



Research Article

Leadership and Strategic Change

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Abstract

In an environment in continuous evolution, the change becomes a condition of survival. Aware of this need for change, companies seek to apprehend the environment developments to properly adapt thereto and maintain their vitality. Considering the extent and the importance of strategic change for enterprises, we have tried in this research to propose a reflection on the theoretical approaches of leadership role in the implementation and success of this type of change. Through the development of the necessary leader's skills for the conduct of this transformation process, we attempted to discuss and present, through a theory synthesis, models of leadership that help enterprises to implement strategic change and to create a flexible and adaptable culture.

Keywords: Leadership, strategic change, leader

Introduction

Since some time, we are going through a new economic era characterized primarily by the globalization of markets and competition. This era may continue for two, four even ten decades. Globalization is just beginning. According to Gibson (1997: 195), the main consequence of this globalization is that it creates at the same time more risks and more opportunities for everyone, risks in terms of increasing volatility of the environment and growing competition, and opportunities thanks to the increasing number and size of markets. All these elements accelerate and intensify the change.

Whether limited and of marginal nature requiring the reorganization of a single department, or of a strategic nature affecting the company as a whole and changing its strategy, its culture, its employees and resources, organizational changes cannot be spontaneous, they are rather triggered by problems and occasions, and then led by leaders. In a context of uncertainty and instability marked by the globalization of markets and technological progress, the current business has to continually adapt and opt, where appropriate, for more pronounced and significant changes. Such changes are generally called strategic changes, which, according to Hafsi and Fabi (1997), affect either the content (objective, assessment of the

environment and nature and availability of resources and know-how), or the process (structure, system, culture and values) in order to sustainably modify the organization performance.

This change, whether major or marginal, marks a discontinuity between a past situation towards a new equilibrium or a refinement of the current situation. Global or partial, it affects either all the organization activities or units or part of them. Hafsi and Fabi (1997) point out that the partial change affecting some parts of the organization is indeed insufficient to change the organizational performance. It results from the need for cooperation and coordination between groups demanding the implementation of a consensus around the change process.

As perceived by these authors, major strategic changes require thus qualitative changes and not simple continuous and usual changes.

According to G. Dessler et al., (2004), organizational change often starts with strategic change, that is to say change in strategy, mission and vision of the organization. Strategic change can then lead to other organizational changes relating to technology, structure and culture of the company. For example, to support a new strategy, the management team of a company may decide to modify the structure of departments, the modes of coordination and division of responsibility, or the common corporate values or working methods that enable the organization to achieve its tasks.

This role becomes more crucial in case of an organizational context characterized by a rapidly changing environment. Faced with this situation, companies are obliged to develop their capacity and speed of adaptation. However, this environment is often presented as a limiting factor for companies' strategy (Soparnot, 2005). Adaptation to external requirements therefore requires the implementation of change especially of strategic nature. To achieve this goal, they

should provide themselves with means allowing them to detect more rapidly the early indications of change and have several sources of initiative to act.

In this respect, all individuals placed at the interface between the organization and its environment can play a key role. Change can succeed only if someone is responsible of it, even though it may be actually the responsibility of more than one person. A reformer shall be supported by others to make a strategic change (Balogun et al., 2005). Hence, the chairman and CEO of an organization may decide to lead the change with the help of a team of senior executives, also with the assistance of external consultants who provide advice and assistance and even of other resources, if necessary, such as groups of change or functional delegates.

Nevertheless, the concept of leadership remains important, because introducing significant changes in an organization "needs often a champion able to demonstrate an unusual commitment and exceptional enthusiasm to implement his vision" (Balogun and al., 2005).

Indeed, when the management of change is described, a leading role is often given to the personal influence of managers which is itself directly related, according to some authors (Johnson and al., 2005), to the role of the strategic leader. Based on the fact that leadership is "an interpersonal influence, exercised in a given situation and directed through a process of communication, to achieve a specific purpose" (Tannebaum and al., 1961), we note the effective power that may be exercised by the management ("the leader") if this management is able to exercise the leadership.

This notion of leadership, which emerged after the accelerated evolution of a competitive and volatile environment, consists in managing the change. As for the task of the leader, it consists in realizing the change (Kotter, 1999). His task is more than a task of control, recruitment and problem resolution; it consists in addressing

the challenges to ensure growth, performance and learning. Indeed, "leadership is identified as a set of knowledge and talent" (Ronald and Laurie, 1999), a challenge to be taken up by mobilizing people around a target aiming at achieving change. The leader is therefore expected to bring those around him to communicate the change, to adjust their values, to modify their perspectives and to learn new habits. To reach this purpose, he has to detect opportunities and identify the existing skills (Zone, 2003).

Today, according to Senge and al., (1999), the leader is the one who opens the way to individuals towards important changes; he is the synonym of the potential "manager" who influences others thanks to his credibility, ability and commitment. The author defines leadership as "the ability of a human community to forge a destiny and especially to provide the necessary processes to achieve the change".

In strategic change, the quality of leadership of managers who lead a company determine the success or failure of a new strategy (Dessler and al., 2004). Given the size of this type of change, several authors have shown the positive effect of strategic change on the survival of organizations (Smith and Grim 1987 Zuniga-Vicente and Vicente-Lorente, 2006, Wilson, 1992). The success of an organization would be directly attributed to its ability to manage strategic change and to make it last. However, few articles suggest the best practices that leaders can adopt to contribute to the implementation of a major change.

Based on these considerations and the fact that few studies have discussed the role of the manager in the context of transformation, we suggest in this respect to study the role of leadership in the implementation and success of strategic change. Such issue raises questions on the necessary skills of the leader for a better conduct of strategic change, the actors involved in such action and the type(s) of leadership promoting the success of this process of transformation.

The purpose of this article is therefore to answer these questions by providing in the first part, a reflection on the theoretical approaches of leadership roles in the context of a strategic change and by discussing in the second part, the model(s) of leadership allowing to manage the strategic change and to adapt to an ever changing environment.

What skills the leader shall have for a better management of strategic change?

It appears, while studying the concepts of leadership and strategic change that several aspects of leadership apply in particular to the implementation of such change. A more thorough examination of these aspects allows us to determine the role and necessary skills of the leader for a better management of this type of transformation.

Provide a strategic vision

Based on the fact that the function of leadership is to produce change especially of strategic nature, it turns out that the definition of the management of this change is one of his core missions.

However, as noted by Bennis and Manus (1985) "to choose a direction, a leader has to first develop a mental image of a possible and desirable situation to the business". This image, which we call vision, may also be as vague as a dream or as accurate as a statement of an objective or a mission. The critical point lies in the fact that a vision expresses a realistic, credible and attractive view of the future for the company, a condition that would be better in several respects to the current situation. The vision of the company is therefore seen as "a general statement of direction that this company considers and to which its members respond emotionally" (Higgins and Vineze, 1993).

Yet, according to other authors, the vision that is synonymous to strategic vision do not only show the way to follow, it also means a comprehensive framework in which fits the

mission and goals of the enterprise. In addition to be a driving force that promotes communication with employees, their participation and their commitment, it shows at the same time where the company wants to go and how it intends to get there (Morris, 1987).

