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HKSARG Civil Servants:

A non-Drucker Organization?

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- Consistently negative
- Inherently bureaucratic
- Government is sick
- The employees?
  - Loyalty > performance
  - The government structure protects from demand for performance and criticisms
- To survive in the new environment, government Must change

Drucker on Government

- Should evolve from traditional bureaucratic model
- To mimic private sector
- Restrict to govern, not doing
- Abandon obsolete activities
- Privatization
- Goals: get rid of inertia and continuous improvement

- Over simplifying the situation
- Critics on government not supported by empirical evidences
- Heavily rely to private sector
- Prescriptions not practical enough (fail to address political, managerial and technical complexities)
- The solutions, e.g. privatization, have/will cause other problems

- Unable to discern the actual tenor and texture of government -- too general description
- Unable to appreciate the complicated nature of government
- There are subcultures, heterogeneous groups
- Unfair treatment to government -- double standards for private and public sectors

- The government needs to change

- The government is unique

- Some suggestions of Drucker are good in principle (e.g. Sunsetting program; random audit, etc) -- at least some "net-gains"

- Drucker maintains that government (being bureaucratic) is resistant to change

- Many researchers share this view

- Non results of many change initiatives in government --> RTC!

- Need to change + RTC = hopeless for government?!

- Bureaucratic = RTC
- Value incompatibility
- Not tally with "ways we do things here"
- Conflict of interests
- The existing systems
  - Seniority comes first > performance
  - Risk averse

RTC - Causes

- Too many change programs – cynical & wish new change programmes
- Insufficient resources/staff
- Lack of communication; leadership; training
- Bad experience
- Exclusion of staff in policy formulation
  - Not buy-in

- Top down managerial decision -- NO
- Bonus,stock option, promotion -- NO in government
- Fire non-performer -- NO in government
- Then, how?

- Immediate and pressing need
- Work for employees' benefits
- Pilot projects
- The existence of subcultures and heterogeneous behavioral groups may be helpful
- The increasing number and proportion of knowledge workers may help

- Government or bureaucracy is not necessarily more resistant to change than private sector

- E.g. Volvo, AstraZeneca, NLB, SIA

- The failure rates of change initiatives in private sector is similar to public sector

- Government cannot copy completely from business -- it's unique!

Research Method

- Change -- E-government IT changes work routines in government workplace
- Basing on lists of Rumelt (1995); Drafke and Kossen (1998); Kotter and Cohen (2002); Pardo del Val and Martinez Fuentes (2003) and PWCI (1995), a newly formulated 12 items construct to test RTC
- Use email survey to check the resistance and acceptance levels

Data Collection

- During the period from January to November 2007, the email survey sent to 700 randomly selected IT users in HKSARG

- Letters were sent to 10 department heads (change agents) for personal interview

- Altogether 66 questionnaire received (9%)
- 5 CAs completed the open-end questions questionnaire
- Only 1 personal interview
- These response rates are within normal ranges in the local context and experiences of researchers

Respondent Profile

- 47% male and 53% female (service: 66% vs 34%)
- 1.5% directorate; 37.3% senior and 71.2% junior to middle
- 22.7% aged 35 or below; 77.3% aged 36 or above
- 65.2% without degree; 34.8% degree or higher
- Similar in age and rank distributions
- No demographic information of IT users for comparison

Respondent Profile

- Higher rank -- older
- Higher rank -- higher education level
- Female dominates junior to middle ranked group
- Male dominates senior ranked group
- Younger IT users -- generally higher education level

Correlation & Regression

- Correlation suggests high resistance level associates with low system usage significantly (r=0.759, p=0.01)

- Regression suggests high resistance level causes low system usage (coefficient=0.205, r^2=0.575, p=0.001)

- Overall resistance level is higher than average
- No significant difference between different gender and ranking groups
- Significant different behaviors observed in different age and education background groups

- Dividing the respondents into high and low resistance groups (mid point = 36)

Groups	AU(7)
High resistance group (RTC score<36) (N=41)	Low Mean score= 5.63
Low resistance group (RTC score >=36) (N=25)	High Mean score= 10.04

Change agents' views

- They are responsible to formulate and implement the changes
- Do not recognize a higher than average resistance level
- Expect high resistance level will hinder change
- Solutions: Training, management support, incentive and communication

Discussion

- Consistent with Drucker:
  - Government tends to be reluctant to change
  - The unwillingness can cause change program fail
- But important information is masked by the pooled results
- Because there are apparent heterogeneous groups within the government

Discussion

- The young or more educated IT users are willing to change

- These groups are minority in size

- Basing on the figures, the less educated group is indeed resisting the change more severely than the older group

- Because education level can be changed by providing training opportunities, this should be dealt with seriously

Discussion

- The rigid systems and the compositions in government are the cause of overall higher than average resistance level

- Should formulate new policies to better manage the human resources in government, e.g. flexible compensation system, flexible entry and exit system, job rotation arrangements etc to have better composition in the service

- Drucker's another important advocate of knowledge workers may be a solution
  - Knowledge workers are highly educated and willing to learn continuously – should be ready to accept change

- Better strategy to implement change:
- Focus on easier groups
- Pilot the change program
- Create critical mass and successful story
- The peer pressure can create greater momentum and help to unroot cultural deadlock

Limitations

- No full IT users list available
- Cannot assure the demographic characteristics of the population
- Low response rate
- Need to compare the resistance levels in other organization forms

Conclusion

- Drucker's diagnosis is too general
- The findings in this research supplement his discussion and open up new possibilities for change implementation in government
- The government is not hopeless!