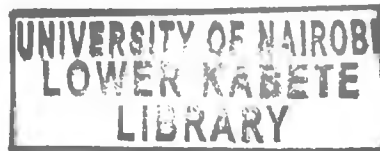


**MANAGING EMPLOYEE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE AT THE KENYA NATIONAL
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (KNCHR).**

BY

NGUGI MERCY NDUTA



**A MANAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI.**

NOVEMBER 2011.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this project is my original work, and has not previously in its entirety or in part been presented at any other university for a degree. All the references cited in the text have been duly acknowledged.

.....*MM Nduta*.....
Ngugi Mercy Nduta

Date ..16th.. November..2011.

D61/77074/2009

This management project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

.....*SNM Nzuve*.....
SNM Nzuve.

Dept of Business Administration

School of Business.

Date ..16/11/11.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ngugi, for their love, care, guidance, support and continuous encouragement that you have always given me. I do also like to extend my sincere appreciation to my siblings, Husker and Varcity and my great friend David for their continuous support. You all complete me.

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I would like to thank the Almighty God for availing the opportunity and strength to pursue my education. It is through His abundant grace that has brought this research project to a success.

Special appreciation goes to my supervisor SNM Nzuve for his encouragement and guidance throughout the project. I also commend Mr. Mwangi Michael for his encouragement and inspiration in my academic pursuits. Special appreciation also goes to the entire staff in the Department of Management Science, School of Business, University of Nairobi.

Thirdly, my gratitude goes out to the entire family of Kenya National Commission on Human Rights for the support accorded to me during the study. Your welcome and hospitality shall remain engrossed in my heart.

There are special people without whom the MBA programme would have been an uphill task: Daniel Mutua, “you are God sent, be blessed”; Olive Sifuna, “you defined the bond of friendship, you are truly a sister”. And to the many brothers and sisters who have been there for me in many different situation and ways, however insignificant it might seem, I appreciate.

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to establish how management responds to employee resistance at Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

The research relied on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered on the randomly selected employees directly thus face-to-face interviews were also conducted. To obtain the sample size, and given the different categories of staff at Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, i.e. Commissioners/ Executives, Senior managements staff and General staff, proportional stratified random sampling technique was used. The final sample comprised of 22 staff members. Secondary data was obtained by examining the company's publications. Content analysis was used to analyze the data.

The study has revealed that by managing employee resistance, KNCHR has been able to successfully undertake various organizational change initiatives. Some of the strategies which were used to manage employee resistance to the proposed organizational changes included; adjusting the organizational culture, change in strategic direction, support by top management, communicating changes in good time, training, participation, scheduling change and coercion. Benefits realized from mitigating against employee resistance included enhancing employee retention, increased level of employee productivity and positive spillover effects to KNCHR's customers. From the findings, important recommendations worth considering if organizations are to successfully address the phenomenon of employee resistance include; it is crucial that managers in such organizations have adequate skills in change management; secondly, it is essential that managers clearly recognize and identify the underlying causes of employee resistance to change as they occur and finally, managers need to take cognizance of the positive aspects of resistance. Current study, though with some limitations in term of response and scope of study, has served the purpose of initiating researching on employee resistance to change in an organizational setup, which can be used as a basis for further study and benefit to the management of other institutions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1: Background of the study	1
1.1.1: Organizational Change	1
1.1.2: Resistance to Change	3
1.1.3: Kenya National Commission on Human Rights	4
1.2: Statement of the problem	6
1.3: Objective of the Study	7
1.4: Importance of the Study	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1: Organizational Change	9
2.2: Employee resistance to Organizational Change	10
2.2.1: Perspectives of Employee resistance to Organizational Change	12
2.3: Causes of Employee resistance	13
2.4: Why Organizations are to Manage Employee resistance to Change	17

2.5: Studies on Managing Employee resistance to Change	18
2.6: Change Styles of Managing Employee resistance	19
2.6.1: Education and delegation	19
2.6.2: Collaboration	20
2.6.3: Participation	20
2.6.4: Direction	21
2.6.5: Coercion	21
2.7: Positive Employee resistance	23
2.8: Common mistakes when Managing Employee resistance	24
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	26
3.1: Introduction	26
3.2: Research Design	26
3.3: Population	26
3.4: Sampling	26
3.5: Data Collection	27
3.6: Data Analysis	28
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION...29	
4.1: Introduction	29
4.2: Type of resistance	29
4.3: Causes of employee resistance	30
4.4: Impact of employee resistance to change	31
4.5: Managing the resistance	32
4.5.1: Adjusting the Organizational Culture	33
4.5.2: Top Management Support	34
4.5.3: Communicating Change	35

4.5.4: Training	36
4.5.5: Participation	37
4.5.6: Scheduling Change	37
4.5.7: Coercion	38
4.6: Addressing the challenges experienced during the process of managing employee resistance	39
4.7: Benefit realized	41
4.8: Discussion of Findings	41
 CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 43
5.1: Introduction	43
5.2: Summary	43
5.3: Conclusion	44
5.4: Recommendations	45
5.5: Limitations of the Study	46
5.6: Suggestions for further research	46
 REFERENCES	 47
APPENDICES	
Appendix I: Letter of Introduction	51
Appendix II: Questionnaire	52

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Causes of Resistance to Change.	16
Table 2: Styles of Managing Employee Resistance to Change.	22
Table 3.4.1: Sample size by stratified sampling	27

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: People's Reaction to Organizational Change.

12

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

As Charles Darwin once said, it is neither the strongest nor cleverest species that survives, but those most adaptable to change. Change is the single most important element of successful business management today. In recent years, virtually every organization has had to deal with rapid change and often unpredictable change, and often employees are clueless about what's causing the change and how it affects them. Organizations are not fine tuned machines that can be copied easily; they are living, breathing, and changing organisms that interact with millions of other living, breathing, changing organisms (Hodgetts and Hegar, 2007). To remain competitive in increasingly aggressive market, organizations (and individuals in them) have to adopt a positive attitude to change.

Robert Heller (2000) argues that, ignoring or trivializing a changing trend can be costly, so managing change teaches managers how to be one step ahead of rivals, set trends, and lead change in order to survive. Carnall (2007) points out that it is generally accepted that the quality of an organization's human resources represent a critical factor of business success and for human resources practitioners, managing change means moving employees to new behavior while remaining at a key competitive advantage particularly competency and customer satisfaction. While managing change, human resources practitioners expect to experience some form of employee resistance and for them, come up with effective mechanism to deal with the resistance to successfully implement the change efforts is a priority.

1.1.1 Organizational Change

Change is sudden, nonlinear, and constant. Its amplitude and direction can't be forecast. Killer apps can come from anywhere; new competitors are lurking everywhere. Markets emerge, flourish, inspire imitators, breed competitors, and disappear seemingly overnight. Brands, which

once took years to establish and which, once established, seemed unassailable, now burst on the scene like new strain of virus, finding competitive spaces and market niches that were previously invisible. Internet buzz can make a product overnight-or break it. There is more choice than ever, more challenges than ever- and more change than ever. As a result, products and markets are continuously morphing, so organizations that want to prosper over the long term need to practice the art of continuous organizational change (Hodgetts and Hegar, 2007). Managing change, the formal process for organizational change, is the systematic approach and application of knowledge, tools and resources to leverage the benefits of change. Organizational change management means defining and adopting corporate strategies, structures, procedures and technologies to deal with change stemming from internal and external conditions.

According to Pearce and Robinson (1997), the impetus of change in most cases usually comes from the external environment. Organizations are constantly being forced to go through continuous adaption due to factors like progressive globalization, increased competition, change in information technology, and deregulation. Increasingly, managing change is seen as a permanent business function to improve efficiency and keep organizations adaptable to the competitive marketplace. Many organizations strategically use change to improve organizational effectiveness. But bringing about successful change in today's competitive environment requires thoughtful planning, effective communication and employee acceptance (Metselaar, 1997). Burnes (2000) argues that the process of managing these organizational changes cannot be thought of or put into effect in isolation. Effective organizational change is built on effective overall strategic change intervention, example; Management information systems, work design, organizational structure and human resources practices.

Carnall (2007) outlined that diagnosis for managing organizational change is partly a matter of analysis and partly a matter of understanding the human dimension of the organization. While it is important that any diagnosis gives full weighing to the commercial and organizational issues, this is not enough. Attention must be given to the people involved. Can they work more effectively? Could they be managed more appropriately? Can we engage their commitment to change? These questions turn on whether or not we believe that there is potential for improvement within people. According to the Society for Human Resource Management's

(SHRM) 2007 Change Management Survey Report, the top two obstacles encountered during major organizational change are communication breakdown and employee resistance.

1.1.2 Resistance to Change

People's reactions to change will depend on the benefits that they think will result from it. If they believe they will profit from change, they will support it; if they feel they will lose status, prestige, earning power, or the job itself because of change, they will fight it. Evaluation of change will almost always lead to one of the four reactions: rejection, resistance, tolerance or acceptance (Julia and Veronica, 2008). Employee resistance can either be overt or covert. Overt resistance is observable; management can see it. Work slowdown, the setting of lower informal production norms, and outright sabotage are examples. Covert resistance is not readily observable because it is done under the guise of working as usual. For example, the management has brought in a group of consultants to study operations and make efficiency recommendations. The workforce is concerned that some of them will lose their jobs or will be transferred to other departments. In an effort to thwart the consultants' efforts, the workers use veiled resistance. When the consultants ask for some data on a particular topic, a worker hands them a massive report containing the information that will take them more time to find the required material. In short, the workers are not refusing to go along; they are simply making it more difficult for the consultants to finish their job (Hodgetts and Hegar, 2007).

