



## The Role of Non-Structural Employee as a Change Agent in Supporting Organizational Dynamics

Ian Rico Andreas Ricardo<sup>1</sup>; Santi Nururly<sup>2</sup>; Embun Suryani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master Student in Management, University of Mataram, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Supervisor, Lecture of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Mataram, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v11i9.6057>

---

### **Abstract**

The change agent role is usually occupied by company leaders or managers who hold leadership positions and are part of top management. The purpose of this research is to understand the role of a change agent in a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) by conducting a case study at PT PLN Indonesia Power, one of the largest subsidiaries of PT PLN (Persero) in Indonesia. This research uses qualitative research methods. The informants in this study are organic employees of PT PLN Indonesia Power who have been designated as Change Agents by the Board of Directors of PT PLN Indonesia Power for the period between 2017 and 2021. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews and documentation. Then, the data was analyzed using the configurative-ideographic studies case study method through the stages of data collection, and data reduction process, to conclude the data. It was concluded that the role of a change agent as a non-structural employee within PT PLN Indonesia Power includes acting as a coach, catalyst, activator, driver, communicator, solution provider, and mediator. The challenges faced in carrying out the role of change agent within PT PLN Indonesia Power include resistance to change and readiness to change.

**Keywords:** *Change Agent; Non-Structural Employee; Organization; State-owned Enterprise*

### **Introduction**

An organization is a group of individuals with their respective roles, formally assigned, and collaborating to achieve organizational goals (Dessler, 2015). In striving toward its objectives, an organization must move and evolve as change is inevitable everywhere (Damawan & Azizah, 2019). Organizations undergo automatic and explicit changes due to shifts in global environmental conditions, state-of-the-art technology, economic advancements, and various other organizational change models (Ratnawati et al., 2020). Consequently, every organization is obligated to invest significantly in preparation and adaptation to various forms of change and the accompanying contexts (Errida & Lotfi, 2021).

In addressing change, organizations are said to adopt a comprehensive or holistic approach to understand the issues and their resolutions from both internal and external perspectives (Sullivan, 2009). This is because one of the triggers for organizational change usually stems from internal and external factors (Jones & James, 2016). To stimulate organizational change, there are individuals specifically assigned or tasked to manage change, often referred to as change agents (Lunenburg, 2010). Individuals who consistently embrace any changes occurring within the organization may also be termed change agents, with the usual recipients being employees within the organization (Gerwing, 2016).

The role of the Change Agent in organizations has become an intriguing research topic, where a Change Agent is considered as someone capable of catalyzing change and innovation by involving others in the process within an organization (Ericson-Lidman & Standberg, 2021). In fulfilling this role, the Change Agent has the task of influencing the targets to willingly embrace the desired changes (Ratnawati et al., 2020). According to Zainol et.al, (2021), change is said to have three process phases: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing, culminating in organizational changes that are routine and generally acceptable. In guiding organizational change, reconciliation and integration approaches top-down and bottom-up initiated by top management are necessary (Edwards et al., 2020). Thus, someone capable of leading change and expertise in management, who also plays the role of a Change Agent, is needed (Stonehouse, 2013).

However, the role of the Change Agent is usually performed by corporate leaders or managers holding leadership positions and is part of top management (By, 2020), such as managers in healthcare institutions (Stonehouse, 2013). In some previous studies on the role of the Change Agent, there are discussions regarding Change Agents who hold positions outside of management. For instance, Change Agents take on the role of volunteers in elderly care facilities (Ericson-Lidman & Strandberg, 2021). Then, Change Agents take on the role of Human Resources (Ratnawati et al., 2020). Change Agents can also take the role as a teacher in an educational institution (Van der Heijden, 2015). This study observed the phenomenon of the role of the Change Agent held by non-structural employees comprehensively. The research location was one of the state-owned enterprises (Badan Usaha Milik Negara - BUMN), namely PT PLN Indonesia Power, which is one of the subsidiaries of PT PLN (Persero).