According to Tregoe and Zimmerman (1979), strategic vision shall precede long and short term planning that ensue from it and is deemed to be the means to achieve that planning. It should eventually take the form of a statement of strategy which is specific, simple and clear enough to constitute a frame of reference for determining future products, markets, production capacity and performance.

For them "the strategy is a vision; it is entirely oriented to what an organization should be rather than how it will be". In the same vein, Mintzberg (1994, p107) also highlights the importance of strategic vision: "the best strategies are visions and not plans".

As adopted by Larwood and al., (1995), the vision is additionally considered important for the leadership, for the implementation of strategies and for change. Being translated into strategic objectives, visions will allow companies to define their new strategies, implement them and meet the requirements of their external environment.

It appears therefore that the proposal for a vision is an essential task to carry out strategic change. The proposal for a vision is also of particular importance in the current ever changing environment in which the operating conditions for enterprises are "volatile, rapid and sometimes hostile" Nvumaki (1979).

Nevertheless, defining a right direction or vision to serve the interests of important stakeholders (customers / shareholders / employees) and translating it into a realistic and competitive strategy is considered a difficult and sometimes exhausting process of gathering and analyzing information. People

able to make such visions are broad-minded strategists, ready to take risks (Kotter, 1999, p62).

The strategist should have the quality of a leader, he has to anticipate the future, to create a line to follow, a vital direction for him, his team or the organization. To share his vision, he must understand and know others, their needs, aspirations and values and know how to talk to them. Leadership is thus closely linked to the ability to create and innovate at the same time, this vision shall be palpable, tangible or meaningful to employees, it is not an impossible dream (Duluc, 2000:69).

The leader should have the qualities of a visionary: he must lead others to see a future that could be different notably from the present and to adhere to this vision by inspiring them through his words and his actions. Indeed, visionary leaders develop values and create and interpret the objectives of the institution, they are models, and they produce meanings, open doors and shape the culture of the organization. They are persistent and consistent and have such a powerful vision that they know what they want from each interaction. Their visions do not blind others, but give them strength (Egan, 1985).

However, the overuse of the concept of vision in management has been challenged by Giasson (1995). He considers that a vision that becomes a source of inspiration does not seem to be the only intelligent way of thinking about action; other manners of thinking and success exist: flexibility, creativity, good judgment in everyday life, business knowledge, and are also considered necessary ingredients for success, "having convictions, guts, energy, loyalty and courage is still part of the definition of good leaders" (Giasson, 1995).

The type of relationship of the leader with his teammates is also involved in the definition of a good leader. While drawing the portrait of the leader, Zaleznik (1977) emphasizes on the affective nature of this relationship. In this regard, Lapierre (1991) confirms that there is

no leadership without imagination without vision and without deep conviction: "if there is in leadership a cognitive dimension based on a rational analysis, there is in particular an affective dimension based on the desires and the needs sometimes beyond our understanding and our explanations".

Defining leadership as a direction that comes from the person himself, from his intellect, his emotions, his beliefs, his moral and physical strength, Lapierre (2008) shows that this internal direction does not prevent an analysis of the external environment to be carried out in order to understand the opportunities and threats lying therein, or to assess the strengths and weaknesses of all types of resources that the leader has.

Identify the need for change and seek a new strategic response

Nowadays, environments are often crucial to the survival and growth of the company. Faced with a turbulent environment, the aforesaid company's answers including those of strategic nature may be inadequate since it is often impossible to predict or influence the changing and complex environments (Allaire, 1982).

In such an environment, the practice of traditional strategy is deemed to be ineffective. It is considered non innovative and non creative leading to a strategic rigidity (Nilson 1995, Edgar and Nisbet 1995, Brown and Eisenhart, 1998, Ross, 1999). These problems are due to the fact that the practice of traditional strategy is often based on (Mason, 2007):

- Obsolete information by the end of the planning process,
- Assumption of a stable environment,
- Assumption that the company is able to control its environment.

Faced with this inefficiency, Allaire (1982) noted that the best way to prepare the company for such conditions is to develop its

capacity to adapt to changing contexts through its management systems and procedures and through its organizational structure.

Yet, in such a context, the chances of success for complex organizations will, according to this author, depend more than ever on their effectiveness in strategic tasks. These tasks will be based on three axes, the three I of strategy (Allaire, 1982) namely:

- Information: the development of networks and information systems which should be formal and informal, strategic and tactical, controversial, nervous, and as much as possible without filters and dysfunctional bias.
- Innovation: not only technological but also search for strategic innovation that changes market structures and sociopolitical context in favor of the enterprise.
- Implementation: "The strategic intentions based on accurate and clear information do not always lead to up to date and compliant strategies". The operational translation of strategic intentions into strategic implementation requires in most cases new organizational mechanisms.

In following these strategic perspectives leader should:

- Be creative. Indeed, creativity plays an important role in the quality of decisions: the ability to propose innovative solutions is essential to decision-making process such as the development of new opportunities and problems diagnosis (Dessler et al., 2004: 372).
- Develop his skills in strategic leadership. Based on the fact that leadership is the key differentiating factor between sustainable success and mediocrity, Tedstone (2008) identifies three main features allowing the leader to act in a strategic manner and

therefore be innovative in a context of a changing environment, they are according to this author:

- ✓ to seek information on the environment in general and know immediately the whole context of problems and issues which arise, allowing the leader to develop ideas and holistic solutions,
- ✓ to have a strong conceptual ability enabling leaders to better understand the internal and external environments and to identify trends, stakes and opportunities.
- ✓ To have the ability to think in a flexible manner. According to this author, Flexibility is essential in a professional environment in constant evolution.

According to this author, the leader needs, to reach innovations, to be a good strategist, he has to understand a wide range of information, decipher new and existing data, create links between the different parts of information and develop a range of possible options to use in case of changes in the future environment .

It turns out therefore that "If a person has strong capacity for strategic leadership there is a bigger probability of innovation in a uniform manner".

However, other researches (Alcorn, 1992) indicate that certain informed management techniques can in some way compensate the practice of leadership. In order to find new strategic responses, some authors (Howell and al., 1990) suggest the right choice of subordinates, their training and motivation: "it is necessary to choose subordinates who are cooperative, flexible and trustworthy, who have initiative and are effective in solving the problem". As for Alcorn (1992), he recommends to make use of their management skills.

In order to reach new strategies, it is recommended to select better managers who have adequate knowledge of the environments and are able to detect easily the warning signals of the changes. It is necessary according to Allaire (1982), to have "games men, or games women as reported by Maccoby, managers who are eager for information, who encourage and submit themselves to divergent and conflicting points of view, who constantly check their perception of the reality, managers who have established a network of wide and varied personal information, "métaculturels" managers who use organizational cultures as instruments for changes but should not socialize with specific values and conceptions of an organization, mobile managers in their career who embrace professional values".

The existence of this type of managers in the company will allow, according to this author, to be less susceptible to functioning according to a truncated and outdated vision of the reality. This will avoid the divergences between the real and the perceived environments and will permit a better adaptation of the company to the environment's changes.

Communicate well the limits of the old strategy and the merits of the new one

Considering the new business opportunities and the external threats on the one hand, and the internal strengths and weaknesses on the other hand, the company is obliged to develop its new strategy according to the statement of its vision and its mission.

