Stress Through Times of Organisational Change: Its Relevance to Organisational Outcomes

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March 31st, 2011

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A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Business (MBus)

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Clare George

March 31st, 2011

Acknowledgments

Thanks Mum, all that I do is for you and because of you.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the advice and support of others; some received voluntarily, some not always. Without the advice and encouragement of my supervisor Dr. Mark Le Fevre I may not have seen the value of the outcomes that were produced, in fact I may not have produced the outcomes at all without his wise words. Thank you for clarifying my thoughts and making them readable. Thank you for being my advocate.

Many other colleagues have been a tremendous support; my thanks especially to Dr. Felicity Lamm, Danae Anderson, and other office space occupants for your sporadic, helpful hints. Thank you Marie Cheeseman for sorting out the “mess”. I am grateful for your meticulous proof reading of the final copy. I certainly couldn’t have done it and I’m thankful that you could!

I would like to make mention of the Department of Labour, in particular OSH for the scholarship that has helped to fund this research.

Thank you to my loving family, especially my younger sister Teresa, who sat patiently during my attempts to explain my research; thank you for your willingness to understand the difference between primary and secondary stress management interventions.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ronny Tedestedt. Without your inquisitive questions, your unwavering love, and your incredible patience I would have lost the plot.

Publications Arising from this Thesis

George, C., & Le Fevre, M. (2010). Stress management practice: Is it effective? *Journal of Employment Relations*, 35,(2):97-118.

Ethics Approval

This research was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics committee AUTEC on the 2nd of November 2011, Ethics Application Number 10/210.

Abstract

In today's fast paced business environment change is something not only to expect but something to take advantage of. Without the ability to embrace change organisations may find they are being left behind competitors who are able to move their organisations past the hurdles that change brings.

For many employees and managers alike, the thought of constant change can be daunting, with feelings of uncertainty and anxiousness as common reactions. Uncertainty often causes stress and as a result resistance. Resistance is a likely outcome in situations that seem too stressful to face. However, without the support and co-operation of employees, managers may find it difficult to achieve the desired outcomes. It was the intention of this research to investigate whether, according to managers, the management of stress associated with change may positively affect the change initiative outcomes.

Semi-structured interviews were used to better understand seven managers' perceptions of the idea that stress management interventions may positively affect the outcome of change. The participants were from a range of industries including the food, hospitality, finance, and engineering industries. Participants also included members from government departments, and a business consultancy firm.

The managers were aware of the positive and negative effects of change on their employees and the organisations. There was consensus that uncertainty, lack of involvement, and pressure were stressors that both they and their employees faced during times of change. These factors are known to cause stress during 'normal' time however during times of change they are particularly evident. The stressors of most concern to the managers were consistent with those reported in the literature. However this is where the consistency ends. It is suggested in the literature that a combination of both primary and secondary interventions should be employed to reduce stress in the workplace with an emphasis on primary interventions. Managers had other ideas.

The managers did not see the need to implement formal SMIs as they felt good management practice was more effective in reducing stress. It should be noted here that there are some similarities in what the managers considered good management practice and what the literature suggests for stress management in primary SMIs. Through the involvement of employees, trust gained and open communication the managers felt their employees could overcome any of the stressors that change caused. Many of the managers, in addition to good management practice, referred their employees to EAP programs as their SMI of choice. Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) were not seen to alter the outcome of the change however it was acknowledged by the managers that it gave the employees emotional tools to deal with stress in the future.

Managers did not appear to believe that proactive stress management (primary and / or secondary SMIs) would be likely to improve the success of management change efforts, yet they did acknowledge that SMIs could reduce stress in employees and that less stressed employees were more likely to perform at a high level, and that high performing employees would contribute to successful change.

Introduction

In business today, management face a new obligation of protection for all employees at work as stress becomes of greater concern for employees and employers alike. As the pace of change continues to get faster, employees are faced with increased pressures with fewer resources and often greater uncertainty. It is for this reason that the author has undertaken this research to investigate the relationship between stress, stress management, and whether stress management positively affects the outcomes of organisational change.

The thesis begins by outlining the literature on occupational stress and the stressors that both employees and employers alike are facing. The fast-paced nature of change is becoming something of a concern as organisations are facing increased pressure due to the uncertain and often stressful nature of change. Due to these concerns, the management of stress may be of greater relevance in today's business environment. The section on occupational stressors therefore outlines the main stressors of concern. Following the section on occupational stressors, literature on the management of stress and stress management interventions (SMIs) has been explored, attempting to address the stressors of concern during times of change.

To better understand the issues faced during times of change, a section outlining change and change management follows. This section first looks at how change is managed and the main factors for successful change management. The reason for incorporating this section into this thesis is to understand what makes change successful and what the major concerns for employees are during change.

In order to bring both the stress management and the change management literature together, the following section, entitled *Link to Stress*, aims to determine the role that stress plays in the change process and whether or not stress management interventions will aid in the successful outcome of the change initiative.

In order to answer this question a methodology was chosen whereby the author interviewed managers to gain their insights into whether they thought stress management interventions would positively affect the outcomes of change initiatives. The methodology section gives

reasons for the methodology chosen and outlines how the research questions for the interview were formed. Within this section the author has chosen to include a table that matches the questions asked in the interviews with the literature that gives reasons for each question asked.

The findings from the interviews are covered in the section following the methodology. In this section, quotes from the mangers are categorised and summarised into major themes and sub-themes. These emerging themes are used to structure the discussion and conclusions section where the author attempts to answer the research question by bringing the manager's thoughts together with the literature. Each theme is summarised and concluded at the end of each argument with a summary bringing all conclusions together. It is here that the researcher offers insight into whether stress management interventions positively influence the outcome of change initiatives.

Limitations of the study are included in the final section as well as practical implications and directions for future research.

Chapter One: Stress and Stress Management

Introduction

Organisations may choose to respond to the increase in pressure placed on employees by implementing occupational health and safety policies or programmes. Under the European Union Framework Directive employers have a legal duty to ensure the safety of workers in any aspect relating to the job. Items of this law include: assessment of all risks and an evaluation of all risks that cannot be avoided; adapting the work to the individual; and developing a sufficient prevention policy which, again, covers all aspects of the workplace and job role. It has been recognised that stress at work may lead to mental or physical illness, and stress that is not related to work may manifest in the workplace (Cooper, 1998). The economic cost of stress is high for all parties involved, and, as will be shown, such costs should be reduced by preventing occupational stress.

Occupational Stress

This section on occupational stress and occupational stressors is designed to take a more specific look at the issues that employees are facing in organisations. It also will attempt to highlight the importance of dealing with occupational stress during times of change and uncertainty and will, therefore, tend to focus on the relationship between change and stress. Today, occupational stress is causing great concern for many employers and employees alike with losses from occupational stress being measured in millions of dollars (Le Fevre, Kolt & Matheny, 2006; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). According to the American Institute of Stress, stress is a major contributing factor in as many as 80 percent of all work-related injuries and 40 percent of workplace turnover (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Similar figures have been reported in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, and Australia (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Le Fevre, 2001; Department of Labour stress update, 2007; Kenny & Cooper, 2003). As the economic community grows stronger in Australia (Boven, 2010) businesses and the Government alike are seeing the costs of occupational stress rise. According to compensation data, stress claims are constantly increasing and are costing around $200 million per annum in Australia (Department of Labour stress update, 2007; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Many countries are facing similar issues, for example the

International Labour Organisation reports that “inefficiencies arising from occupational stress may cost up to 10 percent of a country’s GNP” (Ongori & Evans Agolla, 2008, p.123). Surprisingly, it has proven impossible to obtain similar and/or relevant New Zealand statistics from official sources. It is for this reason that Australian statistics have been used.

High levels of occupational stress in the workplace are costly to governments, but also have the potential to be a significant cost to individuals in terms of physical and psychological well-being (Kohler & Munz, 2006). As a result of the impact on individuals, organisations are affected through increased illness-related absences, early retirement, a rise in conflict, poor job performance, and a decrease in productivity (Schneider & Kuemmel, 2006). Despite the damaging effects of occupational stress, employees are under increasing pressure to be more efficient, be profit driven, and at the same time manage greater workloads (Schneider & Kuemmel, 2006; Levi, 1990). It appears that in the modern business world the well-being of employees is becoming less and less important and the economic well-being of the company is becoming a priority. So where does the responsibility for the management of stress lie? According to Dr. J Wren (Personal communication Nov. 18, 2009) reducing the costs of occupational stress at an individual and organisational level is of great concern for New Zealand’s Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and Department of Labour (DOL) as they work closely with researchers, universities, and local business community members. However, when searching the ACC website and then requesting New Zealand based statistics based on stress claims in the workplace, they failed to produce any research on the area of workplace stress. What was available was mental health claims and, according to ACC, workplace stress claims come under this heading. There is great variation under the heading of Mental Health, and therefore here lays firstly, a potential problem in the way the issue of stress is understood in New Zealand workplaces, and secondly, how stress is defined by influential parties in order to be addressed. The UK offers specific workplace stress-related statistics through organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive (www.hse.gov.uk/stress/research) where documents such as Health and Safety Executive Standards and Stress Related Outcomes are produced to help organisations manage potential sources of workplace stress and ways of tackling stress in the workplace.

Occupational Stressors

Researchers and practitioners alike have, for many reasons, tended to characterise organisations as an "inherently political arena that can serve as major sources of stress" (Perrewé, Ferris, Frink, & Anthony, 2000, p.115). The current nature of workplaces is that constant stress is intensified as organisations go through major changes in order to remain competitive in the market. This will ultimately escalate accountability and increase uncertainty in a highly demanding and competitive environment (Perrewe et al., 2000). Feelings of uncertainty are most common during times of change, as employees face the prospect of job loss, loss of control, role ambiguity, and role conflict (Yu, 2009; Robinson & Griffiths, 2005; McHugh & Brennan, 1994; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Yu (2009) adds to this by saying that uncertainty about the nature of change can lead to job insecurity and decreased satisfaction and commitment. Job insecurity results in emotional stress (Yu, 2009) and when an organisation threatens its employees with job insecurity and uncertainty, it will be unlikely that employees will develop or maintain any kind of organisational commitment. Employees are a major component in the successful outcome of change initiatives (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; McHugh & Brennan, 1994; Kiefer, 2002; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004); this will be discussed in more detail below. Therefore, it seems imperative to identify and manage stressors, especially during times of change, to ensure that managers receive the full support from employees. The occupational stressors (during normal times and times of change) that are most frequently stated in the literature are outlined below.

For more than three decades, role theory has been used by researchers to better understand employee stress and the consequences of such (Landry & Arnold, 1999). Role conflict and role ambiguity are among the antecedents that have been most cited in this area of research and, according to Addae, Parveen Parboteeah, and Velinor (2008), there is sufficient evidence to indicate that both role conflict and role ambiguity lead to psychological strain and can affect an employee's job and organisational outcomes. According to role theory, "when employees perceive conflicting demands or that carrying out one role expectation makes carrying out another more difficult, they are experiencing role conflict" (Addae, et al., 2008, p.571). Role ambiguity, according to Landry and Arnold (1999), "refers to uncertainty about the salient information needed to enact a role" (p.138). In addition, role ambiguity can also be caused by a lack of clear and/or specific information

regarding the work role requirements (House & Rizzo, 1972 cited in Bhatti, Shar, Shaikh, & Nazar, 2010).

When organisations are facing widespread changes, stressors such as role conflict and ambiguity are intensified. The main sources of stress during times of change, as identified by Robinson and Griffiths (2005), are uncertainty/ambiguity, interpersonal conflict, increased workload, and perceived loss. Olson and Tetrick (1988, cited in Robinson & Griffiths, 2005) state "an inevitable consequence of change is the replacement of a predictable and certain environment with one that is uncertain and ambiguous" (p.204). The stressors that are identified to cause stress in a 'normal' organisational setting are clearly more of an issue during times of change. Robinson and Griffiths (2005) found that the high levels of uncertainty during times of change were seen to be compounded by a lack of information coming from managers in regards to the pace and direction of the change process. Winter (2010) supported this by saying that it was not surprising that stress levels had sky rocketed during the economic downturn as uncertainty over job security grew, but it was the responsibility of the managers to deal with the welfare of their staff, and that primarily included work-related stress. Research has shown that one of the major causes of work-related stress is the ability (or lack of) managers and their skills to manage staff and stress in the work place (Yu, 2009). Change is often cited as a psychological hazard but it is not clear whether change itself is stressful or whether its possibly stressful nature is due to the uncertainty and lack of control that is commonly associated with change and the management of employees through change. For this reason, additional occupational stressors, with a particular focus on uncertainty, are discussed in the following paragraph.

There are many reasons suggested as to why employees experience workplace stress. A succinct list offered by Cartwright and Cooper (1997 cited in Robinson and Griffiths, 2005, p.206) has been chosen by the author to focus on for the purpose of this study. The author believes that this list summaries the main points from the literature reviewed and is relevant to the change literature that follows:

- Increased workload
- Perceived loss (of identity, status, power, mastery)
- Career path disruption (possibility of job transfer, job loss, disturbed career path)

- Uncertainty and ambiguity (lack of information, ambiguity in roles)
- Interpersonal disruption (changes in colleagues / bosses or personality clashes).

The commonality in all of these points is that the events interfere with a work routine; this may be experienced as a loss of control and therefore these events may be a source of workplace stress with negative consequences (Schabracq & Cooper, 2000). If employees perceive that something is being imposed on them by forces out of their control, it is likely that they will feel a deep uncertainty regarding their future. Individuals in such situations are likely to experience feelings of powerlessness, which weaken their ability to cope with the stress caused by these potential threats. Such pressures and uncertainties may be brought on by increased work targets, threats of job losses, changes in the job holders' responsibilities and authority, shifts in power, unfamiliar technology, continual or sudden change, or having insufficient information to carry out the change (Ongori & Agolla, 2008; Schabracq & Cooper, 2000; McHugh & Brennan, 1994; Robinson and Griffiths, 2005). It is starting to appear that the causes of stress in a normal situation are very similar to what causes greatest concern to employees during major change.

The powerlessness during times of change may be what is causing the greatest amount of uncertainty, and Olson and Tetrick (1988, cited in Robinson & Griffiths, 2005) suggest that uncertainty is an inevitable outcome during times of change. In addition to causing stress in organisational settings, uncertainty has also been identified in the medical literature as a major cause of stress (Yu, 2009, Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Kohler & Munz, 2006; Coffey, Dugdill & Tattersal 2009; Appelbaum, Lefrancois, Tonna, & Shapiro, 2007). In the medical literature, authors are talking about the health consequences of stress (Henly Haugh & Salyer, 2007; Salisbury, LaMontagne, Hepworth, & Cohen, 2007; Lauver, Connolly-Nelson, & Vang, 2007; Santacroce & Lee, 2006).

Richardson and Rothstein (2008) suggest that it is not possible to completely eliminate stress from the workplace; however, it is possible to educate employees and employers on how to best manage it. When managers, or organisations as a whole, recognise that stress is a relevant and possibly damaging issue for employees, they are sending out a message of concern to those affected or potentially affected by workplace stress. McHugh and Brennan

(1994) explain that the presence of Stress Management Interventions (SMIs) implies that management recognise all or some of the listed issues below:

- Negative effects of stress are firstly experienced by individuals but they also have costly consequences for the organisation
- Stress is an unnecessary cost and should be addressed
- People are our most valuable resource and they should be supported and protected.

The absence of SMIs in the workplace implies all or some of the following:

- A failure to recognise the costly consequences of stress in the workplace
- Not recognising that stress can be reduced
- Not perceiving people to be of value to the organisation or that they should be supported and protected.

It is argued that initiatives such as SMIs reflect an acknowledgment of "organisational responsibility regarding the management of stress and an enhanced awareness of its associated costs as issue of strategic importance" (McHugh & Brennan, 1994, p.32).

Stress Management Interventions

Now that occupational stress and stressors have been outlined, this section on Stress Management Interventions (SMIs) will outline the different options that organisations and individuals have when dealing with workplace stressors and stress.

Many organisations have implemented Stress Management Interventions (SMIs) in an attempt to reduce levels of stress (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Schneider & Kuemmel, 2006; Le Fevre, 2001) and to help mitigate the detrimental effects of occupational stress. The European Commission (2002) stated that:

> "...work related stress may be prevented or counteracted by job redesign (e.g. by empowering the employees, and avoiding both over- and under-load), by improving social support, and by promoting reasonable reward for effort invested. And of course, by adjusting occupational physical settings to the workers abilities, needs and reasonable expectations" (cited in Coffey, Dugdill & Tattersal 2009, p.99).

This statement illustrates how SMIs can be implemented at many levels but are primarily aimed at the culture and fundamentals of the organisation (Coffey et al., 2009; Le Fevre, 2001). SMIs are classified into three groups: primary interventions that deal with the source of the stress at a group or workplace level (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Le Fevre et al.,

2006; Le Fevre, 2001; Randall et al., 2007), secondary interventions that focus on the individual (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Le Fevre et al., 2006; Le Fevre, 2001), and tertiary interventions that focus on assisting individuals with existing issues (Le Fevre et al., 2006; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). The subsequent sections will focus on primary and secondary level SMIs, as the literature recommends these two forms of SMIs are most effective in reducing occupational stress.

Organisational-level SMIs (Primary SMIs) are designed to deal with the source of the stress, creating a balance between demands placed on the individual and providing the resources available for dealing with the demands (Randall, Cox & Griffiths, 2007). Outlined in a later section is Karasek's Demand-Control theory which attempts to match the demands to the individual's capabilities (Payne & Fletcher, 1983). Over the years, stress researchers (e.g. Cummings & Cooper, 1979; McGrath, 1976; Karasek, 1979; Cox & McKay) have contributed to this area of the literature by creating models (e.g. cybernetic model, stress cycle model, demand-control model, general systems approach) that include a demanding encounter, the recognition that the encounter is significant, and the recognition that the consequences will affect the individual's well-being (Cooper & Dewe, 2004). These previously listed factors are the common elements among the models. The fundamental basis of these models is that "strain occurs when there is a misfit, mismatch or imbalance between the demands of the encounter and the resources of the individual" (Cooper & Dewe, 2004, p.97).

Although the focus for primary interventions is essentially based around the organisation, it can be divided into two parts; employee focused, and organisation focused (Le Fevre, 2001; De Frank & Cooper, 1987; van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; van der Klink, Blonk, Schere, & Pijk, 2001). Medical benefits, staff counselling, employee assistance programmes (EAP's), and stress management training workshops, are examples of employee-focused interventions (Le Fevre, 2001). Job structure and rotation, organisational development, and organisational restructuring are examples of organisation-focused interventions (Le Fevre, 2001; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Le Fevre et al., (2006) state that the objective of these interventions is to create an environment or culture that aims to remove, or reduce sources of stress in the workplace, rather than treating present stress in employees. By attempting to remove or reduce stressors (Le Fevre et al., 2006), primary interventions can be an

effective means of protecting and enhancing employee well-being in the medium to long-term (Randall et al., 2007). Typically, primary SMIs are run for over 12 months; this is in contrast to secondary interventions that are usually shorter.

Secondary interventions focus on the individuals within an organisation and can be broken down into three groups: somatic, cognitive, and multi-modal (Le Fevre et al., 2006). Somatic techniques include relaxation methods (e.g. Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Kohler & Munz, 2006), cognitive techniques may include such techniques as affirmations and thought stopping (Le Fevre, 2001; Bunn, Bifulco, Lorenc, & Robinson, 2007; Hampel, Meier, & Kümmel, 2007), and multi-modal techniques involve a combination of the prior two groups, including techniques such as transcendental meditation and programmes that mix cognitive and somatic methods (Le Fevre, 2001). Secondary interventions, such as the examples given above, are often short in duration and, depending on the type of technique implemented, can vary in length (e.g. one meditation session, monthly workshops). Each one has the intention of teaching employees coping strategies to deal with stress by equipping them with skills they may require in the future (Barry & Kuemmel, 2006). Altering the way individuals appraise stressful situations is intended to change reactions to stress in the future (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Soriano, 2009). Such skills as assertiveness and positive thinking (Barry & Kuemmel, 2006) are taught in attempts to reduce the severity of stress symptoms before situations become uncontrollable (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Secondary interventions have been criticised in the past for placing the responsibility of dealing with stressful situations on the individual and thereby removing the obligation from management to address such problems (Le Fevre et al., 2006; Kenny & Cooper, 2003). Le Fevre et al. (2006) suggested that this has been used as an argument against the implementation of secondary interventions, and to support primary interventions as first choice.

The Person-environment fit theory has recently become a focus when addressing stress in the workplace (Cooper & Dewe, 2004). The person-environment fit (P-E fit) theory refers to the alignment or congruence of a person to their environment (Edwards, 2008). A number of factors fall under the heading of the environment, including the social environment, other individuals, groups, organisations, or vocations. In this theory, stress is not related

specifically to the individual or the environment, the focus is the fit between "attributes of the person and characteristics of different vocations" (Edwards, 2008, p.168). P-E fit offers an explanation for stress in the workplace; "when there is a mismatch between the person and their environment" (Le Fevre, 2001, p.3) stress is likely to be the result.

"There is great need to consider variation within persons *and* their environment as determinants of both levels of perceived stress and the effectiveness of stress management…" (De Frank & Cooper, 1987, p.8). Understanding individual's interactions with the environment is important in the evaluation of the stressors. Those same evaluations may predict whether individuals will accept and continue practicing secondary interventions offered (i.e. relaxation techniques, coping strategies) (Le Fevre, 2007).

In a SMI study conducted by Le Fevre (2007) it was found that managers continued the usage of brief SMIs (e.g. deep breathing) but only when their stress levels escalated to a level where they felt they required a 'quick fix'. Other techniques were also taught in this same study however the managers discontinued use after the initial few months of being taught. The main reason why the managers chose to use the brief, curative techniques, and possibly why the more involved SMIs were discontinued, was because of their self-assessed 'too busy' lifestyle that meant they did not have the time. This may provide some evidence to illustrate how much the environment dictates the continued and successful usage of SMIs.

