

Image of Change Management, Vision and the Direction of Change: A Study at Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia

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ABSTRACT: *This study gives an overview regarding images of change management in Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia (FRDM) together with the vision and strategic of change.*

KEY WORD: *Image Of Change Management, Vision and Direction of Change, Fire And Rescue Department of Malaysia*

Date of Submission: 20-04-2019

Date of acceptance: 05-05-2019

I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia (FRDM) popularly known as Bomba, is the federal fire and rescue services agency in Malaysia. The Malay term 'Bomba' is derived from the Portuguese word bombeiros which carries the same meaning.

In Malaysia, the fire and rescue services started in 1883 with the establishment of the Selangor state fire and rescue volunteers squad headed by H.F.Bellamy with 15 crews. After the World War II, in 1946 the Malayan Union Fire Services (MUS) was formed with Flight Lt. W.J Gerumandi being appointed as the Director of Malayan Union Fire Services. MUS was based in Kuala Lumpur. Through the Federation of Malaya's agreement, the fire and rescue service was handed over to the state governments. The service was then integrated as a federal-level department on 1 January 1976, reporting to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. On 15 May 1981, the department was renamed as the Malaysian Fire Services Department. On 8 January 1997, the Cabinet has agreed to change the logo or insignia, flag and name of the Malaysian Fire Services Department to be known as the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department, which are officially announced and launched in a ceremony held in Genting Highlands Fire and Rescue Station, Pahang on 21 February 1997, by The Honourable Malaysian Prime Minister of that time, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad-the fourth Malaysian Prime Minister.

The objective of the FRDM is to provide effective and efficient fire prevention and fire-fighting services, enforcement of law related to fire safety and fire-fighting as well as humanitarian services. To improve on quality, the department is determined to excel through innovation and the M.S. ISO 9001-2000 quality certification. To achieve these objectives, the department implements its functions as stipulated under Section 5(1) & (2) the Fire Services Act 1988 (Act 341), among which are as follows:

1. Extinguish, fighting, preventing and controlling fires.
2. Protect life and property in case of fire.
3. Determining the fire exits, maintenance and regulation.
4. Carry out an investigation into the cause, origin and circumstances of the fire.
5. Perform humanitarian services, including protection of life and property during the occurrence of any disaster.

FRDM can be other than his duties under subsection (1), perform any other tasks entrusted to it by law or otherwise held by the minister to implement. In terms of quality objective, the department are determined to excel through innovation and the quality of MS ISO 9001-2000. Client charter is "To Plan and provide professional fire and rescue services to save lives, property and the environment and increase the level of fire safety and public awareness." Motto Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia is "Ready To Rescue", "Fast And Friendly". As at February 2013, they have 13,446 personnel in the department.

II. IMAGES OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT

What is change management? Change management is a structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state, to fulfill or implement a

vision and strategy. It is an organizational process aimed at empowering employees to accept and embrace changes in their current environment. There are several different streams of thought that have shaped the practice of change management. Change Management: As a Systematic Process Change management is the formal process for organizational change, including a systematic approach and application of knowledge. Change management means defining and adopting corporate strategies, structures, procedures, and technologies to deal with change stemming from internal and external conditions-Society for Human Resources Management, 2007 Change Management Survey Report 5 As a Means of Transitioning People Change management is a critical part of any project that leads, manages, and enables people to accept new processes, technologies, systems, structures, and values. It is the set of activities that helps people transition from their present way of working to the desired way of working.-Lambeth Change Management Team, Change Management Toolkit. As a Competitive Tactic Change management is the continuous process of aligning an organization with its marketplace—and doing so more responsively and effectively than competitors. -Lisa M. Kudray and Brian H. Kleiner, “Global Trends in Managing Change,” *Industrial Management*, May 1997

In today’s world, change management has become the critical to organization’s success and survival. This has resulted in organization – both for-profit and non-profit – examining their fundamental practices around managing strategy, process, people and culture. Managers and executives play an integral role in planning, executing and sustainability of change initiatives. They must not only embrace and propagate the change but act as “change translators, negotiators and implementers, turning the strategic into the logical” (Jones, 2017).

Change management factor refers to the organisation’s external and internal environments, such as a changing political environment or the institutionalisation of a public organisation (e.g. Philippidou et al. 2008). The content factor focuses on the content of the change, including the organisation’s strategies, structures and systems (Armenakis and Bedeian 1999). An example of a content issue in the public sector could be New Public Management (NPM), a world-wide reform trend in the public sector (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). Third, Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) mention the process factor, which describes the interventions and processes that are involved in the implementation of change. Generally, both the management and public administration literature distinguish between radical and emergent change processes. Fourth, Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) raise criterion variables, referring to the outcomes of change, including the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of those involved with the change. An additional factor we include in our frame relates to the leadership of change, which has been receiving increasing attention in the change management literature (c.f. Higgs and Rowland 2005).

III. VISION AND THE DIRECTION OF CHANGE

What’s the difference between effective leaders and great leaders? Effective leaders encourage individual members to succeed within the organization. Great leaders communicate a vision that enhances the success of both individuals and the entire fire department. Most agencies have a mission statement that outlines the organization’s purpose. In 50 years, the fire service’s general mission hasn’t changed all that much—it’s still some form of “protect life and property.” However, small changes have crept in; in the 1980s, with the advent of hazmat responses, protecting the environment was added into many mission statements. Today, some organizations embed ancillary concepts, such as “paradigms,” “stakeholders,” “all-risk,” “diversity,” “collaboration,” etc., into their statements to make their mission unique to the community and its needs. An example of an all-inclusive mission statement: “We exist to care for, protect and serve our communities.” Most fire departments also have values statements, although relatively few agencies take the time to evaluate and reinforce them (see “Common Ground,” *FireRescue*, January 2010, p. 56).