As reported by Porter (1996: 77), it is essential to decide which group of customers and target needs the company has to serve in order to develop a strategy. On the basis of this observation, Dessler et al., (2004: 214) showed that the manager has to establish limits to channel his decisions of a leader. To reach such purpose, he has to:

- clearly explain the activities and the mission of the company,
 - learn to executives when it is necessary to say “no” when an action is not consistent with the mission,
 - establish rules to make sure that executives have guidelines to follow.
 These limits being fixed, it is necessary to clearly define the strategy which is none other than the action plan that explains how the company is going to evolve from what it is now to what it wants to become.

However, defining such a plan means in some way specifying the stages of the change, and the schedule of the actions which will contribute to the development of the ability to change.

The leader's role consists therefore in explaining to the staff the merits of the strategic change scenario and the need for change (Porter, 1996).

Once established, the new strategy should be disseminated within the company. As noted by Porter (1996), “one of the most important functions of a clearly communicated strategy is to guide employees towards choices to be made”. However, to realize such operation, the strategic change should be based on substantial efforts of dialogue and communication at every level of the organization and throughout the change process. It is (CEDIP, 2005):

- to start the discussion about the change and the ruptures,
- to explain constraints and limits,
- to highlight the individual potential gains,
- to determine the change by objectifying «losses» to be assumed real,
- to generate a flow of new ideas which enriches and accelerates the process,
- and finally to adapt the approach to the various actors and to their position.

To make the communication of the change profitable to the company, O'Neill (1999) presents a communication strategy based on a

thorough understanding of how people cope with the change in their lives. This strategy relies on a clear determination for the need for change in general, and the relevance of specific changes to be made. Such approach consists in:

- Firstly, establishing the content of communication: the impact of the change on the employees and on the company...

- Secondly, setting up a communication plan to address the staff questions: the profile of the company after the change, the leadership style and behavior, the system to strengthen the company...

Communication should not be done according to this author retrospectively in the business plan; it is rather a priori communication which leads to the desired results.

- Finally, communicating with employees: to explain to them the process of change, to demonstrate the necessity for change, to describe the arguments in support of the organizational change and to expose the plan of this change.

In developing this approach, the author demonstrates the possibility of encouraging change through communication. It consists in:

- helping people to understand the motives for the change,
- communicating clearly, continuously, openly, honestly and quickly,
- talking to people in person as much as possible,
- telling employees what is expected from them exactly,
- focusing on a small number of tasks to ensure they are well performed, rather than aiming wider,
- communicating by example, demonstrating commitment towards change and demonstrating willingness to change one's own work.

These qualities refer to the leader's features: the leaders are honest and of integrity. Studies

reveal that the leaders are generally considered more trustworthy and reliable than others in the performance of their functions (Kirkpatrick and Luke, 1991), they are self confident, make the right decisions, have strong cognitive aptitudes and a thorough understanding of the social context and of the mission conferred to them, and have strong ideological convictions.

For Denning (2008), good leaders stimulate enthusiasm for change through communication which is fundamentally different from the traditional approach in which leaders address problem, analyze options then recommend a conclusion. The effective leaders should according to this author: firstly, attract the attention of the audience and stimulate the desire. Indeed, they establish an emotional link, and stimulate the desire for a different future by telling positive stories about the past when a similar change has happened. Finally, they should reinforce the desire for change with reasons. Among these three steps, the intermediate one is considered the most important, because it drives the change process.

Indeed, faced with changes that introduce rupture or complexity in practices (Watzlawick et al., 1972), recipients are more challenged on cognitive and emotional levels (Liu and Perrewé, 2005), and should feel the need to be actively directed, even reassured (Colorette et al., 2006). In fact, as these situations generate ambiguity, many persons seek in addition basic information (Elving, 2005).

Through establishing a link between the communication approach and the type of change to be introduced and its complexity, Colorette (2010) recommended for these types of changes to favor frequent contacts and exchanges with recipients. This would not only provide the recipients with nuanced explanations on the reasons and the nature of changes, but also, to provide them with opportunities to perceive managers' attitudes towards them and towards their concerns.

While referring to great leaders, generals, politicians, heroes and dictators, Wood (1997: 566) notes that « their success depended largely on their capacity to hold the audience attention, and the majority of their supporters were only too willing to give up their individuality to merge into this collective fantasy. »

However, through studying the managers' portrait in the political sphere, Doublet (2008) identifies an excess of communication along with a lack of dialogue, consultation and delegation: it is the portrait of a leader "who constantly has ideas and it does not make any difference whether those ideas are his or are inspired by relatives".

Referring to the reflection of Crozier especially in his book «We do not reform by decree », the author shows that decisions falling from the sky accompanied by a large communication, have little chance of success: "Wide is the cemetery of innovations and stillborn reforms".

During the implementation of a change of a certain scale, the exchanges among staff members tend to increase due to the growing uncertainty and to the need to reduce it (Ruff, 2010). In this context, dialogue and discussion between leaders and subordinates are useful as they permit to avoid risks that may be caused by an interpretation of reality that does not match theirs.

It appears therefore, that the leader should not be limited to communication to draw the attention of his subordinates. In order to channel his vision and arouse the enthusiasm of the largest number of persons, it is recommended to use a simple, accurate, clear, fascinating and convincing message and to establish the involvement and the commitment of employees. Negotiation and agreement may suit if a group will obviously suffer a loss as a result of the change (Dessler et al., 2004), such actions will ensure the success of change especially of strategic nature and avoid employees resistance.

Overcoming the resistance to change

Overcoming resistance to change is an important step in the strategic change management. Such resistance is likely to come from five major causes (Ouimet and Dufour, 1997): the individuals resist generally the change when they lack of self-esteem to face it, when they are afraid of the unknown, when their economic security is a game and when they are victims of their embellished perceptions of the good old days.

However, many reasons for the resistance to change have been studied. The reasons that were published (Bareil, 2004) can be grouped into six categories:

- Individual reasons: the recipient is considered himself guilty of his resistance because of his preferences for stability (psychological dispositions), past experience and age that makes him wary about changes in fashion (socio-demographic characteristics), lack of motivation, ability and disability, lifestyle (individual characteristics)...

- The causal variables related to the collective or culture: the group can resist change for fear of losing acquired interests, or because of social norms and compliance with standards. Similarly, cultural variables can engender resistance to change (values, social norms...). Indeed, Hofstede studies (2001), although criticized, demonstrate that the most resistant cultures to change are characterized by a high power distance, low individualism and a high degree of uncertainty avoidance.

- The political reasons of the resistance to change: it is the resistance due to political pressure from influential persons that the recipient trusts or from support for a cause.

- The reasons related to the implementation of the change: the reasons connected to a challenging implementation of the change constitute very often the major reason for failures because of resistance (Bareil, 2004). In this regard, the author evokes the studies of

Rondeau (2002). The latter states that "the success of a transformation is not only a matter of positive disposition of the concerned authors, individual and organizational capacities necessary for its implementation should also be developed". To succeed a transformation process, it is necessary to create according to this author, the conditions of empowerment (training of employees to prepare them to the change), the participation and the consultation of the recipients associated with change, orientation, awareness-raising and communication, availability of resources, time and means to adapt to the change.

- The reasons related to the organizational system : it is the organizational system that may be inert and unresponsive to change, such as inertia, lack of pressure from the environment, the determinants of the capacity to be changed (context, structure, culture, human potential, leadership) and internal integration problems (norms, rites, rituals, language...).