## ***Methodology***

This study employed a qualitative analysis method, with informants being organic employees of PT PLN Indonesia Power designated as Change Agents by the Board of Directors for the period 2017-2021. Data collection techniques included interview guidelines, observation, and documentation. The primary questions posed to the informants were: the role of non-structural employees as Change Agents at PT PLN Indonesia Power, the challenges faced by these Change Agents, and strategies to tackle these challenges. The data were analyzed inductively, moving from detailed, specific data to broader themes and sub-themes, based on research questions, interview guide topics, or relevant literature categories. The analysis followed Creswell's method, involving data reduction (editing, segmenting, and summarizing data without significant loss), coding (identifying themes, grouping, and observing patterns), displaying data (organizing and examining connections between data), and drawing conclusions (seeking meanings, patterns, themes, relationships, similarities, and recurring elements). Verification involved interviewing, confirming information, and discussing research interpretations with representative subjects, ensuring validity through triangulation of data collection techniques and peer discussions. The references comprised documentation materials and notes taken during the research process, which were cross-checked for accuracy.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **A. The Role of Change Agent**

The role of the Change Agent in organizations is pivotal in instigating change or renewal of organizational strategies to address the changing dynamics within PT PLN Indonesia Power's environment, aimed at achieving desired objectives. The Change Agent is tasked with influencing the targets of change to make decisions aligned with the desired direction and serves as a conduit between the sources of change. A Change Agent is an individual tasked with influencing the targets of change to make decisions conducive to the organization's objectives. Additionally, they must reliably connect organizational change sources, whether innovations or policies, with the targets of change. Based on the results of an interview, there are several roles of the Change Agent as a non-structural employee within PT PLN Indonesia Power as follows:

#### **1. As a consultant**

A Change Agent assists employees in recognizing the need for changes in their attitudes and behaviors. Subsequently, they propose new alternatives to solve prevailing issues, emphasizing the importance of addressing and resolving these issues and convincing employees that they can handle them. The primary task of a Change Agent as a consultant is to passively provide assistance to the organization or specific individuals in finding solutions to problems. This consultation relies on the keen observation and proficient analysis abilities of the Change Agent.

#### **2. As a Coach**

A Change Agent also has the responsibility to coach or mentor specific individuals within an organization, whether as managers, department heads, or simply aiding members of the organization in learning new skills. Their role is to identify necessary changes within the organization. This implies that a Change Agent possesses the inherent ability to build teams and nurture individuals within the organization. Moreover, they are responsible for building organizational trust and providing inspiration to individuals. Additionally, the active task of a Change Agent involves research, including observation, analysis, action planning, and evaluation of specific strategies within the organization.

#### **3. As a Catalyst**

The role of the Change Agent as a catalyst entails instilling conviction among all employees in their respective work units about the importance of progressing towards improved unit performance. Thus, the agent must be capable of fostering awareness among all employees to effect tangible changes in their respective units. The goal of the Change Agent is to cultivate self-renewal among employees, fostering the development of individuals who can become agents of change themselves.

#### **4. As a Driver**

As a change driver, the Change Agent is responsible for motivating and driving employees to participate in changes aimed at improving their work units. They should encourage all employees to initiate changes from within themselves and to enhance performance within their respective units. The active role of a Change Agent involves influencing employee attitudes to adjust recommendations or suggestions based on the needs of their staff. Change Agents actively work to stabilize new behaviors or attitudes among employees.

#### **5. As a Communicator**

As a communicator of change in charge of communicating matters regarding change. Information conveyed by management sometimes does not reach employees. The role of a change agent as a

communicator is to communicate matters related to company information whereas a change agent has accurate information related to the change program. Here the task of the change agent is to inform and validate change information to employees in their work area.

#### 6. As a Problem Solver

Acting as problem solvers, Change Agents provide alternative solutions to employees or leaders within their work units facing challenges in the process of transitioning to improved unit performance. In every circumstance, Change Agents must think quickly and act decisively to provide various alternative solutions or avenues for their units or organizational leaders. Change Agents must also be accustomed to creating innovations to serve as examples within their work environments.

#### 7. As a Mediator

The role of the Change Agent as a mediator involves facilitating the change process, particularly in resolving issues arising during bureaucratic reform implementation and fostering relationships between internal and external stakeholders. They must be able to identify issues and seek solutions both internally and externally. Change Agents continue to hone their thinking and acting skills to find the best solutions for all employees. As mediators, they facilitate two-way communication between employees within their work units and decision-makers. This involves fostering good communication among colleagues and between employees and leaders by creating mutual trust and striving for creative implementation through a sense of camaraderie. In essence, the Change Agent's role as a mediator is to assist in streamlining the change process, particularly in addressing issues arising during bureaucratic reform implementation and fostering relationships between internal and external parties.