The adoption of the intervention by employees is essential if a long-term change is to be achieved (Appelbaum et al., 2007; van der Hek & Plomp, 1997). Knowing the situational and individual factors that ensure the adoption of change may also predict the likelihood of a successful primary intervention adoption (De Frank & Cooper, 1897; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). It is hard to know the extent to which employees continue with the techniques taught post-intervention due to the limited number of follow ups conducted. Here presents a gap; there is a lack of long-term follow-up recorded in the literature when it comes to implementing SMIs. Therefore it is hard to compare or draw conclusions from any results, and it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of SMIs, due to a lack of sound measurement

tools, limited or no reliable control groups, the unique nature of organisations, and a lack of long-term follow-up.

According to De Frank and Cooper (1987), many organisations have not created a culture or implemented structures to maintain stress management practices, which highlights the need to see secondary and primary interventions implemented in concurrence with each other. Previous reviews (De Frank and Cooper, 1987; van der Hek and Plomp, 1997; van der Klink, 2001) communicate a shared concern for the way that stress management interventions are measured and reported. There has been improvement since the first review written twenty two years ago. However due to the nature of SMI's there is still a way to go in being able to compare one SMI to another. The comparison seems almost impossible due to the lack of long-term follow-up, differences in SMI methods, and the means in which they are recorded and measured.

The outcomes from the SMIs may more accurately be determined as successful when compared with the organisation's specific objectives. Each organisation has many variables that affect the outcomes of the SMI's, therefore making them difficult to compare. Tailoring the SMI to the organisation's environment may be a way of avoiding unsuccessful outcomes (Elo, Ervasti, Kuosma, & Mattila, 2008). If one determines which individuals are at risk and what constitutes a stressful situation, one may be more likely to find a suitable and effective way of addressing the particular issues. Elo et al., (2008) go on to say that the most effective SMIs evaluated the problems and implemented an intervention that was best suited to the environment and the individuals involved. According to van der Hek and Plomp (1997), the goal of an SMI should be clear and agreed upon prior to the implementation and should attempt to be measured once the implementation process has taken place.

If the environment and the conditions are a determining factor behind successful implementation of SMIs then why do primary level interventions appear to have limited or no effect on reducing stress in the workplace? (van der Klink, et al., 2001). Firstly, managers may often be reluctant to enter into such an undertaking due to the resources required and the level of disruption to employees. According to McHugh and Brennan (1994), one of the main difficulties in implementing SMIs is the lack of co-operation from top managers as it is a prevailing notion that many senior managers see stress as a problem for individuals to

manage, not the responsibility of the organisation. However, many studies have shown that successful implementation requires full management support and has significant impact on the whole organisation (van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; Bunn, et al., 2007; Hampel, et al., 2007; McHugh & Brennan, 1994). According to Rafferty and Griffin (2005), supportive leadership has a positive impact on the negative affect that change has on employees. They go on to say that leaders need to understand the need to provide support and consider individuals' needs in a changing environment (Rafferty & Griffin, 2005). Secondly, implementing a change, bearing in mind change often causes uncertainty and potentially stress, requires full support from employees and other stakeholders. (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Kohler & Munz, 2006; Coffey, et al., 2009; Appelbaum, et al., 2007). Individual perception and coping skills may be necessary to ensure that the change process (in this case, the SMI) is successful (van der Klink, et al., 2001). Educating and equipping employees with the skills to deal with stress are very similar to the skills required to deal with change. Such skills are often taught in secondary level interventions. Once those skills have been taught and adopted, it requires a supportive culture to ensure sustainable use of the acquired skills (Le Fevre, et al., 2006). What Le Fevre et al. (2006) suggest is that there is great benefit in implementing individual-focused, secondary approaches prior to implementing an intervention at the organisational level. Holeman, Axtell, Sprigg, Totterdell, & Wall, (2007) produced the only study that demonstrated the combined effects of job redesign interventions and employee well-being interventions. The interventions produced multiple improvements in job characteristics (i.e. job control, skill utilisation, participation, and feedback). Participative job redesigns allowed the organisation to achieve multiple changes in job characteristics, and off-site educational sessions produced improvements in employee well-being - a successful combination of the two interventions.

Consistent with prior research and the analysis of the studies above, it appears as though secondary interventions are the most effective (van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; van der Klink, et al., 2001; Le Fevre, 2001) and, in general, employees do receive greater benefit from such interventions as cognitive-behavioural theory and coping strategies (Bunn, et al., 2007; Hampel, et al., 2007; van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; van der Klink, et al.,2001). However, some studies have not had the same success as others in implementing the same type of interventions. This was mentioned by van der Klink, et al. (2001) in their observation of

evaluative studies and appeared again in Bunn et al. (2007). It is consistent with the idea that it is not the SMI that is deemed to be effective or ineffective but more importantly the way it is implemented and whether or not the environment has been evaluated properly to determine the most appropriate type of intervention.

Elo, et al. (2008) conducted a primary stress management intervention with the intention of positively increasing employee well-being through changes in the organisational environment. The study showed statistically significant results in all the measures that were organisation wide (clarity of work goals, information flow, work climate, and supervisor support). There were no significant benefits at the individual level. An organisational stress management intervention may improve the work climate and encourage effective communication, but the effects on individual well-being may be limited. In fact, work ability (or work capacity) decreased in the participants of the experimental group; participation in the SMIs did not prevent this (Elo, et al., 2008). This is again consistent with the idea of combining both primary and secondary interventions if the outcome is to be effective in decreasing stress. Le Fevre et al. (2006) suggests that "secondary approaches be employed prior to the introduction of primary methodologies within a client organisation" (p.547).

Difficulties in the measurement of SMI effectiveness have haunted this area of research, and many reviews have reported only small improvements in clarity and accuracy of outcome measurables (van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; van der Klink, et al., 2001). Extensive variation in outcome measures, a relatively low and unreliable presence of control groups and sound follow up, and significant differences between organisations and studies makes it almost impossible to determine which type of intervention is most effective. Although there has been a significant increase in methodologically sound studies, results from many reviews still produce inconsistent results that are difficult to compare (i.e. expensive trials with low success rates, cognitive behavioural theories producing great results in some and not others, long duration of SMI with some good results). Insight into the conditions surrounding the SMI may ensure a greater ability to make accurate comparisons (van der Klink, et al., 2001).

Conclusion

From past research (De Frank and Cooper, 1987; van der Hek & Plomp in 1997; van der Klink 2001), it appears that secondary interventions have had the greatest success in terms of

reducing the levels of stress in the workplace. The variation in outcomes, targeted groups, and the environment lead the author to believe that it is almost impossible to compare such results when there is no consistent basis for comparison.

According to Le Fevre et al. (2006), the correct structures must be in place to support any secondary level interventions if the desire is to ensure stress reduction in the long term. This was supported by one study that implemented both secondary and primary level interventions (Holeman et al., 2009); desired objectives were reached and the organisation was able to maintain the desired results for a significant period of time. According to Elo et al. (2008) organisation-wide interventions may improve communication and work climate, but they do little to improve the well-being of individuals. Cognitive training (individual specific) would enable employees to better deal with the changes caused by organisation-wide interventions. Organisation-wide interventions may help to ensure the longevity of the secondary SMIs provided they are conducted in a suitable secondary organisation (Elo et al., 2008).

Here lies a gap for future research. If the source of stress is identified as the relationship between the individual and the environment then surely both need to be addressed in order to see long-term, effective change? Holeman et al. (2009) had success with a bottom-up intervention incorporating the staff and their ideas into the change process. Each organisation has specific risks and issues that will not respond to a "blanket-approach" solution for reducing stress levels. Any movement towards reducing stress for employees and encouraging active and support workplace cultures is a "worthwhile goal for employers, employees, and researchers alike" (De Frank & Cooper, 1987).

Chapter Two: Change Management

Introduction

Globalization and hyper-capitalism mean that managers are constantly faced with the challenge of committing their organizations to change in response to competitive forces (King & Wright, 2007; Essers, Bohm, Coutu, 2009). Therefore, survival of the fittest, or the "best fitting", (Morgan, 1986, cited in Schabracq & Cooper, 2000) or the organisation that is best able to adapt to the changing environments still appears to be the way to success. The most important factor is the pace at which organisations are able to adapt to the continuously changing environment. This fast-paced environment demands a flexible approach based on constant development reflecting the environment. As a result of an increased pace of change employees are being asked to do more with fewer resources in shorter periods of time (King & Wright, 2007). In order to stay afloat, managers must be willing to spend considerable amounts of energy and resources in supporting change initiatives as well as increasing the likelihood that people will move through change successfully (King & Wright, 2007; Sande 2008; Mueller 2009; Westover 2010).

According to King and Wright (2007) the human side in change processes is often over-looked, generating a number of problems including increasing employee resistance, slow adoption rates, higher than necessary costs, limitations on resources and, essentially, project failure. A common approach to change management is often driven by urgency. Such an approach may result in employees feeling as though the change has happened to them, leaving them feeling helpless and unmotivated. This may cause a mental resistance from employees who are therefore unlikely to contribute to desired change-objectives (Cassar and Bezzina 2005; Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007; Cutcher 2009). This section on change management looks specifically at the human element of change-management initiatives. This particular focus on the human aspect of change management is due to the growing concern for process- and operational-based change initiatives that are taking priority in organisations (Cassar and Bezzina 2005; Walker, Armenakis et al., 2007; Randall and Procter 2008; Sande 2008; Cutcher 2009; Maccoby 2010).

Leadership Through Times of Change

This section focuses on trust, communication, and leadership behaviour, as there is a consensus in the literature that these three elements are significant contributors to the successful leadership of employees through change.

Cassar and Bezzina (2005) suggest that the hardest part of change is creating a situation where the change initiative can be maintained and internalised (Cassar and Bezzina, 2005). The primary concern for many managers is to make changes in the area of processes and operations in order to remain competitive in the market (Walker, Armenakis et al., 2007). Cassar and Bezzina (2005) go on to say that although making process and operational changes may meet short-term objectives, ultimately the organisational culture and employee support required to maintain such initiatives will be underdeveloped and may accelerate resistance. In order to deter such resistance it is important to understand that employees that do not appreciate, support, or see value in the change are most likely to cause the greatest resistance. A primary reason that resistance may occur is the way the employees are lead through the change process (Cassar and Bezzina 2005; King and Wright 2007; Mueller 2009). Maccoby (2010) summaries his mentor saying "…good leaders did not merely lead but recruited collaborators to a shared purpose and provided the stage on which they could give a great performance" (p.69). Many other authors support these notions, saying that strong leaders induce a deliberate organisational redesign, build new management teams and accommodate the internal fit with the external environment to improve the organisational performance by way of rational adaptation (Beer et al., 1990; Burns, 1978; Collins, 2001; Beugelsdijk and Slangen, 2001, cited in Karsten, Keulen, Kroeze, & Peters, 2009, p. 75).

> "The key to success in contemporary organisational [change cf.] is basically found in the nature of the fundamental attitudes and feelings generated by the managerial leader…these thoughts have a frequency and are magnetic (Darling and Heller, 2009 cited in Mueller, 2009, p. 72).

Trust

This section outlines the importance of trust during times of uncertainty and change. During these times it is often when employees look to managers and leaders the most and any small mistake made may cause resistance, which can often make the change initiative unsuccessful.

Stress management strategies such as involving employees in planning, encouraging communication and growing trust in organisations are effective in reducing stress brought on by changes in the workplace (Yu, 2009). Yu (2009) continues by saying that if employees are faced with large-scale organisational change and they perceive an increase in workload or change in work mode, then trust in managers decreases. Therefore, trust (e.g. the organisation, managers, directors, supervisors) plays an important role in the attempt to reduce stress during times of change.

A key need for employees in times of change is the ability to trust the person in charge (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005) and such trust is essential in the change initiative process, especially so if the change is of a large scale (Chawla and Kelloway, 2004), because of the high risk and uncertainty involved. Commitment to change is enhanced when there is greatest trust in those initiating the change and/or management (Noblet & Rodwell, 2008; Hawkins, 2009), and when there is little or no trust in management employees put up the greatest resistance to change (Coch & French, 1948 cited in Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). In an organisation where people feel insecure, and have limited support to experiment with new practices, they may often feel threatened and be resistant to taking the risks required when implementing change (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005). When change has the potential to lower a person's position or change the person's job description or affect the person's freedom, the person is likely to resist the change. This uncertainty often threatens job security and job insecurity causes stress (Yu, 2009). There are many good reasons why SMIs should receive a place on the change management agenda. Reducing uncertainty is one of them, and one of the ways that uncertainty can be reduced during times of change is through previously acquired trust of the manager.

> "Good stress management strategies have a significant positive effect on stress and the greater the level of trust of employees, the greater the influence of stress management strategies in response to job stress" (Yu, 2009, p.18).

Trust, as defined by Nyhand and Marlowe (1997 cited in Ceri-Booms, 2010) is "the level of confidence that one individual has in another's competence and his or her willingness to act in a fair, ethical and predictable manner" (p.235). In addition to this definition, Cadwell and Dixon (2009) put forward the idea that trust is also about the surrender of a person's choice or power with the hope that the other party will "honour the elements of the social contract between the parties" (p.95). Many other definitions have been studied and explored; however, for the purpose of this next section the main elements of trust are focused on how leaders gain trust from their subordinates through their actions, manner, and the confidence they instil in their employees (Kovac & Jesenko, 2010; Cadwell & Dixon, 2009; Konorti, 2008). Today's organisations are becoming flatter in their structures, decreasing the importance placed on hierarchy. However, there is still much pressure on leaders, whether they have a formal title as manager or not (e.g. communicators, change agents, mid-level management, natural leaders) (Ceri-Booms, 2010) to lead organisations into the future with competitive advantage (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009). It is for this reason that leaders may not as easily be able to gain trust from their subordinates through hierarchy, power, authority, and / or control (Kovac & Jesenko, 2010). Kovac and Jesenko (2010) supported by Ramirez (2010) go on to say that any kind of trusting relationship built on the above characteristics will be fragile and will not be able to be sustained through a time of high risk such as change.

Low levels of trust within an organisation often stem from fear of the person in charge. In this type of organisational culture it is common to see a lack of risks being taken and a passive acceptance of the status quo. Greenleaf (n.d., cited in Hawkins, 2009) points out that without the trust of employees a leader's ability to implement actions, problem solve, and have support for risks taken will be greatly compromised. Confidence in a leader's ability to take risks is an important part of an organisation's ability to remain competitive in the market. If an organisation is to remain competitive it requires changes to be made and, therefore risk taking is an important element in order for the change process to be successful. An organisation's ability and willingness to accept change is determined by the

level of trust in the leader (Cadwell & Dixon, 2009; Hawkins, 2009). With the trust of employees, a leader can guide the organisation into an uncertain future (Hawkins, 2009). Promoting a trusting relationship between leaders and their subordinates can be vital for leadership effectiveness. Hawkins (2009) adds to this by saying that effective leaders present their decisions and plans for the future in such a way that employees understand and agree to follow the leaders' vision. This confirms the importance of the trust that leaders must earn from their employees. And it is important for leaders to be trusted by advocating their position in a "disinterested manner and demonstrate a concern for followers needs rather than their own self-interest" (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, p. 642) as may have occurred in past organisational situations. Great leaders not only empower their employees but instil long-lasting confidence, giving them the ability to seek new ways of doing things (Cadwell & Dixon, 2009). Cadwell and Dixon (2009) go on to say that great leaders build trust with followers because of their commitment to the well-being of others, and an organisation that is grounded in trust to empower employees. By empowering others, employees are more willing to take risks and therefore to enable organisations to achieve creative solutions (Cadwell & Dixon, 2009; Konorti, 2008; Hawkins, 2009).

According to Kovac and Jesenko (2010, p.14) the actions of leaders are the greatest contributors to increasing trust. According to Whitner et al., (1998, cited in Kovac & Jesenko, 2010) these are the factors that increase trust between leaders and subordinates:

- Behavioural Consistency
- Behavioural integrity
- Delegation and control
- Communication
- Demonstration of concern for others.

These factors are supported also by Ceri-Booms (2010) and Emery and Barker (2007) in the lists that they suggest are essential factors when generating trusting relationships between leaders and their subordinates.

Ceri-Boom (2010) suggests:

- Honesty and accuracy in the information communicated by the leader
- A leader's ability to be transparent
- Trust worthiness

- Integrity
- Willingness to commit to the goals set.

Emery and Barker (2007) suggests:

- A desire for employees to emulate their leader
- Define and articulate a vision that can be followed
- Credibility in a leader's actions
- Coaching and mentoring instead of authoritarian power.

In summary, it can be seen that trust and leadership behaviour are important elements in the leadership process and that is why these three points have been a particular focus of this research. As mentioned above, feelings of uncertainty and powerlessness are common during times of change, as employees face the prospect of job loss, loss of control, role ambiguity, and role conflict (Yu, 2009, Robinson & Griffiths, 2005; McHugh & Brennan, 1994; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). These feelings of control loss and powerlessness are likely to result in a lack of employee commitment and resistance to the change, because the employees feel the situation is too stressful to face. The commitment level shown by employees during times of change often determines whether or not the change outcomes will be successful (Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007). One of the major causes of stress during times of change is uncertainty and, according to Winter (2010), it is the responsibility of the manager to ensure this uncertainty is reduced. Good leadership is necessary to maintain trust between managers and employees and as a result reduce as much uncertainty as possible (Quirke, 2010). Therefore it is the desire of the researcher to discover what factors improve the outcomes of change and what role leaders play in reducing stress put on employees during these times of change. To restate the research question: according to managers, do SMIs positively affect the outcome of change initiatives?

Leadership Style

According to Winter (2010) it is the role of the manager to lead employees successfully through uncertain times. Winter (2010) goes on to say that it is also the managers' responsibility to ensure the well-being of employees. This section will outline the literature's

recommendations to managers during a time when their behaviour is closely examined and relied upon.

Change stirs many different emotions in people, some expected and some not (Hawkins, 2009). As suggested above the establishment of trust in the leader-subordinate relationship increases the chances that employees will feel they have the support needed to walk the path envisioned by the leader (Kovac & Jesenko, 2010; Ceri-Booms, 2010).

Drucker (1999) believes that if an organisation doesn't participate in the necessary changes to meet various consumer demands, then the organisation may not survive. Change has now become something to expect as opposed to something that can be avoided. It is for this reason that leaders may choose to be proactive in preparing employees for what is about to occur. By being ahead of the change (Drucker, 1999), instead of trying to manage the change, leaders often have the opportunity to address any concerns and deal with any unexpected responses. According to Bass (1990), it is therefore necessary that 21st Century leaders become change leaders. Even if change leaders have to make unpopular decisions, an influential leader can strengthen acceptance by fully explaining their reasoning, thereby soliciting support and earning approval (Bass, 1990). A change leader sees change as potential for improvement – an opportunity. According to Drucker (1999) and supported by other authors (Hawkins, 2009; Emery & Barker, 2007; Mosca, Fazzari, & Buzza, 2010; Conger & Kanungo, 1987), a true change leader looks for change, accurately assesses the risk, and realises that change is necessary to remain competitive. If leaders are able to make sure that employees feel a part of the solution they are more likely to support and accept the change (Konorti, 2008; Bass, 1990). Without their support the change initiative may not go to plan. Bass (1990) explains that managers who are needing to make changes must be prepared to give their subordinates justification and enough stability through a turbulent time to allows them to attempt to find the balance between the "denial and acceptance of reality" (Bass, 1990, p.289). As pointed out by Burns (1978, cited in Hawkins, 2009) leaders are always further ahead in the change cycle than subordinates and in support of this Drucker (1999) claims that "one cannot manage change. One can only be ahead of it" (p.73). Therefore, it seems that the much of the success of change is down to the ability of the manager to

become an effective change leader – one who is aware of the influences that affect the external and internal forces on and within the organisation.

A certain style of leadership is necessary when initiating change in an organisation (Hawkins, 2009). It has been suggested by Laohavichien, Fredendall, & Cantrell (2009) that transformational leaders are most effective in turbulent times (supported by Hawkins, 2009). The titles 'transformational' and 'transactional' leaders are made reference to in the literature, where transformational leaders "empower individuals and groups within the organisation to produce desired results" (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005, p. 211) and transactional leaders focus more on analysing problems, driving task completion, and working on organisational structure complaints (Campling, Poole, Wiesner, & Schermerhorn, 2006; Mueller 2009). Transformational leadership style is different from any other type of leadership because it extends beyond traits, behaviours, and characteristics. It is more about the ability of the leader to inspire, be perceived as charismatic, and give followers individual consideration (Konorti, 2008; Emery & Barker, 2007; Ceri-Booms, 2010). Recently, transformational leaders have been referred to as change agents – they place much focus on followers and empower their employees (Konorti, 2008). According to Laohavichien, Fredendall, and Cantrell (2009), transformational leadership is the style that is most suited to support radical, organisational change. What has been recognised is that the skills identified as essential for leadership through change are very similar to those outlined under transformational leadership. It is for this reason that transformational leadership will be further looked at here, rather than other styles of leadership (e.g. transactional, authoritative, servant leadership (Hawkins, 2009)).

The foundation principles of transformational leadership are the ability to walk the vision, be goal directed, trustworthy, motivational, have an ability to coach, to challenge the status quo, and to sustain change (Hawkins, 2009; Konorti; 2008; Ceri-Booms, 2010; Conger & Kanungo, 1897; Bass, 1990). As mentioned above, these principles are also conducive to change leadership and the successful management of a change-accepting organisation. A transformational leadership style often produces organisational change due to a focus on opportunities and challenging the status quo.

