

Difference between change and Innovation

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Abstract

Purpose – Change is a crucial part of any environment whether natural or experimental. We keep changing the premise in order to define our outcome and often without even a realization of it. But innovation only happens when it is intentionally or successfully pre-designed. Innovation comes into being when it has attained an absolute existence after a series of changes, and when it fits the natural environment independently. Hence change is individual in nature, while innovation defines independent-ability and completeness.

Design/methodology/approach – The research methodology involves analytical research and observational research. Detail study of management theories related to change and innovation. Concepts and theories in Philosophy are also used for study.

Findings – In order for any change to be successful, it needs to affect both, the perception and its execution on reality. Most of the management examples relating to change that do not succeed, fail to affect either of the two above. Such a change could be creative in nature but would not lead to an innovation. Hence in order for innovation to take place, it could just not be a change in an idea or just a change in practice. It needs to evolve at a concrete theory, and such a theory that could be successfully used in practice.

Research limitations/implications – The research paper is theoretical in nature, carefully keeping in mind the practical implications. The theories are well observed and studied over a period of time with requisite practical knowledge.

Practical implications – Keeping in mind the practical nature of the subject, theories have been formed after observing the practical course of the management cycle. However the accuracy of the theory could also be tested with practical implications.

Originality/value – The research paper has not been submitted anywhere else. The purpose of the research paper is to use philosophy as a base to understand the practical nature of change in management. Hence, the paper is an independent study and original in nature as being its author. However the concepts of change and management have been studied earlier.

Keywords – Innovation, Change, Management theory

Paper type- Research Paper

Management

“Management is an art of knowing what is to be done and seeing that it is done in the best possible manner.”

The above is the definition of Management by F.W. Taylor (father of scientific management)

In simple words management could be defined as the optimum use of available resources in order to achieve the desired goal of an organisation. Hence whether the desired goal is achieved or not, there are certain resources that are already available to us. Also we need to keep in mind that the concept of management is used with reference to an organisation. An organisation is a structure that defines the pattern of work and the set objectives to be achieved.

To actually try to formulate what comes first whether it is the goal that we are working for or is it the understanding of the available resources. One could infer that it is the availability of resources that brings a point of beginning to organisation’s quest. Of course there are goals that the organisation desires to achieve. But what are these goals without the resources. The resources in question could be existing in the form of chaos or resources that are undesirable of use and also there are resources intrinsic to the organisation and its purpose.

Every organisation is made for a different purpose. Every organisation has its own visible and latent resources that it uses to achieve its goals. Visible resources are often the common resources that could also be used by any other organisation; however there are certain intrinsic resources that every organisation must recognize to its full potential. It is these resources that help to define and differentiate one organisation from the other. For example, in a publication house there are various kind of resources that are to be managed like content, knowledge, people, equipments, start-up finance etc. Now from these resources, the resources that are intrinsic to the publication house are its content and knowledge. People, equipments and start-up finance could fall into the category of resources that are in chaos or the resources that are undesirable. The Publication House creates an identity for itself with its content that goes public and with the same is differentiated from the other similar organisation. The Publication House not only needs to manage well its intrinsic resources but also needs effective management of the chaotic resources and undesirable resources in order to achieve its goals successfully.

So when an organisation talks about these resources, it is aware of its own value. And it is from this knowledge or understanding of this value that the organisation needs to either improve its value or primarily maintain it in order to achieve its objectives.

Definition of Management by Henri Fayol (father of modern management)

"Management is to forecast, to plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate and control activities of others."

Henri Fayol was the first to mention the four functions of management- Planning, Organising, Directing and Controlling. All these functions could only take place if the manger had the resource that could be planned, organised, directed and controlled. Hence an important phenomenon of the management process is change. If there is no change then management does not exist.

A more elaborate definition given by George R. Terry, defines management as a process "consisting of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources.

The primary essence of management is to create a change in the initial functioning of any enterprise. Management is the process of reorganisation of something that has already existed. And this process creates a change. However the purpose of management is not change. The purpose of management is to get a controlled result from the existing resources. But it is the management or the process of management that creates an inherent change. In this perspective, change is unintentional and it is an inherent need of the management process.

Change and Innovation

The word change could be defined as an act of making or becoming different. Hence change always involves a value difference that could be calculated from its previous stage. Change is a process, which cannot be determined without the knowledge of a previous state of being. Therefore whenever we talk about change, it is not just about something new rather the focus is usually on the comparison from the past value and the need to achieve a higher value than before. A lot of discussion and thought is given to the drawbacks of the previous system of working. With every change that occurs there is a comparison and if the change is successful in practice then the earlier method of working subsequently fades with time after much judgement and utility comparison.

