nothing. Basically it is to redesign.

*"Business Reengineering is the fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service, and speed." – Michael Hammer, one of the re-engineering gurus.*

Reengineering includes thorough rethinking of all business processes, job definitions, management systems, organisational structure, work flow, and the underlying assumptions and beliefs. Reengineering known as Business Process Reengineering/Redesign (BPR), it is the process of taking an organisation through a major organisational change.

Following various publications in 1990 on the fundamental concepts of BPR by Michael Hammer and by Davenport and Short many corporate companies have reported dramatic benefits gained from the successful implementation of BPR. Companies like Ford Motor Co., CIGNA, and Wal-Mart are all recognised as having successfully implemented BPR.

However, despite the significant growth in implementation of the BPR concept, not all organisations embarking on BPR projects achieve their intended result. Michael Hammer and James Champy in their critique of BPR acknowledge that many organisations do not achieve the dramatic results they seek. This has been attributed to lack of sustained management commitment and leadership; unrealistic scope and expectations; and resistance to change. Commitment and leadership in the upper level of command in an organisation are key in this change process.

Others have succeeded only in destroying the morale and momentum built up over the lifetime of the organisation. Many unsuccessful attempts may have been due to the confusion surrounding the concept, how it should be performed, and the leadership of the process.

There are leaders who thrive in situations that have lost vision or focus and love to tune up, heal, and revitalise hurting organisations. They find out what the mission was

and determine on a turn-around strategy for the organisation.

*"Every organisation has to prepare for the abandonment of everything it does." Peter Drucker*

A redesign is essential at some point in the life of an organisation to mark a new beginning towards a new lease of life.

Much has been written on the merits and demerits of 'reengineering'. It remains that the main focus is *radical organisational change*. It demands departure from the status quo and often to be done in a limited period of time.

This radical change demands for a reengineering leadership style which in essence is a combination of several leadership styles at the different stages of the change process.

John Kotter proposed that leading change requires: establishing direction, aligning, motivating, and inspiring the team and staff. Kathleen K. Reardon and others in an article '*Leadership Styles for the Five Stages of Radical Change*' make an effort to demystify the complexity behind leader behaviour and competence during radical change. This process demands leadership styles that will facilitate this change process of *planning, enabling, launching, catalysing, and maintaining*.

In the *planning stage* the focus is on acquiring information, creative ideas, and strategy formulation. This will require a combination of styles: a strategic style that has long term goals, using analysis and questioning to reason things through in strategy development. Then motivational style is needed to develop meaningful visions for the future by focusing on radically new ideas showing a high level of concern for assuring cohesiveness of members of the organisation and encouraging others to follow the vision.

In the *enabling stage*, in addition to strategic and motivational leadership styles, participative style is employed. These styles facilitate explaining the plan, convincing the rest of the team and staff, empowering and assisting them to get through the drastic changes required.

In the *launching stage*, in addition to the strategic leadership style, the directional style is required to overcome resistance while going through implementation steps, meeting goals, getting results, and assessing progress. It is here that tensions in the organisations start to surface, to be ad-

dressed with clear understanding of the strategy but wielding clear authority as in the directional or commanding styles.

In the *catalysing stage*, the team needs gentle push and firm encouragement, but with motivational and participative styles to inspire, energise, and assist the team.

In the *maintaining stage* the focus is on overseeing the progress, guiding, energising, and assisting, whereas the strategic style is critical in ensuring that the proposed drastic changes are on course it has to be supported by the motivational and participative styles.

Simply put, leadership can make or break the BPR. Recognising and admitting that the organisation has a shortage of good leaders is easy, but understanding the level and nature of that shortage is more difficult. It requires unselfish astute leadership to notice the gap in leadership and how to establish a process that will usher in the required appropriate leadership.

Many leaders will try massaging with names like by downsizing, reorganising, restructuring, and rightsizing. However, reengineering is more drastic and may even involve the organisational leader stepping aside, if need be, and could require surgery among the Board Directors to bring the organisation to where it ought to be.

The strongest case for versatility in leadership style comes from the recognition that change is not an event but an extended process, this begs the question: Can any single leader possess the styles needed to lead at every point in the drastic change process?

Leadership experts agree that a key challenge facing leaders now and in the future is responsiveness to radical change.

Most leaders possess different styles which they appropriately apply as each situation demands. The drastic nature and short turn-around BPS puts exceptional pressure on the leader's arsenal of the leadership styles. Leaders can determine which stages of the radical change they are best equipped to handle. And thus determine how to involve others who bring in the appropriate leadership styles required.

Reengineering leadership style is the awareness of one's leadership styles and ability to mobilise other styles that best fit each stage of change to drive the radical change process to fruition. It helps leaders evaluate their preparedness to lead the entire change process to a successful end.