Some people believe that resistance to change is inevitable. In most cases, this is true, for when an organization's employees weigh the benefits associated with the status quo against those that they believe will result from the change, they opt for maintaining things the way they are. Change as it is usually orchestrated, creates initiatives, overload and organizational chaos, both of which provoke strong resistance from the people most affected, the employees. As a result, they resist alteration of the status quo. A key role in reducing resistance to change is making people believe they will be looked after in the change process. This boils down to the relationship between the employer and the employee. The key role is human relationship management. To fulfill the role of a successful change agent, human resources practitioners must be involved in managing change from the moment the topic of change is brought forth. With an

in-depth understanding of change, from the business imperatives to change management tools and techniques and employee reactions to change, the human resources practitioner fills an important role to foster successful organizational change (Metselaar, 1997).

1.1.3 The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (the National Commission) is an independent national human rights institution established by the government through an Act of Parliament, namely the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights Act 2002. The organization has approximately 70 full time employees with another occasional 20 part time employees. Its core mandate is to further the protection and promotion of human rights in Kenya. Many countries have similar bodies that audit the government on human rights. The UN encourages governments to create national human rights institutions as a strategy towards enhancing protection and promotion of human rights.

As Kenya ushered in a new dawn with the promulgation of the new constitution in the year 2010, it brought with it many changes which affected both the private and public sector. One of the major change it brought forth is the establishment of the different independent commissions' to assist the government govern its citizen appropriately. According to Article 59 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights is required to merge with the Kenya Commission on Gender and Development to make one independent body, which is the Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission, the mother organization being the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. This new clause was not as welcomed as anticipated as it meant implementing major organizational changes to the two commissions to encompass the merger. This was due to the fact that each organization was operating independently, each having its own building, functions, structures, rules and regulations, culture, and employees. It is on this basis that the two Commissions had to come up with a solid plan to incorporate the changes in operations from each to make one.

This provision of the Constitution has forced the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights to undergo some dramatic changes over the past years in both its strategies and operations. In April 2010, two consultants were appointed to conduct a situational analysis of KNCHR and

identify major areas that required organizational changes in response to the environmental change. KNCHR'S strategic direction was the first area slotted for change. The dynamic nature of the environment necessitated a re-examination of KNCHR's current position and future direction so as to respond effectively to its mandate. This culminated in a comprehensive revision of KNCHR's strategic plan driven by the board and assisted by the external consultants. The organizational structure was the second area that needed change. KNCHR operated for a long time with a top-heavy structure which was largely blotted, inefficient and bureaucratic. Revision of the strategic plan also necessitated realignment of the organizational structure. This was done in order to forestall structural inertia. Third, most of the processes at KNCHR were outdated and manual in nature. Management found it necessary to review the internal business processes by automating and realigning most of them to make them more efficient.

The fourth area that urgently needed change was the organizational culture. According to a cultural web analysis done on the organization in 2009 by a task force consisting of management and external consultants, it was observed that KNCHR had a predominantly defender culture. In order to meet KNCHR's strategic objectives, the management undertook to change the organizational culture to a prospective culture which is pro change. The final area targeted for change was the Performance Management System. Due to the introduction of performance contracts and the 360 degree performance appraisal approach in State Corporations, KNCHR's management found it necessary to implement a new performance management system. Under the new system, employee were expected to sign annual contracts which would be renewed based on meeting certain work target and in addition, a reward mechanism was to be put in place so as to motivate employee's who met their annual work target.

In an effort to successfully implement the organizational changes in the areas listed above, the management at KNCHR was faced with the challenge of addressing employee resistance emanating from inertia, misunderstanding, lack of trust, fear of failure, poor training, threat of job status and uncertainty.

1.2 Statement of the problem

For many years now it has been said that the pace of change experienced by organizations and those who work in them is increasing. Change has become a way of life, in part because organizations are experiencing many different types of change. As industries consolidate, there are increasing numbers of mergers and acquisitions. The pressure on organizations to compete in a more global arena is leading to different competitive pressures and more strategic alliances. In addition, many organizations need to change their strategy just to remain competitive. Yet the sad fact is that the success rate for most of the change programmes launched within organizations is poor (Julia and Veronica Hailey, 2008). Robert Heller (1998) points out that organizational change creates anxiety, uncertainty and stress, even for those managing change, and even if they are fully committed to change. Seldom are there any guarantees that the new approach will work, will deliver the goods, as a result, the well planned change practice experiences resistance.

One of the most significant changes of managing organizational change is the increasingly role of human resources function being identified as part of the process. This trend can be attributed to the fact that human resources professionals have made significant strides over the past decade in becoming business partners and demonstrating the value that they can add, not just to implementing business decisions, but to the actual strategy-making process. A significant number of any organization's business strategies require major changes in people related issues, especially employee resistance to change efforts. The human resources function and individual human resources professionals develop and manage the key "people" systems needed to support organizational change. Their key role is to find out why employee resistance occurs and determine how it can be reduced or eliminated (Ulrich, 1997).

In his research, Odhiambo (2006) set out to document change management practices at National Housing Corporation. He observed that change management practices cannot be designed without taking into account the human behavior. Ulrich (1997) argues that successful implementation of organizational change depends above all on understanding and accommodating the human element. Despite the increase in studies done in managing organizational change, there is still a lot to be learned about how to effectively manage resistance in organizations. As mentioned earlier, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights has been

going through several organizational changes due to the merger with Kenya Commission on Development and Gender. These changes in its strategies and operations are expected to have elicited some resistance. These research aims at addressing the following questions in relation to Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. What resistance was experienced? And how was it handled?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study seeks to establish how management responds to employee resistance at Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The proposed study will have wide implications to various individuals and institutions, including the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, other public organizations, academia and practitioners in both the public and private sector.

The Commission is in the process of being merged with the Kenya Gender Commission in accordance with the new Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Findings of this research will be a useful source of information to its management and especially the human resources section as it highlights key focus areas in ensuring that employee resistance is properly managed to ensure change is implemented successfully.

As noted by different scholars and human resources practitioners, managing change has remained a critical area of research. Odhiambo (2006) observed that little research has focused on establishing organizational change management from other change interventions like marketing or human resources management point of view. The current study goes along way in addressing this gap. The findings will also go along way in providing an ample base for further research in similar institutions.

Public organizations are constantly adopting new ways and practices of managing organizational changes; hence the findings of the study will boost the understanding of challenges faced by

organizations during the change process especially employee resistance and the various styles of managing the resistance associated by the changes from a human resources management point of view.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Change

Val and Fuentes (2003) have defined organizational change as an empirical observation in an organization entity of variations in shape, quality or state over time after the deliberate introduction of new ways of thinking, acting and operating. Organizational change can occur at three levels which require different changes strategies and techniques. These levels involve; changing the behavior of individuals who work in the organization, changing various organizational structures and systems, and directly changing the organizational climate (Goodstein and Burke, 1991). Change in organizations is really the norm today. According to Reger et al., (1994), organizations are nowadays forced to operate in increasingly dynamic environments and as a result, undergo great pressure to fundamentally change the way they do business. Change in organizations does not happen in a vacuum. Johnson and Scholes (2002), identify political, economic, social, technological and ecological factors as comprising the external environment that present the organization with opportunities, threats and constraints. They pointed out that these factors produce powerful forces in the environment that pressurizes both the public and private organizations to alter permanently existing strategy, structure, policies, technology and practices. This in turn implies that the aim of organizational change is an adaptation of the environment to improve its performance.

There are two schools of thought about how change occurs in organizations. The first sees change as continuous, with organizations transforming on an on-going basis to keep pace with their changing environment. The second sees change as a process of punctuated equilibrium. Meaning changes are usually strategic, transformational and revolutionary. This is where the organization totally changes its essential framework while looking for new competitive advantage (Julia and Veronica, 2008). In order to implement change successfully, organizations need to be adept at managing transitions. Organizations should understand that it isn't 'organizations' that change, but people. For an organization to change, the people within it must

change. Of course, buildings, technology and products can all be changed, but if an organization is to really change, then the people within that organization also need to change the way they behave. This makes managing and achieving change a challenging undertaking for any manager. One of the biggest challenges faced by organizations going through the change process is that posed by resistance to change (Burnes, 1996).

2.2 Employee Resistance to Organizational Change

Ansoff and McDonnell (1990), define employee resistance as a multifaceted phenomenon which introduces unanticipated delays, costs and instabilities into the process of organizational change. Folger and Skarlicki (1990), define resistance as employee behavior that seeks to challenge, disrupt, or invert prevailing assumptions, discourses, and power relations. They stated that resistance reflects the subtext of organizational humanity on stage during organizational transformation efforts. The notion of employee resistance to change is credited to Kurt Lewin who discussed it first in 1940's. His early work focused on the aspects of individual behavior that must be addressed in order to bring about effective organizational change (Kurt, 1945).

