Changing Organizational Culture

Cultural change work in progress

Mats Alvesson and Stefan Sveningsson

HOCHSCHULE
• LIECHTENSTEIN
Bibtiothek

Routledge
Taylor&FrancuGroup
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Contents

List of figures x
List of tables xi
Preface xiii

PARTI
Perspectives on organizational and cultural change 1

1 Introduction 3

Understanding organizational change 4
Studying change in depth 7
The purpose of the book 9
The structure of the book 10

2 Organizational change 13

Fprces of organizational change 14
Views on organizational change IS
The planning approach 19
The planning approach - a critique 26
The process approach 27
Resistance 31
Conclusions 33

3 Organizational culture and change 35

What is organizational culture? 36
Sub-cultures and identity 38
Organizational cultural change 40
Views of organizational culture change 44

Cultural change: preceding, following from or intertwined with 'substantivechanges'? 47 * *
Conclusions 49

PART 2
Change work in practice - a close-up study 51

4 The case- and how we studied it 53

The company and its story 53
Investigative model of management and cultural work 55
Method 57

5 A cultural change project I: background, objectives and design 60

Some key actors in our story 61
I Background - talk of an existing culture 63
H Objectives: ideas behind and aims for a culture change project 66
III Designing a change project 69
Summary 77

6 A cultural change project II: implementation, reception and outcomes 79

IV Implementation and interaction 79
V Reception and interpretation 90
VI Results 92
Summary - and questions 96

PART 3
Crucial issues in cultural change work 97

7 'It is not so damn easy[1] - lack of consistency and expressiveness in cultural change work 99

Immobilized engagement - on the difficulties in getting the process moving 99
Key dimensions behind the problems I: coordination and "tri n *u prioritization 101*
Key dimensions behind the problems II: on symbolism, emotionality and expressiveness 104
Discussion - a challenge that vanished 105
Summary 108

8 Disconnected work: cultural change efforts decoupled lOg

From Excellence to MR - a first phase of loose connections 109
From HR to middle managers - a second phase of loose connections 113
Discussion - disconnected change of baton reflecting bureaucracy 115
Summary and comment 117

9 Hyperculture *\t$*

Culture as an unpacked package 120
Culture as manufactured 121
Culture talk as ceremony and ritual 123
Culture as grandiose fantasies about the future 124
Conclusions 126

PART 4
Getting **into** the substance of organizational change work 131

10 Working with culture vs culture working on change workers 133

Concepts of culture 134
The change programme as an expression of organizational culture 135
Unintentional reinforcement of existing culture 142
Conclusions 145

11 Working with change **148**

An exceptionally unfortunate and/or a typical case? 148
On the re-engineering of engineering culture 150
The organization of change work: beyond steps - and on to identities 153
Identities in change work 156
The organizational context of change work 159
Conclusions 162

12 Lessons for cultural change actors and others 165

Some potential traps in work with organizational cultures 165
On the basic images of change 171
What can be learned? Fifteen lessons for cultural change projects 175

Notes **lgl**
Bibliography **181**
Index **189**