One of the above principles, coaching, has been discussed more so in recent times due to a necessary change of leadership styles from authoritative to more participative in these turbulent times (Drucker, 1999). It has been of focus because when adopting a coaching style it is reported that leaders are able to foster the high levels of motivation, commitment and loyalty from employees that are so desperately sought after during times of change (Konorti, 2008). Sustainable business growth is possible through the support and productivity of employees (Mosca et al., 2010).

According to Mosca et al*.,* (2010) managers who interact with their employees have a much larger impact on the outcome of their production; this interaction with employees is a key component to an organisation's ability to grow. This interactive style has been defined as a coaching style of leadership, one that fits satisfactorily as part of transformational leadership (Laohavichien et al., 2009; Konorti, 2008). Mosca et al., (2010) go on to define coaching as:

> "Possessing a prospective focus while developing employees through personalised, formal and information instruction, empowering, positively reinforcing acceptable work, providing consistent feedback, gathering information, listening, acting as a role model, creating the proper work culture, sharing coping skills, guiding, building confidence, supporting, stress management, elimination of maladaptive behaviours, tapping greater potential, focusing on emotional aspects and feeling of employee performance, character relationship building, counselling and mentoring." (Mosca et al., 2010, p.118).

This descriptive definition shows how many similar principles are shared by transformational leaders, coaching, and leaders initiating change. When adopting a coaching technique, managers are able to become 'thinking partners' and it has already been established that leading by example is one of the most effective ways of leading during times of change (Conger & Kanungo, 1987). By placing the needs of employees first, managers are able include employees in problem solving, which often means that they will be far more supportive of the change. Hammer (1995 cited in Mosca et al., 2010) advocated that in order to be followed, accepted, and successful, future managers must play the role of coach / teacher. The literature on leadership has developed from a style based on structure and authority to one of well-being of employees and the positive effects that change can bring. It

therefore seems clear that mentoring and coaching should be adopted when change is the focus of any organisation, and as mentioned above, without change, organisations will get left behind. Coaching has become a way of sustaining change, as employees recognise the support given to them not only during times of change but also after the implementation when the new elements are expected to be implemented (Hawkins, 2009). Gone are the days of traditional supremacy roles of the leaders. What has replaced this style is a new leader-employee partnership as leaders take the role of coach, not boss (Laohavichien et al., 2009). What is expected to be seen is that these partnerships may begin to produce enthusiasm and commitment from employees resulting in lower levels of stress and larger productivity gains (Mosca et al., 2010; Laohavichien et al., 2009). As employees begin to understand the rationale for decisions, and that the goal should be one shared by all, then all can work collectively to advance the organisation (Hawkins, 2009). For a leader to convey the message, and unite all involved, they need to be confident in their ability to communicate – a trait that any good transformational leader should possess (Hawkins, 2009; Quirke; Gilley et al., 2009).

Communication

This section on communication shows how trust is gained through open and clear communication. It also outlines how effective communication can reduce uncertainty and resistance, and therefore has the ability to lower stress levels during times of change (Quirke, 2010).

> "Technically it was a good plan, but it never touched the hearts of the people, it stayed a paper drill. It was too mechanical. The spirit of quality never went through the company...Managers had thought that with one or two meetings and some thundering speeches we would be there" (Empel, 1996 cited in Karsten et al.,2009, p. 85).

Communication in the change process is essential. Effective communication is no longer just good delivery, rather it is about what we see and how we know what we know (Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008). According to Ramirez (2010) once a crisis begins it is too late to formulate a plan, additional problems occur during change when employees are left to formulate their own ideas, are uncertain about certain aspects of the change, or assess the situation

differently to those in control (Bryd, 2009; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Kiefer, 2010). Ramirez (2010) adds that the information delivered to employees during times of change should be correct and focused; communication in this instance incorporates knowledge transfer and should clearly outline the justification for any actions taken. During uncertain times of change, leaders should be aware that opinions formulate immediately, but that through effective communication leaders are able to create a calmness and avoid miscommunication (Ramirez, 2010). Effective communication includes transparency of details, timelines, and disclosure of all relevant information as quickly as possible (Quirke, 2009; Ramirez, 2010; Gilley, Gilley & McMillan, 2009). Physical presence from managers and leaders often speaks louder than words, it is a sign of commitment from the leaders – something that employees often look to in uncertain times (Quirke, 2009). When change and uncertainty hit, even when the organisation maintains its current good practices, employees feel more doubtful and nervous. According to Quirke (2009) it is therefore important that managers have to "run faster" (p.25) during these times of change to reduce the feelings of uncertainty. As mentioned above in the stress chapter, uncertainty is one of the main stressors during times of change (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Kohler & Munz, 2006; Coffey, et al., 2009; Appelbaum, et al., 2007). The stress caused by uncertainty can lead to a lack of commitment to the organisation and any changes they are proposing to make (Robinson and Griffiths, 2005). According to Quirke (2010) managers need to communicate to their employees that they are being cared for, that management know what it's going to take to succeed, that management are telling the truth and giving necessary feedback, and that everyone is in the same boat sharing the risks. When the perceived threats of change draw close employees want to remain in control and get back to a sense of what is familiar, this for them means understanding what is in their control and what isn't. What employees want is to reduce uncertainty as much as possible because it leaves individuals with a sense of powerlessness (Quirke, 2010; Schabracq & Cooper, 2000). Communication efforts therefore have to highlight how much 'movement' employees have during this time. Where there is confusion and uncertainty there is resistance (Quirke, 2010). Good leadership is essential when engaging employees in to the change process, and good communication is vital for good leadership and building trust (Quirke, 2010; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Chawla and Kelloway, 2004; Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009).

In relation to the idea that trust in change leaders is essential, communication has the potential to inspire change, inform those who want to understand and want to be understood, to encourage, and guide. Without effective communication employees are left with feelings of vulnerability, and feel open to criticism (Jabri et al., 2008). In organisations that face constant change, people need to feel comfortable to communicate and connect with other people, whether they be managers, change agents, supervisors, or colleagues. The planning of communication channels can be seen as a strategic business solution; the more thorough you are in the planning phases the better the outcome will be (Sande, 2009). It's important to note that spending time and resources on generally informing employees across the organisation would enable change agents to reach a large audience with reasonably minimal effort. In contrast, engaging and enabling activities will affect a much smaller group with a specific, targeted message resulting in a more personal and effective communication of the message (Sande, 2009). Management may underestimate the impact of change on employees. When little time is spent explaining the change to employees it may result in low levels of effective commitment towards the change (Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007). Schweiger & DeNisi (1991) showed that when a message is communicated to a wide audience (i.e. newsletters, emails, large group meetings) it is likely for employees to experience a great increase in stress and decrease in satisfaction (Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991, cited in Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007). Schweiger and DeNisi (1991) compared this previous group with another group that was educated about the change through a newsletter, had access to an information hotline, group meetings with management, and individual meetings with other employees affected. Although both experienced an increase in stress the second group proved more capable over time in dealing with the change and its sustainability. From this it is clear that certain elements of change causes stress, which may be inevitable, but stress levels increased when employees were communicated with on an impersonal level (e.g. via a newsletter). In contrast, when employees were given greater access to information through other communication channels and also had the ability to openly talk on an individual level, the employees showed greater support for the change and helped to ensure the sustainability of the change. Access to information and open communication kept the employees informed, reduced uncertainty, and gave them the opportunity to express their concerns. These may be key factors in reducing stress during times of change.

Organisational Culture

Schein (1992 cited in Cassar & Bezzina, 2005) defines culture as a

> "multi-dimensional phenomenon incorporating not just the aesthetic, behaviours, or even language used but also the very values, norms and unconscious processes that create the social reality of being an organisation" (p.206).

According to Cassar and Bezzina (2005) and others (Karsten, Keulen, Kroeze, & Peters, 2008; Driel & Dolfsman, 2009) adjusting or changing an organisation's culture is one of the most challenging tasks faced by managers. A manager may be required to take into consideration the historical and the current state of the culture in order to commit to any sort of change (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; Karsten, Keulen, Kroeze, & Peters, 2008; Driel & Dolfsman, 2009). It is stated in the literature how important it is to create a culture that has change imbedded into it; it should become a "way of life" (King & Wright, 2007, p. 58). By doing this organisations are able to exist in an ever-changing market. The need to build an acceptance of change cannot be done without the full support of senior management and significant leaders; without them culture change is impossible (King & Wright, 2007; Randall & Procter, 2008; Mueller, 2009; Westover, 2010; Karsten, Keulen, Kroeze, & Peters, 2008).

By creating a culture that not only facilitates change but coaches employees through change, managers can feel confident that future change initiatives will be supported and embraced, also determining the speed of advancement and success (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; Münner, 2007; Randall & Procter, 2008). "Working on the cultural capital by expanding the levels of individual and collective consciousness is the key to a true transformation, both personal and organisational" (Münner, 2007, p. 53).

In order to successfully address the current status of the organisational culture change it is essential that the first part be analysis rather than action (Münner, 2007). It is difficult to implement change when the culture is not ready or designed to sustain that change; ensuring an entire grasp on the ins and outs of the culture will aid in developing favourable conditions for the change implementation (Münner, 2007).

Successful Change

This section brings together the change management sections so far to look at what actually makes a change effort successful according to the literature. This section is based on a model by Cassar & Bezzina (2005) who effectively summarise all the key points. The model looks at reducing the fear of change, the importance of management behaviour and their communication with their employees, the importance of a change-accepting culture, and how employee involvement can play a significant role in the adoption of the change.

According to Walker, Achilles, Armenakis, and Bernerth (2007) change success "hinges on management's ability to consider all change factors...when planning change efforts" (p. 769). They go on to list a few things to consider e.g. individuals' coping abilities, contextual issues, internal and external factors, and processes. Many suggestions for successful change implementation are targeted at managers and are given in the form of lists and models (e.g Essers, Bohm, & Contu, 2009; Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; Sande, 2009), applicable as the change agents (i.e. managers, leaders, consultants) see fit. Cassar and Bezzzina's (2005), 'Intrapersonal Change Model' focuses on ensuring the right people are chosen for the change agent roles. According to Cassar and Bezzina (2005) the people chosen as change agents need to be practicing the change in all facets of their working lives, a living example of the change potential. The model follows on from there with the six components; *challenge, address, understand, practice, own, and grow*. The first stage focuses on encouraging employees to see that change is not something to fear or resist, but something to been seen as a ***challenge***. This suggests that the change is not a negative but should be seen as a positive for employees and for the organisation as a whole. Once that mind-state is reached it is far more realistic for the individual to face or ***address*** the issue at hand. Avoidance and resistance are common reactions to change processes (Chawla and Kelloway, 2004); the individual should be encouraged to confront the issues as opposed to retaliate in a negative way. According to Chawla and Kelloway (2004) resistance may be associated with a lack of readiness for change and hence the desire to withdraw from what seems like a situation too stressful to face. The greater the uncertainty the more stressful a situation may appear (Robinson & Griffiths, 2005). By addressing the issue of fear and uncertainty, as stated by this model, employees may feel less stressed and therefore be able to more competently address any issues that the change presents. Management play a role in this

stage through the acquisition of trust, clear and open communication, and consistent and transparent behaviours (Yu, 2009).

A change-accepting culture is vital for this stage to work. If employees feel it is acceptable to make mistakes when learning, and feel assured that they will not be punished, but instead supported, by management they may feel encouraged to try new things resulting in an adoption of a problem-solving mentality. By stage three, ***understand***, ideally individuals will have removed much of the negative association with the change and feel equipped to deal with any issues that arose. It is essential that those issues are clearly communicated so that employees have an understanding about what exactly is expected of them. They can then make a realistic evaluation of their role in the change and how they are going to tackle it. The fourth stage is ***practice*** and at this stage the individuals should be encouraged to put in place their beliefs in day-to-day practice with full support from team leaders, managers, and other identified change agents. This stage allows employees to be in a state of development, a dynamic process where it is not so much the task itself but the way the task is carried out. The practice stage works to grow an encouraging working environment which in turn may act as a positive influence on others. The fifth stage, ***ownership***, is an important one because it implies that individuals have the resources and capabilities necessary to anticipate new problems or situations and feel confident to do so. By the stage of ownership the individual should feel in control of their behaviours and abilities. Resulting from this progress, the sixth stage of ***growth*** is a stage where the individual feels completely in control, has "mastered the ability to recognise his/her capabilities to face any new situation" (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005, p. 212) thus allowing them to be flexible and apply their new skills to future change situations.

Individuals will not adopt each stage at the same pace as others. It is the role of the change agent to identify which individuals are at the right stage to move on and which individuals need more time and assistance before progressing. Contextual, personal, historical, and cultural issues require attention as they may hinder or accelerate the advancement of the stages. Feedback is an essential part in all change-management processes (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005). It is for the benefit of all parties that everyone involved is clear about past, current,

and future issues that are pertinent. This requires open and effective communication (Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008).

Critiques of the Change Management Literature

Critics of change models and the theories discussed cite failure to comprehend the complexity of change. They highlight that following such rigid steps will not always bring success as there are many factors such as adoption rate, the human factor, and unique organisational cultures that will alter an organisations ability to consistently follow each step of the models. The reality is that people react to change in many different and often unexpected ways, and it seems therefore impossible to predict outcomes and plan accordingly. The models and theories also imply that a simplistic view of success is suggested for measurement of the outcomes. Success should be defined according to specific requirements and objectives set by the organisation in question, of which no two organisations will have the same. It therefore seems impossible to compare the success of one organisation to that of another. The models appear superficial and without sufficient evidence to prove that a ‘blanket-approach’ model is the answer.

Chapter Three: Link to Stress

In this section the author will attempt to combine both the stress literature and the change management literature to determine the role that stress plays in a change process, and whether or not SMIs will aid in the successful outcome of the change initiative.

Change initiatives managed poorly can cause employees and managers a considerable amount of stress (Cutcher, 2009; hse.gov.uk). The detrimental effects of stress on employees can cost both the organisation and them personally (Byrd, 2009). Recognising the complexity of stress caused during organisational change can be very challenging as employees react in different ways at different stages of the process. According to Kahn and Byosiere (1992, cited in Byrd, 2009) many individuals in an organisational setting tend to associate job stress with negative outcomes and find withdrawal to be the best way of coping. Many change initiatives have failed in the past due to the negative assessments made by employees as they find ways to resist the change in some way due to their appraisal of the situation being too stressful (Bryd, 2009; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Kiefer, 2010). According to Chawla and Kelloway (2004) resistance to change may be associated with a lack of readiness for change and hence the desire to withdraw from what seems like a situation too stressful to face. "The underlying assumption is that people fear change in general" (Kiefer, 2010, p. 41) and this is one reason for resistance. Resistance may prevent employees from understanding the reasons for change, the positive outcomes change may bring, and how they as individuals can benefit from the change. Resistance to change can endure and manifest for a long time and often the commitment required isn't strengthened over time (Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). The reasons suggested for why employees resist change are similar to those that are identified to cause stress in a 'normal' organisational setting (Kiefer, 2010; Byrd, 2009; Yu, 2009; Robinson & Griffiths, 2005; McHugh & Brennan, 1994; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Such examples as: loss of value, a lack of understanding, different assessment of the change than those who are initiating it, and fear of not having the necessary skills, are suggested for causing stress during organisational change (Kiefer, 2010; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). According to Byrd (2009), managers feel less stress than employees, suggesting that there is an association between knowledge and time for processing of the new information, and decreased stress through some change initiatives. This is backed up by Robinson and

Griffiths (2005) who say that lower-level employees have little to no control over the situation and are therefore more likely to distance themselves from the change process in an attempt to avoid any perceived threats. Robinson and Griffiths (2005) go on to say that managerial staff have more control over the process and typically are in a better position to seek more information of clarification if required. Again, it is the uncertainty and the ambiguity that is most likely to cause stress in an organisational setting and from this reasoning illustrated above, employees are likely to face greater uncertainty.

Given that the overall goal of many changes is for the organisation to become more efficient, more effective, and more competitive, employee performance through the change process is vital (Noblet & Rodwell, 2008; McHugh, 1997). Structural and procedural changes associated with becoming more economical often mean that employees are expected to do more with fewer resources, the stress and added pressure associated with the changes represent a significant barrier to the organisation actually reaching their goals (Noblet & Rodwell, 2008; King & Wright, 2007). Often change is thrust upon employees without much warning and they are expected to continue with consistent outputs without hesitation or complaint (McHugh, 1997). In this case managers stand accused of putting the needs of the organisation before those of the employees. For this reason it is likely that the whole change process will be stressful for employees. Winter (2010) emphasises that "companies are failing to appreciate that the responsibility of dealing with workplace stress lies with their own directors and managers" (p.6). According to the Health and Safety Executive website (hse.gov.uk, 2007) one of the major causes of work-related stress is the ability of the managers and their skills to manage staff and stress in the workplace. Management need to consider the stress factor and, especially during times of change and turbulence, it must receive a place on the change management agenda (McHugh, 1997; Byrd, 2009).

As the pressures on organisations increase to remain competitive in the global and even local markets, so too do the pressures on management to meet higher targets with greater efficiency, and fewer resources. That pressure is often filtered down to employees when organisations are required to make sudden and/or drastic changes to remain competitive. The strain put on employees when change is thrust upon them can be quite significant and can have a negative effect on the well-being of employees. Interviews conducted by Cutcher

(2009) saw employees having to take sick leave and feeling terribly uncomfortable about coming to work. In the Cutcher study, the new sales strategy that had to be implemented was not aligned with the current organisational culture, it was an impossible task to ask of the employees, they were not sufficiently trained, and the strategy was not totally supported by management. One of the interviewees went so far as to say

> "...we have to be thinking, thinking. Then we would get stressed if we get sick....It really scared me and I haven't been right since and I kept getting sick all the time...I would think about work and almost start crying" (Cutcher, 2009).

The authors labelled this, and many other accounts from interviewees, as an inability to cope or be equipped with the right coping tools. The employees recognised the contradictions in the message that was being (inadequately) communicated to them; they put up a great resistance to the whole change initiative.

Stress need not always be seen as negative, although it has historically been viewed as counterproductive. Through analysis of the situation, the organisational culture, and how employees feel, management can understand the need to manage stress as a part of the change process itself (Byrd, 2009; Kiefer, 2010). When management place importance on listening; "coaching rather than telling, and leading rather than directing the employees through the transition" (Byrd, 2009, p. 13) it is likely that they will be able to reduce the negative stress and encourage eustress (c.f.). Workplace support has been suggested by Noblet and Rodwell (2008) to significantly improve employee well-being when advice, feedback, and assistance is given. This suggests that healthier work environments are built through closely monitoring employees' needs and ensuring that the support is readily available at their request (Noblet & Rodwell, 2008).

Equipping employees with the necessary skills to deal with change involves teaching them personal strategies for coping with the change process (King & Wright, 2007) especially when organisations are facing a future of constant change. Constant change in an organisation or industry often means that high demands are placed on employees and, according to Noblet and Rodwell (2008), "high demands are much more likely to contribute to high job strain" (p.573) in comparison to low or moderate demand levels. Byrd (2009)

defines job strain as the “immediate manifestations of job stress” (p.9). This may be best explained by Karasek's Demands-Supports-Constraints model of job stress (Payne & Fletcher, 1983) which argues that the extent to which individuals consider themselves subject to a high level of job demands influences the level of job stress which they experience. Other models such as Cummings and Cooper's cybernetic model and McGrath's stress cycle model show that when a demanding encounter, deemed to be significant, is experienced by an individual and that the consequences of this encounter will affect their well being they are likely to experience strain. The strain referred to in these models, occurs when the there is a "misfit, mismatch or imbalance" (Cooper & Dewe, 2004, p.97) between the demands placed on the individual and the resources that they have to cope. Any organisation that is dependent on its staff to provide efficient and effective service should be adequately equipped to cope with the strain placed on employees. Therefore, for management to facilitate effective coping with organisational change, it is recommended that an organisation-wide culture of support be adopted, thus preventing negative stress caused by change initiatives (McHugh, 1997). Teaching employees to cope with stressful change situations may help them to develop resilience in the future (McHugh, 1997; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). Management arguably play the most important role in the teaching process. By acknowledging the need for stress management interventions through times of change they are regarding highly employees’ well-being, as well as that of the organisation (McHugh, 1997). As mentioned above, effective communication is an essential part in the success of managing large-scale change initiatives and the issues associated with it (Jabri, Adrian, & Boje, 2008). It allows both parties to communicate levels of strain and ensures managers are aware of the impact on the employees from the change (Noblet & Rodwell, 2010) as well as any input employees may have.

Employee participation in the change process has many mutual benefits for the employees themselves and for the organisation (McHugh, 1997). Input from employees should not be seen as a negative thing, employees should be heard because often such input is an expression of any underlying problems or concerns faced by the individuals (Kiefer, 2002). According to Chawla and Kelloway (2004) participation in the change process increases performance and commitment but most importantly it reduces resistance. This is where the mutual benefits for all parties involved becomes more apparent. The organisation is able to

retain highly skilled employees that are able to perform consistently with the skills they have been equipped with through the change process. In turn, the employees are likely to feel like worthwhile contributors, have a sense of value within the organisation, feel more equipped to deal with future change initiatives, and hopefully maintain their well-being through what could be a stressful time (McHugh, 1997; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). However, Chawla and Kelloway (2004) go on to say that the participation must instil a perception of fairness and that it is the genuine desire for management to use the ideas put forward by employees. For the employees to feel as though their contributions are valid it is suggested that they must see results (McHugh, 1997). What McHugh (1997) goes on to suggest, supported by Noblet and Rodwell (2010), is that the organisations should foster a culture of ownership for decisions made where employees can have a level of control that enables them to be a part of and achieve meaningful improvements, not only in themselves and their well-being but also for the organisation. If continuous change is to play a role in the future success or failure of organisations, then adopting a culture that is equipped to cope with stress may ensure a greater ratio of successes to failures.