Employee resistance has been studied as a prime reason why most change does not succeed or get implemented (Durbin, and Ireland, 1993). As employees' resistance has certain implications for management, also employees play an important role in the success of firm's change and that is why it is a very important factor to be considered during organizational change program. Two types of resistance may stem when in an organizational change, the attitudinal and behavioral resistance (Sandy Kristin, 2000). The extent of employee's resistance range from lack of interest, negative perception & attitude, and strong opposing views, to; overt blocking behavior, violent strikes, and boycotts (Coetsee, 1999).

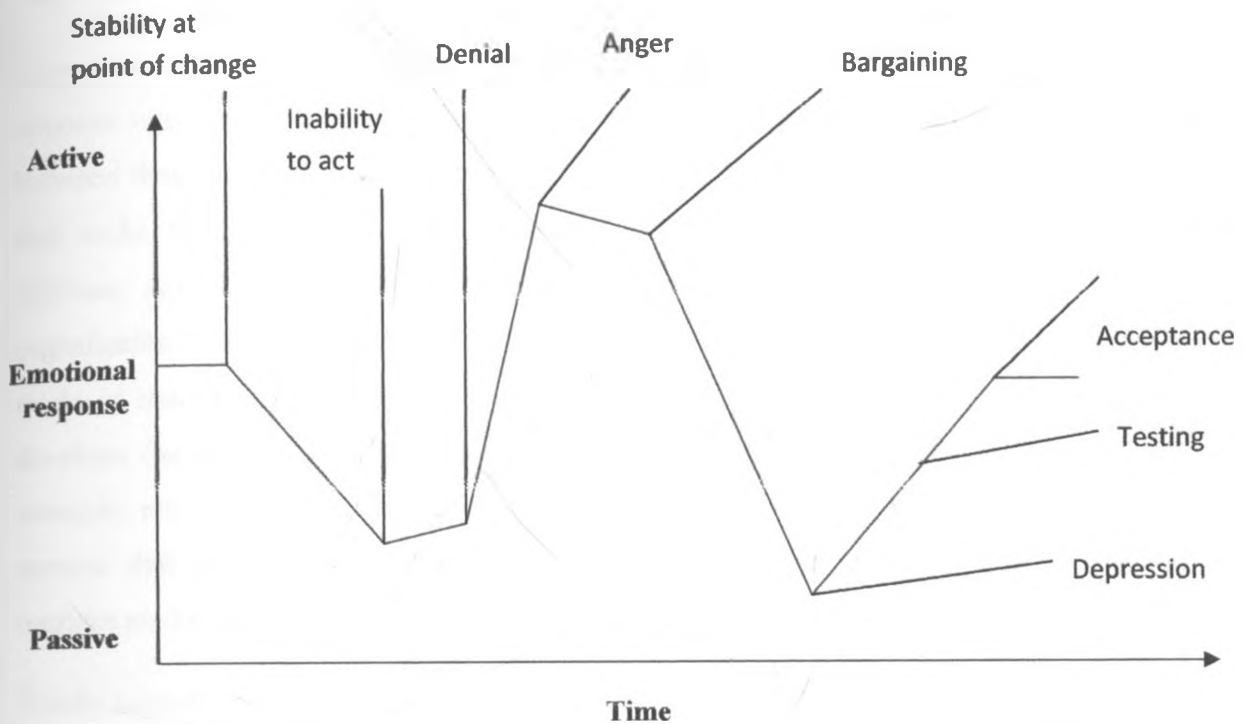
Robert (1998) argues that in response to change, people tend to go through a series of emotional reaction. Typically, passivity and denial give way to a fighting impulse which in turn leads to depression, and finally acceptance; that the duration of this process depends on the particular situation. According to him, the initial response to organizational change is usually negative: passive resistance which is then followed by active resistance and then further passive feeling, before eventually acceptance (See Figure 1). A manager can, however, pre-empt resistance to a

large extent by anticipating and understanding people's reservations. Allow time for these reactions to take their course, and plan presentation and concessions accordingly.

Johnson and Scholes (1998) assert that resistance in organizations occurs at two distinct levels, organizational and individual. Organizations as a whole also manifest behavior similar to individuals when faced with need to change. An organization is a complex system of relationships between people, leaders, technologies, and work processes. From this interaction emerge organizational behavior, culture, and performance. These emergent properties and behaviors are tightly inter-linked. Organizational resistance to change can easily give rise to individual resistance and vice versa. A self-reinforcing loop of increasing resistance can develop in the organization if individuals create an environment in which resistance to change is the norm. That environment in turn encourages increased resistance to change among individual employees. The basic dynamic behind this phenomenon is that the organization is made up of a network of circular casual processes, that is, A influences B, which then influences C, which in turn influences A. Understanding these internal organizational dynamics is a prerequisite for leading effective change processes (Lorenzi et. al., 1995). Regardless of how widespread or systemic change is in organizations, ultimately it is personal. Resistance frequently occurs as a response to an interpersonal or organizational change that has the potential of personal impact. Positive reaction can be supportive of change and yield its success, while negative reaction can undermine or thwart planned change (Schalk and Campbell, 1998).



Figure 1: People's Reaction to Organizational Change.



Source: Robert, H. (1998) "Managing Change", Dorling Kindersley Ltd, pp.38

2.2.1 Perspectives of Employee Resistance to Organizational Change

Review of literature indicates that employee resistance to change has been defined differently by various authors. Further analysis of these definitions indicates that this phenomenon can be differentiated into four main perspectives (Vos, 2006). These are the irrational, political, social and psychological. The last three emanate from a rational point of view and offer more insight for the investigation of resistance than the irrational approach.

The irrational approach views resistance as unavoidable behavior response to change such that when managers and employees are faced with change, they act irrationally by trying to maintain the old habits (Metselaar, 1997). According to this perspective, employee resistance is viewed as a natural aspect of change and involves any force directed away from the changing process. This perspective is rather flawed as it does not attempt to understand the underlying elements that

causes resistance and seems to resign to the fact that resistance is bound to happen regardless of the prevailing circumstances.

According to the political perspective, organizations are made up of coalitions with usually opposite interests. Change is then resisted because it leads to alterations in the existing balance between these coalitions. Folger and Skarlicki (1990), define resistance as employee behavior that seeks to challenge, disrupt, or invert prevailing assumptions, discourses, and power relations. An example is where resistance originates from the existing power structure in an organization. The social perspective holds that organizations are socially constructed realities made of individuals or groups of individuals working together (Vos, 2006). Here, resistance develops during the course of social interaction when group norms and values collide. For example; attempts to change the organizational culture often leads to resistance. Morgan (1986) stresses that the chance of conflict or resistance to change increase when rituals and daily routines are broken.

Finally according to the psychological perspective, people have a tendency towards homeostasis, meaning that people strive for a balance between change and stability (Vos, 2006). Too much change leads to uncertainty and commotion, but no change at all leads to boredom. Resistance in this case lies in the perception of a constant threat to the status quo. This perspective is reflected by Dent and Goldberg (1999) who point out that, individuals naturally rush to defend and protect their status quo if they feel that security or status is threatened.

2.3 Causes of Employee Resistance

The study of causes/antecedents in the literature of employees' resistance is very important as it plays significant role in proposing solutions and implementation of different measures to overcome resistance and its resulting problems. As discussed by Mintzberg (1998), "the cure might actually prove to be just more of the cause". In addition, to make successful organizational change, lots of work has been done by different authors and researchers to find the major causes of employee's resistance and to perfectly deal with the symptoms of resistance. This will lead organizations to solve the right problem which is causing resistance to change. One or some of the below causes can lead the change to severe resistance from employees. The consequences of

employees' resistance are very important to be mentioned here, to reveal the miseries of resistance for organization and the change program. The consequences of employee's resistance to change range from; slow down of the change (and thus increase in cost) (Bryant, 2006), less productivity (outcome), employees corruption, high employees' turnover, disturbance and trouble in change program, failure of change program, and in extreme situation it can even lead the organization to destabilization and breakdown (Coetsee, 1999; Coch and French, 1948).

Organizations may face the above problems in change due to employees' resistance. It should not be denied that resistance to change might be a valuable employees' passion that can be channeled more constructively (Dent Eric and Goldberg Susan 1999). It may help in improving the change plan by utilizing rather than just overcoming (Waddell and Sohal Amrik 1998). However the contention of this study is that, beyond a certain initial level, the employees' resistance results more destructively as mentioned above. The first step after discovering employee's resistance lead us to the exploration of causes of employee's resistance to change which has been thought by different authors as very important for overcoming it.

Johnson and Scholes (1998) outlined six major sources of organizational resistance as structural inertia, limited focus of change, group inertia, threat of expertise, threat of established power relationships and threat of established resource allocations. Individual resistance on the other hand arises due to factors like uncertainty, surprise, personality conflicts, and lack of communication (Kreitner, 1992). Kotter and Schlesinger (1979), point out that there are four major reasons why people resist change. First is fear of losing something of value. Second is misunderstanding or mistrusting the change and its implications. Third, is the belief by employees that the change is of little or no use at all. Finally, is when a low tolerance for change exists in the organization. In these cases, the causes of resistance can be found in both personality and environment. They further argue that if an employee has low tolerance for change, the increased ambiguity that arises as a result of having perform their job differently would likely cause resistance to the new way of doing things.