However, very few agencies have vision statements that specifically indicate their desired future—where they want to be in the next 1–3 years. Those that do have vision statements often have something that sounds more like a continuation of their original mission statement—expressing what they do, not where they would like to be. A true vision statement answers one or more of the following three questions:

1. Where do we want to go?
2. What do we want to become?
3. What do we want to accomplish?

This differs from a mission statement, which focuses on what the organization does in the present. By the sheer nature of their position, the fire chief is responsible for moving the organization in the right direction, so their role is crucial in creating the vision. And to be compelling, that vision must be inspirational and simple to understand. The following five basic communication principles necessary to create an effective vision have analogies to the Incident Command System, where common procedures and terminology are important to effective operations. Specifically, the vision should:

1. Be simple and specific;
2. Be easily understood;
3. Be relevant to your agency's needs;
4. Use common strategic language; and
5. Define future direction.

Simply stated, a vision statement should be clear, concise and memorable. Just as your members need to understand your intent on the fireground, they must also understand the primary focus of the FRDM long-term vision.

Define the Vision

Where does a vision come from? And what should organization use as a guide for creating a vision statement? Steven Covey may have explained this best: "Begin with the end in mind." When envisioning the change, ask yourself, "What is our preferred future?" Ensure that the answer reflects the beliefs, mission and culture of the organization while describing what you want to see in the future. The mission should also reflect or incorporate your strategic initiatives. A good vision will challenge the status quo or require an analysis of future trends and demographics. Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement, "I have a dream that all men will be judged by the merit of their character, not by the color of their skin," is an example of a vision that challenges the status quo. For a fire agency, such a vision might be: "We aim to become an internationally accredited agency with a focus on quality, cost-effectiveness and all-risk service that exceeds our community's expectations." An example of a vision that maps out future direction: JFK's 1960 "Land a man on the moon and safely return him to earth by the end of this decade." The fire service equivalent to this could be: "Position the fire district securely (operationally, financially and politically) through and beyond the current economic uncertainty, while creating a predictable and sustainable future." Another example: "To build a premier fire agency." Note that the vision isn't to be the premier organization or even be recognized as a premier organization, thus implying the organization is in the building or growth state. This is an example of a vision that will likely change after a few years, after the building stage has been successfully accomplished. A follow-up vision might include elements such as, "to become accredited," or "to lower our ISO rating by one point."

Communicate the Vision

Of course, it's not enough to define your vision; you must also communicate it in a way that produces action. John W. Gardner, who authored several books on leadership, described this process: "True direction for an organization is born with a vision. It begins when the leader accepts it. It gains acceptance when the leader models it. And it becomes reality when the people respond to it." Communicating the vision is crucial. You want the community and fire personnel to understand where the organization stands and what its goals are for the future. Next is institutionalizing the change, which may be the most difficult part. The reason for this is that many people either resist change or need time to adjust (see "The Challenge of Change," *FireRescue*, February 2010, p. 96). It's important to realize that even those who don't like the status quo fear change even more. Regardless of the leader's credentials, some people won't trust that the leader is capable when proposing change. Sometimes the best thing you can do to communicate the vision and build support for it is to explain it in more detail. Let's look at an example. The following vision statement could describe almost any department today: "To position the fire district through and beyond this economic uncertainty while creating a predictable and sustainable future." Now let's look at how you could further explain the vision to overcome doubt and resistance to change: "We are cautiously yet confidently moving forward, adjusting to the new norm while shaping a new future and future possibilities. Our foundation is financial sustainability—living within our means while having a simultaneous, proactive approach in shaping new realities. We must be very firm and clear in an uncertain world that there's a certain future, one that we design. We're not 'surviving,' nor hunkering down, nor waiting to see what the future brings. We are neither wishing nor hoping for something good to occur—we're making it happen." This example clearly explains in detail what is going to occur, but equally important, it defines what's not going to occur.

Reap the Benefits

Once you've defined and communicated your vision, it's time to reap the benefits. An effective vision:

- Identifies direction;
- Provides organization continuity;
- Describes the changes that need to occur;
- Promotes focus; and Creates the desired state.

In the final analysis, a vision will inspire, renew or transform an organization only if it can be translated into action. As Will Rogers once said, "It isn't enough to be on the right track; if you're not moving,

you can still get hit by a train.” One of the best ways to get an organization moving is to develop an effective long-term strategy based on the vision. In the end, you can either control your destiny or let outside forces control it for you. The importance of a vision is that it gives you the control. For fire departments, this means having greater control of the future for individuals, it means that in terms of job security, the odds favour tomorrow.

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, the change management process is series of steps or actions that one can adopt to transform Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia. There are several images of managing change that leaders can use to control and shape changes within the organizations. These images require use of skills and activities that, if used right, can have profound effect on the people, profit and purpose.

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Nor Rasidamayati" Image of Change Management, Vision and the Direction of Change: A Study at Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia" International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI), vol. 08, no. 04, 2019, pp 14-17