Many studies have supported this concept of organizational inertia by favoring the past as an explanation of evolution or non evolution of the company (Boeker, 1989 Kimberly, 1979). Starbuck (1965) also confirms that when an organization adopts a type of strategy, this automatically makes difficult or impossible the adoption of other strategies. According to Quinn (1980), organizations would generally tend to preserve their strategy rather than changing it radically. Miler and Friesen (1980), meanwhile, speak about "strategic momentum" that drives organizations to adapt very slowly to the environmental changes.

- The reasons related to the change itself: the recipient resists because the announced change is complex, little legitimized by the organization and in opposition with the values of the environment. Abrahamson (2004) has distinguished the notion of "resistance to change" from resistance of change. He means by this, that there is currently a too strong tendency in the practice for what he calls "the

creative distraction” or radical change and the syndrome of the repetitive change. The accelerated changes in the recent years resulted in the inability of people to resist any more the changes which have always befallen them. He denounces these changes which are only causing resistance, anxiety and cynicism; it is also necessary to highlight the fact that resistance constitutes one of the twenty recognized dysfunctional consequences of the downsizing.

So, these researches show that the causes of resistance to change are multiple, multidimensional and often without direct control for a manager. The concept is also revealed “complex, multiform, multi-cause and multilevel”: contrary to the literature which implies, implicitly, that the sources of resistance would be located at the lowest levels of the organization, Vas (2000) has demonstrated, through an exploratory study, the importance of resistance to change at all the hierarchical levels of the organization. The resistance would take different forms depending on the category of actors that show it. Consequently, he identifies two types of resistance: the tacit resistance developing more at senior levels and the explicit resistance specific to the lower levels, as for the median levels, they show the two types of resistance.

But, whatever its form, its cause and its level, the degree of resistance to change depends on what people expect therefrom for better or for worse and on the influence of the organization’s culture on the how to react.

To succeed the transformation of his organization, the leader has to create and maintain the desired culture. Dessler et al., (2004: 519) recommend the use of the following ways:

- the publication of a valuable statement,
- words and actions from the leaders themselves,
- symbolism, what the manager says and does,

- and the signals which he sends, contribute ultimately to the creation and the maintenance of the corporate culture.

To overcome resistance to change, Kotter and Sclesinger (1979) recommend to leaders the use of one of the following management practices:

- information and communication: when lack of information or blurred trainings are on the base of the resistance,
- participation and commitment: if the initiators do not have all the information needed to design the change and if the others have a great power of resistance,
- facilitation and support: if the resistance is a manifestation of fear and anxiety,
- negotiation and agreement: if a person or a group would obviously undergo a loss after the change and if this group has a great power of resistance,
- manipulation and cooptation: when other tactics are ineffective or too expensive,
- coercion: if the rapidity of action is essential and if the initiators of change have considerable power.

In order to resist the temptation of great changes, Hafsi (1995) advises managers to work on themselves before working on the world: “it is necessary to accept in particular that others can benefit from what we undertake, accept that the best of our efforts are not necessarily visible”.

He states that strategic change is a paradox. It is necessary but not really urgent: “it should be done constantly in small steps to avoid major upheavals. This would allow ongoing adaptation and especially educate constantly and irritate the individuals who work in the organization to avoid that they fall asleep, and find themselves confronted to situations where the upheaval is rough and threatens the essence of their collaboration”.

These various reflections show that this concept is not only multi-causes, but it involves different management methods which allow challenging and managing the resistance to change.

According to Bareil (2004), the traditional perspective which presumes that if the reasons which explain the resistance are known, and if the right approach is used, resistance will always be avoided or surmounted, has induced many managers to believe that there is only one way to manage change and therefore inevitably surmount resistance. Such intervention proposals reflect a rather simplistic view of resistance. Visinand (2003) writes that "this conception is indeed simplistic considering the fact that it is not only a question to know the reasons of the emergence of resistance, and to apply thereto a prescribed approach to conclude that this resistance will be avoided or surmounted".

In fact, as suggested by Abrahamson (2003) in his book « Change without pain », resistance to change could be avoided if the decision-makers were able to choose the types of less painful changes and strived to manage them with respect to persons.

However, for other authors, resistance to change is considered as a part of the normal process of acceptance of the change. We quote in this regard Vaillancourt (Les cahiers de l'actif), who shows that "it is primordial to identify the meanders of the extent of change in order to appreciate it. Indeed, a change which would not cause any resistance could not be a change!".

Thus, the range of options in terms of the attitude to be adopted towards the resistance to change is large. According to Collette, Deliste and Perron (1997: 103), they can range from the full respect of resistance, in other words the withdrawal of the change project to be for example introduced again in a more convenient moment, to the complete ignorance of the resistance. Between the two, there are the strategies of reduction or elimination of the resistance. Sometimes, it is preferred to tolerate manifestations of resistance.

But, whatever option chosen, leaders are expected to influence employees so as to overcome the resistance to change. It is

assumed that a particular attention should be given to this action while implementing large-scale changes because of the risks of this type of change.

Using power and developing a political support

The implementation of the new strategy requires sometimes the use of multiple sources of power in order to influence the behavior of others.

These sources may include (Hellriegel and Slocum, 2006: 361):

- the legitimate power: subordinates can act, because the leader is entitled to ask them to do it and they are obliged to obey,
- the power of reward: the subordinates can act to obtain rewards whose granting is influenced by the leader,
- the concerted power: subordinates may behave in a manner to avoid sanctions which are under the leader's control,
- the power of example: subordinates may engage in behaviors conducted by their admiration for the leader wishing to be like him and to receive his approval,
- the power of expertise: subordinates may engage in behaviors as a result of their conviction that the leader has special knowledge and knows what is needed to achieve a goal or to solve a problem.

However, the use of the sources of power evolves towards expanding the place given to the powers of reward, of example and of expertise at the expense of the coercive and legitimate powers. This new schema is influenced according to Hellriegel and Slocum (2006: 362), by the progress of techniques, the capacity building of employees and teams to make decisions, the tighter organizational hierarchies and the change of expectations of

staff regarding their professional and personal life.

The strategic change can also lead to alter or even disrupt power relations within the enterprise. As adopted by Guvenc et al., (1995), a new strategy may affect the balance of power of a company resulting in conflicts and political struggles. To avoid these problems, the leader has to set up a political support for his new strategy among, for example, members of the senior management or the board of directors.

This proliferation of power games in organizations is attributed according to Zaleznik (Lapierre, 1999), to the absence of a leadership able to exercise authority which ensue a genuine pact between the leader and his collaborators, a pact capable to generate enthusiasm and to stimulate the respect for the leader and the commitment of subordinates to overcome their limits and weaknesses.

It would be necessary, according to this author, to restore the individual's dominant role as a source of ideas and energy and to recognize the inequality of talents and contributions and the need for strategic decision making and for clear guidelines.

Motivating staff

To implement a new strategy chosen by the managers, it is necessary to motivate the staff and incite them to bring their contribution thereto. This is why an effective management is important as the function of the leader is to drive change, he should be able to mobilize energies in order to overcome the inevitable obstacles that change creates (Kotter, 1999).

In addition to the fact that the definition of a management allows to guide the movement in the appropriate way and to influence the employees to eliminate their resistance to change, motivation is efficient and brings to them the necessary energy to surmount the difficulties.

