THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN MANAGEMENT OF STRATEGIC CHANGE AT NAIROBI BOTTLERS LIMITED, KENYA

BY

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

NOVEMBER 2013
The aim of the study was to establish the role of leadership in management of strategic change at Nairobi bottlers limited. The research adopted a case study research design. The case study involved a careful and complete examination of the entire social units and institutions and embraced depth rather than breadth of the study. Both primary and secondary data was collected for this study. Primary data was collected through an interview guide that carries questions pertaining strategic change, the challenges encountered in the process and the role of leadership in addressing the same. The interview guide consisted of open-ended unstructured question to allow greater depth and breadth of responses and was administered through personal interviews. Secondary data consisted of various literatures about the company as recorded in the company profile, company newsletters, annual reports of accounts, pertinent company correspondence as well as various industry publications. The findings revealed that management of Nairobi Bottlers Limited created an environment for participation and involvement of employees. This was done by breaking down big groups into smaller units creating room for growth since members from the team were appointed team leaders in charge of managing operations while top managers concentrated on managing change. This reduced staff resistance and high turnover, as they felt involved in the wider goal of enhancing growth amidst competition and changes in the operating environment. The study noted that a lot of challenges were faced handling competition brought about through unrelated diversification and entry of Pepsi in the market. The challenges were both internal and external. During the period most employees joined trade unions raising fears of unrest and incitement among fellow team member. Nairobi Bottlers Limited also lost some of its experienced employees to competition. Despite investing heavily in bridging gaps and loopholes Nairobi bottlers sales continued to decline due to factors beyond the firm’s control. Such as change in climate, high inflation rate as well as cheap substitutes. The study concluded that leadership role is fundamental in strategic change management. Organizations go through series of changes during which leadership’s role is to ensure that the organization aligns to changes in the environment. The organizations leadership should also forecast change and develop a vision of the desired future. Finally, the study recommended that organizations should plan for change in order to maintain competitiveness. Structures should also be put in place to anticipate likely changes in the organizations environment. The implementation phase should also be closely monitored and evaluated.