For example, Nokia is a popular electronic goods brand and a telecommunication service provider. It is an internationally acclaimed brand. There are various models of Nokia mobile phones that are available in the market. All of these models are different from each other in various features. Every time a new model is introduced it is compared to its previous model. And after much judgement and utility comparison, the model with the more successful change or more successful features becomes popular in demand and the model with less successful change fades out with time. It is important to note that every time a change that is made need not be a successful one. The success of change is only determined by its introduction in the market and its comparison with the previously existing products in the market. Also when Samsung, another internationally acclaimed brand which deals in electronic and telecommunication goods along with various other products and services, launches its range of mobile phones that is again considered a change in the market and more successful product between Nokia and Samsung, attains more share in the market while the

other product or less successful product fades out. Now when Samsung launches its new range of washing machines, what would that be called? Will that be a change in the market or will it be an innovation in the market? Such an introduction will neither be a change nor will be an Innovation. It will not be a change as the market of mobile phones and washing machines are completely different.

So when does an Innovation occur?

Innovation is something that is beyond change. It is not a step further or after change rather it is a result of subsequent successful or failed changes. Hence, when we learn of an innovation, the past patterns are not compared rather they just become obsolete and the two tracks or the two patterns cannot be compared anymore. Hence we are talking about something totally new here and this is Innovation. To elucidate further Innovation is not a change in value; rather it is an actual creation of a new value. And because of that it is beyond comparison from any past value.

Now there are two ways in which Innovation occurs. First is after a series of n ' successful changes and the second one is after a series of n ' failed changes. Either ways there will be an Innovation taking place. It is almost an auto-cycle for any creation. To understand this one can either use the concepts of philosophy or one can use science to confirm this. By taking a very basic life experience, let us try to understand Innovation better. If there was a person who loved to have noodles and had the ample resources to have as many noodles he/she wishes to have. There are only n ' number of times that he/she can have noodles in one go or for a stipulated-extended time. Beyond a limit the person will either get bored or the stomach will refuse to take in more. Hence, with the available resources left, he/she will have to manage them or reorganise them in order to find a new product. Therefore the availability of resources does not affect the process of Innovation, it is the unsatisfied need.

Similarly if a person wishes to have noodles but does not have enough resources to either avail them or create, then after n ' failed trials of trying to avail them or create them, he/she will have to look for another accessible product. Again it is the unsatisfied need that leads to a new product that was not thought of earlier. This new product could actually satisfy the person or not will be another set of an experiment. But only when the new product satisfies the person, it will be called an Innovation.

To understand as it is said that Innovation is intentional or pre-designed in nature, it means that it does not occur from the need of improvement as in the case of change; rather it occurs independently or naturally without an expectation of it. Also they are intentional as they come from an unsatisfied need which is conscious in nature. Hence Innovation occurs in order to satisfy the need, rather than the use of resources. For example patents and inventions come under this category of Innovation.

Innovation often occurs without the previous knowledge or with the unconscious knowledge of the available resources. Therefore Innovations can also be a result of the unconscious quests made, and are a result of an unexpected finding. For example during Research and Development process, a lot of unexpected results could come out as an Innovation. Hence we can say that Innovation is always a result of an unsatisfied need but often these unsatisfied needs could be unconscious in nature. Hence, they are latent or pre-designed in nature. An Innovation does need any resources necessarily; however it requires an unsatisfied need.

According to Joseph F. Engelberger, a robotics engineer also asserts that a recognized need is one of the first components required for an Innovation.

Innovations are always independent in nature while a change is relative in nature. When an Innovation is made and it is proposed in public as a new finding or a new product, it is not waiting for any confirmation or reassurance from the public. It is almost an independent entity, which cannot be compared or judged. Hence it exists on its own. For example an invention of the first aircraft by Wright brothers (1903) could not be compared to the usage of a motor vehicle; hence the invention of the aircraft is said to be an independent entity.

There is one more aspect of differentiation between change and Innovation. Change has often been differentiated with two types of change. One is change in reality and the other one is change in perception. The change in reality is continuous in nature but change in perception is discontinuous. And it is the change in perception that leads to an Innovation.

Reality keeps changing on a continuous basis and is relative in nature. Such a change is the Change that has been discussed earlier. Such a change leads to comparison. However, when there is a change in perception, it changes the entire identity of the organisation, which is called Innovation.

The previous example can again be taken where the invention of an aircraft changes the perception of how a travel can take place. This Innovation in travel by air cannot be compared to travel by road as in the case of motor vehicles.

Therefore, the difference between Change and Innovation lies from four different perspectives.

Firstly in Change, the availability of previous knowledge and resources is required while in Innovation, previous knowledge is not necessary.

Secondly Change is relative and comparable while Innovation is something new beyond comparison.

Thirdly Change does not comes from unsatisfied need rather it is just a process of natural growth of an element; while Innovation comes from a conscious or an unconscious unsatisfied need.

Fourthly Change is continuous in nature and corresponds to change in reality while Innovation is discontinuous in nature and corresponds to the change in perception.

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