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Multi-Hat Consultancy: Utilizing Technology in Organizational Development to Build Relationships and Foster Innovation

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Abstract

As technology has advanced, it has become clear that consultants are able to operate more efficiently because of the use of technology. This is evident in the rise of digital-driven networks of consultants and independent consulting groups, and this is having a direct impact on the ability of consultants to build relationships and provide assistance to their clients. An increasing number of organizations can operate in an agile manner as a result of this approach. Technology is being used to enable some of the collectives that make up these groups to work together more effectively, while others have used it to enable digital platforms to share their information. Access to technology helps consultants remain up-to-date with new tools that can be used to increase customer acquisition and engagement, and build strong relationships with clients. Through their services, organizations are able to transform digitally and optimize their business processes more efficiently.

Keywords: *Consulting Skills in OD; Helping Peers; Building Relationships; Increased Innovation through OD*

Introduction

Several advanced processes have been developed in many businesses as a result of technology. Technology will continue to grow in importance to businesses as it becomes even more advanced. Technology development puts new demands on organizations. On the other hand, it also provides new opportunities for developing or improving markets as well as products.

The use of technology in consultancy is one example of a trend that is contributing to the improvement of collaboration among consultants and the building of relationships. When it comes to consulting relationships for companies, they already have a variety of approaches that they can choose from. In addition to Lippit and Lippit's six-phase consultation model, there are also approaches to change

management that are 360 degrees in nature and focused on innovation. One such approach is Appreciative Inquiry (AI), which has already been applied to a variety of fields and situations in varied contexts.

Appreciative inquiry is a way to engage people in creating an organization or world where they feel they can make a difference by imagining how it would look and operate. This method is based on the use of personal narratives and questioning, which can be very powerful when applied with the correct training and practice.

The Systems Approach consists of solving problems by means of Problem Verification with the , the idea that the problem-solving possibilities may be identified at the beginning of the project. A majority of the literature on decision-making methodology discusses the determination of the causes of a problem, which is of particular relevance in relation to threats. In contrast, there is a tendency to neglect the verification of potential opportunities that are presumed. A quick look at 'Problem Solving' indicates that it refers to the act of defining a problem, determining the cause of the problem, identifying, prioritizing, and selecting alternatives for a solution, and implementing that solution. The next step would be to go through the problem-solving process step by step. It is imperative to solve problems with a wide range of resources, which ultimately leads to feedback channels and relationships with clients, as well as maturity in dealing with feedback.

How Technology Impacts the Consultancy Engagement

It is well known that when a change agent lives the principles of appreciative inquiry, he or she has the capacity of improving and influencing the client's and his organization's course of actions before the formal consulting phase has even begun. In Appreciative Inquiry (AI), there is a way of seeing things and being in the world that we call an appreciation of the world. Worldviews are both a methodology for facilitating positive change in human systems like organizations, a group, or a community, as well as a process for facilitating that change in those systems. According to this theory, each human system has something that works correctly, and that is the premise on which this theory is based. If it is vital, effective, and successful, then there is something that gives it life. AI works by identifying where the positive core is within an individual and connecting to it in a way that allows for the energy level to be raised, the vision to be sharpened, and the action to be inspired in order to achieve change.

In the context of solving problems, the focus is increasingly shifting from resolving problems to uncovering the organization's or group's or community's positive core as the conversation shifts from discussing problems to uncovering innovations within an organization, group, or community. In the end, AI is not about finding what is best about people, organizations, and the world around them; it is about finding the best possibilities arising from the qualities of people, organizations and the world around them. Considering that AI has emerged as a significant aspect of organizational change over the last few years, it should not be seen as a mere change in the methods and models of organizational change. Rather, it should be seen as a fundamental shift in the perspective taken throughout the entire process of change. This goal is best achieved by looking at the wholeness of the human system through an examination of its strengths, possibilities and successes.

Over the course of the Coronavirus pandemic, organizations and consultants have also improved internal communications to a certain degree, making it possible for employees in many companies to work from home. With the help of communication networks, consultants can access and share data within departments as well as throughout the organization, thereby developing strong relationships. Advanced collaboration tools have enabled businesses to complete work that was previously performed only in person.