At a first glance all of the suggestions may appear to be costly to the organisation and inhibitory to the pace of the change. However, how fair is it to expect employees to deal with the stressors of change implemented by management when management are leaving staff in a vulnerable position during this time? (McHugh,1997). It is likely that the employees' inability to cope will be a greater impediment to the success of the change rather than the processes and goals that are to be met. It therefore becomes imperative that managers become more active players in the well-being of employees through organisational change as it is argued that without employee support and well-being through this time, the change is unlikely to be successful (McHugh, 1997; Kiefer, 2002; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to therefore determine whether SMIs will positively affect the outcome of a change process from the perception of the managers.

This study will attempt to link the literature that claims that employee support and participation is key during times of organisational change in order for the outcomes to be met (McHugh, 1997; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004), and that, employee resistance is common

during times of change due the situation appearing too stressful (Bryd, 2009; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Kiefer, 2010). This appraisal of the situation is often due to a lack of understanding or certainty caused by the way the process is managed. Change is known to cause stress due to factors such as uncertainty, pressure, lack of involvement, inaccurate assessments of the change, and the perception that the employees do not possess the necessary skills to achieve what is required of them (Kiefer, 2010, Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). These factors also cause stress in 'normal' organisational settings (Kiefer, 2010; Byrd, 2009; Yu, 2009; Robinson & Griffiths, 2005; McHugh & Brennan, 1994; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). The literature review above suggests also that trust, open communication, and consistent management displays from the direct manager, are most likely to reduce stress during times of change (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Chawla and Kelloway, 2004; Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009). Poor communication and a lack of trust cause resistance (Cutcher, 2009). Therefore it seems there is reason to manage employees' stress during times of change in order for the change to be more successful. By reducing the levels of stress during times of change with the recommended primary and secondary level interventions, managers should see change initiatives succeed more often and see the well-being of their employees maintained to a greater extent than if no SMI were implemented.

Essentially, given all the above research covering the management of stress literature and also change-management literature, a research question has been formulated to better understand how elements of both stress and change management are used in organisational settings. This research therefore aims to investigate the following: do managers believe that SMIs positively affect change outcomes? From the stress management literature we can see that, among other things, uncertainty and poor management cause stress. It is recommended that a mix of primary and secondary interventions are used to reduce stress in the workplace. From the literature on change management it is apparent that change causes uncertainty for many employees and if the change is not managed well it is likely to increase both uncertainty and resistance. The purpose of this research is therefore to uncover whether managers agree with the specific stressors that are evident in the change literature and whether they, as managers, address stress during times of change. The methodology section that follows outlines how the researcher went about answering this research question.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Introduction

The aim of the research is to investigate whether SMIs may help ensure a successful outcome in organisational change from the point of view of managers. By understanding the perceptions of managers who have played a significant role in a recent organisational change initiative it is hoped to find out what types of stress they experienced, if there were any stress management interventions in place, and whether in their expert opinions, they felt that stress management would have helped address issues in the change process.

It is the aim to test the assumptions that stress has a direct negative effect on the successful outcome of change initiatives and that reducing stress enhances the success of change efforts. For this reason it is necessary to hear what managers who have been through a change process have to offer this area of existing research. Currently there is research into stress negatively affecting the transitions that occur during change, however there is limited evidence to support what affect stress has on the outcomes. This research will offer an insight into whether stress, or its reduction, affect managers' perceptions of change success. The information collected may influence the way a change agent (whether they are in management or as a consultant) would guide employees through change by including stress management on the agenda.

Methodological Approach

Qualitative Research Paradigm

A qualitative approach is best suited for this research due to the author's desire to gain a greater understanding of the perceptions from managers about stress management during times of change and whether it affects the outcomes. To say that someone is conducting qualitative research, however, doesn't offer much clarity as qualitative research covers a wide, and sometimes conflicting array of activities (Silverman, 2006). As Peter Grahame (cited in Silverman, 2006) suggested, the idea that qualitative research is not quantitative is true but it is also very uninformative, to define qualitative research we need more than a negative definition.

> "Qualitative data are sexy. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.1).

Qualitative data, usually collected in the form of words, generally aims to discover the essence of people and situations (Berg, 1989, cited in Miles & Huberman,1994; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). These words can be based on observations or interviews and the collection of the data is typically carried out in a close proximity to a local environment for a sustained length of time (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research has a strong focus on the naturally occurring, in a setting that is as close to 'normal' as possible in order for the researcher to observe what 'real life' is like for the participants (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative investigations tend to focus more in depth on a selected few cases (Patton, 2002). The influences that surround these cases are not usually dismissed; they are most commonly taken into account as an essential part of the analysis. It gives the researcher the ability to observe non-obvious events that may be quite complex in nature and when collecting "perceptions, assumptions, prejudgements, and presuppositions" (van Manen, 1977 cited in Miles and Huberman, 1994), the researcher is then able to apply these findings to the social environment around them. It is for this reason that qualitative research is best suited to explore and observe lived experiences and it is best suited for highlighting meanings that people place on certain elements of their lives (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008).

A basic differentiation between quantitative and qualitative analysis is that quantitative analysis examines data that is in the form of numbers and qualitative analysis examines data that is narrative (Easterby-Smith et al.,1991, cited in Hyde, 2000). The logic for each approach is unique because the purpose of the research is different (Patton, 2002; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). It has been argued that quantitative is more "analytically astute" (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008, p.33) and has, in the US, become the 'norm' for many researchers (Silverman, 2006). According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998) the academic resistances to qualitative research is just an example of the "politics embedded in this field of discourse" (p.7). They go on to mention that many others say that traditionally qualitative research was termed unscientific, entirely personal and filled with bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Qualitative researchers argue that through their methods they are able to get closer

to the subjects' perspective, are able to confront the constraints of the everyday world, and can examine a reality out there that is to be studied, and embed their results in it (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Goulding, 2002). However according to Hyde (2000) "many social scientists would now subscribe to the view that qualitative and quantitative methodologies can both lead to valid research findings in their own right" (p.48). Becker (1986) supports this notion by saying "both qualitative and quantitative practitioners think they know something about society worth telling to others, and they use a variety of forms to communicate their ideas and findings" (p.122 cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).The choice of methodology should be based on what will best answer the research question so neither should be viewed as right or wrong, simply which is the best fit to uncover the desired outcome (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Silverman and Marvasti (2008) go on to say that selecting qualitative methodology could simply be a practical matter of deciding what works best. In this case, by using a qualitative approach the researcher is able to use the narrative data to expand and generalise theories, not establish a frequency which is likely in quantitative research (Hyde, 2000) to answer the research questions proposed.

Qualitative studies typically assume an inductive approach, starting off with observations seeking to uncover generalisations about the subject (Hyde, 2000).Generally this is done through exploratory and open-ended questions. This research aimed to explore the perceptions of managers to best understand the role that stress played in the success of their change management outcomes and whether the management of stress positively affects the change outcomes. Open ended questions were written to best collect the qualitative data. The process of the data collection was also inductive as the data that was first collected influenced the way in which the subsequent data was collected (also see Grounded theory section).

Interpretive Research

Dilthey's 1911/1917 thesis that human nature could not be analysed through methods of natural or physical science was defining in the history of interpretive research (cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) add to this by saying that if human nature could be represented by text in research, then how does one analyse this text? Many fields

in research are adopting an interpretive style of research because people are never separate from their surroundings or cultural background. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) state that the beliefs that we obtain as a result of experiences and environment influences how a researcher views the world and how they act in it and ultimately all research is interpretive, guided by a set of beliefs. Not only do these beliefs influence the researcher but also the phenomena being researched.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) "interpretation comes via the understanding of group actions and interactions" (p.8) and meanings are associated to the findings by the researcher. It is acknowledged that this methodology does not lead to "covering laws" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.8) but gives the researcher the ability to grasp a practical understanding of people's actions and interactions (Goulding, 2002). There is no one interpretive truth, however unlike other methodologies interpretive research allows the researcher to take into consideration the context, environment, behaviour, and relational aspects of the phenomena in question (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Goulding, 2002). Qualitative research is creative and interpretive, the researcher does not simply collect the data and develop a logical list of findings, qualitative interpretations are constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). It is suggested by Goulding (2002) that due to the different construct and nature of people's culture it is important for the interpretive researcher to construct the analysis in reference to the respondent's "cultural orientation" (p.52). Goulding (2002) goes on to say that different cultures use different languages, words, physical and mental boundaries, gestures, and attitudes all of which influence "different interpretations of reality and thought" (p.52). For this reason it is recommended that when conducting interpretive research that as many factors as possible are considered and the researcher has strong cultural sensitivity (Goulding, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Much interpretation is happening during the interview itself (see interview section) as it is a skill of the researcher to pick up on comments made during conversation based on pre-understandings of the culture, context, and participant. However, a full interpretation is not reached until the interview is complete and the findings have been analysed.

Some interpretive researchers claim that there is no absolute fact of matter in regards to human behaviour and as a result struggle to give criteria for good qualitative research (Miles

& Huberman, 1994). They simply acknowledge that we cannot claim that all research is perfectly good but to try not to get it majorly wrong. Interpretive research is said to give a reasonable view on what happened in any given situation, even what is believed or interpreted (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Grounded Theory

Elements of grounded theory will be used to develop and build on emerging themes from the interviews. Although elements of grounded theory will be utilised, there is no attempt to generate a theory from this research, more importantly the aim is to produce relevant and illuminating findings to aid managers in dealing with issues of stress in the workplace during times of major change.

Elements from grounded theory have been chosen to aid the researcher in moving beyond description to see what findings could be readily applicable and able to be handed back to the interviewed managers. Grounded theory aims to "penetrate the phenomena" (Goulding, 2002, p.36) and allows the researcher to exercise an interpretive style of research as suggested above. Schwandt (1994) suggests that through grounded theory the researcher is able to engage in symbolic interactions and is expected "to interpret actions, transcend rich description...which incorporates concepts of 'self, language, social setting and social object" (cited in Goulding, 2002, p. 38). From a methodological approach the researcher is required to enter the worlds of the participants, incorporate an interpretive view of the environment and interactions that occur in order to gain understandings of the subject. What is constructed from that should be presented in such a way that the end user of the research should be able to vividly experience with detail the phenomena being studied (Goulding, 2002). Again, it must be stressed that this research will not fully exhaust a complete grounded theory approach however due to the continually evolving nature of business and the active role of the managers in question the inductive nature of grounded theory allows the researcher to ground the theory in reality and show the emphasis on change and the active role of the participants (Glaser, 1992).

The iterative nature of this analysis, which is particularly evident in grounded theory (Bryman & Bell, 2003), may allow insights to be found with limited interference from the

researcher (Morse & Richards, 2007). It is best suited to this study because “continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p.273 cited in Morse & Richards, 2007 p. 60) allows comparisons between the interview questions and data to be made resulting in continuous adaptations for future interviews.

Grounded theory allows the interviewees to tell their story (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Morse & Richards, 2007) and is therefore appropriate for this project.

Method

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted based around seven to nine open ended questions and were estimated to take approximately one hour. The interviewees were advised of this before commencement, and permission to audiotape the interview was sought and obtained. All interviewees were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the participants to tell of their experiences without too much constraint from the interviewer. A more participant-driven conversation occurred and the interviewer was then able to follow up on topics of interest to the participant, gaining their view on the issue. This flexibility meant that the perspective of the participant could be explored, and gave the interviewer the structure required for coding and analysis later on (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Allowing the managers to share their perceptions in the area of stress management through change aided the researcher in gaining an understanding about what was happening inside the organisation not just what is suggested in theory. In having some structure to the interview questions the researcher was able to use the predetermined thematic coding system successfully (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews have been chosen due to the interviewees being managers and the methodological approach having elements of grounded theory. The subject guides of the semi-structured interview ensured the researcher was able to show the managers a short outline of the topics that were covered, what purpose the research served, and how they might find the research useful. The nature of semi-structured interviews meant that a themed summary could be sent as opposed to constructed questions which often lead to predetermined answers. If answers have already been constructed in the minds of the participants it is difficult for the researcher to explore new and interesting topics raised during the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Morse & Richards, 2007). Qualitative researchers

are often interested in not only what is said but also what is not said, reactions to questions can sometimes expose interesting findings (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

It is most common in grounded theory to use semi-structured interviews because "it has the potential to generate rich and detailed accounts of the individual's experience" (Goulding, 2002, p.59). Due to the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews it is possible for previously unthought-of ideas or themes to arise stimulating new questions that can be presented to future participants (Goudling, 2002). This process allows the researcher to integrate interpretation, participant interaction in the environment, and an inductive approach to produce feasible results that may be of benefit to management practice in the area of stress and change management.

Research Questions

Statement of Research Questions

- How is change managed in the workplace?
- Who is involved with the change?
- What role does management play in the change process?
- What role does stress play during times of major change
- How, and to what extent do organisations use stress management interventions?
- Do managers perceive that SMIs affect the outcome of major change?

Statement of Initial Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about recent major change that you were responsible for?
2. How successful was the change? How do you know?
3. Who else was involved in this change and in what way?
4. Can you tell me about the communications involved in executing the change?
5. Can you explain your role in the change process?
6. Can you tell me about the reaction to the change from the people around you?
7. What role did stress play in the change process?
8. Were there any stress management techniques or interventions used during this change?
9. Can you describe them?

10. How effective were they in reducing stress (If no SMI was identified then, if faced with a stressful situation, how was it dealt with?)
11. What, if any effect, did the SMI have on the change?
12. Can you give me some more detail on how you specifically managed certain aspects of the change? (If no, do you think that an SMI would have made a difference to the outcome?)
13. Was the organisation's environment analysed before any objectives were set or any SMI was planned? (If no, how relevant do you think the environment is when implementing SMIs?)
14. Can you explain if there was any reluctance from you as a manager to implement an SMI for any reason?
15. What do you think is necessary for long-term change to be sustainable?

Statement of Additional Interview Questions

- Do you think it is the responsibility of the employee or the employer to manage stress in the workplace?
- What is your opinion on the effectiveness of consultants?
- How effective are Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) in your opinion?
- What is the burnout rate in your organisation?
- Do you think that good management is the reason for a successful or unsuccessful outcome of the change?
- Can you tell me more about unsuccessful change and why you believe it was unsuccessful?
- Can you tell me what you think about positive stress?

The questions from the interviews are listed above and were altered slightly according to the participant, the participant's previous answers, and participant's industry. Questions one through to six are designed to gain insight into the way change is managed in organisations. Question seven was designed specifically to understand what role stress played in the change process. This question was designed to gauge the awareness that managers had of stress in their workplace. Questions eight to eleven were designed to better understand managers' usage of SMIs, whether they were deemed to be effective, and how these managers dealt to stress if a formal SMI was not adopted. Question twelve stemmed directly

from the literature, stating that an organisation's culture should factor into the planning process of a SMI. Questions thirteen through to fifteen were designed to reveal the influence that the managers had over the change process and what specific techniques they adopted within their organisation.

Interesting or previously un-thought-of points raised in initial interviews were asked as additional questions in following interviews. This was to see if there was consensus among other managers to determine whether the points were worth further consideration. An initial interviewee raised strong points about Government departments, as a result of this response a manager from a Government department was approached and interviewed to support or challenge the statements made.

Research Process

Sampling Decisions

Qualitative sampling methods allow the researcher to nest data in context and gather in-depth information; this is why only a small sample of cases are chosen (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative samples tend to be purposeful rather than random, this is because social processes tend to have a logic and coherence that random sampling may miss; random sampling can make for uninterpretable data. Random sampling can also mean that the cases chosen are biased due to the small number of cases in any one qualitative sample pool. It is for this reason that other forms of sampling methods are used for qualitative research. Much of qualitative sampling is theory-driven and often begins once the fieldwork has begun. Initial choices potentially lead you to similar and / or dissimilar cases to ensure that the collected information is nested in context as mentioned above. When research outcomes are finally produced it is then more appropriate to say that information gathered is not totally relevant to all managers, for example, but that the research will add to existing or new theories that management may choose to implement.

The sampling methods chosen for this research are consistent with the above theory. A small number of cases have been chosen and they have been selected through an on-going process guided by the findings from previous cases. The seven specific cases were not only chosen to challenge the current literature but also to nest gathered data in context. By

looking at multiple cases it adds confidence to findings and by using contrasting or similar case studies it helps to better understand the 'how', 'where', and the 'why' (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The cases were chosen based on a combination of snowball sampling, criterion, and theoretical sampling; initially three cases were chosen and a further four were chosen after the commencement of the first few interviews. Snowball sampling is designed to gather information rich data with key informants in the area chosen (Patton, 2002). It begins by asking suggestions of cases from relevant people in the area, according to Patton (2002) it is common that similar names will come up more than once. Once the pool of potential samples gets bigger the cases can be chosen based on criteria outlined by the researcher. The point of criterion sampling is to be sure that cases are likely to be information rich and will reveal data that supports or contradicts current literature.

From speaking with business networks and university lecturers in the area of stress and change management the researcher was able to gather a pool of potential participants. The criteria used for choosing the cases from that pool were simply at least five years management of employees during a time of change in the last five years. After confirming this, the participants were also asked whether they knew anyone else with relevant experience that would be interested in participating. From that further participants were confirmed.

Six cases were originally decided on as the researcher felt it would give sufficient confidence that any analytical generalisations would be relevant. The data collected was reasonably complex and rich in information therefore six 1 – 1.5 hour interviews were firstly regarded as satisfactory (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994) multiple cases require the researcher to have a clear idea about which cases to include and which to not. It is for this reason that once interview number two had been completed further cases were arranged. Two new cases were chosen based on information that had come from interview number one and two, they mentioned conflicting information about Government departments and the researcher felt it was relevant to add in a seventh case study based around management in such departments. As the research progressed it became apparent

that males and females were also giving disparate information, for this reason the researcher felt it was necessary to interview one more female to balance out the heavily male sample to test the initial information. Going deliberately negative or atypical in sampling choices is healthy because it helps to clarify your concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After conducting interview one and two certain themes began to emerge and it was clear that some of the themes would require further confirmation. This is where theoretical sampling came into play for the selection of further cases. Paton (2002) mentions that theoretical sampling permits refinement of concepts that are emerging and allows variation can be sampled. It enables the researcher to constantly analyse and compare the data collected to then pick cases that will contradict or support the concepts found from initial research. According to Goulding (2002) the researcher that uses theoretical sampling cannot know in advance what to sample for and where to find them as the information will lead them, cases are chosen when they are needed. As the concepts are developed further individuals may need to be incorporated to strengthen the findings.

Interview process / Data collection

Participants

The participants were chosen based on criteria set out to ensure that they could offer relevant insights into the research topic of stress management through times of change. The pool of participants changed during the process due to new insights that required new participants to be selected and due to the cancellation of some other participants.

They were all managers of some description and have managed more than ten employees through a significant change. The selection criteria outlined that the interviewee must be a manager, have experience as a manager for more than five years, are managing more than ten employees currently, and be able to identify a significant change event that they were responsible for leading employees through. All managers met all criteria.

Of the final seven participants four were male and three were female, six of the seven were above 40 years old but all had significant work experience in their current area of management. Four out of the seven had been to university and all four had studied in the

specialised area they were in currently. Of the three that hadn't been to university one had trained in the Army and became specialised in his area through workplace training. The last two started in administration roles and moved their way up into their current positions.
The managers were from a variety of different industries. This varied selection was purposeful to gain insight into a wide range of industry happenings. The industries included one manager from the finance sector, a Health and Safety manager for an engineering firm, an HR manager in the hospitality and hotel industry, an HR consultant in the security industry, an Auckland Regional Council manager, a System and Administration manager at a supermarket, and a General Manager from a distributing company.

Six of the seven managers are working on a full time basis and one is working at the organisation he manages three days a week. Of the seven participants, three are leading other managers and three are have direct control only over their immediate employees, the seventh participant is in the organisation as a consultant and is working on a partnership basis. Only one of the seven owns the business they are currently working in. Five of the seven managers work in a large organisation (and two work in small businesses. Due to no agreed definition by numbers of a what a small or large business in New Zealand is these statements have been based on Australian definitions where a small business is 6-9 employees, medium is 20-200 employees, and Large is 200 plus (Massey, 2005). Four of the seven organisations were locally based and three were international wide organisations. Three of the seven organisations were part of a chain of organisations and four were stand alone.

All seven managers were able to recall and explain current and past change examples that were relevant to the research. Their examples ranged from restricting and having to dismiss employees, to bringing in new managers, to implementing new process and policies, and even merging numerous organisations together.

The data was collected based on a semi-structured interview framework where the researcher has a list of open ended questions with bullet points underneath outlined what points are required to be discussed. The interview was recorded on a Digital Voice Recorder with the permission of the participant. The interview was transcribed by the researcher

straight after the interview and before the commencement of the next. Each interview was analysed after transcription to identify any main concepts that arose and the next set of questions were re-evaluated before the commencement of the next interview.

Data Validity

Bias Clarification

"Qualitative analyses can be evocative, illuminating, masterful – and wrong" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.262). The story told may not always reflect the data collected, most often this is due to its interpretative nature. In some cases the ideas of the case respondents do not match that of the researcher's final conclusions. With qualitative research there is no single reality to get right however it is the role of the researcher to deliver reasonable conclusions that both line up with the thoughts of the case respondents, previous literature and produce results that are collected from a sample as representative as possible.

As much time was spent with the interviewees as possible to ensure the most accurate data was recorded, most if not all issues were clarified, and the managers had the opportunity to give as much information as possible. Through the use of grounded theory the researcher was able to source managers from an industry that was suggested in a previous interview to clarify as much bias as possible. A consultant was chosen to be part of the study to see that both sides of an argument were able to be covered.

One issue, suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), is that the researcher works alone in the field. It is difficult to be sure of the outcomes stated because we cannot see how the researcher went from hundreds of pages of field notes to the conclusions made. There is much reliance on the individual's ability to process and code the data. To avoid this particular problem the researcher worked closely with two colleagues who, once the data was coded, also went through and briefly coded the data. They too produced similar themes that had emerged from the original researcher's work confirming what was initially recorded.