Leaders must also generate enough confidence so that their teams accept, despite the uncertainty, the portrait of change which they deal with, and its potential impacts and conclude that exploration presents more benefits than risks.

Indeed, according to Rondeau and Bareil (2010), the existence of a climate of trust and confidence is necessary for a team to agree to explore the risks of a new situation. Contrarily, confidence leads to the reserve face to uncertainty. Considering that any change holds some uncertainties, it is the confidence in its leader that encourages a team to see change as an opportunity to advance in obtaining new resources or increasing their flexibility. On the contrary, in a situation of distrust, the focus is on potential losses and the team would first protect themselves.

Therefore, the leader has to be motivating. This quality refers according to Duluc (2000: 77), to "the enthusiasm, the dynamism, and the positive attitude towards future, others or oneself". Indeed, if the teams expect from leaders a vision for the future, they also want to be rooted, motivated to fulfill their mission. Hence, they have to motivate teams and inspire their followers to get them to achieve the objectives of the organization.

It can be concluded, while summing up the different aspects of the leader in his conduct of the strategic change, that he should be primarily a change agent with a strategic vision which guides his behavior and which should generate the optimism of the subordinates.

Secondly, he has to be a good strategist showing creativity and flexibility, and must have strong strategic skills allowing him to develop new strategic responses thanks to a thorough analysis of the environment.

Thirdly, the leader has to be an agent of communication who should well channel the values and the standards supporting his strategic vision, also the limits of the old

strategy and the merits of the new strategic scenario.

Fourthly, the leader has to be an agent of influence who should use his abilities to build the confidence in the others, convince them of the need for strategic change, overcome their resistance and set up a political support for the new strategy.

The leader also has to establish an emotional relationship, stimulate the desire for a different future, build commitment and involvement of employees, motivate them, encourage dialogue, consultation and delegation (see diagram : Figure 1)

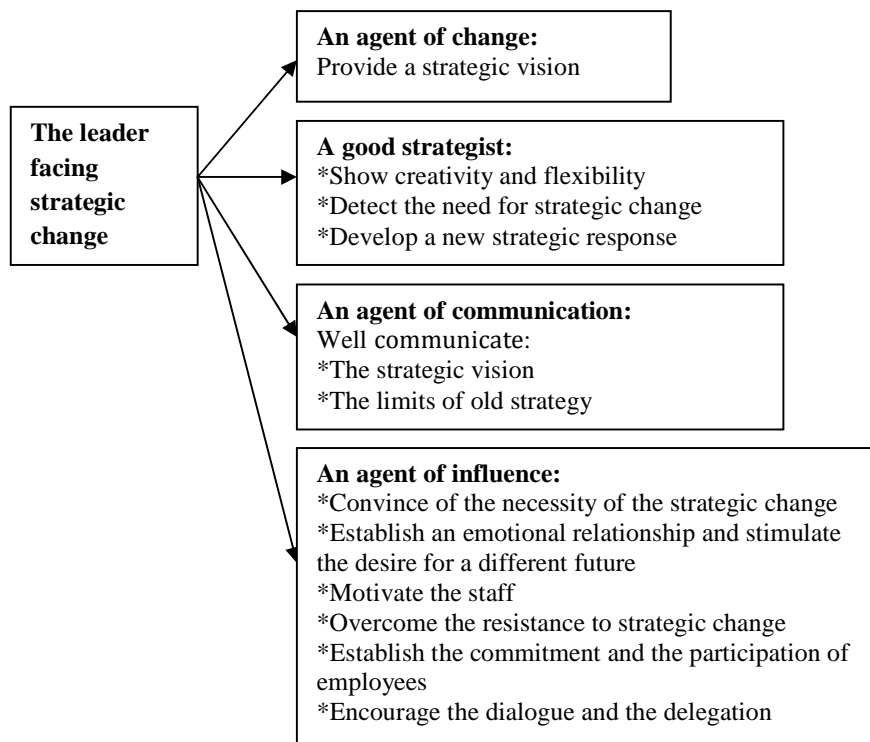


Figure 1: Skills of leader facing strategic change

During a strategic transformation, the leader has to play the role of a strategist by acting as visionary strategist showing innovation and flexibility on one hand, and the role of a manager motivating staff and endeavoring to overcome resistance to the strategic change on

the other hand. These types of skills lead us to raise the question on the actor or the key actor(s) having to play the role of leadership and on the leadership style(s) allowing to ensure the success of this type of change.

What type(s) of actor(s) and which leadership style(s) for a better management of strategic change?***The strategic change management: roles of actors***

In developing the various skills of the leader required for the success of a strategic change, it is presumed that the leader is not necessarily the director general of the organization or its chief operating officer, he can also be a chief of office or just a team leader (Dessler et al., 2004: 516), whose role consists in promoting a new product at all levels of the company until it is actually manufactured.

For Balogun, Hailey and Viardot (2005) the leader may be the chairman and chief executive officer, the director general, another director such as the human resources director, or any other senior executive who serves as an internal reformer. They state that if the person who leads the change is neither the chairman and CEO nor the director general, he will then certainly need the support of the upper level management of the organization to enforce the change. The leader is not necessarily a manager in the organization, but rather someone who has the power to influence (Johnson et al., 2005).

Indeed, the leadership is not useful or beneficial only at upper level management; many experts (Scermerhorn et al., 2002) agree that it can be applied at all levels of the organization. This can be explained by the importance of actors of the different hierarchical levels in the success of the strategic change. In fact, the literature on change and generally on the construction of the strategy has recently focused on the role of Middle Managers (MM).

In his analysis of the action systems and the skills deployed by the three stakeholders of the organization: senior management, responsible for the strategic choices, middle managers, the liaison between parties and

point of intermediation, and the grassroots, the structure of the implementation of the policies and procedures, Chiha (2006) demonstrated that the middle managers are often behind the radical changes.

According to this author, middle managers would be, like median fish, a highly important force of intermediation within the company, the pool of skills for the organization and those with new solutions. They would be probably the most qualified to operate a significant change, "the central piece in the puzzle of the company" (King et al., 2001:99). They ensure the daily management and are responsible for "the interpretation and communication of the senior management vision to the grassroots called to execute it" (King et al., 2001: 97). Moreover, due to the diversity of their partners and the heterogeneity of the speeches and the logics they face, the intermediaries benefit from a fairly broad field of observation and experimentation. The range of their relations makes them part of a plural logic and enables them to establish "a required variability" essential for any successful adaptive change (Ashby, 1952). In fact, multiplying one's exchanges and diversifying one's interlocutors, would be a source of enrichment and learning (Chiha, 2006).

The middle managers can contribute very substantially to the success or the failure of a change process, because they play a key role as mediators between those who execute. Many researchers have demonstrated that the way in which middle managers understand, express and explain the strategy of the organization is crucial (Balogun, Hailey and Variadot 2005). In addition to the role of deployment and monitoring, these managers are able to translate the strategy formulated by their superiors and to ensure reinterpretation and adjustment of strategic responses to unforeseen events, for example, in terms of relationship with customers, suppliers, staff, etc. This is an essential role that only middle managers who are in daily contact with these interlocutors, are able to play.

Though, other authors (Autissier Vandangeon-Derumez, 2007) state that the first-line managers play a pivotal role in change projects. Thought as natural vectors and prescribers of change towards the operational, their behavior reveals more contrasting postures.