### **B. Challenges**

Based on the research findings, the challenges faced in playing the role of a Change Agent in the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment are as follows:

#### 1. Resistance to Change

Change processes generally encounter resistance from various stakeholders who feel disrupted by the proposed changes. There are several reasons why individuals or groups may resist change, including personal habits, comfort with the current system, economic factors, fear of uncertainty, and negative perceptions. The challenge in being a Change Agent at PT PLN Indonesia Power lies in managing resistance effectively. Resistance can manifest actively or passively, and it can come from individuals or groups within the organization. To address resistance, strategies such as rational communication of leadership decisions, involving resistant parties in the change process and decision-making, providing support and training, and, if necessary, applying sanctions as a last resort, can be employed.

#### 2. Readiness to Change

Organizational change is a complex process requiring continuous management, both short-term and long-term. Factors such as disengagement and lack of interest or support from staff and top management can hinder organizational change efforts. Therefore, important determinants of organizational readiness for change include employee engagement and perceived organizational support, both directly and indirectly. Ensuring readiness for organizational change involves creating a condition where employees focus their thoughts and intentions on making the change effort successful. Challenges in being a Change Agent at PT PLN Indonesia Power include addressing readiness to change, as employees may experience uncertainty and fear of failure in facing new conditions brought about by change. Uncertain and stressful change conditions can affect employees' overall attitudes toward the organization. Therefore, leadership and management must build positive perceptions among employees

through attention, support, and recognition of their contributions to organizational goals.

In line with the research findings of Van Der Heijden et al., (2015), the challenges faced in acting as a Change Agent include the upheaval or change which also carries the consequence of rejection; the greater the upheaval, the greater the potential for rejection turmoil. Some individuals with closed-mindedness will cling to old ways, considering them to be correct, and they will reject them, either directly or indirectly, especially if there are vested interests involved, such as fear of being sidelined or other vested interests, the rejection will intensify. Furthermore, when changes are made, those consciously or unconsciously disturbed will initiate resistance movements (Coksun & Krdzalic, 2008). For instance, refusing to follow new rules for various reasons: unpreparedness, busyness, and others. Seeking weaknesses, including exaggerating minor issues that have occurred since the change. Conducting smear campaigns to undermine the change initiators. As a result, turbulence or chaos arises in the company or government; when chaos occurs, change resisters gain momentum to develop the chaos issue into evidence of a failure in the change process.

In contrast to Simon (1996), one of the toughest challenges faced by a Black Belt in companies, whether in manufacturing, energy, or services industries, is how to work on a data collection system or data collection that generates information crucial in carrying out a project. Implementing such a system is also a challenge, regardless of whether the required data is attribute or variable-based. Similarly, according to Havelock (1973), companies as dynamic entities continually adjust to changes. Companies change because they consistently encounter various challenges. These challenges arise due to environmental influences (the company's environment). The company's environment encompasses all factors affecting the company and its activities. These factors influencing the company are vast and numerous. In terms of breadth, the environment can be divided into two categories: internal and external environments.

### **C. Suggested Solutions**

To address these challenges, Change Agents at PT PLN Indonesia Power can implement solutions such as effective communication strategies, involving stakeholders in change programs, and ensuring comprehensive information dissemination. By ensuring open and transparent communication, Change Agents can help foster a culture of effective change within the organization. Through active engagement and communication, Change Agents can encourage genuine participation in change efforts, fostering a more receptive environment for organizational transformation.

#### **1. Communication**

Based on the interviews above, the solution to address the challenges of a Change Agent in the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment is communication, where communication occurs during the socialization of change, and a Change Agent acts as a source or communicator. The communication skills of a Change Agent become increasingly important when linked to their function as change agents.

#### **2. Collaboration of All Parties**

The paradigm shifts in organizational management and the development of technology, information, and dynamic, unpredictable, and complex environmental conditions, require organizations to make improvements through a process of change. Organizational change is an effort to maintain the survival of the organization to survive global challenges. Organizations that adapt quickly to environmental changes are those that survive in the competitive era. Some demands for organizational renewal according to organizational change can arise from unexpected internal and external conditions, the emergence of anomalies, innovation based on process needs, changes in industry structure or market structure, demographics, changes in perception, atmosphere, and meaning as well as new knowledge. From these points, there will be demands on organizations to develop themselves.

