

The influence of institutional factors on employee performance levels at a private sector organization in Cape Town

Interview questions for department managers:

1. What are your thoughts on the organizational change that has taken place over the recent months at your organization?
2. In your opinion, how has organizational change affected employee performance in your department?
3. What initiatives do you employ in your department in order to reduce change resistance?
4. How do you communicate change to your subordinates?
5. What additional methods are used to communicate change to diverse persons /groups in your department?
6. How would you improve communication at your organization?
7. To which extent would you include your staff in the decision-making process?
8. In the past, how has the specialised knowledge of your subordinates assisted you in implementing change?
9. How would you describe the culture at your organization?
10. How is good employee performance acknowledged at your organization?
11. In your opinion, do you believe that the level of transparency at this organization is sufficient?

Thank you for your time.

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Participant 1

Academic Research Interview with Participant 1

Date: 17 July 2018

Time: 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Question 1: What are your thoughts on the organisational change that has taken place over the recent months at your organisation?

P1 Organisations should always be open to change. Change often creates capacity, efficiency and cost savings. As in the past and still today, it is the intention of all the major organisational change that takes place. The initial transitional period for the restructuring was difficult, but we've seen an improvement and I can say with certainty that the situation has stabilised.

Question 2: How do you communicate change to your subordinates?

P1 Meetings and emails

Question 3: In the past, how has the specialised knowledge of your subordinates assisted you in implementing change?

P1 Using 'specialist' in certain areas of the business does really help, however the problem with that is we don't get a new perspective. For example, what would really change if we kept using the opinions of the same people who has been working a certain way for a very long time

Question.4: In your opinion, do you believe that the level of transparency at this organisation is sufficient?

P1 No from my perspective. I would've liked more transparency in terms of long-term strategies. On my level (management), I think that we are only included at the tail end of the strategy. We are expected to implement but we don't always start off knowing big picture.

Question 5: What initiatives do you employ in your department to reduce change resistance?

P1 I've done nothing in addition to standard emails, paraphernalia and posters.

Question 6: What additional methods are used to communicate change to diverse persons /groups in your department?

P1 Most of the written communication in my department is in English. There is no need for translation.

Question 7: How would you improve communication at your organisation?

P1 First we determine the extent of the communication gaps and problems, get feedback from the staff and let them tell us what their preferences are and where we can improve.

Question 8: In your opinion, how has organisational change affected employee performance in your department?

P1 The teams' performance plummeted right after we centralised departments. Staff were generally unclear of their roles and responsibilities. Now, months down the line we are more structured, and we've overcome the worst. Certain departments benefited from the change, with certain tasks and functions reassigned to other departments.

Question 9: To which extent would you include your staff in the decision-making process?

P1 It's not feasible to include staff in every decision made. We can get their input, involve them from time to time. This will help to get their 'buy-in' but in reality, we (the managers) implement decisions that are made much higher up the ranks.

Question 10: How is good employee performance acknowledged at your organisation?

P1 We have not incentivised employee performance although we have the quarterly performance appraisals. I must admit that we don't really acknowledge good performance. We've come to expect high quality performance from our staff. We give excellent training and we expect excellent results.

Question 11: How would you describe the culture at your organisation?

P1 Results and process driven.

Participant 2

Academic Research Interview with Participant 2

Date: 18 July 2018

Time: 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Question 1: What are your thoughts on the organisational change that has taken place over the recent months at your organisation?

P2 Not all change is good. I'm a believer that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Yes, there are things we can do to improve processes but the changes that the organisation undertook over the past few months, has been tried and tested before. It didn't work then, and I don't see it working now.

Question 2: How do you communicate change to your subordinates?

P2 Posters for the staff that does not have access to emails (operational staff). We'll have monthly meetings and make use of emails.

Question 3: In the past, how has the specialised knowledge of your subordinates assisted you in implementing change?

P2 By specialised knowledge we refer to experienced staff, it has served us very well in past and when the time comes we do draw on the knowledge and experience of our staff.

Question.4: In your opinion, do you believe that the level of transparency at this organisation is sufficient?

P2 There is not enough transparency and staff feel excluded. There's been times in the past that our clientele was more informed of what was happening in our organisation than some of our management staff. It really sends out a bad message to all.

Question 5: What initiatives do you employ in your department reduce change resistance?

P2 There were none, change was communicated through the usual mediums and I believe that this was sufficient

Question 6: What additional methods are used to communicate change to diverse persons /groups in your department?

P2 In operations we use a translator for isiXhosa, other than that everything is communicated in English.

Question 7: How would you improve communication at your organisation?

P2 We should use technology to enhance communication levels. There is definitely a need for improved communication, but not only what we communicate but also how we communicate.