According to De jager (2001), employees resist change because they have to learn something new. In many cases, there is no disagreement with the benefits of the new process, but rather a fear of the unknown future and about the ability to adapt to it. According to Greenberg and Baron (2002), a distinction exists between primary and secondary causes of resistance. Primary

sources of resistance are perceived as being directly linked to the content of change. This is often the case when change has detrimental effects on the work conditions. In contrast, secondary causes of resistance are defined as barriers that directly or indirectly hinder the implementation of the change. Examples of secondary causes of employee resistance include; lack of time, resources, competencies, and absence of a clear plan to implement change.

Dent and Goldberg (1999) observed that there is usually a lot of similarity in the arguments that various authors in managing employee resistance (Aldag and Stearns, 1991; Durbin and Ireland, 1993; Griffin, 1993; Kreitner, 1992; Schermerhorn, 1989) put forward as the causes of employee resistance. According to Kreitner, 1992 employee resistance arises from those whose jobs are directly affected. Griffin, 1993; Aldag and Stearns, 1991; and Schermerhorn, 1989 are almost synonymous in the causes of employee resistance to change as Table 1 shows. Durbin and Ireland, 1993 on the other hand attribute employee resistance to three main factors; people's fear of poor outcomes (i.e. that they may earn less money, be personally inconvenienced or be required to perform more work), people's fear of the unknown, and workers realization of faults with change overlooked by management and their fear of resulting problems.

After studying the different causes of employees' resistance to change as discussed by different authors, Julia and Veroica, (2008) were able to divide these causes in four different categories, based on the nature of resistance causes. These categories include; Psychological:- Employees negative perception, frustration, anxiety, preference towards status quo, cognitive comfort, fear, past failure, Cynicism or mistrust in top management/owner (Kreitner, 1992; Dubrin & Ireland, 1993) (Val and Fuentes 2003); Materialistic:- Loss of pay, comfort, status, and threat to job security (Dent & Goldberg 1999); Employees' constant capabilities:- Employee's skills (existing), knowledge, & expertise getting obsolete i.e. capabilities gap, embedded routines (Lawrence, 1986) (Val and Fuentes 2003); and Employees concern for firm: - Faults & weaknesses in change program i.e. change is not good for the firm or employees and management have difference/conflict of perceptions about change program and its effects (Dubrin & Ireland, 1993).

Table 1: Causes of Resistance to Change

Author	Kreitner (1992)	Griffin (1993)	Aldag & Stearns (1991)	Schermerhorn (1989)	Dubrin & Ireland (1993)
CAUSES OF EMPLOYEE RESISTANCE					
Surprise	X				
Inertia	X				
Misunderstanding	X	X	X	X	
Emotional Side Effects	X	X	X	X	
Lack of Trust	X	X	X	X	
Fear of Failure	X				X
Personality Conflicts	X	X	X	X	
Poor Training	X				
Treat of Job Status/ Security	X	X	X	X	X
Work Group Breakup	X	X	X	X	
Fear of Poor Outcome					X
Faults of Change					X
Uncertainty		X	X	X	

Source: Dent, E & Goldberg, S. (1999). Challenging Resistance to Change, Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences March.

2.4 Why Organizations are to Manage Employee Resistance to Change

The process of change is ubiquitous and employee resistance has been identified as a critically important contributor to the failure of many well intended and well conceived efforts to initiate change within organizations (Reynolds, 1994). Employee resistance usually impairs concerted efforts to improve performance at both the individual and organizational levels. Many corporate change efforts have been initiated at tremendous cost only to be halted by resistance among the organization's employees. Change suggests letting go of old habits, roles, processes, procedures, and structures (Pearce & Robinson, 1997). There is uncertainty about new requirements and excessive concern about the future. All of these results to anxiety, stress, conflicts, and resistance. According to Eriksson (2004), it is important for change managers to have an understanding of why people resist change, because this allows them to plan strategies aimed at managing resistance from the onset.

Foger and Skarlicki (1999) asserts that organizational change usually generate skepticism and resistance in employee making it sometimes difficult or impossible to implement organizational improvement. The resistance aspect of change can make or break it. Understanding, addressing and embracing resistance is fundamental to understanding and managing change. In order to facilitate a smooth transition from the old to new, organizations must be competent in effectively managing employee resistance to change. Ansoff (1990) points out that resistance to change introduce costs and delay into the change process. This implies that organizations need to take cognizance of employee resistance when implementing change. According to Coetsee (1999), any management's ability to achieve maximum benefits from change depends in part on how effectively they maintain a climate that minimizes resistance behavior and encourages acceptance and support to change. It is therefore very important that change managers anticipate and plan strategies for dealing with employee resistance. If not adequately addresses some of the consequences of employee's resistance to change range from; slow down of the change (and thus increase in cost) (Bryant, 2006), less productivity (outcome), employees corruption, high employees' turnover, disturbance and trouble in change program, failure of change program, and in extreme situation it can even lead the organization to destabilization and breakdown (Coetsee, 1999; Coch and French, 1948).

2.5 Studies on Managing Employee Resistance to Change

Lewis (1947) was the first author to introduce the concept of resistance to change. He is also credited with bringing up the notion of managing and removing employee resistance to proposed changes occurring in the organization. His early work focused on the aspects of individual behavior that must be addressed in order to bring about effective organizational change. He introduced the term as a system concept, as a force affecting managers and employees equally. According to him, the status quo represented equilibrium between the barriers to change and the forces favoring change. He was of the opinion that it was more effective to weaken the barriers to change than strengthen the drivers. He argues that work took place in organizations within a system of roles, attitudes, behavior, norms, and other factors. He suggested that any disequilibrium in these group dynamics in organizations could result in a change effort being accepted or resisted. He believed that some differences in the forces were required in order to facilitate change. His solution was to advocate that successful change rests in “unfreezing” an established equilibrium by enhancing the forces driving change, or by reducing or removing resisting forces and then “freezing” in a new equilibrium state.

Lewis (1947) suggested that the practical task of social management, as well as the scientific tasks of understanding the dynamics of group life, requires insight into the desire for and resistance to, specific change. Employee resistance to change was a system phenomenon, not a psychological one for the psychology of the humans in the system is an element of total system. The first known published reference to research on resistance to change in organizations was a study conducted by Coch and French (1948). This study focused on finding out why people resist change so strongly and what can be done to overcome employee resistance. Their hypothesis was that resistance to change is a combination of an individual reaction to frustration with strong group induced forces. Through a variety of experiments, they basically concluded that groups which were allowed to participate in designing and development of changes had much lower resistance than those that do not. Coch and French (1948) advise managers to hold group meetings to communicate the need for change and solicit employee’s involvement in the planning of the change.

Zander (1950) wrote an article that made an early distinction between symptoms and causes of employee resistance. Rather than providing a system model, unlike Lewis, he equated resistance in organizations to a psychotherapist and a patient. His primary advice for practicing managers was to know what the resistance meant so that they could reduce it by working on the causes rather than the symptoms. Lawrence (1954) proposed the existence of both technical and social dimensions of change. He argues that resistance occurs when these social aspects are not addressed. He listed five prescriptions for what management can do about resistance to change as; broadening staff interest, using understandable terms during change, having a new perspective towards resistance, developing new job definitions, and revising the role of the change agent to be that of a facilitator. Flower (1962), on the other hand observed that the solution for those managing change involves finding out what change means from the employee's perspective. He also noted that additional resistance is often triggered by the way managers react to the initial change. Some of the basic prescriptions of overcoming resistance that he presented to managers include; providing employees with the opportunity for participation, facilitating two-way communication, avoiding imposing change, making change consistent with the employee's self image and dealing with employees individually and not as a group when managing change.

2.6 Change Styles of Managing Employee Resistance

According to Julia and Veronica (2008), there are many classifications of management styles during change, but broadly speaking, change styles to employee resistance can be seen as sitting on a continuum from coercion, in which change is forced on people, to education and delegation, in which change is delegated. (See Table 2).

2.6.1 Education and delegation

Education and delegation involves convincing employees of the need for change through means such as training, gaining their commitment and support for change, and then delegating change to them. This may involve more than just talking to employees. It could involve, for example,

sending managers on benchmarking visits to other organizations to learn how things could be done better and then expecting the managers to implement the ideas and opportunities they identify (Dent & Goldberg 1999). Julia and Veronica (2008) argue that this change style is easily confused with collaboration and participation. However, education and delegation is more to do with equipping employees with an understanding, and then encouraging them to use their learning to propose and implement change projects supportive of the organizational change goals.

2.6.2 Collaboration

In collaboration, there is widespread involvement of employees in both what to change, and how to deliver the needed changes. Employees are asked to contribute to both the goals set for change and the means of achieving those goals. This may be through participative face-to-face meeting, such as workshops or focus groups in which, for example, consultants introduce participants to analytical tools and frameworks that can provide new insight on the participants' business and lead to identification of the critical change issues and an explicit consideration of actions to be taken, and by whom (Kreitner, 1992). According to Julia and Veronica (2008), the principle behind collaboration is that the more employees are involved, the more likely they are to support and be committed to the change that they have helped design, and the more likely they also are to sell those changes to others in the organization. In other words, collaboration can be used to bypass resistance. Furthermore, collaboration can be used not only to determine what to change and how, but also to create an awareness of the need for change by challenging complacency within the organization.