Assuming that in a context where competitive advantage is built day by day at the operational level of the organization, a new conception of change appears: change is no longer a variable of cyclical adaptation but an integral part of the functioning of the organization. This finding puts the perspective of the practice in the center of concerns and leads to consider the strategy not as "property" at the possession of the organization, but as the result of daily construction by actors (Jarzabkows et al., 2003). This reinforcement of the role of practice in change (as in the construction of the strategy) leads to pay particular attention to actors initiating the practices.

This new conception of the change that takes a more organizational form, directs the attention of these authors not to the triggering conditions and phases of change, but rather to the mechanisms of appropriation and actors' action. Hence, it is at the operational level that the success of change initiatives happens, thanks in particular to the ability of the front line managers to appropriate and spread out the change in their immediate environment (Autissier and Vandangeon-DermeZ, 2007).

It appears therefore that the participation of actors from different levels of the organization is necessary for the conduct of strategic change.

For Senge (1990), conducting change effectively means the recognition that senior managers do not have all the answers and the encouragement of thinking and integrated action at all levels. Other researches (Butler et al., 1998; Handy, 1997 Jackson, 1997; Whipp and Pettigrew, 1993) state that the most successful organizations in the management of

the dynamics of loose-tight working relations combine the "personalized" strong management at the top with the "divided" management, a group of experienced and confirmed persons operating at different levels of the organization.

Case studies (Fiona, 2000) also show that if "key stakeholders are not playing a role particularly in the middle and lower levels of management; they act as obstacles to change. This prevents the passage of the change process to those within their scope of control". (Kotter, 1995; Pettigrew and Whipp, 1993).

For Balogun et al., (2005), some strategists may be exceptionally talented to build a vision but much less to implement it. Moreover, in some contexts, an operational manager may have to play a role of reformer. A team of internal or external reformers can also be used; for example, consultants specialized in the management of change. In fact, the reformer is not necessarily a single individual.

Therefore, it turns out that whatever the hierarchical level, the leaders, considered as the catalysts of the change; have to play a major role in any organizational change. So, we have to observe more closely the characteristics of the role played by these leaders in the strategic change through a study of the change management styles that can be used.

Leadership styles for the strategic change management

The charismatic/instrumental leadership

Charismatic leadership combines three elements: vision, inspiration and empowerment (Dessler et al., 2004). It is exercised by the leader who, only thanks to his personality, manages to have a strong and deep influence over his subordinates. Such a leader is distinguished by a strong need for power, as well as by his confidence in his abilities and in the moral correctness of his convictions (Schermerhorn et al., 2002).

While raising the issue of strategic change, several authors show the importance of the charismatic leadership, we cite in this regard Bass (1985) and Burns (1978)...

Indeed, when an organization needs a strategic shift, charismatic leaders are frequently responsible for it. Being efficient, charismatic leaders are often able to communicate a vision and to mobilize the energy required for improvement (Landrum et al., 2000).

Anantaraman (1993) suggests that strategic change in an organization is so much encompassing that it requires charismatic leadership. As for Weber (1947), he assumes that charismatic leaderships can repudiate the past and thus act as a revolutionary force.

Nevertheless, despite that charismatic leaders may have the necessary qualities to transform organizations, it has been demonstrated that the charismatic leaders can be harmful for organizations and disciples (Hogan et al., 1990; Janis, 1989; Post, 1986). For example, Janis (1989) noted that charismatic leaders may lead disciples of groupthink, and gave the example of JF. Kennedy and the Cuban Missiles Crisis. Charismatic leaders were also accused of being narcissistic (Hogan et al., 1990; Post, 1986). Indeed, Post (1986: 679) declared that "the charismatic leader needs continuous admiration from his audience in order to feed his hungry love".

As to Conger (1996), he states that the vision of a leader, the communication and management skills as well as management practices may lead to negative results: "it is possible that these dark features or contrary to the ethics of charismatic leader can jeopardize and even sabotage efforts of improvement of a company".

Unlike those who recommend the use of charismatic leadership for strategic change, some advocate a team-based approach (Emery and Purser, 1996; Weisbord, 1992; Weisbord and Janoff, 1995) or a bottom-up approach (Clarke and Meldrum, 1999). The approach focusing on the team aims at involving employees from all levels of the organization,

including the management, to conceive and to implement the vision and the strategic plan. These teams of people may be responsible for the global strategic direction of the organization and are called the strategic teams.

However, others authors (Nadler and Tushman, 1989) think that in order to succeed, the charismatic leadership is necessary but not sufficient for strategic change. They postulate that the charismatic leadership has to be accompanied by the instrumental direction (the leader's behavior that contributes to implement the change), without which the charismatic leader will fail.

The importance of a mixture of charismatic and instrumental dimensions in the change management was also demonstrated by Graetz (2000).

Traditionally, managers have focused on the technical or operational aspect of the management. However, to be effective leaders in an environment of change, a second interpersonal dimension becomes critical (Goleman, 1998; Javidan, 1995). This suggests according to Graetz (2000), that the leadership of change involves two roles: "the integration of operational expertise with strong interpersonal skills. While the two roles perform distinctive functions, they mutually strengthen each other". According to this author, the charismatic leadership is the personalized leadership and is supported by strong interpersonal skills. It is crucial for forecasting, for disciples with authority and energy. The key elements of instrumental leadership are the organizational design, control and reward which consist in "managing environments, creating the conditions that motivate the desired behavior" (Nadler and Tushman, 1990: 85), and setting up mechanisms allowing the reinforcement of the required new values of working methods.

A cross-sectional analysis of three case studies (Pilkington Australasia, Ford Plastics and Ericsson Australia), Graetz (2000) has showed

that the charisma alone, or the power of an individual personality, is not enough to ensure a systemic sustainable change.

However, leaders of change consider the efficient use of the charismatic role which will boost and enable others operating at different levels of the organization to get involved and contribute significantly to the process of change (Nadler and Tushman, 1990: 82). In addition, they must according to Gratez (2000) create a link between the traditional technical or operational dimension of management and the strategic, interpersonal dimension. The ability to conciliate and balance the two roles depends essentially on whether a leader possesses certain qualities and attributes required for effective leadership of change (Jackson, 1997; Kouzes and Posner, 1995). These qualities and attributes, which define strong interpersonal skills as a key ingredient of liaison, provide the link between the charismatic and instrumental roles. By merging charisma and involvement of instrumental factors, that focus on the development of roles, responsibilities, structures, systems and rewards, the critical building blocks to conduct changes throughout the organization are firmly fixed in place (Gratez, 2000).

Thus, this study shows the need for a two-pronged approach and stresses the importance of the mixture of charismatic and instrumental dimensions for the conduct of strategic change.

The operational/institutional leadership

Through highlighting the insufficiency of charismatic leadership in the implementation of the global strategic change in organizations such as Kodak, Apple and IBM, Nadler and Tushman (1990) have identified other types of leadership.

Indeed, the charismatic leadership cannot alone explain the type of success that a leader like L. Gestner obtained by making changes at IBM. "The effective leaders of the change must

also build competent teams, clarify the required behaviors, include ways to measure the progress and administer rewards and sanctions, so that employees realize that they must adapt their behaviors to the change to achieve their own objectives" (Dessler et al., 2004). This is what Nadler and Tushman (1990) called the operational leadership role or the "management" of the leadership of change which aims to provide employees with the tools which they need to perform their new tasks.