Research Methodology

Analyzing and Developing Methods for Research and Design

In this study, the aim was to explore the ways in which consultants use technology to assist, build relationships, and increase innovation through organizational development using a qualitative research design framework. In order to provide a deeper understanding of the topics covered in this article, the relationship between the variables in the survey has been examined and analyzed as part of the qualitative research.

Participants Involved In the Process

To formulate the study's recommendations and conclusions, it was necessary to interview in-depth 197 professionals from 29 organizations and engage them in focus group discussions. The selected participants came from a wide range of fields. In addition there were consultants who have been working in the fields utilizing technology. During the selection process, participants had the option of being selected based on their level of knowledge about the topic of the study as well as their current level of experience. The use of technology by consultants as an aid, relationship builder and innovation tool was closely examined from a range of angles.

Instruments Used in the Study

During the process of developing the questionnaire, brainstorming with professionals in the field who were involved was conducted. This interaction with them was designed to seek feedback which was highly valued considering that they were involved as consultants utilizing technology to assist, consult, build relationships and increase innovation on a daily basis as part of their regular work duties. The experts had a responsibility to make sure that the questionnaire would be acceptable to the general public. After the interview had taken place, an expert that was enlisted to assist in assessing the quality of the responses provided by the interview participants was consulted. The expert ascertained whether the responses provided by the participants were of the required standard. These types of questionnaires allowed the researcher to draw conclusions from the participants' responses. They also provided insights into the participants' attitudes and beliefs. The information thus gathered helped in making decisions and shaping strategies.

For the purpose of gathering the necessary information concerning consultants' use of technology, the authors of this study conducted face-to-face interviews with representatives of the organizations. This method was chosen as it would allow the authors to gain an in-depth understanding of the organizations' use of technology and the challenges they faced as well as gain insights into the consultants' perspectives on the relationship between technology and innovation. This research has the potential to contribute greatly to improving the overall response rate to the research on consultants utilizing technology. It will give consultants the tools and techniques they need to create and foster relationships with clients, build innovative solutions and increase their response rate. Among the various methods of conducting interviews, face-to-face is considered one of the most effective. Through this one-on-one interaction, respondents were able to clarify any confusion they may have had about the research. In addition, their responses were verified to be accurate as well. By engaging in such a method, it contributed to the validity of the findings. Careful consideration was given to the structure of the questionnaire and the wording of the questions. This ensured that the data collected was reliable and could be used to draw valid conclusions. Additionally, the interviewer was provided with guidance on how to conduct the interviews, ensuring consistency and accuracy.

Data Analysis

Using Microsoft Excel and Super Decision software, this study aimed to identify how consultants could utilize technology to assist them in their work by automating certain processes to increase efficiency and innovation and help them build stronger relationships with their clients. Furthermore, source data regarding the development processes and interventions in such industries from targeted respondents were collected. In order to formulate a hypothesis and arrive at a conclusion in this study, it was necessary to analyze the initial raw data and information collected from the respondents. A qualitative evaluation of the interviews was conducted by the authors of the study based on the analysis. As a result of the responses, insights into the positives and negatives of various development processes were gathered, which allowed identification of opportunities for improvement. A number of interventions were implemented in the study that could help companies optimize their development processes. The results and conclusions are summarized and discussed in detail in the appropriate section.

Framework Developed

After conducting this research, the authors propose an ideal framework for organizational development and a tiered approach to consulting guidance, both of which result in the scaling of relationships and ultimately the development of effective change management practices as a result.