2.6.3 Participation

Julia and Veronica (2008), point out that participation is limited collaboration. The principle that involvement will equal greater commitment still justifies this approach to change. However, employees are allowed only limited involvement in certain areas of change, such as how the desired change can be achieved. For example, employees may be told of the overall vision and

change goals for the firm, such as to achieve greater efficiency, greater productivity, and to eliminate waste. They can then be asked to think about what they need to do differently if they are going to help to deliver that vision.

2.6.4 Direction

When those leading change make the majority of decisions about what to change and how, and use their authority to direct the achievement of change, this is a management style of direction. This approach effectively separates the thinkers from the doers. The thinkers come up with the change ideas and 'sell' them to the doers, who are then supposed to implement these plans and the ideas. There may still be an attempt to sell the changes to the employees, to encourage them to buy effort in which employees are involved in workshops to debate the implications of change for themselves. However, employees are not invited to contribute to the goals or means of change, except in a limited way. Many turnarounds, for example, involve this style of change (Julia and Veronica 2008).

2.6.5 Coercion

According to Julia and Veronica (2008), coercion is an extension of direction. Here change is imposed on employees, rather than staff having the idea of change sold to them. It is a way of achieving rapid change, but as with direction, it may lead to greater resistance. Given the lack of effort devoted to explaining the need for change to staff, or to encouraging buy-in for the changes, this approach is unlikely to work unless there is a very real crisis that is felt by most employees within the organization. However, unless the coercion is such that all aspects of behavioral change can be enforced in some way, the result may still be lip-service to the changes rather than actual change (Julia and Veronica, 2008).

Table 2: Styles of Managing Employee Resistance to Change

STYLE	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Education and delegation	Use small group briefings to discuss things with people and explain things to them. The aim is to gain support for change by generating understanding and commitment.	Spreads support for change. Also ensures a wide base of understanding.	Takes a long time. If radical change is needed, fact-based argument and logic convince others of need for change. Easy to voice support, then walk away and do nothing.
Collaboration	Widespread involvement of the employee on decisions about what and how to change.	Spreads not only support but ownership of change by increasing levels of involvement.	Time consuming. Little control over decisions made. May lead to change within paradigm.
Participation	Involvement of employees in how to deliver the desired changes. May also include limited collaboration over aspects of the 'how' to change as opposed to the 'what' of change.	Again, spreads ownership and support for change, but within a more controlled framework. Easier to shape decisions.	Can be perceived as manipulation.
Direction	Change leaders make the majority of decisions about what to change and how. Use of authority to direct change.	Less time consuming. Provides a clear change direction and focus.	Potentially less support and commitment, and therefore proposed change may be resisted.
Coercion	Use of power to impose change.	Allows for prompt action.	Unlikely to achieve buy-in without a crisis.

Source: Julia, B. and Veronica, H. (2008) "Exploring Strategic Change", Prentice Hall, London. pp. 36

2.7 Positive Employee Resistance

Traditionally, resistance has been perceived as an unfavourable and destabilizing problem that must be resolved in anyway possible so as to achieve successful organizational change. Dent and Goldberg (1999) point out that managers often consider resistance negatively, and employees who resist change are usually viewed as disobedient and obstacles the organization must overcome. Several scholars and theorists have forwarded alternative views regarding resistance. The gist of this school of thought is that resistance should be handled more objectively and represented as being a useful feedback tool that plays an important and constructive role in the whole change process.

Various authors (Maurer 1996; Waddell 1998; Piderit, 2000), have opined that resistance is not always negative or an obstruction to change. They point out that in certain instances, resistance may play a positive and useful role in organizational change. They further argue that resistance may force management to rethink and re-evaluate a proposed change initiative. Weisbord (1987) identifies employee resistance as valuable passion, which can be channeled more constructively. Folger and Skarlicki (1999), contend that at times the organization may be changing the wrong thing or doing it wrong. Employee resistance can therefore act as a gateway or filter which can help organizations select from all possible changes the one that is most appropriate to the current situation. According to Piderit (2000), resistance to change acts as a useful source of information which can assist change managers in developing a successful change processes. Resistance often serves as a constructive purpose and is frequently an appropriate response to a situation especially when it is a symptom to deeper problems (Gitlin and Margonis, 1995).

De Jager (2001) asserts that resistance is a very effective, very powerful and very useful survival mechanism. He argues that the idea that anyone who questions the need for change has an attitude problem, is simply wrong and not only because it discounts past achievements, but also because it makes us vulnerable to indiscriminate and ill-advised change. Waddell (1998) postulates that there are many managers who believe that change processes that occur with only minimal resistance must have been a good change idea that was well managed by the organization. She point out that this understanding is an immature perspective which leaves employee resistance in the negative side of the change process.

2.8 Common Mistakes when Managing Employee Resistance

It is important to note that there are no clear-cut solutions which managers can employ to manage employee resistance to change. This is basically due to the fact that the context of each change process and causes of resistance are unique to each organization. There are certain common mistakes made by change agents and managers when attempting to lessen or remove resistance to change in their organizations (Dent and Goldberg, 1999).

First, managers often make the mistake of assuming that it is their role to foster change and that of employees to always resist it. Therefore more often than not the strategies adopted to manage resistance are for managers to implement change and not for the supposed resistor (“employee”) to change. This assumption is flawed moreover may trigger additional resistance. According to Spreitzer and Quinn (1996), employees in the lower levels in organizations are often eager to make changes but encounter resistance from senior managers due to the skewed assumption above. Second is the tendency of managers to react to the symptoms of resistance rather than the underlying causes (Hultman, 1995). This usually results in the change agent prescribing the wrong preventive actions to manage the assumed resistance. Normally when the planned change in an organization is not going on as planned due to employee resistance, managers often look to make changes in employees while the real need may be to change the system. At times the resistance may actually be as a result of the way the change effort is being implemented. It is not surprising therefore to find some managers implementing strategies that deal with employee resistance while the underlying causes of resistance may be that the internal structure, processes and resources of the organization are not in tandem with the change effort being undertaken.

Third is the practice of managers attempting to replicate strategies that were successfully used to manage resistance elsewhere while not taking cognizance of the context of change. As it was mentioned earlier, the circumstances of each change process and causes of employee resistance are unique to each organization. Sometimes a strategy for managing resistance that was successful in one organization fails in another due to the different holding variables. For example organizations have unique organizational cultures which consist of different employee’s values, beliefs, rituals, routines, and power systems (Pearce & Robinson, 1997). Finally, most change agents and managers usually consider resistance as something negative and inappropriate which should be overcome at all costs (Dent and Goldberg, 1999). Due to this, many managers do not

take time to understand and appreciate the nature of resistance and as a result fail to benefit from its positive aspects like the feedback loop it offers which is vital in monitoring the change. As it was mentioned earlier, genuine employee resistance can at times prevent management from undertaking change efforts which may end up unsuccessful.

In summary, overcoming employee resistance is important and complex work. Change agents and managers need to play pivotal roles in recognizing, understanding and minimizing resistance before it evolves into a barrier to progress in organizations. While managing change, it is prudent for managers to also take cognizance of the feedback role of employee resistance and thus turn it into a positive force. This implies being proactive and helping employees identify key issues and potential roadblocks so that the change process remains on track.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures that were used to conduct the study. It includes the research design, target population and sample size selected, data collection and data analysis technique.

3.2 Research Design

The research is a case study on how management at Kenya National Commission on Human Rights responds to employee resistance towards organizational changes. A case study was selected as the research design because it provided in-depth information and understanding on how employee resistance to change is dealt with.

3.3 Population

The study population comprised of all staff members in Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. The organization has a total of 72 employees. They are categorized as commissioners, senior management staff and general staff.

3.4 Sampling

In sampling, a sample size of at least 30 percent respondents was considered to be large and reasonably adequate, hence a good reference point in determining a reasonable sample size. The sample size was 22 employees (30% of 72 employees).

To obtain the said sample size, and given the different categories of staff at Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, proportional stratified random sampling technique was used. Thus the final sample comprised of 22 staff members selected randomly from the various categories as stipulated in Table 3.3.1. The selection of respondents was based on the understanding that they are either directly or indirectly involved in managing employee resistance to change.

Table 3.4.1: Sample size by stratified sampling

Category	No. of employees	Target sample (30% of category)
Commissioners/Executives	9	3
Senior management staff	11	4
General staff	52	15
Total	72	22

3.5 Data Collection

The research relied on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered on the randomly selected employees directly thus face-to-face interviews were also conducted. However, where face-to-face interview was not possible with a respondent, the questionnaire will be dropped and picked later. The questionnaire (Appendix II) was structured to address issues like the types of resistance manifested, sources of employee resistance identified, impact of employee resistance, how the resistance was managed, challenges encountered when managing employee resistance to change and how they were overcome and finally the benefits realized from managing resistance. Secondary data was obtained by examining the company's publications.

3.6 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to identify and extract the key themes, concepts and arguments from the data that was obtained and assist in the development of content around identified themes. Content analysis has been successfully applied in similar empirical studies by Njau (2000) and Odhiambo (2006).

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analysis the study findings from the data collected from the targeted respondents. From the initial target sample size of twenty two, all the questionnaires were collected back. The findings have been discussed based on the study's objective of how management responds to employee resistance at Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

4.2 Type of Resistance

According to the executives interviewed, resistance to organizational change at KNCHR was predominantly behavioral as opposed to systemic. Over 90% of the respondents cited employees as the main causes of resistance to change at KNCHR. It was observed that the reason why individual resistance was dominant was basically because most of the planned organizational changes were destined to directly impact the employees and how work was going to be done. This challenge to the status quo was largely manifested as employee resistance.