Managing change is an art of processing where systemic changes are made in a controlled manner following pre-determined frameworks or models, up to certain limits (Purhantara, 2012). Successful organizations are those that successfully acquire, instill and apply their knowledge to help the learning organization process. Learning Organization or Organizational learning is a concept where an organization is considered capable of continuously conducting independent learning processes (self-learning) so that the organization has "thinking and acting speed" in responding to various emerging changes. Therefore, to achieve this, the collaboration of all parties must be in place.

Based on the interview result, to tackle the challenge and apply the solution well, as a change agent, an employee must have at least these characteristics to influence others. Which are:

### 1. Creative

When our organization changes, everyone within it must prepare themselves to become change agents, harnessing and directing their creative energy to engage in the change process. Every change policy originating from the leadership level must be received and responded to effectively by all parties at lower levels. All policies and visions from the top must be promptly responded to and followed up by all levels below. Essentially, everyone in the organization at any level must prepare themselves to become more effective and productive change agents.

The characteristic of a Change Agent that must be possessed within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment is creativity. This means that even if the change is led by charismatic, visionary, inspiring, and motivating leadership, without creativity in the soul of every individual change agent, realizing the change will be difficult. The greatness of leadership alone is not complete and sufficient to effect change; awareness of change agents is required to embody change with creative energy. Change agents must be mentally prepared to face the challenges of adapting to new conditions. The effort for change must be a passion and motivation to generate new ideas to improve the quality of change. Always be creative in finding better ways to bring about change.

### 2. Insightful

One key thing possessed by a change agent is the initiative to implement ideas. Not everyone who has ideas can initiate their thoughts to others or the community around them. This requires certain courage and skill, and a change agent is required to actualize it. With this initiative, a change agent will later be known for their ideas and breakthroughs, so a change agent must have a broad perspective.

A good change agent cannot only focus on solving problems partially. They must be able to analyze and find solutions from a holistic or comprehensive approach. This can be done by understanding the various roles of stakeholders from different parts or departments within the organization and synchronizing them. Comprehensive alignment in determining the direction or strategy of change is needed so that solutions can be implemented effectively and efficiently. Solving a problem needs to be done to its roots, therefore a change agent cannot be satisfied with solving just one problem, hence high insight is required by a Change Agent. This means that a change agent also has extensive knowledge and is not confined to their job field alone. By studying and knowing fields other than their own, they can gain insights and see opportunities for personal and company development.

### 3. Work Spirit

This Change Agent is the driving force for all employees to make better changes. Although this change is a collective responsibility, at the very least, with the presence of this Change Agent, there is a promoter who can move other colleagues, so work enthusiasm is needed. The characteristic of a Change Agent that must be possessed within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment is a work ethic because change agents will certainly serve as role models for all employees who can motivate to improve the

effectiveness of work implementation and carry out innovations related to the realization of excellent service, in addition to having the duty and responsibility to be a pioneer in enhancing discipline in improving performance, so enthusiasm is needed in work.

#### 4. Discipline

Given the importance of Human Resources (HR) in an organization, companies must also be able to maintain and sustain competitive and quality human resources. A change agent is someone who can change someone by influencing others to do something. Considering that the task of a change agent is to influence targets/subjects of change so that they make decisions in a direction desired by the organization, discipline is required. Change agents are individuals who act to influence other HR to take initiative according to the mission and vision of the organization or institution. The role of change agents is also as a link between sources of change, whether in innovation or policy, and the target of change for the better. Therefore, a mindset and work culture are expected to bring about integrity and high organizational performance. The meaning of integrity is individuals within the organization who prioritize disciplined behavior.

#### 5. Empathy

A change agent possesses the characteristic of empathy or understanding the feelings of others. Through empathy, a change agent can see the situation and conditions of others or the organization and then build communication or understanding about the necessary changes together.

The characteristic of a Change Agent that must be possessed within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment is to have empathy, because empathy will affect the effectiveness of communication. Effective communication will accelerate the acceptance of innovation. This means the success of change agents is positively related to empathy towards employees. It should be noted that the more differences between change agents and employees, the more difficult it is for change agents to show empathy.