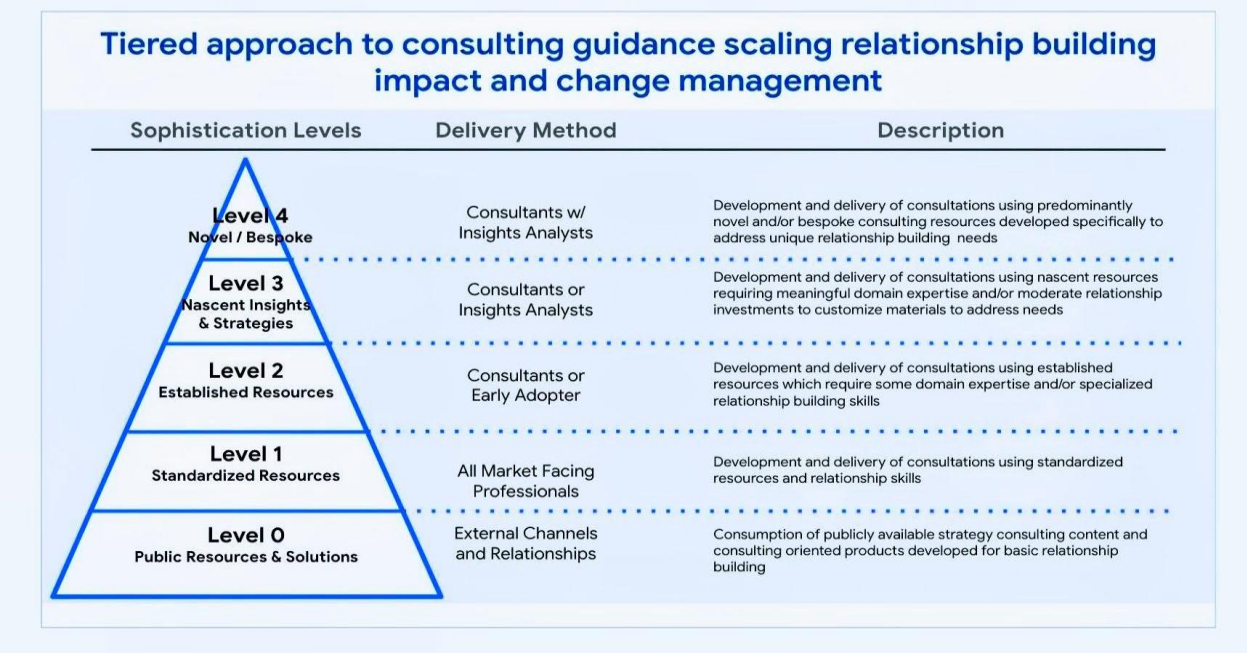

Figure 1: Consulting guidance that is tier-based facilitates the scaling of relationships and the development of effective change management practices to promote innovation and foster long-term relationships.

Results and Discussions

Enhancing Company Agility and Strengthening Relationships through Technology

Globally, the population is getting older and older. In many countries around the world, the average life expectancy has increased to 70 years or more. A new study has found that for the first time in

history, the number of people over the age of 60 would outnumber the number of children under the age of five in 2020. In the digital age, aging poses a number of challenges. A large number of older people have not been exposed to a digital education, nor are they at ease with new technologies as younger people are.

An improvement in public health, better nutrition, better healthcare, and most recently, the use of technological innovations, big data, and artificial intelligence, are all contributing to these remarkable gains and meeting the demands of an aging population while improving healthy life expectancy. It is expected that by the year 2050, one in six people in the world will be over 65 years of age, and a government's policy on an aging population will be one of the keys towards lessening the amount of pressure on governments to take care of their elderly citizens. Technology is going to be the key to finding a solution to this problem.

Through the use of technology, older adults who are consultants can enhance and enrich their lives by facilitating better interpersonal relationships between themselves and their clients. It should be noted, however, that there are few studies that have examined the relationship between technology's use for social reasons and the physical and psychological health among older adults who work as consultants. This paper demonstrates that while technology increases the agility of companies to respond to change, it can also strengthen relationships among older consultants and their clients.

The use of technology and online social networking by older adults who are consultants can have a large impact on their health and well-being. It has made it easier for older adults to contact their clients and has made life more convenient in general for them as well. In an interesting twist, there has been a great deal of previous research on the use of technology among older adults that has focused primarily on the reasons why older adults do not use technology. In spite of this focus, studies have shown that using technology and the Internet more often for older age consultants can have some positive mental health effects that come along with it.

There is one way that Asian economies and older age consultations can reinvigorate productivity growth in the face of rapidly aging populations and rapidly declining salaries. Technology is proven to be a great tool for helping people improve their health and longevity, build great business relationships, transform jobs and workplaces, and improve the performance of the labor market. As demonstrated by the experience of older and more advanced economies, using technology to train workers and improve job matching services enables job candidates to attain the right kind of jobs.

During a recent focus group discussions with senior citizens, it was found that older consultants often abandon or reject technologies due to a lack of compatibility or little personal involvement in selecting devices. There was a general positive attitude among participants regarding the installation of technology in their homes and its use but they were concerned about privacy, functionality, and aesthetics. It should be noted that some devices have monthly fees attached to them, and researchers have found that perceived affordability played a significant role in older adults' intention to use these devices on a daily basis as well as pay for them.