To ensure that the identified themes were consistent with what the managers were saying, feedback was requested from a few managers to make sure they agreed with the statements being made. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that "one of the most logical sources of

corroboration is the people you have talked to" (p.275). The best person to judge the findings is the informants themselves, in this case the managers. This feedback processes occurred during the data collection period and during the writing up of the findings.

The transcribing process was completed by the researcher, this gave the researcher numerous opportunities to go over the data and be clear about what was being said and who it was being said by. The data was transcribed word for word.

Data Analysis

The most appropriate way to analyse this data is to use an open coding system with thematic analysis. Content analysis was considered, however, for this type of data where it hasn't been analysed before it is suggested by Bryman and Bell (2003) that, although the two types are similar, thematic analysis will help to identify the connections and links from the data. An open coding system is defined by Bryman and Bell (2003) as "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data" (p.586). Although this type of coding is an element taken from the Grounded Theory approach, it is appropriate for this data as the desired outcome is to have categories of themes that can then be further analysed to determine the specific problems of the organisation in question.

The suggested method for this type of analysis in Bryman and Bell (2003) is broken down into stages that allow the researcher to reduce large amounts of information into themes, analyse the themes and the connections between them, and as a result interpret the data to show any significant findings. Reading through the data at least twice allows the researcher to gain an understanding about possible themes that are occurring. All data should be coded. It is then possible to identify the many themes that have emerged. Bryman and Bell (2003) suggest that there are three to four levels of coding in order to arrive at a final group of themes. Level one is a basic one-way or the other, e.g. like or dislike, positive or negative, level two is about having an awareness of not only what is said but the types of language used and the issues raised. Level three gives the researcher broad analytical themes in a development from the level two themes. The outcome from further analysis at a fourth level is to gain general concepts from the data and observe and analyse the connections between the themes. From there the themes can be used to relate back to emerging themes from the literature and/or develop hypothesis for the research. The analysis of the findings is essential and the process is not completed until the themes identified have been made

sense of through the analytical process. This may be aided by a cut and paste approach suggested by a student named Angharad in Bryman and Bell (2003, p.597) where by using a Word document she was able to group all of the themes together on a separate page and then do the analysis from there.

“Coding is starting point for most forms of qualitative data analysis” (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p. 593).

This type of coding is best suited to the data given because of the nature of the responses; in most cases one idea is given per respondent. Although there are a few narrative-like answers the respondents most often respond with one main theme. Open ended questions are difficult to quantify and therefore presenting the validity of the answers is reasonably complex. Open coding and thematic analysis ensure that the researcher ends up with themes that can be placed into a matrix grid whereby the number of times the themes appear can be recorded as figures. This case has many similar themes mentioned in differing ways, narrowing the data down into themes and then grouping them together ensures all similar ideas are grouped and analysed together but also gives the ability to quantify the themes if necessary. If the responses are opinions, answers to open-ended questions, or narrative in nature then open coding and thematic analysis is suggested (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

The method that has been chosen to analyse this data follows very closely the suggestions made by Bryman and Bell (2003) in their steps for coding. Below is a detailed outline of the steps taken to reach conclusions from this specific data.

Each participant was given a corresponding number that firstly ensured confidentiality and secondly meant coding was easy as the number could be written next to the theme headings.

1. The information was read through without too many predetermined ideas and then read through it again to get an idea about the first level of themes that were emerging. At this point the researcher had heard the information during the interview and typed the transcripts. The major emerging themes were written in pencil on the outer most margins of the paper as an initial grouping.
2. On the third reading each of the themes were summarised by a key word as the next level of coding. Many of the key words were the same as the researcher had a

general idea about what the emerging themes were. Some information did not fit exactly into current theme summaries so new categories were created.

3. Once each section had been summarised the respondent number and the second level theme were written on separate post-it notes in preparation for grouping. Similar themes were placed in different piles, some were obvious e.g. stress and pressure, others weren't. Once satisfied with groups, a theme was given as a main heading for this selection of notes.
4. Taking each pile in turn a word/excel document was opened to cut and paste the data. On that page a table with the headings Respondent Number, Information, and Code was created. This was similar to a content analysis Coding Schedule. The table created helped to group the information with the corresponding respondent number, relevant information, and the thematic code that was been assigned to it.
5. Once the information was grouped it was easier to see the connections between the information in each of the groups and again between the themes. By putting them into groups it was easier to reduce a large number of themes down under the umbrella terms making it easier for analysis. The groups with the larger number of post-it notes are the main themes that were looked at first.

The connections were noted between answers within the group and the "Questions from the Literature" table meant the researcher was able to answer the literature statements with the data collected.

Summary

In summary, the main aim of this research was to determine whether managers believed that SMIs had a positive effect on change outcomes or not. This data was collected through a qualitative paradigm to best uncover exactly what stress management the managers were practicing in as close to a 'normal' environment as possible. Elements of grounded theory were adopted to build on emerging themes that arose from the previous manager's interview. There is no attempt to produce a theory from this research; it is more the aim to produce illuminating findings to aid managers in dealing with issues of workplace stress during times of change.

In total seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers across a wide variety of industries and organisational size. A mostly participant-driven conversation occurred allowing the interviewer to invite further conversation around interesting or unexpected findings.

An open coding system was used in conjunction with thematic analysis. As a result of this style of coding major themes became obvious and the author was more easily able to group relevant findings.

What follows below is a summary of the questions used in the interview process. The table format clearly displays where in the literature the questions were sourced from. The questions were designed to eliminate gaps in the literature and/or confirm or deny any statements made by other authors.

Questions Sourced from the Literature:

Questions for Managers:	Literature States:	References
1. **Can you tell me about a recent, major change that you were responsible for?**	In order to remain competitive in an ever-changing market a manager must be willing to spend considerable amounts of energy and resources in supporting change initiatives as well as increasing the likelihood that the people will move through the changes successfully. Drucker (1999) believes that if an organisation doesn't participate in the necessary changes to meet various consumer demands, then the organisation may not survive, change has now become something to expect as opposed to something that can be avoided. It is for this reason that leaders may choose to be proactive in preparing employees for what is about to occur.	(Drucker, 1999; Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009)
2. **How successful was the change? How was it measured?**	The information received is intended to be specific to the organisation. The success of the change is suggested to be measured against these specific objectives.	
3. **Who else was involved in this change and in what way?**	The need to build an acceptance of change could not be done without the full support of senior management and significant leaders, without them culture change is impossible. If acceptance of change is	(King & Wright, 2007; Randall & Procter, 2008; Mueller, 2009; Westover, 2010;

	required then employee support is essential because they are the ones that are to maintain and uphold any changes made. Without the support of the employees the change may not go as originally planned or may not even happen at all.	Karsten, Keulen, Kroeze, & Peters, 2008; Konorti, 2008; Hawkins, 2009)
4. Can you tell me about the communications involved in executing the change?	Schweiger & DeNisi (1991) showed that when a message is communicated with a wide audience (i.e. newsletters, emails, large group meetings) it is likely for employees to experience a great increase in stress and decrease in satisfaction. It's important to note that spending time and resources on generally informing employees across the organisation would enable change agents to reach a large audience with reasonably minimal effort. In contrast engaging and enabling activities will affect a much smaller group with a specific, targeted message resulting in a more personal and effective communication of the message. Management may underestimate the impact of change on employees. When little time is spent explaining the change to the employees it may result in low levels of effective commitment towards the change.	(Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991 cited in Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007; Sande, 2009)
5. Can you explain	Trust, communication, and leadership	(McHugh, 1997;

your role in the change process?	behaviour are three elements that are significant contributors to the successful leadership of employees through change. Management arguably play the most important role in the change process, by acknowledging the need for stress management interventions through times of change they are regarding highly employees' well-being as well as the organisations.	(Cassar & Bezzina, 2005)
6. Can you tell me about the reactions to the change from the people around you?	Avoidance and resistance are common reactions to change processes. According to Kahn and Byosiere (1992, cited in Byrd, 2009) many individuals in an organisational setting tend to associate job stress with negative outcomes and find withdrawal to be the best way of coping. Many change initiatives have failed in the past due to the negative assessments made by employees as they find ways to resist the change in some way. According to Chawla and Kelloway (2004) resistance to change may be associated to a lack of readiness for change and hence the desire to withdrawal from seems like a situation too stressful to face. "The underlying assumption is that people fear change in general" (Kiefer, 2010, p. 41) and this is one reason for resistance. In doing this it prevents them from understanding the reasons for change,	(Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; Kahn and Byosiere (1992, cited in Byrd, 2009; Bryd, 2009; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Kiefer, 2010)

	the positive outcomes it may bring, and how they as individuals can benefit from the change. Resistance to change can endure and manifest for a long time and often the commitment required isn't strengthened over time. The reasons suggested for why employees resist change are similar to those that are identified to cause stress in a 'normal' organisational setting. Such examples as: loss of value, a lack of understanding, different assessment of the change than those who are initiating it, and fear of not having the necessary skills, are suggested for causing stress during organisational change.	
7. What role did stress play in the change process?	Change initiatives managed poorly can cause employees and managers a considerable amount of stress. The detrimental effects of stress on employees can cost both them personally and the organisation. Recognising the complexity of stress caused during organisational change can be very challenging as employees react in different ways at different stages of the process. Implementing change, bearing in mind change causes uncertainty and often stress, requires full support from employees and other stakeholders involved.	(Cutcher, 2009; Byrd, 2009).

8. Where there any specific stress management techniques or interventions used during this change? Can you describe them?	Often change is thrust upon employees without much warning and they are expected to continue with consistent outputs without hesitation or complaint. In this case, and many others like it, managers stand accused of putting the needs of the organisation before that of the employees. For this reason it is highly likely that the whole change process will be stressful for employees. Management need to consider the stress factor during times of change and turbulence, it must receive a place on the change management agenda. No empirical examples were found to link SMIs during a change management initiative or programme.	(McHugh, 1997;Byrd, 2009)
9. How effective were they in reducing stress?	It is clear from the studies that the most effective SMIs evaluated the problems and implemented an intervention that was best suited to the environment and the individuals involved. Consistent with prior research, it appears as though secondary interventions are the most effective. Other ideas are to combine both primary and secondary interventions if the outcome is to be effective in decreasing stress. Le Fevre (et al., 2006) suggests that "secondary approaches be employed prior to the introduction of primary methodologies within a client organisation" (p.547). Difficulty of measurement of SMI	(Elo, Ervasti, Kuosma, & Mattila, 2008; van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; van der Klink, et al.,2001; Le Fevre, 2001)

	effectiveness has haunted this area of research and many reviews are finding only small improvements in clarity and accuracy of outcome measurables. Extensive variation on outcome measures, a relatively low and unreliable presence of control groups and sound follow ups, and significant differences between organisations and studies makes it almost impossible to determine which type of intervention is most effective. The outcomes from the SMI may more accurately be determined as successful when compared to the organisation's specific objectives.	
10. What, if any effect, did the SMI have on the change?	(Specific to each manager)	
11. Can you give me some more detail on how you managed certain aspects of the change?	(Specific to each manager)	
12. Was the organisation's environment analysed before any objectives were set or any SMI was planned?	It is not the SMI that is deemed to be effective or ineffective but more importantly the way it is implemented and (Elo, et al., 2008; Le Fevre et al., 2006) whether or not the environment has been evaluated properly to highlight the need for this type of intervention. A combination of	(Elo, et al., 2008; Le Fevre et al., 2006; Conger & Kanungo, 1987)

	both secondary and primary interventions may help to evaluate the organisation's current environment as well as address the needs of the individuals. Tailoring the SMI to the organisation's environment and not the other way around may be a way of avoiding unsuccessful outcomes. According to Conger & Kanungo (1987) there is a high need for environmental awareness when the desire is to change the status quo.	
13. Was there a unified goal among the teams for the SMI outcome?	According to van der Hek and Plomp (1997) the goal should be clear and agreed upon prior to the implementation and should be proven once the implementation process has taken place.	(van der Hek and Plomp, 1997).
14. Can you explain if there any reluctance from you as a manager to implement an SMI for any reason?	If the environment and the conditions are a determining factor behind successful implementation of SMIs then why are the primary level interventions having limited or no effect on reducing stress in the workplace? Firstly, managers may often be reluctant to enter into such an undertaking due to the amount of resources required and the level of disruption to employees. Successful implementation requires full management support and has significant impact on the whole organisation. Secondly, implementing such a change, bearing in mind change causes uncertainty and often stress, requires full support from	(van der Klink, et al., 2001; van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; Bunn, et al., 2007; Hampel, et al., 2007)

	employees and other stakeholders involved.	
Can you tell me about how much participation was required / allowed of the employees in any decisions made?	If leaders are able to make sure that employees feel a part of the solution they are more likely to support and accept the change. Without their support the change initiative may not go to plan. Bass (1990) explains that managers who are needing to make changes must be prepared to give their subordinates justification and enough stability through a turbulent time that allows them to accept the paradox and find the balance between the "denial and acceptance of reality" (Bass, 1990, p.289).	(Konorti, 2008; Bass, 1990)
15. What do you think is necessary for long-term change to be sustainable?	If the source of stress is identified as the relationship between the individual and the environment then surely both need to be addressed in order to see long-term, effective change? Each organisation has specific risks and issues that may not respond to a "blanket-approach" solution for reducing stress levels.	Gap in the research that the researcher is hoping to address.

It must be noted that these questions were grouped and cut down for the final interviews (a copy of the questions can be viewed in appendix number one. This expanded version of the questions allows the researcher to explain each element of the literature that the questions were sourced from. For the interview process bullet points were made under each final question to ensure that no points in the cut down version were missed from this expanded list.

Chapter Five: Findings

The structure of this section follows that of the interview format used. Some of the quotes have been used to support more than one idea. It is for this reason that a select few quotes have been used under more than one section as interviewees often raised relevant points during discussions raised by other questions.

All direct quotes are in italics within open quotation marks. In some cases, portions of the text have been removed to reduce the provided data to relevant information only. Where portions of text have been removed ellipses (...) are used. Quotes are identified by numbers which correlate to the interviewee in question. Where an identifying reference has been used by the interviewee, a name is replaced by [name] in the text and an organisation's name has been replaced by [organisation name]. In a few examples the quotes are out of context as standalone information, in these cases leading questions or additional text is added in to support the quote. Brackets have been placed around the additional text [...].

In most cases the main theme of the quote has been identified and written after the managers' identification number. These themes are placed in brackets (...) and are to help both the author and the reader identify and group the findings into relevant themes.

Organisational Change

According to Drucker (1999) if an organisation doesn't participate in the necessary changes to meet various consumer demands then the organisation may not survive, change has now become something to expect. Much of what the respondents said seemed to be reminiscent of this statement above. Their thoughts on the necessity for change are illustrated by the quotes below.

"*Try to position your organisation to deal with change because that is the core of what most organisations do. Adopt and change and try to be one step ahead of the wolves before they catch up with you because you haven't done anything. Are things changing fast enough?*" [manager one] (Creating a change-accepting organisational culture)

"*...it started that everybody just ended up doing more work then, after a while, we figured out that we needed to add people and there was a lot of job change and content change*

over the last 6months and still evolving. We have made some fairly major changes" [manager seven] (Change initiated by the manager)

"... situations become radical like that. That also increases the acceptance for change, even if it's so uncomfortable to lose your job" [manager one] (Forced change)

The main themes that emerged from this discussion with the managers were; change imposed on the managers, change they initiated themselves, and the responsibility of the managers to create a change-accepting organisational culture. As illustrated in the quotes below the change they had involvement in was less stressful for the managers. The importance of involvement in the change process will be highlighted in the following sections. The rest of this section will continue to look at what the managers' main concerns were that arose from organisational change.

The following examples illustrate the stressors the managers were faced with as well as the stressors on their employees that they observed.

"I think stress at least in my case... when people start to decide things that they weren't involved in and deciding and have you reached you're used by date that can be a little bit stressful, and when you are uncertain about the support you have." [manager one] (Lack of involvement)

"...it is really stressful because the trouble is that it's not totally in my control, that is the thing that for all of us, even department managers, you always rely on someone else and that is where stress is because when you can do it yourself you know it's going to be done." [manager one] (Lack of control / involvement)

"That was stressful because you were constantly worried about stuff which you had absolutely no input in, no control over." [manager two] (Lack of control / involvement)

"*They keep on doing exactly the same thing over and over again in a way, shape or form, chucking unapt managers into managerial positions above staff who actually do a*

reasonable job in most cases. The staff aren't acknowledged, rewarded, they're not respected." [manager two] (Lack of involvement)

[The positive outcome of involvement] *"...and often if you take time out you can get that confirmation or buy in, look, I am here, someone wants me to reduce by 20 percent, what can I do? What would you do? This is my plan, tell me if you know better, usually people say well yes, if I had that role, that is what I would do also and then you can cooperate around it, rather than look like a smarty pants and just sort of as long as cover my own skin what do I care about my staff?"* [manager one] (Involvement)

Lack of involvement in the change process has, in these cases above, led the individuals to formulate their own ideas about the situation causing uncertainty. It appears that uncertainty is a prominent stressor in the minds of the managers as they are not always involved in the change process that they are expected to implement. In the last quote mentioned by manager one, they highlight the idea that inclusion in the change process often results in a buy-in approach from employees affected. Inclusion in the change process was mentioned by many of the managers as something their managers did not practice much but they tried to adhere to. In addition, manager one also identified that a lack of support whilst working through challenging times can also cause stress.

"...usually if people are stressed, it's often because the culture is not right and no one is supporting them." [manager one] (Lack of support)

Without the support of the employees the change initiative may not go to plan. Bass (1990) explains that managers who are needing to make changes must be prepared to give their subordinates justification and enough stability through a turbulent time that allows them to accept the paradox and find the balance between the "denial and acceptance of reality" (Bass, 1990, p.289). The responses from the managers illustrate what happens when employees are involved and the importance of their involvement but the managers also alluded to the negative outcomes when employees are not involved.

"...you should always try to talk to people and explain what you do and ideally have them more or less think that yes, that is good, I would have the same way. And often if you take time out you can get that confirmation or buy in." [manager one] (Involvement)

"...the basics were that you have to involve them, forget the process, include them and get the process working so all of the [theoretical] models got sidelined." [manager one] (Involvement)
"...they feel like they are in control and they are being appreciated." [manager one] (Involvement)

"...because we were firm in terms of our offer that we offered to the union and we stood collectively and we were all in it together to gut it out and to last as long as we needed to until we came to an agreement and in this case it was two weeks and we couldn't have found a better way to bring all of the management and the employees together." [manager three] (Involvement)

"*I came upon this as a result of attended the HR management prize giving on the project that had won the prize that year for HR involvement and it was a change management process, it was for chemical company and the employees had managed the change process, they had been given the task of internally managing that change process themselves and which automatically gave them buy in, gave them the decision had been made unfortunately from the top down as a result of an international decision, they're closing their NZ branch and so you know the employees then had from there had to sort it out and they were then the HR department said let's get to together and see what we can do, so internally they did a vocational assistance programme, they assisted them in CV development, they helped people in all sorts of programmes and assessments, build your process around employees."* [manager five] (Involvement)

"...it's never going to go away because any change is stressful but giving the employee a real role in that process gives them an opportunity of mitigating a lot of that stress." [manager five] (Involvement)

"[What do you think is necessary for long term change to be sustainable or successful*?*] *Clear understanding of the business purpose, unless people understand what we are trying to achieve and they can see what role they have in achieving that, I think that's the most important thing, including them and communicating with, and making them understand that if they make a mistake, they might make one mistake but it's got a chain reaction and it's the guy in the field out there who suffers the wroth of the customer. That would be communicating a clear purpose, making people understand, it's as much about the business as they can, and we try and take people to customers."* [manager seven] (Involvement)

"...people start to decide things that they weren't involved in when deciding and have you reached you're used by date that can be a little bit stressful, and when you are uncertain about the support you have." [manager one] (Lack of involvement)

"...you might get somewhere but they never listened to you and thought they knew best, you knew they were going to rotate round again before too long and in the mean time it was just whether you were going to be chucked out the door as a part of the [organisation name] *cut backs. That was stressful because you were constantly worried about stuff which you had absolutely no input in, no control over and the communication was there to tell you what was going on either."* [manager two] (Lack of involvement)

"The staff aren't acknowledged, rewarded, they're not respected." [manager two] (Lack of involvement)

It appears from the above quotes that the majority of the managers see the value in involving employees in the change process. The managers that choose not to involve the employees seemed to see a greater amount of resistance and caused higher levels of uncertainty.

Without the support of the employees during times of change it is unlikely that the change will have the desired outcomes (Cassar and Bezzina, 2005). Below is evidence that highlights the importance of having the right team of people to support the change. The first selection

of quotes outline benefits of having the support from staff, the second selection show the challenges that arise due to lack of staff support.

"...the key is to have positive people who enjoy what they are doing and feel as though they are growing in the roles and if you have that positive team then you can almost adjust to anything." [manager one] (Positive team – support)

"...you should always try to talk to people and explain what you do and ideally have them more or less think that yes, that is good, I would have the same way. And often if you take time out you can get that confirmation or buy in, look, I am here, someone wants me to reduce by 20 percent, what can I do? What would you do? This is my plan, tell me if you know better." [manager one] (Positive team – support)

"...*They weren't. They weren't briefed. He was just put in there really. Purely because we have a lot of staff in food and beverage that we don't believe hold the most value purely because they are not good performers. To us it didn't matter what they thought because there is a lot of change that needs to happen there*." [manager three] (Lack of support shown, therefore, reciprocated)

"[can you give me an example of unsuccessful change?] *... it was almost the opposite, it wasn't communicated well, the culture wasn't there in the business and it just operated differently, there was separate offices, people had their own agendas and there was no cohesion, where I guess there was cohesion here."* [manager seven] (Lack of support – no cohesion)It appears from the quotes above that when there is support for the staff or the manager shows concern for the staff it is then that the staff reciprocate that support. As manager one alludes to, when the employees feel as though they are a part of the process, as a manager, you are more likely to be able to make the necessary changes with the support of your employees.

