

A Model to Create Radical Change in an Educational Institution

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Simple Description:

The focus of change in educational institutions has moved from evolutionary or incremental change to change that is disruptive or radical. Educational institutions have been forced to this type of change because of vast societal changes that has made them become more accountable for their resources. Therefore a very different style of leadership is now required in these institutions. Leadership has to be more active, courageous and passionate and to constantly create change within the institution.

This workshop will show a model implemented in a mid-size university to focus on radical change. The basics of the model will be described and practical implementation hints will be given.

Biographical Profile of Paul M. Arsenault, Ph.D.

Dr. Arsenault is an Associate Professor of Marketing at West Chester University in West Chester, Pennsylvania where teaches courses on leadership, change, innovation and strategic management. He holds a Ph.D. from Temple University (1999), a MBA from the Babcock School of Management at Wake Forest University (1983), and a Masters in Psychology from Vanderbilt University (1978). He was a James MacGregor Burns Scholar in 2000 and has been very active with leadership organizations such as the ILA and ALE.

Recently, Paul has been very active at West Chester University as an Organization Development Specialist coordinating change programs through out the university. He has been doing research on cohort analysis for three years in conjunction with an in-class assignment for undergraduate students. Dr. Arsenault has developed a large database of responses by cohorts. His other research interests include leadership assessment, charismatic leadership, and team and individual leadership. Dr. Arsenault is very interested in the application of social constructive perspective in the leadership process.

Abstract

How to overcome the perception that status quo is acceptable in educational institutions is a frequent question asked by current university presidents or administrators as they face significant social changes such as reductions in traditional funding sources. The answer is difficult but doable if centered on the ability to create a misalignment with the traditional perceptions that educational institutions do not need to change or if they have to change it is only incremental. To change this perception requires a new style of leadership that is more disruptive, strategic, profit oriented, emotional, passionate, and honest. This leadership style

is very similar to the Saul Alinsky's Radical Leadership, Gary Hamel's Grey-Haired Revolutionary and Debra Myerson's Tempered Radical model that emphasizes change at every level of the organization and more importantly as a way of life.

Such a model has been developed at a mid-sized state university because the university was faced with fast moving social changes, reductions in state funding and above inflation increases in tuition. The university president therefore mandated that every employee had to take more of a leadership role. A traditional leadership training program was initially implemented but proved unsuccessful to meet the demands of the needed changes.

Therefore, this model was implemented with focus on two levels of the university; (1) vice-presidents including the president and (2) middle-managers. Vice-presidents' role is to develop and implement a realistic change strategy that aligns with accountable goals. Middle managers attend workshop on how to implement change and handle conflict. In addition, both groups are exposed to the difference between intentional and imposed change and how to become more sensitive to imposed change. Finally, a change agent network within the university that connects administrators and faculty who have created change with peers that have the potential to create change but have felt they have no support has been created. The long-term goal of this network is have these success stories spread throughout the university therefore changing the organizational perception that change is possible by everyone.

The presentation will include (1) the foundations of the models including the incorporation of Saul Alinsky, Gary Hamel and Debra Meyerson models, (2) the results of the initial workshops and follow ups and (3) what has been learned. The assumptions, goals and format of the workshop will be highlighted along with the successes and failures. Special emphasis will be on the workshops 4 C's: creativity, collaboration, credibility and culture that as keys to success. The last segment of the presentation will present the progress of the program including the downfalls and how the mentoring system established at the workshop has developed through the network.

Time will be available for participants to ask questions and/or discuss the presented model.