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Implementation of Operational Excellence - Dealing with Resistance during Change Processes

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Abstract

In order to survive, the observed food packaging companies are forced to constantly adapt to the economic, political and social environment at a faster pace. Changes such as Operational Excellence (OE)-initiatives, are often characterised by major shifts on several levels, strategically, structurally as well as culturally, and sometimes results in drastic changes for staffs. In return, regularities and habits give people a sense of stability and security. Since change triggers fear and uncertainty, staffs tend to keep what they are used to instead of suddenly adapt to something new. Thus, resistance is a natural phenomenon that occurs in any change process in a professional context. The subject of the paper is the examination of the topic of dealing with resistance during Operational Excellence-initiatives. This includes research in the relevant literature and the inclusion of the author's experiential knowledge from his personal professional practice. The conclusions drawn from the corresponding evaluation are incorporated into the process and described. The paper is limited to the reflections, observations and interventions regarding resistance to Operational Excellence-initiatives in the food packaging industry and concentrates on the stakeholders of the shop floor and middle management, as these two target groups are particularly critical of change projects.

Keywords: Operational excellence, resistance, change management, food packaging