It is not only the employees that require involvement during times of change; many of the managers were obligated to make the changes due to directives from above them giving them limited involvement in the change. Some managers mentioned that they actively

sought change and welcomed it; most managers recognised they were obligated to implement the changes as well as continue with existing daily expectations. According to Gilley, Gilley and McMillan (2009) it is the responsibility of the manager to support the change as they have direct influence on actions in the work environment that enable change. These quotes listed below show how the managers dealt with the changes they were expected to make (change imposed on them) and any changes that they initiated themselves. These themes of forced or imposed change are sub-themes that fall under the major theme of employee involvement.

"*...to get used to the idea of change. What can I change today? How can I make it more solid or sustainable? In some ways I feel that's what we are paid for – change. To make sure we don't fall behind and ideally that we are a little bit ahead*." [manager one] (Initiates change)

"...the other type of change is the one which you generate yourself and because with every job comes a responsibility to improve because that is what life is all about and that is why we are here to try to pass on something better we started with so to speak... it is way easier when you are the instigator of change rather than someone else." [manager one] (Initiates change)

"...the most common one [type of change] *is the one that is imposed on you. In particular if you are in a large corporation which I have been all my life. So someone says this is going to change and then you have it thrown to you to implement the change... Because occasionally you may not agree with the parameters of change why and how it should be done and you are told and that can cause some agony because if you don't believe it then how are you going to make it credible to those who you are responsible for.* [Manager one] (Imposed change)

"*...there is no option, this has to work. It's been expensive, and there is no one doing it now so it has to be sustained it has to work. In spite of the politicians and the game playing us plebs down in the streets are committed to making it work because it has to. We have obligations under all those acts that the organisation must meet irrespective of how damn difficult it is, we just have to do it.*" [manager four] (Imposed change)

"*...at that point in time, back when the original decision was made to split was when I agreed to join [organisation name] ... so in a couple of months that's when it all happened so I guess there was no who made the decision I guess [organisation name] agreed to do it. Probably there wasn't much choice*." [manager seven] (Imposed change)

"...back then [the change] *was seen as extra stuff, and you already had to worry about sales and GP and you had to worry about having enough staff"* [manager six] (Imposed change)
From these quotes it seems that change is seen to be necessary by the managers although they rarely are the ones who have the power to initiate the change. It is more common for the change to be imposed on the managers rather than they themselves look for ways to make change. Change imposed on someone can cause great levels of uncertainty due to the lack of control over the change process (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Kohler & Munz, 2006; Coffey, et al., 2009; Appelbaum, et al., 2007). As mentioned above, the managers are still responsible to manage their employees through this change and are expected to do this despite facing stressors themselves.

The Role of the Manager

The managers acknowledged that without clear and purposeful communication there would be limited cohesion between themselves and their employees. Communication from the manager was seen as pivotal in the change process especially when there was a lack of communication.

"*I think a few individuals knew what they thought they wanted me to do but it hadn't probably been communicated to the rest of the organisation and it certainly hadn't been sold to them, so that's why the first bit was so slow, all of a sudden I arrived and these people had no idea, what is he going to do, or what is he here to do? There were a few challenges."* [manager two] (Lack of communication – uncertainty)

"*...that was stressful because you were constantly worried about stuff which you had absolutely no input in, no control over and the communication wasn't there to tell you what was going on either."* [manager two] (Lack of communication – uncertainty)

"The thing is that we couldn't communicate with them because legally the ERA does not permit us to bargain or talk to them about what's going on. We were communicating through the union" [manager three] (Lack of communication)

"they [external consultants] seemed to have a very tight lipped minimalist communication approach, so it was a case of we'll tell you what we want you to know and we'll tell you when we're ready, not what you think you need to know in order to communicate with your staff so the whole process was run by the [consulting organisation]" [manager four] (Lack of communication – uncertainty)

"[How was the change communicated?] *There were some training courses, we did go to the odd workshop, they did have some workshops and still do, but that didn't always get through to everybody."* [manager six] (Unsuccessful attempt to communicate)

"...unless people understand what we are trying to achieve and they can see what role they have in achieving that, I think that's the most important thing, including them and communicating with them, and making them understand that if they make a mistake, they might make one mistake but it's got a chain reaction and it's the guy in the field out there who suffers the wroth of the customer. That would be communicating a clear purpose, making people understand." [manager seven] (Communication to aid in understanding)

The majority of the managers mentioned the importance of good management during times of uncertainty and change. They acknowledged that trust, communication, and the reduction of fear are elements that contribute to the successful leadership of employees through change. According to Ceri-Booms (2010) and supported by Cadwell and Dixon (2009) where there are high levels of trust and open communication from the manager, an organisation is more likely to move past any hurdles that change brings. Low levels of trust and communication are known to cause uncertainty and uncertainty among employees is known to cause stress (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Kohler & Munz, 2006; Coffey, et al., 2009; Appelbaum, et al*.,* 2007). What is interesting to note here is that all of the managers expressed that they thought good management had a greater effect on employees stress levels than any SMI offered. This issue will be discussed later in the findings.

"...in order for change to fruitfully be implemented a very good lubricant is a lack of fear. And the presence of the fear is a great enemy of positive change I think, ... try again and be a little bit better so a positive free from fear environment is crucial for change if people are fearing things all the time that is like a dead hand over swift change I think." [manager one] (Lack of fear)

"...so the only reason that people don't want that is because they smell a rat somewhere, that you have bad plans for them that you're not telling them and if they know that you're honest and you have that kind of relationship there shouldn't be any fear of change." [manager one] (Lack of fear)

"Stress happens when people are stressed, taking fear out is very important. I've always tried to do that, take fear out of things." [manager one] (Lack of Fear)
"If it's a big bad news just tell everybody and just be honest, have no fear if you are the one are instigating the change. Because it very much is about being gutsy, people hate cowards." [manager one] (Lack of fear, Communication)

"...or common sense management, but because it's a small family typed business there is no board of directors, its [name] *and his wife that own the business and they keep involved in."* [manager seven] (Communication)

"...it [the change] was very emotional for them [staff] and it was a question of just sticking to it, also at the same time, listening and understanding their concerns and taking it on board, listening, communicating." [manager five] (Communication)

"...just doing things like that, or I'd say to people, just scoot, go home, just little things that keeps things, it also helps to have your efforts recognised helps with stress reduction. I've just had a wonderful manager and she would always when I left her office after telling her what I've done, and she would say thank you very much." [manager four] (Communication)

"[Bad management practice] *The* [organisation name] *is constantly changing and employees are always under pressure, because you never knew how long your job was going to last for,*

whether you would be the next one out or quite what was going on. Communication was poor, trust was poor, and the place was shambles... It was precarious [management] would come up with a scheme and we'd say well we tried that 5 years ago and it didn't work so why would it work now, they go because we've developed it, well you have not! It was the same as last time, why don't you just listen to what we have to say and you might get somewhere but they never listened to you and thought they knew best, you knew they were going to rotate round again before too long." [manager two] (Communication, Trust)

"...they could see what I was doing, the dedication, the time I was putting in and what I was trying to achieve, they always had a mistrust of the board and the board's intentions and they perceived as something, and there was always that mistrust - it will never work." [manager five] (Mistrust)

"...we had a very good relationship and a healthy respect for each other and a very strong bond and trust grown over time and being very ethical and straight forward and with him and with me." [manager five] (Trust)

These issues raised by the managers such as a lack of trust, lack of fear, and communication is what they believed caused stress for both themselves and for their employees. They also outlined that having these same factors present were key in reducing stress during times of change.

The Role of Stress

As mentioned in the above quotes change can be an emotional time for employees and according to Chawla and Kelloway (2004) avoidance and resistance are common reactions to the change process. "The underlying assumption is that people fear change in general" (Kiefer, 2010, p. 41) and this is one reason for resistance. The reasons suggested in the literature as to why employees resist change are similar to those that are identified to cause stress in a 'normal' organisational setting. Such examples as: loss of control, a lack of understanding, different assessment of the change than those who are initiating it, and fear of not having the necessary skills, are suggested for causing stress during organisational

change. Below are examples the managers' reactions to organisational change and show how they too agree that the stressors mentioned above are of concern.

"...that is the ultimate stress when you have no control over things that happen and you have no way of influencing it, that is bad news." [manager one] (Stressor – lack of control)

"...you always rely on someone else and that is where stress is because when you can do it yourself you know it's going to be done." [manager six] (Stressor – lack of control)

"...people seem to think that different meant difficult, actually different just meant different... so that created angst and it made things difficult." [manager four] (Reaction – resistance to change - uncertainty)

"...[name] *were very anti right up until the last minute* [name] *was trying to find a way out of becoming part of the* [organisation name]*."* [manager four] (Reaction – resistance to change - fear)

"...there was a lot of resistance in terms of the cultural side, they [the employees] *said it would never work ...the* [employees] *were very mistrustful and didn't really understand the process but knew they would be the first in line and then the unions just said no, resisted it from day one because anything that management wanted to do was just mistrusted. Anything and everything that was communicated from management they just said no..."* [manager five] (Reaction – resistance to change, lack of trust)

"Probably a combination of resistance and hesitation, again it was because they'd probably got into a comfort level that business was going well, profitable, everybody was happy then suddenly there was this step change...Because the way the business needed to be done was different from the way they'd been doing it, they tried to do things the old way and it didn't work so there was certainly people were trying to protect their patches, there were people who didn't want to do some things the new way." [manager seven] (Reaction – resistance to change - uncertainty)

Lack of involvement and uncertainty during times of change have been noted as major themes that the managers felt were common stressors during times of change. Pressure was

also mentioned briefly as a common source of stress during change. Below are the managers' comments on the three themes; uncertainty, lack of involvement, and pressure.

"...you might get somewhere but they never listened to you and thought they knew best, you knew they were going to rotate round again before too long and in the mean time it was just whether you were going to be chucked out the door." [manager two] (Uncertainty)

"...this went on for 18months, so that's uncertainty for some people for 18months which is a really long time. So everything you do in your personal and professional life is underpinned by this anxiety and none of that anxiety was really alleviated until about 12months had passed at the earliest." [manager four] (Uncertainty)

"...a lot of people in this change, who worked in [organisation name] *had never been through change like it, never had to look for a job in 35 years that is hugely stressful."* [manager four] (Uncertainty)

"...they used to call me the grim reaper. I was coming in with this sword that is just going to tear this whole thing apart and leave them all without jobs, without their passion, so it was extremely gut retching for these people." [manager five] (Uncertainty)

"The [organisation name] *is constantly changing and employees are always under pressure... you never knew how long your job was going to last for, whether you would be the next one out or quite what was going on. Communication was poor, trust was poor, and the place was shambles."* [manager two] (Uncertainty)

"...so right up until the very last I had no guarantee of employment." [manager four] (Uncertainty)

These quotes illustrate that uncertainty was a prevalent issue for the managers during times of change. From these examples we can see that uncertainty caused anxiety, pressure, and in many cases stress. Much of this uncertainty was caused by poor communication and, according to the managers, the lack of understanding or explanation led people to feel

anxious. These feelings of uncertainty may also have been caused by a lack of involvement or control over the situation. According to Byrd (2009), it is the managers that feel the least amount of stress in comparison with employees, suggesting that there is an association between knowledge and time for processing of the new information and decreased stress through some change initiatives. What must be acknowledged is that the managers don't always have complete control over the situation either and are often themselves being managed.

According to the managers, the change process put pressure on both themselves and their employees. The main reason they have given for this is being expected to maintain consistent work outputs during the uncertain time.

"Quite often it is a matter of being unappreciated and under stimulated and still having to work very hard. Someone who always gives you a sense that you're barely measuring up despite working like a dog and that is stressful." [manager one] (Pressure)

"... [organisation name] *recommended that it take four years transition and it's been done in 18months. In lots of respects it shows, not from a customer's perspective but in terms of the difficulties we are having in keeping some processes going, IT is a major issues they can't keep up with the changes so there is lots of frustrations of things not working."* [manager four] (Pressure)

"...you get really tired. I reckon it take thirty percent longer than usual [during the change], but it's the emotional drag, some people lost the plot... people would get very stressed out." [manager four] (Pressure)

"...back then it was seen as extra stuff, and you already had to worry about sales and GP and you had to worry about having enough staff and you have a lot of new managers and then that's another stress" [manager six] (Pressure)

Pressure, lack of involvement, and uncertainty in the change process are three issues that many of the managers suggested caused the greatest stress among employees. This is

consistent with the literature that suggests that the factors that cause employees to resist change are the same reasons that people feel stressed in a normal setting (Kiefer, 2010; Byrd, 2009). The above quotes are an illustration of the factors concerning managers during times of change and uncertainty, again, has come up as a major issue. Implementing change, bearing in mind change causes uncertainty and often stress (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Kohler & Munz, 2006; Coffey, et al., 2009; Appelbaum, et al., 2007), requires full support from management and open communication in an attempt to reduce the uncertainty. In previous sections, the managers mentioned that uncertainty can be reduced by good management practice (communication, lack of fear, and trust) and they have become aware of the need for good management by themselves being managed in the past. Few managers concentrated on implementing SMIs nor did they see that if they reduced uncertainty through good management practice would they in turn reduce stress.

Change initiatives managed poorly can cause employees and managers a considerable amount of stress (Cutcher, 2009). The detrimental effects of stress on employees can cost both the organisation and the employees personally (Byrd, 2009). In addition, the complexity of stress caused during organisational change can be very challenging as employees react in different ways at different stages of the process so a "one size fits all" approach is unlikely to succeed.

Stress Management Interventions (SMIs)

Change is often thrust upon employees without much warning and they are expected to continue with consistent outputs without hesitation (McHugh, 1997). It is for this reason and other reasons outlined above that stress management may need to receive a place on the change management agenda. The managers all acknowledged that change caused stress for their employees and often themselves. So the question was asked, where there any specific SMI techniques or interventions used during this change? They were also asked to describe them in detail if there were any available. This question was designed to find out whether managers were consciously using specific SMIs or did they believe their management style was a means of reducing stress during the change period? It also, unintentionally, highlighted the fact that the majority of what the managers were doing to address the stress was more curative or a reaction to a situation as opposed to preventing the stress from occurring. Prevention of stress is recommended most by the literature through the use of

secondary and primary SMIs. Both secondary and primary SMIs are used to change the employee's perception of stress and/or eliminate potential stressors in the future.

"... because I said, whatever you want to do for training I'm going to sign off on it, as long as it doesn't cost too much... you have to find your own. This guy was stressed and he was a support person for corporate banking and he said I'd like to go to yoga, so I said alright, $400 for 10 lessons, that's not a problem, you go on your ten lessons and he really changed! It was huge for him because that's what it is to become a more contented individual often, to have more wisdom, to have more life wisdom." [manager one] (Prevention – Secondary)

"... not putting everything on one card I think reduces stress as well...to employ well rounded people is probably going to reduce stress so I think often you have to go a few steps back and try to prevent that stress and to also have leadership management style that doesn't put undue pressure on people." [manager one] (Prevention – P-E Fit)

"The next step was the specific stress management workshops that [organisation name] *laid on for anyone who wanted to go so you just put your name down and eventually you got to go on a workshop, that was before the end of last year we had the stress workshops."* [manager four] (Preventative – Primary)

"We don't have anything formal and again because of the open family type thing of the business, we talk a lot with the employees...drinks on a Friday afternoon, there has just been a 12 week gym challenge type thing. We expect people to take care of, not take care but at least recognise if someone is under stress and again because of the organisational structure you can see when people aren't coping." [manager seven]. (Preventative – Social, employee morale)

There are a few examples from the data that outline a manager's (or the organisation's) attempt to avoid stress before it is an issue (prevention). Many of the managers suggested that it was the role of the employee to adjust to the organisation, not the other way around. The following examples illustrate attempts to reduce stress but only when it became a concerning factor through the use of curative solutions. It should be noted that some

examples are from decisions the managers have made themselves, other examples are from times when they, themselves have been managed.

"...think they signed up to EAP, I think they signed up to that but all that was a poster on the wall." [manager two] (Cure – Tertiary)

"I sat down with the girl [employee] and questioned her motives and had a good understanding of her [issues]...I took her [the employee] under my wing and had daily meetings with her [the employee] and coached her on how to handle work stress, work pressure, professionalism." [manager three] (Cure – Secondary)

"I think having a third party be there for the employee if they don't feel comfortable going to their manager or HR is beneficial and it is an assistance programme at the end of the day so it shows that we care about our employees and we are able to provide them another avenue to go to." [manager three] (Cure – Tertiary)

"...we always had access to EAPs so they kept that running they offered everybody who was in change who did not have a confirmed job, actually anybody in the organisation could attend a stress management workshop half-day it was only about 20 people per workshop so it's quite good. Then for those people who were in-change and they grouped people according to the tier in the organisation they were in, you got access to CV writing workshops, and also interview workshops, and for those who were confirmed as redundant had access to transition assistance, next stage sort of things." [manager four] (Cure – Secondary and Tertiary)

"...that stuff starts to impinge on people's work performance, so you send them off to EAP and it's a great place to get some emotional tools to help you work through stuff that is the baseline stuff that is available all the time to all the staff through this [organisation name]*."* [manager four] (Cure – Tertiary)

"...an EAP whereby you pull in an outsider, independent psychologist or counsellor to be provided for anybody who wants to go in and speak to them and counselling in terms of

financial management for employees, all of those sorts of things, somebody apart from that team to say go and talk to those people." [manager five] (Cure – Tertiary)

"Do you think EAPs are effective?"
"Done correctly, yes but as they are done in NZ today - no. because they're not."
"Why not?"
"Because it comes down to dollars and EAPs shouldn't be run on dollars, EAPs should be run on employee wellness but if I am the employer I would be looking at the dollars as well. It's a budget situation." [manager five] (Tertiary)

"...the only thing they do have is, it probably could help, is they have a company that you can go to counselling sessions for free, two or three and they will pay. But people don't usually want to do that I suppose it is admitting that you have failed somehow." [manager six] (Cure – Tertiary)

This information is only relevant if the managers deemed what occurred to be effective in regards to the management of stress and then therefore the success of the change itself. It should be acknowledged here that the measurement of success is difficult during change because it is difficult to define when the efforts have finished and each manager has their own objective(s) to meet. However, most of the managers believed that the SMIs did not make the change more successful but it did or would have reduced the levels of stress among employees.

"I don't think that it takes away from the stress, but having the availability of it helps people feel a bit safer and certainly gives the impressions that they are cared for...the EAPs are not a solution in itself, they are a tool that helps an organisation support its staff because well supported staff who are functioning properly are productive." [manager four]

"I don't think it would have changed or helped me or have helped. The outcome would have been the same and it would have gone through in terms of the same time scale what it would have done was decreased the stress and trauma that the employees suffered over that period. Stress was always going to be

present but it was just about how they could manage their stress." [manager five]

"...probably not, it might have made it a little bit easier. It might have been more successful in terms of the fact that we may put people under less stress." [manager seven]

It is apparent from the literature that the most effective SMIs are the ones that evaluate the problems and implement an intervention that best suits the environment and the individuals involved (Elo, Ervasti, Kuosma, & Mattila, 2008; van der Hek & Plomp, 1997). Many of the managers weren't aware of official names for SMIs (e.g. primary and secondary interventions) but did in fact spend the time analysing the individual problems that occurred and dealt with the individuals on a case by case basis as their preferred way of dealing with stressors and stress cases that arose. This implies that although the managers believe that good management practice is more likely to have a positive effect on stress levels, in fact much of the good management practice outlines are fundamentals of some SMIs.

"You have to deal with them on an individual basis because you can't group people, because everyone deals with different stressors in their life so you can't have a programme for family stress or personal stress, everyone's personal stressors are different, everyone's work stressors are different. You analyse it from a case by case basis and see what you can do from an employer's point of view to help that" [manager three]

"...occasionally you have a sort of employee which is out of wack and stressed for anything and then you have to focus in on that and send them on a course for time management course or something, and try to take it seriously anyway, sometimes people aren't cut for the job, that always happens, that maybe they are not interested enough, maybe their brain isn't really designed for this type of job. And then you sort of have to say look, it doesn't work, I think you should spend next three to six months to try to find something you are more enthusiastic about that comes easier to you." [manager one]

Consistent with prior research it appears as though secondary interventions (an intervention that focuses specifically on the individual) are the most effective during 'normal' time. However, according to Le Fevre, et al. (2006) a combination of both secondary and primary

interventions is deemed to be most effective in decreasing stress. None of the managers were able to specifically label any of what they did as a purposeful intervention however many of them did adopt elements of secondary interventions but most often turned to tertiary interventions when faced with situations of stress. There was limited use of primary interventions (change of the organisation's processes and structures to reduce stress) but a surprisingly high use of tertiary level interventions such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs). It is a surprise to see that tertiary level interventions are usually the first choice with this group of managers as the literature recommends that organisations use primary and secondary interventions as the first option for reducing stress. This will be covered in greater detail later in the discussion section.

When the managers were asked, whose responsibility was it to manage the stress levels, the employers or the employees? The responses show a mixed result although the majority see it as the employees' responsibility to manage their own stress levels.