#### 6. Flexible

A change agent must be flexible and open to change. This is so they can connect the creative ideas of others while understanding their perspectives and personalities for the benefit of the company. The characteristic of a Change Agent that must be possessed within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment is flexibility to be able to use various concepts and viewpoints when solving problems or making decisions.

### ***Conclusion***

Based on the research results and discussion described above, the following conclusions can be drawn from this research:

1. Roles of a Change Agent as a Non-Structural Employee within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment: The role of a Change Agent within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment includes serving as a consultant, a trainer, a catalyst, a motivator, a problem solver, and a mediator.
2. Challenges Faced in the Role of a Change Agent within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment: Challenges encountered in the role of a Change Agent within the PT PLN Indonesia Power environment include resistance to change and readiness to change.

## References

- By, R. T. (2020). Organizational Change and Leadership: Out of the Quagmire. *Journal of Change Management*, 20(1), 1–6. doi: 10.1080/14697017.2020.1716459.
- Coskun, M., & Krdzalic, A. (2008). The Characteristics of Change Agents in the Context of Organizational Development.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2016). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. Singapore: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Damawan, A. H., & Azizah, S. (2020). Resistance to Change: Causes and Strategies as an Organizational Challenge. In *Proceedings of the 5th ASEAN Conference on Psychology, Counselling, and Humanities (ACPCH 2019)* (pp. 49–53). Paris, France: Atlantis Press. doi: 10.2991/assehr.k.200120.010.
- Dessler, G. (2015). *Human Resources Management (Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia)*.
- Edwards, K., Prætorius, T., & Nielsen, A. P. (2020). A Model of Cascading Change: Orchestrating Planned and Emergent Change to Ensure Employee Participation. *Journal of Change Management*, 20(4), 342–368. doi: 10.1080/14697017.2020.1755341.
- Ericson-Lidman, E., & Strandberg, G. (2021). Change agents' experiences of implementing a new organizational culture in residential care for older people: A qualitative study. *Nordic Journal of Nursing Research*, 41(3), 149–157. doi: 10.1177/2057158521995994.
- Errida, A., & Lotfi, B. (2021). The determinants of organizational change management success: Literature review and case study. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 13, 184797902110162. doi: 10.1177/18479790211016273.
- Gerwing, C. (2016). Meaning of Change Agents within Organizational Change. *Journal of Applied Leadership & Management*, 4, 21–40. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/156751>.
- Havelock, J. (1973). Organizational Change Readiness Practices of Business Turnaround Change Agents. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 4(3), 143–152.
- Jones, K. (2016). Frank Voehl and H. James Harrington: Change Management—Manage the Change or It Will Manage You. *Chromatographia*, 79(19–20), 1397–1397. doi: 10.1007/s10337-016-3141-x
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2010). Managing Change: The Role of the Change Agent. *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration*.
- Purhantara, W. (2012). Menciptakan Organisasi Yang Kreatif. *Economia*, 8(2), 153–163. doi: <http://doi.org/10.21831/economia.v8i2.1225>.
- Ratnawati, S., Atmaja, H. E., & Hartono, B. (2020). Implementation Role of HR in Organizational Transformation as Agent of Change. *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Tidar*, 21(2), 121–130.
- Simon, N. J. (1996). Meeting the challenge of change: The issue of readiness. *Competitive Intelligence Review*, 7(2), 86–88. doi: 10.1002/cir.3880070213.
- Stonehouse, D. (2013). The change agent: the manager's role in change. *British Journal of Healthcare Management*, 19(9), 443–445. doi: 10.12968/bjhc.2013.19.9.443.
- Sullivan, L. (2009). *The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA:



SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781412972024.

van der Heijden, H. R. M. A., Geldens, J. J. M., Beijaard, D., & Popeijus, H. L. (2015). Characteristics of teachers as change agents. *Teachers and Teaching*, 21(6), 681–699. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2015.1044328.

Zainol, N. Z., Kowang, T. O., Hee, O. C., Fei, G. C., & Kadir, B. B. (2021). Managing Organizational Change through Effective Leadership: A Review from Literature. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(1), 1–10. doi: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i1/8370.

### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).