Systemic resistance was not a major issue since KNCHR's management had undertaken certain steps to ensure that the organization had capacity to undertake the planned organizational changes. First, adequate resources and planning time had been allocated to facilitate the organizational changes. Second, two consultants with competencies in the five areas targeted for change i.e. strategic direction, organizational structure, internal business processes, organizational culture and performance management system, were brought on board to assist management drive the process. Finally in an effort to reduce structural inertia, management planned to realign KNCHR's organizational structure with the new strategic direction.

4.3 Causes of Employee Resistance

A number of different reasons were identified as being behind employee resistance to organizational changes at KNCHR. According to the general staff members, the organization had operated for a long time under a predominantly dormant or defensive organizational culture that found any change threatening and that thrived to maintain the status quo. A strategic analysis of KNCHR's cultural web carried out by the consultants indicated that the organization had rigid rituals, routines and structures which reflected conservative assumptions, beliefs and values. Furthermore, KNCHR's values and beliefs were not clearly defined and thus most employees generally demonstrated apathy in this regard. For example many employees at KNCHR still did not understand why the change was necessary.

The second source of resistance was the threat of job status or job security as a result of the proposed organizational changes. According to the CEO, some senior management staff resisted changes in the organizational structure due to a possible loss of their power and influence in the organization. General staff on the other hand demonstrated passive resistance to the restructuring process and implementation of the performance management system because some were of the view that it was a strategy by the management to lay them off. Many of the employees at KNCHR thus resisted change due to their reluctance to leave their comfort zones which they considerate familiar like job positions and titles.

Thirdly, according to senior management most subordinates were uneasy with review of the performance management system. This was basically because it involved dramatic changes in how work was to be done. For the first time they were expected to meet. The performance management system that was previously in place did not make employees accountable and thus was subject to abuse. This shift in how work was to be done – i.e. from old to the new way – was causing resistance among employees.

The fourth source of resistance was as a result of uncertainty and fear of the unknown by employees. Prior to the proposed organizational changes, information was generally tightly controlled such that only the management staff had a clear picture of what was happening in the organization. Most employees had never gone through any organizational change process in the organization and were therefore apprehensive about what the future held. This resulted in

resistance towards some of the change efforts proposed by the management. The situation was complicated given that general staff constituted about seventy percent of KNCHR's total workforce.

Fifthly, implementation of Quality Management Systems at KNCHR required computerization of the processes. Most of the internal work processes in the organization were inefficient, time consuming and manual in nature. The new strategic realignment required employees to be knowledgeable in the use of computers. This however was not the case since many employees were not computer literate. The prospect of automating certain functions was therefore met with employee skepticism. According to management, most employees had not been adequately trained in the use of ICT at their workstation. A number of employees were thus resisting change due to lack of job related skills.

Finally, it was identified that some of the employees were resisting since they found the amount of changes going on in the organization to be overwhelming. According to the senior managers, many employees were complaining that the management was implementing very many changes in the organization concurrently. This required employees to be in tandem with the changes something that they were struggling with hence the resistance.

When the different sources of resistance listed above were ranked according to significance to change efforts at KNCHR, it was observed that emotional factors associated with the employees themselves – i.e. uncertainty, fear of the unknown, lack of trust, personality conflicts, threat of interests – ranked highly compared to actual faults in the change process itself, i.e. the fast pace at which organizational changes were being implemented.

4.4 Impact of Employee Resistance to Change

According to management, resistance was impacting negatively on the change process, organization, and the people involved. Executives interviewed identified the following effects to employee resistance. First, resistance was causing unnecessary delays at the strategy formulation and implementation phase of the various change efforts. For example formulation of the new Performance Management System was delayed for three months in order to address issues

pertaining to employee reactions to change such as anxiety, uncertainty, defensiveness, grief, denial etc.

Secondly, employee resistance was threatening to derail KNCHR's change initiatives and thus prevent it from meeting its corporate strategic objectives. According to the revised corporate plan, management had recommended restructuring of KNCHR to make it lean, efficient and in tandem with the intended strategic direction. The restructuring process was however experiencing stiff resistance from informal power groups in the organization that were blocking its implementation due to perceived threat to their job security and work groups.

Thirdly, addressing resistance towards change was proving to be costly. For example in an effort to address employee resistance caused by rigid cultural artifacts like rituals, routines, symbols, and structure, the management was forced to expend vast amount of financial resources. Consultants were hired to advise the management team on how to improve the organizational culture and train employees. In addition, huge amount of funds were used to improve organizational symbols such as office space, furniture and equipment to reflect a new culture at KNCHR. Finally, it was observed that a group of employees who were actively resisting various change efforts were in turn pressurizing their colleagues who were either cooperative of change or showed indifference towards change to join their camp. This was causing tension, reduced job satisfaction, low motivation and generally adversely impacting the working atmosphere.

Not all the respondents interviewed agreed that employee resistance to change caused a negative impact on the change process. According to some general employees interviewed, employee resistance encouraged the management to look before it leaped. Considering that the organizational change processes were costly to implement and if wrongly planned it could mean major problems to the organization's finances. This impact ensured management think before they took action through proper planning.

4.5 Managing the Resistance

As it can be observed, the resulting impact of employee resistance were serious and needed to be addressed if the various change initiative were to be undertaken successfully. KNCHR's top

management team drove the process of managing resistance with some valuable advice from the two consultants who were hired to facilitate the change initiatives. Below is a summary of the contingency methods that were used to manage employee resistance to organizational change at KNCHR.

4.5.1 Adjusting the Organizational Culture

The culture at KNCHR reflected deep-rooted values, beliefs and assumptions that thrived to maintain the status quo. To reduce resistance to change, management was forced to consider how much the organization culture fitted with change objectives and what could be done to improve such fit before the change process began. This cultural consideration was also meant to bring employees and management interests in tandem so as to avoid “organizational silence”.

In an effort to obtain the fit mentioned above and address the issue of resistance, management embarked on changing certain underlying aspects of KNCHR’s cultural web. These realignments were meant to signal people within and outside the organization of impending organizational changes at KNCHR. Changes were made to most of the organization’s rituals and routines, which were a reflection of how the members of KNCHR behaved towards each other and towards people outside the organization. Negative rituals and routines were discarded while those that added values to employees and customers are introduced and encouraged. This was done using various methods. Examples included, training staff on good customer care practices, introducing induction programs for new staff, encouraging rituals of enhancement i.e. annual award ceremonies and promotions, enhancing both internal and external communication and adjusting work procedures.

The other areas targeted for change were organizational symbols, which acted as a shorthand representation of KNCHR’s culture. In order to reflect a new working environment, management purchased new furniture and computers. An arrangement of an open office plan was also underway. With these changes taking place, management observed that employees were slowly tuning themselves for further changes in the organization. It was also noticed that the level of optimism and expectation among employees significantly rose.

During the strategic planning process, management modified the existing KNCHR's desired core values for the first time. These values were regularly communicated to employees using different methods i.e. speeches, training programs, and visual displays. According to the general staff, KNCHR required to develop a degree of coherence in its culture for it to function effectively and support organizational changes.

4.5.2 Top Management Support

Support by the top management was ranked highly by the general staff as being crucial in managing resistance at KNCHR. It was also observed that the success of all the other strategies for managing employee resistance heavily depended on support by the top management. This was manifested in several different ways. First, the CEO was aware right from the beginning that his leadership role was required if KNCHR was to successfully implement change. He demonstrated his commitment by being the sponsor for change. Many employees resisted change because they lacked a corporate sense of being or sense of enduring purpose to enable them embrace the changes. The CEO recognized that successful change was impinged on a picture of a desirable future and was therefore instrumental in crafting KNCHR's vision and mission, which crystallized to all the employees why change was necessary. This enabled many employees to support the various change initiatives at KNCHR.

Secondly, in order to minimize employee resistance during the transition, the CEO constantly created a sense of urgency for change at KNCHR. He did this by being the spokesman for change. During management meetings, the CEO often spoke candidly on why KNCHR needed to change and the undesirable outcome that might result from maintaining the status quo. He often pointed out that if people thought that the organization was doing fine, there would be little motivation for change hence the desire for employees to continue maintaining the status quo.

Thirdly, management encouraged employees to support change initiatives by adjusting performance expectations accordingly. The organizational changes that were being undertaken at KNCHR lead to changes in the operating environment. This caused adjustment problems among some employees who responded by resisting change. In an effort to address this problem, the

management team found it necessary to modify or set new performance standards that would facilitate employee to embrace change efforts.

Finally, to management team played an instrumental role in providing supportive resources. According to the CEO, a detailed budget of the proposed changes was done and forwarded to the board for approval. Funds were made available for both the planning and implementation phases of the proposed change efforts including those for financing strategies to deal with resistance.

4.5.3 Communicating Change

Employees were resisting change due to misinformation concerning why the changes were being carried out. Management thus took it upon itself to clearly explain to employees the intentions and proposed methods of achieving the intended change efforts. Different methods were employed towards this end. First, it was observed that some employees were using misinformation to try and influence their colleagues into resisting certain change initiatives being implemented. In an effort to address this problem, KNCHR's management developed a communication plan which outlined when, where and how employees would be receiving information concerning the organizational changes.