According to both authors, the behavior of the operational leader unfolds in three parts:

- Firstly, structuring: leaders should ensure that the necessary structure is set up to support the implementation of change, and invest in the training of teams, the creation of new organizational structures, the establishment of objectives and standards and the definition of roles and responsibilities.
- Secondly, the establishment of effective monitoring mechanisms,
- Finally, the operational leadership of change should include incentives that is to say material rewards (and non material) and sanctions which will reinforce behaviors corresponding to the desired organizational change (and discourage the unwanted behavior).

According to Dessler et al., (2004), the concept of operational leadership means that the leader of a successful change is really an efficient manager in terms of his ability to successfully plan, organize and control the diverse elements of the change and recruit the necessary staff.

In addition to the charismatic leadership and operational leadership, the careful analysis of leaders responsible for strategic change conducted by Nadler and Tushman (1990) in the three aforesaid organizations showed the importance of institutional leadership. Indeed, the institutional leader should make sure of

the help of other persons and then use this new coalition to meet the vision of the chairman and CEO.

As presented by these authors, the efficient leaders must:

- Firstly, transmit their new visions to three groups: their own team of executives, the senior management team and other leaders of the organization.

Generally, they seek for opportunities to pass on and to institutionalize their vision of the company to the senior executives group who form their own team.

- Then, encourage managers who report directly to the senior management to adhere to their new vision and to their new plans, and to become missionaries of the change.

- Finally, the vision and the details of the change should be "sold" and spread throughout the organization. This involves creating teams of employees who can contribute to the smooth running of the change and want to do it urgently.

In his study on the leadership role in strategic change, Dessler et al., (2004) demonstrate that much of the behavior of leaders of change, charismatic leadership, operational leadership and institutional leadership for example are part of the nature of the transformational leader.

The transformational/ transactional leadership

According to Burns (Bass, 1995), the leadership can be viewed as a transactional process or a transformative process.

The transactional leadership was described by Burns (1978), it consists in motivating followers mainly thanks to rewards quotas based on exchanges. It concerns therefore the necessary exchange between the leader and his subordinates to reach the agreed daily

efficiency level. These exchanges require from the leader one of the four following behaviors (Schermerhorn et al., 2002):

- allocation of rewards according to performance,

- management by active exception: the leader seeks to detect deviations from rules and standards and adopts corrective measures,

- management by passive exception: the leader intervenes only if standards are not met,

- "laissez-faire attitude": the leader assumes no responsibilities and avoids making decisions.

In general, the main objective of the transactional leader is to determine the objectives, to clarify the link between performance and rewards and to provide constructive feedback to keep disciples on the mission (Bass, 1985).

The Transactional leadership is thus an exchange, a reward for manager or a disciplines follower, in exchange of the follower of the adoption of a mutual agreement on the role (Bass 1985). But the success and the effectiveness of the interaction are increased if the leader is also transformational (Bass, Waldman and Yammarino, 1990).

The transformational leadership goes beyond the usual or everyday performance. For Bass (1985), it occurs when the leader:

- leads his subordinates to broaden their horizons, to better understand the goals and the mission of the group and to adopt them,

- incites subordinates to look beyond their own interests to consider those of others.

It consists in developing a close relationship between the leaders and the followers based more on trust and commitment than on contractual agreements. The transformational leaders help the disciples to see the

importance of transcending their own interests in favor of the mission and vision of their group and/or organization (Jung and Avolio, 1999).

Burns (1978) suggests that the transformational leadership and the transactional one are situated at the opposite ends of the same continuum of leadership. Therefore, the leader has to be either transactional or transformational and not both at once.

However, in making the distinction between transformational leadership and the transactional leadership, other authors (Bass 1985; Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Kouzes and Posner, 1988; Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987) have demonstrated that they are complementary and both can be used by the same leader. For example, Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) consider that transformational leadership coincides with the phase of human development of being able to view the reality in terms of deeply rooted values. The transformational leaders are able to influence others on these values.

Yet, these leaders can also understand the importance of maintaining tangible transactions with the followers as a basis for effective leadership.

Compatible with these views, the transactional leadership was rather perceived by Bass (1985) as being completed by the transformational leadership in its influence on leadership effectiveness. Indeed, the transactional leader recognizes the needs and desires of the followers and clarifies how these needs and desires can be satisfied in exchange of their working role, leaders are expected to grant rewards to the followers on their performance, strengthening therefore the expectancy of performance result (Vroom, 1964).

According to Bass and Avolio (1994) the transformational leadership, whatever its form is likely to be added to the transactional leadership to reach a better performance with

more satisfaction. It appears therefore that the transformational leadership does not replace the transactional leadership, but adds to its effectiveness (Bass, 1997).

Bass (1996) concludes that if the transformational leadership is probably more common within upper management, where leaders have more chances to propose and to channel a vision, it is not limited at that level of the management and is found at all levels of the organization. In addition, the transformational leadership can go with the transactional leadership, which is similar to most approaches of traditional leadership. According to this author, leaders should, in order to succeed, exercise at the same time a transformational leadership and a transactional leadership, besides focusing on both leadership and management.

However, Burns (Dessler et al., 2004) confirms that in the today's rapidly changing environment, the necessary style for change management is often not transactional but transformational. Burns (1978) sees the transformational leader as reflecting the traits and the behaviors needed to initiate change. These are the same effects of charismatic leadership (Bass, 1985).

The transformational leadership is therefore the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and hypotheses of the organization's members, and receiving their commitment towards the mission, the objectives and the strategies of the organization (Tichy and Devanna, 1986).

Indeed, studies (Solomon, 1990) lead into thinking that the transformational leadership tends to be more closely associated with leaders effectiveness and employees satisfaction than the transactional leadership style, as the leadership focusing on general supervision and the leadership of *laissez-faire*. This style is therefore considered effective particularly in situations that require the management of radical changes (Bass, 1985 and Shamir, 1998): "the transformational

leaders are promoting radical change through articulating a realistic vision of the future that all the organization's members can share, resulting in the intellectual stimulation of subordinates. They are also concerned about differences between subordinates".

As perceived by Bass (1985), the transformational leadership is part of a perspective that is to meet the needs of contemporary organizations and to adapt to a continuously changing environment. From the subordinates' perspective, the transformational leaders are charismatic, inspiring, caring and stimulating people (Dessler et al., 2004: 380). These leaders are charismatic, or managers with idealized influence, and are models for their followers. They are admired, respected and trusted. The disciples want to become identified to them. These leaders are confident, determined, persistent, highly competent and ready to take risks (Bass, 1997).

Among these dimensions, the charisma has been considered as the basic component of the transformational leadership (Lowe et al., 1996; Waldman et al., 2001).

Though, other studies (Waldman et al., 2001) have showed that the values and behaviors of leaders can influence their strategic decisions through their impact on the field of vision of leaders in the organization and the perception and interpretation of the information. In this measure, the studies concluded that this influence is due to the intellectual stimulation and not to the charismatic leadership.