Question 8: In your opinion, how has organisational change affected employee performance in your department?

P2 Initially it was a mess. We actually reported a high staff turnover during the transitional phase. Staff were overworked and feeling despondent, it was really hard to manage and keep a positive momentum.

Question 9: To which extent would you include your staff in the decision-making process?

P2 It's not realistic to include staff in decision-making. As managers, we too are all limited in our involvement in the decision-making process.

Question 10: How is good employee performance acknowledged at your organisation?

P2 As a company we don't individualise good performance, majority of the staff are union members so we don't get involved with that type of initiatives.

Question 11: How would you describe the culture at your organisation?

P2 Very formal and corporate, not an innovative or creative environment.

Participant 3

Academic Research Interview with Participant 3

Date: 18 July 2018

Time: 14:30 am – 15:30 am

Question 1: What are your thoughts on the organisational change that has taken place over the recent months at your organisation?

P3 My team and I are positive about the changes over the recent months however as a manager it would've been good to be part of the decision-making process or even giving our input before implementation. It is us who deals with the transition, the people and the changes.

Question 2: How do you communicate change to your subordinates?

P3 Informal discussion, team meeting and posters and emails.

Question 3: In the past, how has the specialised knowledge of your subordinates assisted you in implementing change?

P3 Using our experienced people to assist in change is always helpful. The staff has seen many changes over the years. They handle change very well and us managers would be lost without their input.

Question.4: In your opinion, do you believe that the level of transparency at this organisation is sufficient?

P3 Yes, I believe it to be appropriate to the levels within the organisation.

Question 5: What initiatives do you employ in your department to reduce change resistance?

P3 I've had informal chats with my staff and where the frustrations reached boiling point, I intervened wherever I could.

Question 6: What additional methods are used to communicate change to diverse persons / groups in your department?

P3 None needed in my department

Question 7: How would you improve communication at your organisation?

P3 Nothing really replaces face to face communication, so strengthening relationships will definitely improve the quality of our communication.

Question 8: In your opinion, how has organisational change affected employee performance in your department?

P3 There is always a dip in performance after any major organisational change. As managers, we do anticipate this but the staff has persevered and we were able to give them the support they needed to get them up to standard again.

Question 9: To which extent would you include your staff in the decision-making process?

P3 If this were my company, I would probably include the staff in some of the decisions that are made, but in a corporate it is almost unheard of.

Question 10: How is good employee performance acknowledged at your organisation?

P3 The occasional 'thank you' when we've completed big projects or shipments but it would be an acknowledgement in a form of a lunch or half day off and it would be for the whole site and not for individuals.

Question 11: How would you describe the culture at your organisation?

P3 It depends on which level you find yourself; the general worker might find it to be a safety-conscious culture whereas a manager in admin might find it to be more an authoritarian type of culture. Overall, I think that ours is a culture of procedure and discipline"

Participant 4

Academic Research Interview with Participant 4

Date: 19 July 2018

Time: 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Question 1: What are your thoughts on the organisational change that has taken place over the recent months at your organisation?

P4 I've seen many changes over the past years. In order for a company to evolve, change must happen. Companies should be agile and pro-change. It's up to us managers to get the staff aligned with organisational changes and strategy

Question 2: How do you communicate change to your subordinates?

P4 Mostly emails and staff meetings.

Question 3: In the past, how has the specialised knowledge of your subordinates assisted you in implementing change?

P4 The 'specialised' skilled staff such as bond clerks, compliance clerks etcetera, all have a role to play and if we don't get their input or assistance, we will find it much harder to implement change".

Question.4: In your opinion, do you believe that the level of transparency at this organisation is sufficient?

P4 I don't really have an opinion about it.

Question 5: What initiatives do you employ in your department to reduce change resistance?

P4 There will always be resistance to change, as a department we just have to ride out the storm and plan properly.

Question 6: What additional methods are used to communicate change to diverse persons /groups in your department?

P4 No requests for additional languages.

Question 7: How would you improve communication at your organisation?

P4 I would probably have more meetings, but we don't always have the luxury of making sure everyone is 100% on board.

Question 8: In your opinion, how has organisational change affected employee performance in your department?

P4 Nothing outside of what we expected. We knew that certain staff members will resist change while others would welcome it, overall, we've managed to overcome the worse.

Question 9: To which extent would you include your staff in the decision-making process?

P4 I wouldn't include them in decision-making per se, however I think that it would be really important to get their buy-in.

Question 10: How is good employee performance acknowledged at your organisation?

P4 It's not really something we do here. We have branch initiatives from time to time but that would be at the discretion of the managers at the branch.

Question 11: How would you describe the culture at your organisation?

P4 I would like to believe that we have a learning and developing culture.