Secondly, management decided to use internal communication tools like KNCHR's internal website, annual reports, bulleting boards, and speeches to issue monthly briefings to all employees on the status of all the various change initiatives being undertaken. This was done so as to enable those resisting change and supporters of change to align their emotional reactions with management's vision and strategies. It was observed that this greatly assisted in lowering employee resistance caused by misinformation.

Thirdly, the CEO as the sponsor of the change efforts constantly articulated and discussed with the senior management teams the motives for change and how they were to be implemented. This was done through monthly management meetings. The aim of this was to empower management staff to have adequate knowledge to handle change and also communicate the same information to their subordinates.

KNCHR's management observed that by executing the communication plan effectively, they were able to create a surprise free environment and at the same time minimize employee resistance associated with the rumor mill. This strategy impinged on using good communication patterns to deal with the uncertainty and anxiety experienced by employees during organizational change. It involved offering information frequently and encouraging those affected by the change process to be at ease as well as dispelling rumors and uncertainty in the organization.

4.5.4 Training

Both management and general employee observed that some of the staff members were resisting change due to inadequate education on the change process and also lack of proper training in areas targeted for change. Training was thus essential if the various change initiatives were to be successfully undertaken. A decision was therefore made to use the consultants spearheading the various change efforts to train employees.

The first step involved sensitizing employees why the changes were necessary followed by staff detailed training programs. In-house training programs were organized by the human resources department and attended by all employees. The programs were designed in an interactive way such that employees were allowed to actively participate in discussions. This gave employees a sense of involvement and increased the probability of their commitment to change.

KNCHR's management realized that the jobs being performed by employees were going to be altered significantly as a result of the organizational changes. For example, the new performance management system was going to radically alter the working environment. In order to successfully make the transition from the old to the new way of working, employees were expected to develop new skills. Nearly all the executives interviewed ranked staff training highly among the strategies they used to manage employee resistance towards change.

4.5.5 Participation

KNCHR's general staff took cognizance of the fact that no meaningful change would take place in the organization if employees were not empowered to participate in the change process. It was for this reason that management ensured that employees were invested participants throughout the change process. Several methods were used to achieve this. First, prior to the strategy implementation phase, management frequently organized occasions where they would sit down together with their subordinates and speak with them. Management used these meetings to listen to employee's queries and concerns. It was observed that giving employees an opportunity of being heard was integral in establishing understanding and consensus thus avoiding resistance. This approach was mainly used to address resistance caused by lack of understanding between employees and management.

Secondly group dialogue sessions organized by the consultants provided another forum where employees were empowered to participate in the change process. By discussing the change process openly, employees were able to reduce their anxiety and fear thus lowering instances of resistance. During these sessions, employees were taken through the planned change from its vision through to implementation. It was observed that as a result of the feedback obtained from the consultants, management was able to gather useful information regarding possible resistance, where and how these resistances may arise. By establishing this, KNCHR's management was in a strong position to avoid employee resistance.

4.5.6 Scheduling Change

According to management, many employees were struggling to keep abreast with the pace of the new change effort being undertaken within the organization thus exhibiting resistance. This was basically due to the fact that KNCHR operated for a long time without going through any major organizational changes but was in the process of undertaking several. The general feeling among employees was that too many changes were being introduced simultaneously without giving people time to adjust.

In an effort to address this resistance, management decided to implement changes in a gradual manner. A plan to guide implementation of the different change initiatives was developed specifying which changes were to be undertaken and their respective timings. Instead of implementing all the changes at the same time, management decided to spread them. First in line was the revision of the Corporate Strategic Plan in April 2010, followed by implementation of the Performance Management System in December 2010. Restructuring of the organization structure began in 2011 while review of internal business processes was to be completed by April 2012. Staggering the changes significantly reduced time and resources constraints for the organization. It enabled KNCHR's management to allocate resources to each change process. It also allowed them enough time to clarify goals and intentions of the change effort being undertaken to resisting employees.

According to the CEO, this approach made the change easier to plan for, easier for employees to accept and easier to implement than undertaking simultaneous radical changes. For example, it was observed that employees were more responsive to incremental changes since it gave them sufficient time to make psychological and operational adjustments. This would not have been possible if several changes were implanted at the same time.

4.5.7 Coercion

This method was only used to deal with a few employees who were active resisters and totally failed to respond to the other strategies listed above. According to the executives interviewed, some employees continued resisting implementation of the new performance management system because they assumed that it was a ploy by management to retrench them. The fact that the intended changes were going to significantly change how work was to be performed did not go down very well with some employees, especially the old support staff who were skeptical about management's intentions.

This group formed a network that was causing tension, reduced job satisfaction, low motivation and generally adversely impacting the working atmosphere. Under the new performance management system, employees were required to negotiate their annual work target with their immediate supervisor. These were to be drawn from the corporate performance contract signed

between KNCHR and the government. However, due to active resistance from some employees implementation of this process was delayed by three months.

Management's response to this problem was systematic and swift. Investigations were first done to establish the individuals involved and their power base in the organization. It was observed that the main reason for resistance was work oriented, something that the consultants had adequately addressed during training. It was also confirmed that most of the perpetrators were low-level staff. Having established these facts, the human resources manager informed the employees concerned that they risked having their employment contracts revoked should they continue exhibiting the negative behavior. KNCHR's management was therefore able to explicitly coerce the resisters into supporting the proposed organizational changes since they wielded more power than the employees. The executives interviewed confirmed that management opted to use this strategy as a last resort when active employees' resistance was causing unnecessary delay towards the planned change.

4.6 Addressing the challenges experienced during the process of managing employee resistance

Management experienced several challenges in the process of addressing resistance to the various organizational changes that were being undertaken. A detailed analysis of the information obtained however indicates that these bottlenecks were effectively dealt with. Below are some of the challenges that arose and how they were addressed.

One of the biggest challenge faced by the management dealt with aligning KNCHR's organizational culture with the new strategic direction. In order to achieve this, management was expected to ensure that employee's values, beliefs, norms and expectations were in tandem with the change objectives. Attaining this fit proved to be very difficult since the culture at KNCHR was predominantly conservative and thrived to maintain status quo. Management responded to this challenge by adjusting underlying elements of KNCHR's cultural paradigms like rituals, routines, symbols, structures and control systems. These realignments were meant to signal to people within and outside the organization of impending organizational changes at KNCHR. Consultants had to be hired to assist with the culture change.

The second challenge was dealing with varied employee concerns and emotions during the change process. For example, it was observed that some employees passively resisted change, some embraced it, while others actively undermined it. Similarly, the changes were resulting into different emotional outcomes among employees. KNCHR's management was therefore required to be adept at understanding a plethora of employee issues in order to successfully implement the organizational changes. Management responded to this challenge by showing sensitivity towards employees and developing strategies for dealing with their emotions. Two approaches that were used to address employee concerns during the change process included facilitation and scheduling change.

The third challenge involved getting employees to actively participate without delaying the change program or increasing implementation costs. Management recognized that letting employees participate was the best way to get their buy-in and thus give them more of a stake in the change efforts. At the same time, if employees were given too much leeway during the planning and implementation phase of the change process, a lot of delays would arise. Determining the optimal level of employee participation posed a challenge. In response, management undertook to establish the power base of the employees who were resisting changes. According to the executives interviewed, it was observed that management generally wielded more power than the subordinates. Subsequently, in the interest of time and resources, employee's contributions were mainly limited to group dialogue sessions just before the implementation phase.

The final challenge involved determining the best approach to be used in managing resistance. In response, a project team headed by the CEO was set up to drive the process. It comprised of three commissioners who were heading the monitoring and evaluation department, the human resources manager and her senior officer, five key employees supporting the organizational changes and the two consultants tasked with spearheading different change initiatives. The team was responsible for formulating and implementing various strategies for managing employee resistance at KNCHR.

4.7 Benefits Realized

The benefits of managing employee resistance to organizational change at KNCHR cut across the board as it had implications on the organization, employees and its customers. First and foremost, by managing employee resistance, KNCHR's management was able to successfully implement three of the planned organizational change initiatives. For example, by September 2011, KNCHR had successfully undertaken revision of its corporate strategic plan, organizational structure and implemented the new performance management system while the process of re-aligning internal business process was 60% underway.

Secondly, by effectively addressing people's concerns during the change process, management avoided the prospects of losing experienced, hard-working and knowledgeable employees who would otherwise have been costly to replace in the long term. In the process of forestalling resistance, management contributed towards enhancing employee retention at KNCHR. Statistics indicate that the cost of losing a trained employee is equal to 1.5 to three times his or her pay.

Thirdly, according senior management staff, they noted that the level of employee productivity increased significantly once the underlying causes of the resistance were addressed. For example, strategies used by management to address employee resistance such as training, participation and communication, positively improved the working environment at KNCHR. This in turn resulted in increased job satisfaction, team performance and a high level of employee morale.