By specifying the dimensions of transformational leadership, we note the importance of this type of leadership in driving strategic change, given its impact on organizational effectiveness, on the commitment of the company's members to the mission, and on their desire to excel (Bel Haj Hassine, 2002/2003: 36). Indeed, it contributes to increase morale, motivational and emotional level of subordinates (Dvir and Shamir, 2003;

Kennedy and Anderson, 2002). Being transformational, the leader encourages group cohesion, motivation and emotional attachment of subordinates (Popper et al., 2000).

Finally, transformational leadership contributes to the success of the companies in the XXIth century by the satisfaction of the leader and subordinates, as well as the effectiveness and extra effort made by the subordinates.

The collective/ individual strategic leadership

The strategic leadership is often associated with the strategies of major changes that take place in organizations. The literature on strategic leaders divides them according to Balogun and Hope Hailey (2005), into two categories:

- The charismatic leaders, who seek above all to build a vision for the organization and mobilize individuals to reach it. Researches show that this type of leader performs better when the organization is facing an uncertain situation.

- The leaders' managers who rather focus on system design and monitoring of the organization activities.

However, some researches show, according to these authors, that the most successful strategic leaders are the ones who are able to change their approach depending on the circumstances. Indeed, some approaches are primarily consistent with the development of the strategy, while others concern its deployment or its control. If the strategic leader focuses on a single approach, the change management process risks to be incomplete (Croysberg et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, and as confirmed by Francine Séguin, "if it is true that executive leadership is important for the realization of a major strategic change, it is also necessary when the

organization has a strategy to maintain, consolidate and ensure incremental development" (Séguin).

As defined by Séguin, Hafsi and Demers (2008), "the strategic leadership is the type of leadership exercised by the organization's leaders in respect of the development of the strategy, both in its formulation and in its implementation and realization in everyday life".

So, the strategic leadership focuses at first on managers, as the ultimate responsible for the organization strategy. It is interested in the different manners to exercise it in order to bring the organization to make appropriate strategic choices and to set up the structures and the processes which will help the implementation of the strategy.

Ready to explore different possibilities, the strategic leader is therefore open to new ideas and has the discipline to verify their effectiveness. He knows what he needs to learn and to develop, and he actively seeks the knowledge, the experiences and the strategies that would be a tool for his continuous improvement.

Regarding the role of strategic leaders, they are in fact expected to make and communicate decisions for the good future of the organization (Zaccaro, 1996). They formulate the organization's objectives and strategies, develop structures, processes, control systems and basic skills for the organization, the management of multiple constituencies, choose the main managers, provide guidance on strategies of organization, maintain an effective organizational culture, maintain a system of ethical values, and finally serve as representatives of the organization, the government and other organizations and as negotiators with them (Bernard, 2007). This strategic orientation shall be able to deal with ambiguity, complexity and of information overload, requiring a capacity of adaptation and a sense of the timing (Boal and Hooijberg, 2001).

As mentioned by Séguin, Hafsi and Demers (2008) in their book, "Strategic management: from analysis to action", there are different manners to exercise strategic leadership. We identify three:

- the leader may firstly be defined as the architect of the organization purpose: he is very concerned about the values and principles that guide the organization in its strategic choices and in its daily actions,

- then, the leader may be defined as the designer of the strategy: he works on the formulation of the strategy, on its communication to the rest of the organization and on its implementation with the least distortion possible,

- finally, the leader may be defined as a creator of context, in other words, as the responsible for establishing a context that will make possible the participation of the other members of the organization in the creation of strategies.

These three manners to exercise strategic leadership are not mutually exclusive according to Séguin, but it often happens that the leaders of an organization, due to their personality and their skills, the size of the organization, the context and the challenges which it faces, develop a strategic leadership style that focuses on one these manners.

However, despite that popular business press still give disproportionate attention to Chairmen and CEOs, some researchers (Denis et al., 2001) have pointed out that the strategic leadership requires the contribution of more than one individual. For example, Hambrick and Mason (1984) and Eisenhardt (1989) have focused their studies on management teams, Pettigrew and Whipp (1991) have noted that the change of leadership in surveyed large enterprises often involves many people. In some cases (such as when the positions of Chairman and CEO are separate), the collective strategic leadership is explicitly formalized within the organization structure, leading to a

variety of possible distributions of roles (Stewart, 1991).

The authors (Denis et al., 2001) use the expression “constellation of the role of leadership” to designate the group of collective management, rather than “management team”. This concept involves multiple actors, but also a certain division of roles between them. For example, a member of a constellation can focus on relationships with external agencies, and another may address internal operational issues.

Hodgson and his colleagues (1965) believe that the effectiveness of the constellations of leadership role depends on the degree of complementarity between their members. The complementarity implies both adequate coverage of all areas of activity, and the existence of mechanisms allowing different actors to play their respective roles in a concerted manner. In raising these conditions, considered important for the strategic change, Denis et al., (2001) state that “obviously, a perfectly harmonious and complementary constellation may be difficult to achieve when power relations are diffused and where individuals have different sources of expertise and influence.”

In addressing these constraints, we also note the role played by the environment in the development of strategic leadership. This is, according to Séguin, the type of team we belong to, the type of organizational culture and the type of structure in which we work. Thus, an entrepreneurial corporate culture that encourages the risk taking will facilitate the exercise of the strategic leadership. The same applies for the structure which includes few hierarchical levels and few silos: such structure will foster cooperation, communication and exchange, and thus will facilitate the exercise of the strategic leadership. It is through action that strategic leadership can be learned. Action is also the means for strategic leader to learn and prove himself (Séguin).

Considered as a valuable asset, extremely valuable decisive asset and a protagonist of the adaptation to environmental change which has become increasingly complex, the strategic leadership is nevertheless considered by Giacotti (2009), as a difficult skill to master because of biological and cultural limitations affecting our ability to think.

Consequently, it often seems, according to this author, the existence of a lack of thinking and strategic leadership in a world where large organizations grow, multiply and operate in a complex environment where they have much to lose.

To overcome these constraints, this author considers a multidisciplinary focus on leadership issues from the perspective of the human sciences and the methods of problem resolution: so that, the necessary leap forward occurs, an organic vision shall be created and shared, a new cultural basis established and a methodology developed. In a word, a new paradigm shall emerge.

Conclusion

In studying the role of leadership in the strategic change management, we note the importance for business managers to be:

- agents of change by articulating a powerful strategic vision to be translated into a realistic and competitive strategy,
- strategists by showing creativity, flexibility and by acquiring strong strategic skills,
- communication agents by transmitting to subordinates the necessity to adopt a new strategy, and promoting opportunities for dialogue and discussion,
- agents of influence by motivating subordinates, convincing them of the need for change and by directing them towards a better management of strategic change.

Endowed with these skills, the leaders acting at different levels of the organization cannot be limited to one style of leadership. A

thorough analysis of the literature allowed us to identify different models of leadership for the conduct of strategic change:

- the charismatic / instrumental leadership
- the operational / institutional leadership
- the transactional / transformational leadership
- the individual / collective strategic leadership

The manner of managing and leading strategic change will not be identical in all circumstances and in all organizations. We assume therefore, that depending on the situation they are facing, the managers have to arbitrate between different leadership styles.

Finally, we note that this theoretical study should be completed later by an empirical research that would focus on a comparison of these different leadership models on the basis of their contribution to the success of strategic change. This research would also permit to verify the various skills of the leader facing this type of transformation.

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