By enabling people of all ages to live healthier and more fulfilling lives as a result of the rise in new technologies, there will be higher longevity in the future. For example, technological innovations have been deployed to keep people physically active, enable independent living and early detection and management of disease conditions, and keep people engaged in the workforce. The maintenance of social connections through the reduction of social isolation and engagement of the workforce can be accomplished through the use of technology.

There is an assumption among many people that senior consultants are not tech-savvy. However, seniors have demonstrated that they can adapt to the ever-evolving technology landscape just as well as other age groups.

1. Impact on Internal Processes and Relationships

As a result of technology, consulting firms' own internal operations are experiencing a lot of changes thereby helping to build better relationships among their clients. It is not surprising that firms are incorporating automation and artificial intelligence into their own processes not only to improve the way they manage primary activities such as project management, use of resources, and client engagements, but also to improve secondary processes such as finance, human resources, and internal reporting. Consulting firms are able to scale, manage and connect with their talent more easily as a result of technology.

2. Building Trust and Relationships

Technology can also be used by consultants to maintain secure environments for sensitive business or consumer information, which builds trust with the customer. It is important to note that many types of business technology or software programs are easy to use and are capable of accommodating consultants with only a limited background in technology to make the most of their tools and features, which contributes to a client's trust in the consultant.

3. Re-Defining the Role of Consultants

As a result of the increasing diversification of the activities of consulting firms, there has been a global trend wherein consulting firms are going through a transition process of being re-defined resulting in reorganization of the entire consulting market in response. Technology advances are not the only reason that this industry is growing so rapidly. The consulting industry is also expanding into other fields of professional services such as marketing, advertising, engineering, and design thinking and along with it comes building better relationships with clients. Helping these growth industries has enabled consultants gain a competitive edge in the market and expand their customer base. Research and development have also been heavily invested in the industry to ensure that they remain at the forefront. As a result, they have been able to remain profitable while staying ahead of their competition and created great relationships with their clients.

4. Asset-Based Consulting as Innovation Driven by Technology

In asset-based consulting, technology is used to create value and competitive advantage for customers through shortening project lead times and providing more functionality with lower costs. Consulting companies are adopting dynamic software solutions and data-based reusable assets in place of static software solutions and business models. With the help of e-change, a self-service software tool, Change first, an organization that offers organizational change management consulting services, replaced traditional organizational change management capabilities. By providing companies with self-service digital tools, which include education, diagnostics, planning templates, reporting tools, as well as social learning functionality, these tools facilitate the implementation of OCM in an organization.

5. Engagement Models Based on New Technologies

The increasing commoditization of technology, the creation of reusable assets, and the development of agile methodologies is resulting in the emergence of new models of engagement which in turn results in the adoption of new forms of consulting contracts. Recently, there has been a sudden explosion of the use of licenses, subscriptions, retention contracts, and equity contracts in the context of software licensing, especially in niche consulting areas. To gain a competitive advantage, consulting firms

have begun to adopt gain-sharing contracts which also build great relationships. This has allowed them to increase the value they deliver to their clients and ensure that their consulting business will have a more stable future for years to come. This has also enabled them to build strong partnerships with software providers and capture a larger share of the market.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to understand how the average day of the individual consultant has changed over the years, especially with the introduction of technology that has had a profound impact on the way he/she builds relationships. Clearly, the profession is not anymore able to conform to the narrow expectations that were imposed on it in the past when it was less agile. As with any industry, there have been a number of shifts in attitudes regarding work and good employment practices from the older generations to their more technologically savvy counterparts in recent years.

The discipline of organizational development has a long history of adopting participatory approaches to change management. Over the course of the past several decades a wide range of approaches with a large variety of terminology and assumptions about how to facilitate change have developed and has largely replaced the traditional human relations approach. It is important to remember that relationships are at the core of every OD intervention or process, and therefore relationships are an absolute necessity for a consultant.

As a final point, it is important to acknowledge that in the past few years, it has become more and more evident that the average day of an individual consultant has changed a lot with the influence of technology, and that this is allowing consultants to build long-term relationships as a result. Among the current professions, there is a common theme that is evident in the fact that they are not suited to the narrow expectations of the past when they were less agile. There has been a shift in the ways that older generations and their more digitally savvy counterparts have viewed work, relationships and the best practices for employment in almost all industries.

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