Finally, addressing employee resistance to organizational change also benefited KNCHR's customers. Responses from the general staff members indicated that some of the strategies which were used to manage resistance, like adjusting the organizational culture and training staff on the new ways of performing work, had a spillover effect resulting in positive benefits to KNCHR's customers. According to management, the customer satisfaction index improved after successfully implementing some of the planned organizational changes.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

The dominant type of resistance at KNCHR was behavioral as opposed to systematic or organizational resistance. Among the factors which triggered employee resistance during the

organizational change process included defensive organizational culture, threat to job status and job security, changes in the mode of working, uncertainty, lack of job related skills and the perceived high pace at which changes were being implemented. As it can be observed, the causes of employee resistance to change at KNCHR were fundamentally similar to those identified earlier by different authors in the literature review like Kreitner (1992), Aldag and Stearns (1991), Schermerhorn (1989), Durbin and Ireland (1993) and Griffin (1993). Emotional factors associated with the employee were identified as ranking highly in causing resistance compared to actual faults in the change process itself. This is consistent with the literature review where according to Greenberg and Baron (2002), emotional factors are the primary sources of employee resistance and are directly linked with the content of change. Secondary causes of employee resistance include lack of time, resources, competencies and the high pace at which the organizational changes are being implemented.

It was observed that employee resistance generally had a negative impact on the change process, employees and organization as a whole. Some of the effects attributed to resistance include; unnecessary delays to the change process, increased implementation costs, tension, and a stressful working environment. These effects are not only unique to KNCHR, but also usually occurs in other organizations elsewhere going through organizational changes as was pointed out by various authors in the literature review (Bryant, 2006; Coetsee, 1999; Coch and French, 1948).

With the guidance of the two consultants, KNCHR's management teams come up with appropriate strategies to address the resistance to avoid the negative impacts. This included; adjusting the organizational culture, support from the top management team, communicating the change initiative to the employees in time, training, participation, scheduling the change initiatives and coercion. All these choices need consideration in relation to the context of change to avoid the application of simplistic change recipes. However, choosing which option to take is not straightforward (Julia and Veronica, 2008).

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of study findings, conclusion and recommendations arising. The chapter concludes with limitations to the study and suggestions for further study.

5.2 Summary

In order to align the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights in accordance with the provisions of Article 59 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010), its management with the professional guidance of two hired consultancies came up with five areas targeted for organizational change i.e. strategic direction, organizational structure, internal business processes, organizational culture and performance management system. These proposed changes experienced some resistance which was predominantly attributed to employees who were reacting to change in their status quo. This type of behavioral resistance is consistent with what was alluded to earlier in the literature review concerning people's reaction to change (Durbin, and Ireland, 1993).

Some of the strategies which were used to manage resistance to the proposed organizational changes at KNCHR included; adjusting the organizational culture, change in strategic direction, support by top management, communicating changes in good time, training, participation, scheduling change and coercion. As it can be observed, some similarities exist between these strategies and those identified earlier in the literature review by Dent and Goldberg (1999) and Julia and Veronica (2008). Interestingly, the common mistakes associated with managing employee resistance were not evident at KNCHR since management focused on addressing the underlying causes of resistance as opposed to the symptoms.

5.3 Conclusion

The study has revealed that by managing employee resistance, KNCHR has been able to successfully undertake various organizational change initiatives. Four out of the five planned organizational changes were implemented. Other benefits realized from mitigating against employee resistance included enhancing employee retention, increased level of employee productivity and positive spillover effects to KNCHR's customers.

Certain useful observations can be deduced from the study regarding the manner in which KNCHR's management addressed the issue of managing employee resistance to organizational changes. First, support by the top management was crucial during the entire period of managing resistance. KNCHR's CEO and commissioners played a central role during the change process by offering leadership during the transition, being the spokespeople for change, adjusting performance expectations and providing supporting resources to the employees affected by the changes. Management commitment was therefore guaranteed throughout the process. Managing employee resistance was top driven with the CEO and commissioners as the strategic change leaders.

Secondly, a team composed of KNCHR's three commissioners who were heading the monitoring and evaluation department, the human resources manager and her senior officer, five key employees supporting the organizational changes and the two consultants tasked with spearheading different change initiatives, was set up to assist management in coordinating the different change efforts. In addition to this, the team was also responsible for formulating and implementing strategies used to manage employee resistance. As it can be observed, the process of managing resistance to organizational change at KNCHR was well coordinated and deliberate.

Thirdly, KNCHR's management realized that in order to come up with the correct prescription for managing employee resistance, it was necessary to establish the causes of employee resistance. The strategies used to manage the resistance were based on addressing the underlying causes in each case. For example; where communication was used to address resistance caused by misinformation, group dialogue used to address resistance caused by lack of employee participation and training used to tackle resistance caused by lack of job related skills in the area targeted for change.

Fourthly, all the strategies used to manage employee resistance took cognizance of the prevailing situation. The pros and cons of each strategy were considered before application. This was basically done to ensure that the best approach was being employed to manage resistance given the existing circumstances. For example, explicit coercion was used by management as a last resort to deal with active resistance from a few subordinates who were causing unnecessary delays to the change process. Under the circumstances, this strategy was most appropriate since management possessed more power than the few resisting employees and the timing was of essence. Fifthly, KNCHR's management took advantage of positive employee resistance to adjust the change process. According to the study findings one of the causes of resistance was due to the fact that different changes were being introduced concurrently without giving employees sufficient time to adjust. Management took into account this feedback arising from employee resistance and adjusted the change implementation program accordingly.

5.4 Recommendations

Three important recommendations are worth considering if organizations going through organizational changes are to successfully address the phenomenon of employee resistance. First, it is crucial that managers in such organizations have adequate skills in change management. In the event that these competencies are not available in-house, organizations can outsource the same to external change consultants who would then work closely with management and advise them accordingly during the entire change period. This worked for KNCHR.

Second, it is essential that managers clearly recognize and identify the underlying causes of employee resistance to change as they occur. A clear distinction ought to be made between the symptoms and causes of resistance. It is only then that managers can prescribe the most appropriate corrective action for managing employee resistance.

Finally, managers need to take cognizance of the positive aspects of resistance. The argument here is that not all employee resistance is negative or detrimental to the organization. There are instances when resistance offers a feedback loop which is vital in monitoring the change efforts being implemented. KNCHR was able to leverage on this aspect to adjust its change program accordingly when need arose.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study arose out of the fact that it was a big task for all the executives, senior management and general staff interviewed to recollect in exact detail what actually transpired during the process of managing employee resistance to change. This was basically due to the fact that the scope of the study extended back three years starting from 2009. Some crucial information pertinent to the study may thus have been missed out.

The second limitation deals with the extent to which the study findings can be used for generalization in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of employee resistance in other organizations. Being a case study, this research basically dealt with how KNCHR responded to the issue of employee resistance during the period before the merger with the Kenya Commission on gender and development when it was implementing certain organizational change. The study was therefore conducted within the context of KNCHR's working culture and environment. Other organizations may have different culture, competencies, resources capacities and structures thereby displaying different reactions to organizational changes.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

Further research in managing employee resistance could be conducted in different organizations at the same time while taking cognizance of their respective cultures and structures. It can also be interesting to establish the extent to which these organizations use positive employee resistance during the change process. Traditionally, employee resistance to change has been viewed in a negative content. It is recommended that further research be done to find out how organizations can positively leverage on this phenomenon so as to create some competitive advantage when implementing organizational changes.

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APPENDIX I

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Respondent,

RE: MBA RESEARCH PROJECT

This questionnaire is designed to gather information on how The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights manages employee resistance to change. This study is being carried out for a management research project paper as a requirement in partial fulfillment of my Degree of Master of Business Administration, School of Business, University of Nairobi,

All the information you disclose will be treated in strict confidence and in no instance will your name be mentioned in the report.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Mercy Nduta Ngugi
MBA Student

SNM Nzuve
Supervisor

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE.

Section 1: Personal Details

1. Position in the Company

.....

2. Years of experience in the Company

.....

Section 2: Employee resistance to change

3. Is there any resistance to change at the Commission?

Yes

No

If Yes;

4. What type of resistance was being experienced

5. Describe some of the factors which were causing employee resistance to change.

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

6. How were these factors identified?

7. How significant are the factors listed below in triggering employee resistance towards the change effort that were being carried out? **(Rank the factors in order of significance from 1-10, 1 being most significant and 10 being least significant)**

- i. Surprise
- ii. Inertia
- iii. Faults in the Change process
- iv. Threat to job status/ security
- v. Lack of Trust
- vi. Lack of resources
- vii. Lack of expertise
- viii. Uncertainty
- ix. Work group breakup
- x. Poor training

8. What are some of the effects of employee resistance to change for the Commission?

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

Section 3: Addressing employee resistance to change

9. Is there someone responsible for managing employee resistance to change at the Commission?

Yes

No

If Yes who is driving the process

10. Describe some of the strategies that were used to respond to employee resistance and how they were implemented.

- i.
- ii.
- iii.

- iv.
- v.
- vi.

11. Was there any consideration in determining the strategies used in managing employee resistance?

Yes

No

If yes, what were they?

.....

12. How significant are the strategies listed below in managing employee resistance? (**Rank them in order of significance from 1-8, 1 being the most significant and 8 being the least significant**).

- i. Education
- ii. Participation
- iii. Facilitation
- iv. Negotiation
- v. Manipulation
- vi. Coercion
- vii. Financial Benefits
- viii. Political Support

Section 4: Challenges of managing employee resistance to change and how they are tackled

13. Were there any challenges experienced during the process of managing employee resistance to change?

Yes

No

If yes, what were the challenges and how were they addressed?

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

v.

Section 5: Benefits achieved

14. Were there any benefits realized from managing employee resistance?

Yes

No

If yes, describe them

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.
- vi.

THANK YOU