"...It is a culture of survival, if you can't hack the pace, leave and find something that you can handle." [manager two]

"If I was to quantify it I would say 65 to 35 percent, as in 65 percent to the individual has to somewhat take responsibility of handling stress, 35 percent the employer needs to be mindful and look after their employees with regards to stress. It's like when you go for a job, or apply for a position then you take on the responsibility of the position and with that responsibility comes pressure and stress. You know what you're signing up for, you know what the role is and you sign on the dotted line. Sure the employer will try to accommodate them as much as they can but ultimately if they've agreed to what they have signed up to then it is their responsibility that they carry out their duties in the most professional manner." [manager three]

"...part of the Health and Safety thing - a safe environment...the onus is on the employer...people need to have a safe working environment and that is about how they are treated by their employers but also how they are treated by their manager and their colleagues." [manager four]

"...the employer has responsibilities, the employee has responsibilities and it's about knowing when to intervene and when to offer support for people to take, some people don't take up the offers but they are there, that is thing, it's there." [manager four]

"...if the employee is capable and has the necessary skills and abilities, expertise to do the job and do the job effectively then there is a certain amount of their own responsibility to do that and maintain their own stress, I'm right wing on that side of things. However, there are outside mitigating factors that do a play a role within that, that the employee is not responsible for, bad management, fighting within the org, poor management, lack of communication, all of those sorts of things can create a stressful situation on the employee and that is not the employees responsibility and yes the organisation does have responsibility to provide." [manager five]

The fact that the majority of the managers believed that it was the employee's responsibility to manage their on stress has big implications for the regulations under the Health and Safety Act (http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1992); it also goes against good management practice. Some of the managers alluded to their ability to intervene, however this again highlights that often situations are left to get to boiling point before stress is addressed. The concept of prevention rather than a cure for stress will be discussed later in the discussion.

Successful Change Outcomes

Difficulty of measurement haunts this area both in the research and in an organisational context. However, the organisations that appeared to have more involved managers, managers that; practiced open communication, gained trust from their employees, and reduced fear through the communication of a clear purpose (quoted in above sections), seemed to have met their initial aims more so than the organisations that didn't have such involved managers. Below are examples from each manager that display the outcomes of the change they implemented.

Manager one: made the company significant amounts of money and met the aims set prior to the change, this manager had success beyond what was expected.

"Very successful, because we went from costing 2 million dollars to having net income of 3 million dollars income or something. So immediately we saw the effects, no one said that complained about lack of service and we cost so much less and everybody was happier" [manager one]

Manager two: is still employed in the role and has made much progress within the organisation in regards to the initial aims set.

"Im still here! It was successful, if it hadn't been I would have been thrown out by now. They got to a point where they accepted there was a need for the role, they accepted that I could do it and I had a place in the organisation. I'm doing my job, I'm here, I've been promoted along the way" [manager two]

Manager five: met the aims set prior to the change and saw the organisation go from relying heavily on Government funding to being self-sufficient.

"Immensely, both culturally and financially, the financial success, there was a very limited amount of Government funding and the organisation was able to still continue to fund productions through a mix of the bums on seats and private sponsorship" [manager five]

Manager six: was successful in terms of meeting the initial aims set but was a very stressful situation for all involved, there was not apparent success from the perspective of the employees' well-being.

"I think it was fairly successful...but I had a lot of the work dumped on me..." [manager six]
Manager seven: acknowledged that more time is needed to see whether the initial aims have been met but the employees have taken on their new roles and are working productively.

"So far it's been successful because from a sales perspective we have taken over the business, within 6 months we have basically taken over all that business" [manager seven]

The two organisations that saw the greatest amount of stress during the change period, although meeting some of their initial aims, struggled with employee strikes, chaotic work environments, non-completion of tasks, hostile environments, and a heavier load on the manager.

"The success of the change is that it's a legislative requirement, it's a requirement of the Government through the legislation that the [organisation names] be amalgamated. The success so far is that nothing has fallen over in terms of key business processes and that sort of thing. [Organisation name] *recommended that it take four years transition and it's been done in 18months. In lots of respects it shows, not from a customer's perspective but in terms of the difficulties we are having in keeping some processes going."* [manager four]

"I remember back in that period I worked for one month straight from Monday, without a weekend and you'd clean rooms during the day and at night you would catch up on your own work and have it again." [manager three]

In conclusion of the above summary of managers' responses one might be tempted to assume that the use of good management practice, which has been liken to much of the content of SMIs, seems to be associated with better outcomes from change efforts.

Culture

As mentioned above, Le Fevre, et al. (2006) suggested that a combination of both secondary and primary SMIs were required to reduce stress. Some secondary interventions were utilised by some managers but primary interventions were not explored in as much details within the managers' organisations. Despite saying this, many of the managers acknowledged that if the culture of the organisation is unsuitable to support the change then it is likely cause issues such as resistance or avoidance of change. Below are examples of how the managers acknowledged the importance of having the right culture during times of change and how it can both cause and mitigate stress.

"Essentially it can't be an add on, it has to be intrinsic. And that is a lot of things that are like that like values and even HR, HR can't be an add on, sustainability cannot be an add on, it

has to be integrated into the blood stream of it all and I think this change management also needs that, you need mature people to be managers." [manager one]

"...if you have the right atmosphere and spirit then the results will come actually and also if you are a little bit efficient, if you say you can't sit there all day, get up, in a friendly way then it is going to happen and you are going to be ahead of people who are scared and stressed and harassed and so forth." [manager one]

"...turnover rate at the senior level is very low so that makes it slightly different so that means you can't change things too quickly because they've been here so long they are used to things being a certain way." [manager two]

"...all that sort of thing mitigates stress and creating a culture of ongoing learning and an organisational culture, safe workplace and practices." [manager four]

"There is not expectation that people will work for all hours that God keeps them awake, no, and [organisational name] *is very sensible like that. If I was in the private sector working in a similar environment then I would be expecting to work 12 hours a day minimum, ...people work 8 -9 hours a day maybe 10 hours and then they stop which is how it should be because if you keep working on and on you just burn out and that's not good to anybody. That comes back to your argument of providing a safe work environment."* [manager four]

"...it wasn't communicated well, the culture wasn't there in the business and it just operated differently, there were separate offices, people had their own agendas and there was no cohesion." [manager seven]

"...the employees are poorly paid, poorly treated and poorly managed, and you're not going to change it because of the culture." [manager two]

"I would say here it's quite a survival culture. You either make it or you don't and it's probably not a terribly forgiving place either. So if you survive then you probably keep on

surviving but if you don't you'd probably leave because you hate it, you'll go find a job that's easier, there is less pressure." [manager two]

"...that is another way to manage stress and of keeping a safe workplace because managing stress and managing change is all about keeping a safe work place really, it's within that context of a safe workplace." [manager four]

According then to the managers, it is important to have the right people to fit the organisation's culture as well as having the ability to be open to change and collectively work towards a common goal.

"...the key is to have positive people who enjoy what they are doing and feel as though they are growing in the roles and if you have that positive team then you can almost adjust to anything." [manager one]

"...because it depends on the team that you are working in so if you work in a good team it helps the stress." [manager two]

"...that sort of enthusiasm, desire to improve things and that is higher with many people and maybe I was lucky that I was in a very positive environment because if you have fear of people above you that then can cut your willingness to do things a bit radically." [manager one]

"It's a belief that we've got to get everyone on board and everybody fits into the business somehow and if somebody doesn't do their job then someone else suffers. It's like a family and [name] has developed it." [manager seven]

The managers acknowledged that SMIs should have more of a priority during times of change supporting the literature that suggests without the support of able employees, change processes don't often meet the initial aims (McHugh, 1997; Kiefer, 2002; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004).

"In this organisation, yea. I'd say actually in any professional services organisation it needs to be more priority." [manager two]

"The answer is yes. But I guess because we didn't know how long it was all going to take, it's easy to sit back now and say yes, if we'd done that, and if we'd brought in another person that would have made life easier and we've been able to give staff an extra half an hour for lunch or whatever else, just to chill out, it would have been better. The answer is certainly yes, perhaps if someone had come in at that point and time and said if you are going to do all this then we suggest you should probably do this then it would have been helpful." [manager seven]

"Yes I think that facility needs to be provided but just a unilateral imposition of you, this is a change process that we are going to go through, you are all going to suffer stress so we are going to put this programme in place so you are going to have to go through it, I don't think it's the answer, there are two ways of looking at it, one is to provide it through an EAP and say OK there is a facility if you feel you need it, use it and we will fund a percentage of it so if you feel there is a need, use it. Alternatively, and this is the way I would prefer, is to structure and manage the change process in a way that intrinsically mitigates, no change is going to be stress free but i would prefer to do that on a basis where it mitigates that process." [manager five]

And then they were asked would there be any reluctance from you as a manager to implement a specific SMI? Successful implementation requires full management support and has significant impact on the whole organisation. Implementing such a change, bearing in mind change causes uncertainty and therefore stress, requires full support from employees and other stakeholders involved (van der Klink, et al., 2001; van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; Bunn et al., 2007; Hampel, et al., 2007).

"For me no, but for some people it's the acknowledgement of a problem that they don't want to acknowledge at present, that is what the resistance is." [manager two]

"It depends on what the programme is and what it targets and what its intent is. If we just run a stress management programme purely for the reason of just running a programme, I disagree with that. But if it was a programme structured for an EAP where it may be more general in helps out employees in all aspects of life then sure I'd be willing to look at that." [manager three]

"From my past experience, I've been on a time management course and some others from previous jobs. The answer is probably no, the expectations of what they will get from it are not so much the time management issue but the fact that they go to courses with other people, they network, they get to see other people, it's a business experience, it's an experience thing as opposed to an outcome, if they learnt one or two things then I'm happy and as long as they go there with the right mind frame...Because there is only a limit, with a lot of people working, say in customer services or the warehouse, there is only a limit of what they can control so we have to make sure that the overall processes are ok so that they can do it." [manager seven]

In conclusion, the managers were asked what they thought was necessary for the sustainability of long-term change? Many concepts were again brought up here such as; change is something to expect and be prepared for, not resist; management play a key role in the process; employees need to have buy-in and without their involvement it is very difficult to achieve the desired results; and reducing uncertainty through open communication.

"Therefore it's good to make sure that change happens regularly and that it is done with the people rather than to people. That people are involved in it and feel they understand why and I think that is also important that people get a sense that you're looking after the future you are not trying to kick people around for the sake of it, that's ridiculous. If you can do all those things well I think change is a piece of cake, people think it's fun...Which ultimately reduces stress...take fear out is very important. I've always tried to do that, take fear out of things." [manager one]

"...effective change, there are so many factors that are involved in that, it has to be changed for the right reasons, and so what are the right reasons? Well there are infinite numbers of reasons for the change so it has to be for the right reasons it has to be managed correctly in other words; one of the core things for change is buy in. Without buy in, you are wasting your time, the right reason, buy in and that whole process needs to be managed and processed correctly through to the end, if you don't have any of those three facts it's going to fail. It should be a joint process, change cannot take place unidirectionally, change is a process that has two parties, that's what needs to change, everybody has to change, and if there is one standing outside, sorry it's not going to happen." [manager five]

"...clear understanding of the business purpose, unless people understand what we are trying to achieve and they can see what role they have in achieving that, I think that's the most important thing, including them and communicating with, and making them understand that if they make a mistake, they might make one mistake but it's got a chain reaction." [manager seven]

Summary

In summary, these findings show that all of the managers spoken to are aware that change is to be expected and without change organisations would cease to continue. In most of the cases there was limited option for this change, it was either driven by directives above the managers themselves or the change was a reaction to a shift in customer demands or a shift in the market. The lack of control over the change in these causes caused uncertainty and, as a result, stress. This lack of control or involvement in the change firstly caused much stress for the managers themselves as they had to not only lead their employees through the change but manage their own stress at the same time. They felt that the more they could be involved with the process the less uncertainty they would have had when leading their employees.

In saying that, the role of the manager was acknowledged as being vital in not only the change process but in reducing the uncertainty of the employees. The managers played a pivotal role in the change process in that without strong leadership the employees felt great pressure. Some of the managers chose to adopt open communication, established trusting

relationships, and were transparent in their reasons for change. These managers in particular noted that this good management practice mitigates a lot of unnecessary stress on the employees. It appears that the managers believe stress will always be present during change but good management can mitigate additional and unnecessary stress.

The majority of the managers found consensus on what caused the greatest amount of stress during times of organisational change. These responses came from their own experience with change, observation of employees, and past experiences as either an employee or a manager. Lack of control, lack of involvement, lack of trust, and lack of support were the main stressors mentioned by the managers. In order to understand how to best mitigate the stressors it is important to know what they are. The majority of the managers acknowledged that clear and open communication from leaders is the best way to reduce the stress felt from these main stressors during times of change. Therefore if they communicated with a clear purpose, gave as much individual focus to issues as possible, and were honest with their employees they did or could have reduced the unnecessary stress.

In addition, the majority of the managers adopted Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) as the SMI of choice. They felt that an available third party gave employees the necessary tools to deal with stressful situations and, according to the managers it also showed the employees that management cared enough about them to invest the money into making an EAPs available. When the managers were asked whose responsibility it was to manage the stress felt the majority of them placed the onus on the employees saying that if they could not handle the pace then they are not in the right job and should find something more suitable. This again, goes against the Health and Safety act whereby it is the organisation's responsibility to create a safe working environment for all employees (http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1992). The choice to use EAPs may reflect this opinion as many of the solutions suggested by managers were curative instead of preventative. Again, the managers did not believe that any kind of SMI would make the change more successful but would reduce the stress felt by employees. It is beginning to be obvious that there is much confusion in the managers' statements.

If most of the stress is felt due to lack of involvement or lack of support then surely good management practice is the best solution. However, during times of change unexpected stressors can arise and the managers acknowledged that having the third party to talk to was a good way to take a break from the stressful environment that change brings and give employees the necessary tools to cope. Maybe the managers see that all they can do is manage the employees the best way they know how and after that there is not a lot more they can do. The majority of the managers recognised that without the correct organisational culture change was unlikely to be successful and if change was to be implemented in this unsuitable culture higher levels of stress would be felt. Despite saying this none of them employed any type of primary level interventions to adjust the culture of the organisation in the hope that it would reduce the stress levels. Most of the managers then went on to say that it was the people that made the difference to the culture so possibly this is why many of the actions taken to deal with stress were on an individual basis. Although not all of them specifically used SMIs, or acknowledged stress management as a tool they currently used they all acknowledged that SMIs are important and should have been more a priority during the change. None of them were overly reluctant to use them in the future.

Chapter Six: General Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this section is to bring together the findings from the interviews with the literature around the area of stress and change. In doing this it is hoped that this may lead to a greater understanding as to whether stress management makes a change initiative more successful. The title of this thesis is "**Stress through times of organisational change: Its relevance to organisational outcomes"**. The main research question is: according to managers, do stress management interventions positively affect the outcome of change initiatives? Three major issues have been raised by the managers that are of most concern to this research and will be discussed in relation to the literature in this section to best answer the research question.

The three themes that will be discussed are as follows:

1. The main stressors identified by the managers as being present in their workplaces during times of change are a lack of control, uncertainty, pressure, and no management support.
2. What form of stress management were the managers using or not using during the time of change and/or what were the identified barriers to using specific SMIs suggested by the literature?
3. Why good management practice was perceived by the managers to reduce stress more effectively than any formal SMI.

Main Stressors During Times of Organisational Change

The main stressors identified by the managers closely line up with those suggested in the literature as causing the greatest problems during times of organisational change. Most commonly, the managers mentioned that uncertainty was most prevalent during times of change but was also the stressor of most concern. Secondary to uncertainty, the managers mentioned that a lack of control, too much pressure, and no support also caused the greatest amounts of stress, both from what they observed of their employees and also from personal experience. The researcher believes that it is vital to understand what in particular is causing the greatest amount of stress in order to know how to both prevent and cure the workplace stressors.

According to Yu (2009) feelings of uncertainty are most common during times of change as employees face the prospect of job loss, loss of control, role ambiguity, and role conflict. If uncertainty is heightened during times of change and it is known to be a prominent stressor during 'normal times', then surely this stressor should be managed more closely during change initiatives. Robinson and Griffiths (2005) support this argument and go on to say that the outcome of change is the replacement of a certain and familiar environment with one that is uncertain and ambiguous, and that it was not surprising that stress levels rose greatly during this time. This argument is supported by Winter (2010) who adds that it is the responsibility of the managers to deal with the welfare of their staff, particularly during uncertain times. Many of the managers recognised the issue of uncertainty, best represented in these quotes:

"...this went on for 18 months, so that is uncertainty for some people for 18 months which is a really long time. So everything that you do in your personal life is underpinned by this anxiety" [manager four].

"...because you never knew how long your job was going to last for, whether you would be the next one out or quite what was going on. Communication was poor, trust was poor, and the place was a shambles...it was precarious" [manager two]

In the above quote, manager two alluded to two key elements that were mentioned by both the managers and the literature: communication and trust. Trust plays an important role in attempts to reduce stress during times of change. Stress management strategies such as encouraging communication and growing trust in organisations are effective in reducing stress brought on by changes in the workplace (Yu, 2009). Cadwell and Dixon (2009) suggest that trust is about the surrender of a person's choice or power with the hope that the other party will honour and protect the uncertain party involved. An employee's willingness to accept change will be determined by the level of trust in the leader (Cadwell & Dixon, 2009; Hawkins, 2009). Once the trust of the employees is gained managers will more easily be able to guide the organisation into an uncertain future. A lack of trust is likely to result in feelings of control loss and powerlessness, which are likely to result in a lack of employee

commitment and resistance to the change because the employees feel the situation is too stressful to face.

"...there was a lot of resistance....the employees were very mistrustful and didn't really understand the process, they resisted from day one because anything that management wanted to do was just mistrusted. Anything and everything that was communicated from management they just said no!" [manager five].

The commitment level shown by employees during times of change often determines whether the change outcomes will be successful or not (Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth, 2007). One of the major causes of stress during times of change is uncertainty, and again Winter (2010) states that it is the responsibility of the manager to ensure this uncertainty is reduced. Good leadership is necessary to maintain trust between managers and employees and as a result reduce as much uncertainty as possible (Quirke, 2010). In the quote above, manager five stated that a lack of trust caused resistance from the employees and it was for this reason that he was brought in as a third party to manage the change initiative. Manager five was able to more successfully lead the employees through the change because of an already strong, trusting relationship that had grown over previous years. A couple of the managers alluded to pre-existing relationships that allowed them to lead their employees through the uncertain time with little resistance because the trust was already there.

"...we had a very good relationship and a healthy respect for each other and a very strong bond and trust grown over time and being very ethical and straight forward..." [manager five].

"...those qualities, they need to pre-date the crisis in a sense because in the crisis it's a little bit late to come with it" [manager one]

According to the majority of the managers it is open communication that allows a trusting relationship to grow between managers and their employees. Many of the managers went on to mention that a lack of communication lead employees to formulate their own ideas about the change and create uncertain and incorrect conclusions about the consequences of

the change. Ramirez (2010) and others (Byrd, 2009; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Kiefer, 2010) support both this argument and the one above by suggesting that once a crisis begins it is too late to formulate a plan; additional problems occur during change when employees are left to formulate their own ideas, are uncertain about certain aspects of the change, or assess the situation differently to those in control. During uncertain times of change, leaders should be aware that opinions formulate immediately, but that through communication leaders are able to create calmness and avoid misconceptions (Ramirez, 2010). Transparency of detail, expected timelines and the disclosure of relevant and timely information are key elements for effective communication, which, in theory, may reduce much of the uncertainty caused during times of change.

"I think stress in my case...when people start to decide things that they weren't involved in and deciding you have reached your used by date that can be a little stressful when you are uncertain..." [manager one].

"That was stressful because you were constantly worried about stuff which you had absolutely no input in, no control over and the communication wasn't there to tell you what was going on either." [manager two].

The managers also referred to the use of communication to reduce fear among employees. The reduction of fear was something that the managers felt was important when attempting to reduce stress during times of change. Chawla and Kelloway (2004) suggest that fear reduction is the first step in managing the people-side of change. The first stage focuses on encouraging employees to see that change is not something to fear or resist but to be seen as something more constructive and achievable. Robinson and Griffiths (2005) say that the greater the uncertainty the more stressful a situation may appear and therefore by addressing the issue of fear and uncertainty employees may feel less stressed and be more capable of dealing with any further or new obstacles that they may face. This is supported by a quote from manager one that highlights the importance of reducing fear among employees.

"...so the reason that people don't want that [change] is because they smell a rat somewhere, that you have bad plans for them that you're not telling them and if they know that you're honest and you have that kind of relationship there shouldn't be any fear of change...stress happens when people are stressed, taking fear out is very important..." [manager one].

What is evident from this section is that during times of change, uncertainty is of great concern to both employees and managers alike. Uncertainty is heightened by a lack of trust and poor communication from managers, consequently leading employees to formulate their own outcomes and often appraise the situation as too stressful, resulting in resistance. Both the literature and the managers offered similar solutions for the stress caused by uncertainty and that is the managers' ability to communicate openly and generate a trusting relationship. From this it can be seen that resistance is reduced, commitment toward the manager and their efforts is strengthened, and therefore the change is more likely to succeed. Employees are a major component in the successful outcome of change initiatives (Cassar & Bezzina, 2005; McHugh, 1997; Kiefer, 2002; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). Therefore, it seems imperative that stressors such as uncertainty, lack of control, no support, and pressure are identified and managed, especially during times of change, to ensure that managers receive full support from employees.

Conclusion one: Uncertainty is of greatest concern for employees and managers alike during change. Uncertainty causes stress. Managers have the responsibility and the ability to reduce uncertainty through open communication, the reduction of fear, and the development of trusting relationships. Managers therefore have the ability to reduce uncertainties and as a result may be able to reduce the stress felt by employees during times of change.

Uncertainty is not the only stressor that the managers mentioned to be of concern during times of change. Both the managers and the literature suggest that a lack of control or input over the changes, too much pressure caused by unrealistic workloads, and no or little support from management are both heightened and stressful during times of change

(Ongori & Agolla, 2008; Schabracq & Cooper, 2000; McHugh & Brennan, 1994; Robinson and Griffiths, 2005).

