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WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT ABOUT FEARS’ MITIGATION ANALYSES DURING THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT RELATED COURSE?

New challenges such as COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine have made a significant impact on the organizations’ behaviour as well as their employees. These challenges have also influenced the manager’s understanding of the first key stages in the processes’ management in an organization. The key feature of the mentioned processes is the identification of employees’ fears, which helps managers to make the rational decisions in time constraints. In this context, designing of the customized training for representatives of businesses, municipalities, and education facilities became an essential first step to map the new reality and to make transition from experiential learning and practical cases to new theoretical and methodological concepts.

In his part ‘Leading Change in Crises’ in a frame of ‘Leading Organizational Change in Turbulent Times’ course Lauri Tabur presented the problematic cases from Ukrainian organizations and proposed to solve these issues by learners with the fear mitigation method.

It helped to collect the data results from groups (10 groups) and for situation similarity analyses. In times of crisis or change, this situational leadership approach becomes paramount. By active individuals supporting and facilitating their engagement, managers can mitigate fears and uncertainties, fostering a conducive environment for change implementation. Such as the current situation must be described, Lauri Tabur has proposed the next approach (see table 1).

Table 1

The Example Case Solving by a Group of Ukrainians

CASE About ICT Company and Its Real Situation in Ukraine During The War:	
The ICT development company YYY, after invasion of Russia into Ukraine and the following war, decided to move its headquarters away from the zone of possible military activities from Kyiv to Polish town Lublin. The local authorities in Lublin have offered YYY a nice start-up friendly environment to place their office there. Despite a peaceful and modern environment, the 46 employees of the YYY are not all happy to move to Lublin. Your group is the CEO of the YYY to launch the change.	
FEAR	MITIGATION ACTIVITY
1. Fear of firm loss	1. Providing an explanation to employees about the agreements with the Polish side regarding assistance in preserving the company.
2. Fear of interpersonal conflicts at the workplace.	2. Conducting a discussion with the members of the labour collective in order to explain the necessity of relocating management employees to another country.
3. Fear relating with living in a new country.	3. Providing an overview of the specific elements that define Polish culture in a presentation.
4. The issue of a language barrier.	4. Language courses sponsored by the company.
5. Fear of additional financial expenses	5. Increasing of salary in accordance with Polish standards.
6. Housing uncertainty.	6. Corporate accommodation for employees
7. Fear of family separation.	7. If feasible, offer family housing and support in enrolling children in educational institutions.
KEY FIRST STEPS TO TAKE TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH THE CHANGE:	
1. Gather employees' input on the matter of relocation. 2. Group employees according to their issues or problems. 3. Establish positive relations with the Polish side regarding guarantees for the startup agreement's execution. 4. Develop a plan for resolving issues and provide it to the company's employees.	

The resolving of all these cases was achieved within a time constraint of approximately 15 minutes, with participants divided into groups for collaborative problem-solving. Notably, participants from the business sector demonstrated quicker reactions compared to those of scientific backgrounds. This discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that some business participants had firsthand experience with similar situations arising from the current wartime conditions.

The imposed time limitation significantly influenced the behaviour of each group, leading to a noticeable increase in chaotic tendencies. Participants required additional time to focus and concentrate that is very crucial for making well-considered decisions. However, in real-world scenarios, such as war times, the time available for thorough decision-making processes is often insufficient.

Furthermore, this approach is applicable across organizations despite of their size. Its versatility based on its ability to promote collaboration and systematic problem-solving, irrespective of organizational scale or complexity.