



Balancing Growth and Change through Internal Marketing

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Abstract

Focus on employees and their contribution to competitive advantage is especially important for small business since they rely upon fewer staff to achieve their mission. From the 1960s, the focus of business strategy and marketing change processes moved from product to customer. Research today advises that reliance on the view of consumer sovereignty as too narrow. This paper discusses a holistic approach to change management through balancing the business focus on the customer with attention to the employees who are required to satisfy those needs. It highlights the need for change processes to achieve a balance between the external demands of market orientation needed to keep the business afloat and head off competition with the internal processes designed to achieve those objectives efficiently and effectively. It explores the internal relationships required to develop a horizontal stream of value-added activities that exploit staff skills to create benefits for the customer. Appreciative inquiry is proposed as a means of determining knowledge of resource strengths and finding opportunities for improvement to bring about organisational change. In line with TQM philosophy, the influences of internal marketing on the customer-supplier relationships in the service delivery process within the firm are discussed. The process of horizontal value streams with new organisational models and partnerships are used to provide value for customers. Leadership, corporate culture, shared vision and goals address issues arising from lack of cohesion in various structures. Successful strategy and planning processes are achieved through moving intelligence between the internal and external markets. Benchmarking external and internal markets assist the small business inside and across partner organisations. Together, these processes provide a way to ensure strategy considers what is most important – providing for the sophisticated customer whilst satisfying the needs of the internal suppliers and customers in order to achieve small business growth.