

BOOK REVIEW

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Gerald Bradley, *Benefit Realization Management*, Gower, Aldershot, UK, 2006, xx+292 pp, £ 55, hard.

Gerald Bradley, the author of the well developed book, clearly outlines what happens when change is taking place within an organization. Towards this end, he precisely suggests many different angles and considerations that must be part of the decisions to implement the change from beginning to end. In this three-part book, the first part discusses the fundamentals and foundations of benefit realization and the second and third parts provide the reader practical tools and techniques for full utilization of Benefit Realization Management (BRM). It is not just an investment in a management book, but this book is an investment in a technique that can be used, to add value to all the current and future change initiatives within an organization.

In small bites Bradley captures the many complex issues that are at the core of the implementation process for any significant change implementation and also provides clear examples and meaningful strategies of perceiving and dealing with them. He has given the reader a wealth of information on change and change management techniques in a down-to-earth and easy-to-follow language. Besides, he has ended each chapter with one dialogue box that contains the essence of the message from each chapter. Used collectively, these concluding “gems” can become the check-list for success, after the reader has mastered the content of this book. .

The author first outlines the challenges for implementation and though with a UK reference, his points are valid in the context of any culture or country. Looking at the failure rate of change implementation and processes over the last few years, he shares research findings that he conducted during presentations by his own company, “sigma”, with over 200 of the UK’s largest public and private sector organizations. He indicates that the primary reasons that investment in change is not fully realized are: lack of commitment by

senior management; lack of clarity in vision/objectives; and dearth of contribution by stakeholders to the change.

Bradley also notes that these findings are similar to the top three hindrances to success in realizing the benefits of change that were identified by the National Audit Office and the Office of Government Commerce. Based on the readers’ personal and professional experiences with change, these indeed would be borne out in any context for any significant change initiative, as the reasons for failure of the full benefit of the investment of the change to be realized. He then begins to lay the groundwork for the way in which these issues can be approached, which, if followed, will lead to total benefit realization for the organization and the individuals involved.

The author’s careful attention to identify the stakeholders and useful explanation of how to determine, who they are and how to address them for each change, helps the readers focus on the first important steps to building up a plan for successful implementation. He provides several methods for engaging the stakeholders and for helping the change agents to deal with issues that affect each of the identified groups.

The chapters dealing with identifying and being able to articulate the desired benefit of the change and building the infrastructure to support movement toward the achievement of that benefit give the reader a complete sense of the complexity and clarity, That can be achieved with the use of proper tools like the Quality Benefits Maps, which can turn dreams into realities.

The author has created a complete list of the “objections” or obstacles that BRM (Benefit Realization Management) can address and/or alleviate. Again, this is extremely helpful for the readers in understanding why and how this technique can support them and why it is important to spend time to get the right infrastructure and thought in place at the beginning of the change process, in order to support achieving the financial targets in the end. This “fable” used by “sigma” to market BRM as shared in this book, is a clear example of how important the BRM process is for success.

A farmer once planted a vineyard. He prepared the ground with care and devoted much time to choosing the best vines, planting and nurturing them lovingly, using the best methods available. As the grapes began to form he worked long and hard, trimming the branches to the most beautiful shapes and sizes. Then he sat back pleased that his work was done.

He made no plans for harvesting or processing his crop. Although a few bunches were picked and eaten and a neighbour made good wine with a few that overhung his fence, most of the grapes rotted and disease set in, which reduced their fruitfulness next year.

In compiling his work, Bradley has taken every step to ensure that the reader, no matter how sophisticated about

change and change management, will find this work and the BRM process meaningful. More than just enjoyable for reading, this book is a complete tool kit for understanding and learning about the dynamics of change and for eliminating the frustrations associated with failure in achieving the desired results of any change initiative.

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