According to the managers, many of the change initiatives that they had been a part of or had managed employees through were imposed on them without much warning or without reason. Someone above them had made a decision without much consultation with others involved and the managers were expected to implement the change involuntarily.

"...the most common one [type of change] *is the one that is imposed on you. In particular if you are in a large corporation...So someone says that this is going to change and then you have it thrown to you to implement the change...occasionally you may not agree with the parameters of the change, why and how it should be done and you are told that you can cause some agony because if you don't believe it then how are you going to make it credible to those who you are responsible for?"* [manager one].

According to Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) and others (Kohler & Munz, 2006; Coffey, et al., 2009; Appelbaum, et al., 2007) change imposed on someone causes great levels of uncertainty due to the lack of control over the change process. Even though the managers may have no choice in whether to implement the change or not, according to Robinson and Griffiths (2005), lower level employees have little to no control over the situation and are therefore more likely to resist the change. There was limited support from the managers over this suggestion, they acknowledged that they had more time to get used to the idea but also had to produce results as well as ensure that the well-being of the their employees was taken care of as well as their own. There was a perceived greater amount of pressure on the managers and as a result caused them also to feel stressed.

"...back then it [the change] was seen as extra stuff and you already had to worry about sales and GP and you had to worry about having enough staff" [manager six].

Conclusion two: Changes forced on you, whether you are in management or are an employee, are stressful due to a lack of control and heightened uncertainty. It was first thought that employees have the least amount of control therefore experience the greatest

amount of stress, but actually it is the perception of the managers that they too experience great amounts of stress due to a lack of control, in addition they are faced with extra workload and added pressures to ensure a successful change outcome. Management and staff alike may require stress management during times of change.

Much of the pressure faced by the managers was said to be because they possessed a lack of the necessary skills to complete the tasks asked of them during the change. Not having the correct skills to complete the required tasks was seen to cause anxiety and stress.

"Someone who always gives you a sense that you are barely measuring up despite working like a dog...that is stressful" [manager one].

"...in terms of the difficulties we are having in keeping some of the processes going, IT are having major issues they can't keep up with the changes so there is lots of frustrations of things not working" [manager four].

Increased workload is suggested by Robinson and Griffiths (2005) to be one of the major sources of stress during times of change and Ongori and Agolla (2008) support this by saying that this type of pressure is likely to be brought on by increased work targets during an already uncertain time. If employees don't feel that they have the necessary skills to complete what they are being asked to do, most commonly the reaction is resistance (Kiefer, 2010; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004). When change is thrust upon employees without knowledge, control, or support it can have significant negative effects on the well-being of employees. An example of this is displayed in this manager's comment about her staff during a change out of her control that saw a serious increase in work pressures.

"...you get really tired. I reckon it takes thirty percent longer than usual [during the change], but it's the emotional drag, some people lost the plot...people would get very stressed out" [manager four].

Karasek's Demands-Supports-Constraints model of job stress (Fletcher & Payne, 1983) argues that the extent to which individuals consider themselves subject to a high level of job demands will influence the level of job stress which they experience.

Conclusion three: A lack of necessary skills to complete a required task is a main source of stress during 'normal times' however during times of change this stressor is heightened for both managers and employees as they face greater work pressures during an already uncertain time. Increased pressure on employees and managers alike can have negative implications for their well-being and their ability to complete the job.

To summarise this section, the final stressor that was made mention of by both the managers and the literature is that a lack of support from management is an issue that causes much uncertainty, pressure, and stress during times of change.

"...that can be a little bit stressful...when you are uncertain about the support that you have" [manager one].

Physical presence from the manager is often required during times of uncertainty as employees look for guidance and assurance (Quirke, 2009). Quirke (2009) goes on to say that managers need to communicate to their employees that they are being cared for and they know what it's going to take to succeed, that management are telling the truth and giving the necessary feedback. It is the support of the management staff that has the ability to reduce the levels of stress felt by employees.

Final Conclusions on Workplace Stressors

Both the literature and the managers agree the main stressor during times of change is uncertainty. It is caused often by a lack of communication and lack of trust from the managers as change presents often precarious situations where employees require greater input and support from their managers. Managers themselves face a time of uncertainty when change is forced upon them resulting in a lack of control and added workplace pressure. Without the necessary support the change initiative can appear all too stressful and it is then that employees may resist any change efforts. Many of these stressors may

potentially be lessened by the actions of the manager. Good management practice appears to have the ability to reduce uncertainty and as a result reduce much of the stress felt during times of change. The research question asks, do SMIs positively affect the outcome of change initiatives, according to managers? Now that the main stressors are identified, one could make an assumption as to which type of stress management interventions will best address the specific stressors most felt by employees during times of change. The managers alluded to the idea that good management has the ability to decrease stress levels during times of change. What is important now is to determine whether the managers believe that if stress is effectively reduced the change will be more successful?

Barriers to SMI Implementation

This section of the discussion will focus on the reasons why managers chose not to use formal SMIs during times of change and will contrast their perceptions with what the literature suggests.

The literature suggests primary and secondary SMIs are the most effective way of reducing organisational stress however, the managers disagreed. Tertiary level SMIs were the intervention of choice for our managers and they used them sparingly. Namely Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) were the intervention most commonly used and available in our managers' organisations. It appeared that the majority of the managers referred employees to EAPs when the situation became too stressful for the employee. It was seen to provide emotional tools that gave the employee the chance to speak with a third party and then continue working.

"...having a third party be there for the employee if they don't feel comfortable going to their manager or HR is beneficial and it is an assistance program at the end of the day so it shows that we care about our employees and we are able to provide them another avenue to go to" [manager three].

One of the reasons the managers gave for using the tertiary level of intervention was that organisations didn't often have the time or the resources for SMIs at a primary or secondary level. However, on some occasions managers would spend time with employees on an

individual basis addressing the problem and then would most likely refer them to an EAP. One manager mentioned that the effectiveness of EAPs came down to dollars.

"Do you think EAPs are effective?"
"Done correctly, yes but as they are done in NZ today - no. because they're not."
"Why not?"
"Because it comes down to dollars and EAPs shouldn't be run on dollars, EAPs should be run on employee wellness but if I am the employer I would be looking at the dollars as well. It's a budget situation." [manager five]

As mentioned above the majority of the managers were in favour of EAPs but one manager in particular pointed out how it was simply a way for higher management to display but not often exercise concern.

"...I think they signed up to EAP, think they signed up to that but all that was was a poster on the wall" [manager two]

The main issue that is apparent here is that in the majority of the cases it was a curative solution not preventative that the managers were adopting. The reason why there is such a great deal of support and backing for secondary and primary interventions is that the objective of these interventions is to create a culture that aims to remove or reduce sources of stress in the workplace rather than dealing with stressed employees on an individual basis (Le Fevre et al., 2006). This is supported by Barry and Kuemmel (2006) who suggest that secondary interventions in particular have the intention of teaching employees coping strategies to deal with stress by equipping them with the skills they may require in the future. The managers argue that that is what employees get from EAPs.

"...so you send them off to an EAP and it's a great place to get some emotional tools to work through stuff" [manager four].

What we have seen from the previous chapter is that it is the presence and the support from managers that reduces uncertainty during times of change and ultimately reduces stress. It

has not been suggested that management are always present during primary and secondary interventions but by management's decision to prevent any major stressors from happening in the future it may send a more supportive and certain message to employees that they have full support from management during any current or future change periods. One manager in particular alluded to the idea that getting a third party in to deal with change issues sends the wrong message to employees, management gain trust through being present.

"...my own belief is that ideally it should be taught before its needed, and because these sort authenticity and responsibility qualities can get lost if you sent an agent forward, if it looks too manufactured, it had to be sincere who is responsible for implementing the bad news or communicating the bad news" [manager one].

Schweiger and DeNisi (1991) suggested that when employees were given greater access to information through other communication channels and also had the ability to openly talk on an individual level, the employees showed greater support for the change and helped to ensure the sustainability of the change. Access to information and open communication kept the employees informed, reduced uncertainty, and gave them the opportunity to express their concerns. These may be key factors in reducing stress during times of change as opposed to any formal SMIs when pressures on resources are already stretched.

Conclusion one: The majority of the managers felt that EAPs were the best option when dealing with stressed employees. Some stressed individuals were seen on an individual basis by management staff but again, this option and the option of EAPs were of a curative not preventative nature. The literature review conducted above lead the researcher to believe that primary and secondary SMIs were the most effective form of intervention to reduce stress. However, after interviewing these managers it is clear that the time or resources are not made available to these managers to implement either primary or secondary interventions. Managers may often be reluctant to enter into such an undertaking due to the resources required and the level of disruption to employees. According to McHugh and Brennan (1994) one of the main difficulties in implementing SMIs is the lack of co-operation

from top managers as it is a prevailing notion that many senior managers see stress as a problem for individuals to manage, not the responsibility of the organisation.

When the managers were asked about whom they thought the responsibility lay with when dealing with stress, it was a surprise to find that many of them said it was the individual's responsibility to deal with their own stress.

"...It is a culture of survival, if you can't hack the pace, leave and find something that you can handle." [manager two]

"It's like when you go for a job, or apply for a position then you take on the responsibility of the position and with that responsibility comes pressure and stress. You know what you're signing up for, you know what the role is and you sign on the dotted line. Sure the employer will try to accommodate them as much as they can but ultimately if they've agreed to what they have signed up to then it is their responsibility that they carry out their duties in the most professional manner." [manager three]

This is not representative of all the managers' views and a few of them alluded to the Health and Safety Act that says it is the responsibility of the employer to provide a safe workplace and that includes the removal of potential stressors.

"...part of the Health and Safety thing - a safe environment...the onus is on the employer...people need to have a safe working environment and that is about how they are treated by their employers but also how they are treated by their manager and their colleagues." [manager four]

Ultimately the majority of the managers agreed that it was a combination of both the employee and the employer, best represented by this manager's statement.

"...the employer has responsibilities, the employee has responsibilities and it's about knowing when to intervene and when to offer support for people to take...but they are there, that is thing, it's there" [manager four].

Regardless of whose responsibility the managers think it should be to manage the stress, any change initiative and SMI alike require the full support from management if the initiatives are to be successful. Many studies have shown that successful implementation requires full management support and has significant impact on the whole organisation (van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; Bunn, et al., 2007; Hampel, et al., 2007; McHugh & Brennan, 1994). According to Rafferty and Griffin (2005) leaders need to understand the need to provide support and consider individuals' needs in a changing environment.

Conclusion two: There are mixed views among managers regarding whose responsibility it is to manage workplace stress. However, the majority of the managers agreed that there was a shared responsibility between the employees and their managers. Regardless, any change initiative and/or SMI that is to be implemented requires the full support of management and this is the main difficulty as the managers that were interviewed did not possess the necessary resources to make it happen. Top management may need to see stress not as an individual's problem but one that effects the whole organisation and is something that needs to be prevented not just cured.

The main reason the managers gave for not going down the path of primary and secondary interventions was they felt that what they were currently doing was sufficient. The managers felt that they had the most influence over their employees when it came to reducing stress levels.

"We don't have anything formal and again because of the open family type thing of the business, we talk a lot with the employees...drinks on a Friday afternoon, there has just been a 12 week gym challenge type thing. We expect people to take care of, not take care but at least recognise if someone is under stress and again because of the organisational structure you can see when people aren't coping." [manager seven]

One manager also suggested that hiring the right kind of people for the job, someone who could fit in with the existing culture was one way that they reduced stress in their workplace. This manager was in support of creating an environment for their employees to avoid stress.

"... not putting everything on one card I think reduces stress as well...to employ well rounded people is probably going to reduce stress so I think often you have to go a few steps back and try to prevent that stress and to also have leadership management style that doesn't put undue pressure on people." [manager one]

A point to be made here is that when employees feel as though something is being forced upon them, whether it be change or something else, the lack of control can cause great uncertainty (Schabracq & Cooper, 2000). The paradox is that change causes uncertainty because of feelings of powerlessness and a lack of control; however, formal SMIs may also be seen as something forced upon employees involuntarily therefore may in itself cause the same reactions as change. The managers recognised that if they ensure sound management practice (constant and clear communication, trusting relationships, and a lack of fear) they can practice a certain amount of consistency during an uncertain time of change. McHugh and Brennan (1994) explain that actively investing into SMIs implies to employees that management show concern for the employees' well-being. Failing to recognise the costly consequences of stress implies that people are not of greatest value to the organisation. It is argued that initiatives such as SMIs reflect an acknowledgment of "organisational responsibility regarding the management of stress and an enhanced awareness of its associated costs as issue of strategic importance" (McHugh & Brennan, 1994, p.32).

Conclusion three: The literature suggests that by actively engaging in primary and secondary SMIs, the organisation and management are displaying a level of concern and care for their employees and recognising the costly consequences of stress. However, the managers believe that they are able to reduce stress through good management practice and let their employees know that they care by ensuring they are kept informed and are part of the change process. Employee involvement and buy-in is something that will be discussed in the next section however here is one manager's view on support for staff.

"...then you can cooperate around it, rather than look like a smarty pants and just sort of as long as cover my own skin what do I care about my staff?" [manager one]

Management Practice versus SMIs

When the managers were asked whether they thought stress management in general would make a change outcome more successful their replies were all fairly consistent. They didn't believe that any active stress management would take away from the stress but many of them concluded that it would have reduced the stress levels of their employees and that well supported staff are more productive.

"I don't think that it takes away from the stress, but having the availability of it helps people feel a bit safer and certainly gives the impressions that they are cared for...the EAPs are not a solution in itself, they are a tool that helps an organisation support its staff because well supported staff who are functioning properly are productive." [manager four]

"I don't think it would have changed or helped me or have helped. The outcome would have been the same and it would have gone through in terms of the same time scale what it would have done was decreased the stress and trauma that the employees suffered over that period. Stress was always going to present but it was just about how they could manage their stress." [manager five]

"...probably not, it might have made it a little bit easier. It might have been more successful in terms of the fact that we may put people under less stress." [manager seven]

According to Yu (2009) one of the major causes of work-related stress is the ability of managers and their skills in managing staff and stress in the workplace. This is supported by Cassar and Bezzina (2005) and others (Mueller, 2009; King & Wright, 2007) who suggested that a primary reason that resistance may occur is the way in which the employees are lead through the change. This highlights the importance of the managers' role during the change period. The managers do believe that no formal SMI would reduce stress and if there were any conscious efforts to reduce stress levels then it would only do just that and not ensure a more successful change outcome.

Conclusion one: These statements from the managers are slightly conflicting as at first they acknowledge that the management of stress wouldn't have changed the outcome of change

initiative, but some go on to say that their staff would have been less stressed and more productive. An employee that is less stressed and is more productive is likely to contribute more and resist the change less. In saying that, the managers had their own ways of preventing stress and in a few cases were possibly already getting the best from their employees.

"You analyse it from a case by case basis and see what you can do from an employer's point of view to help" [manager three]

The managers suggested some of their own techniques for successfully managing stress through times of organisational change. In particular they mentioned ensuring employee involvement, trust, communication, and having the right reason for the change. The literature supports much of what the managers have suggested as it outlines necessary management traits during periods of change. What is emerging from combining the literature and the findings is that the management traits that are suggested by the literature for a successful change outcome are also what is suggested separately for managing stress during 'normal times'. Possibly the managers are correct in saying that good management practice is what is primarily necessary for maintaining levels of certainty during change. This does not make formal SMIs redundant however, the foundation or the starting place for the management of stress lies with the managers and management style.

Conclusion two: The managers highlighted an important point by suggesting that before managers anticipate implementing any form of SMI it is important to ensure good management is present and consistent first. The managers believed that good management practice has a potentially greater impact on employees well-being than any formal SMI and that this should be the first priority. Manager one made an accurate summarising comment outlining that good management needs to predate the change initiative, it cannot be an add on.

"Essentially it can't be an add on, it has to be intrinsic. And that is a lot of things that are like that like values and even HR, HR can't be an add on, sustainability cannot be an add on, it

has to be integrated into the blood stream of it all and I think this change management also needs that, you need mature people to be managers." [manager one]

Change has now become something to expect as opposed to something that can be avoided. It is for this reason that leaders may choose to be proactive in preparing employees for what is about to occur. By being ahead of the change (Drucker, 1999) instead of trying to manage the change, leaders often have the opportunity to address any concerns and deal with any unexpected responses.

"Try to position your organisation to deal with change because that is the core of what most organisations do. Adopt and change and try to be one step ahead of the wolves before they catch up with you because you haven't done anything. Are things changing fast enough?" [manager one]

Manager one alluded to an important point, by being one step ahead of the change managers may be able to anticipate the kinds of support systems that employees may require. According to Drucker (1999) and supported by other authors (Hawkins, 2009; Emery & Barker, 2007; Mosca, Fazzari, & Buzza, 2010; Conger & Kanungo, 1987) a true change leader looks for change, accurately assesses the risk, and realises that change is necessary to remain competitive. If leaders are able to make sure that employees feel a part of the solution they are more likely to support and accept the change (Konorti, 2008; Bass, 1990). Bass (1990) explains that managers who need to make changes must be prepared to give their subordinates justification and enough stability through a turbulent time.

"...unless people understand what we are trying to achieve and they can see what role they have in achieving that, I think that's the most important thing, including them and communicating with them" [manager seven].

Stress management strategies that ensure employees are involved in the planning are effective in reducing stress brought on by the changes in the workplace (Yu, 2009). In addition, managers have the potential to gain greater trust from their employees if the managers are seen to be including them in the process. According to Kovac and Jesenko

(2010) the actions of leaders are the greatest contributors of trust. If a manager has the trust of his employees then the employees are more likely to allow the manager to guide them through the change process with limited resistance. Resistance to change may be associated with a lack of readiness for the change and so if managers are able to maintain a level of involvement from the employees there is likely to be more certainty and less surprise for all those expected to participate (Chawla & Kelloway, 2004).

"...it has to be managed correctly in other words; one of the core things for change is buy in. Without buy in, you are wasting your time, the right reason, buy in and that whole process needs to be managed and processed correctly through to the end, if you don't have any of those three facts it's going to fail. It should be a joint process, change cannot take place unidirectionally, change is a process that has two parties, that's what needs to change, everybody has to change, and if there is one standing outside, sorry it's not going to happen." [manager five]

"...you should always try to talk to people and explain what you do and ideally have them more or less think that yes, that is good, I would have the same way. And often if you take time out you can get that confirmation or buy in, look, I am here, someone wants me to reduce by 20 percent, what can I do? What would you do? This is my plan, tell me if you know better." [manager one]

Even if change leaders have to make unpopular decisions, an influential leader can strengthen acceptance by fully explaining their reasoning soliciting support and earning approval (Bass, 1990). If leaders are able to make sure that employees feel a part of the solution they are more likely to support and accept the change (Konorti, 2008; Bass, 1990). Resistance is a consequence of employees appraising the situation as 'too stressful'; ensuring employee buy-in means that managers should see less resistance because of stress.

Conclusion three: Managers are able to reduce resistance through employee involvement and essentially buy-in to the change initiative. The managers believe that employee buy-in is one of the key factors in reducing stress during times of change as it ultimately reduces

uncertainty. Buy in and involvement is best created through open and clear communication with a manager that has the trust of their employees.

"...it [the change] was very emotional for them [staff] and it was a question of just sticking to it, also at the same time, listening and understanding their concerns and taking it on board, listening, communicating." [manager five]

According to Rafferty and Griffin (2005) supportive leadership has a positive impact on the negative affect that change has on employees, and leaders need to understand the need to provide support and consider individuals' needs in a changing environment. Manager five best summarised the conclusions made and the final thoughts from the managers.

"Yes I think that facility needs to be provided but just a unilateral imposition of you, this is a change process that we are going to go through, you are all going to suffer stress so we are going to put this programme in place so you are going to have to go through it, I don't think it's the answer, there are two ways of looking at it, one is to provide it through an EAP and say OK there is a facility if you feel you need it, use it and we will fund a percentage of it so if you feel there is a need, use it. Alternatively, and this is the way I would prefer, is to structure and manage the change process in a way that intrinsically mitigates, no change is going to be stress free but I would prefer to do that on a basis where it mitigates that process." [manager five]

Summary

The research question asked was, do stress management interventions positively affect the outcome of change initiatives according to managers?

The main stressors felt by employees according to both the managers and the literature was uncertainty, a lack of control, pressure, and no support. Out of these four stressors, three (uncertainty, lack of control, and no support) were addressed by the managers. The managers did not see the need to implement formal SMIs as they felt good management practice was more effective in reducing stress. It should be noted here that there are some similarities in what the managers considered good management practice and what the literature suggests for stress management in primary SMIs. Through the involvement of

employees, gaining trust and open communication, the managers felt their employees could overcome any of the stressors that change caused. Many of the managers, in addition to good management practice, referred their employees to EAP programs as their SMI of choice. EAPs were not seen to alter the outcome of the change however it was acknowledged by the managers that it gave the employees emotional tools to deal with stress in the future. The managers are quite right in making this comment as EAPs are offered after the event and possibly even after the change has happened making it difficult to observe any affect the EAP has on change.

When asked whether they thought stress management practice ensured a more successful outcome for the change initiatives their reply was they thought despite stress levels being reduced it, stress management would not make a change initiative more successful. However, it was acknowledged that an employee that is less stressed is more productive.

In conclusion, there were inconsistencies in the managers' responses. Many of them believed that if stress was managed then their employees would be more productive. Leading on from that some of the managers outlined that they believed more productive employees would have probably contributed to the increased success of change. The contradiction is apparent in the managers' comments that suggest SMIs would not have a positive effect on the outcome of change. The managers also had the tendency to pay lip service to SMIs without realising its potential real payback. EAPs were the intervention of choice suggesting a curative, rather than preventative, style of managing stress. In saying that, the managers all agreed that no formal SMI could do as good a job as good management practice. Good management practice may have indeed affected the outcomes as represented in the findings section. In that section the managers were asked about the success of their change period. The managers that showed conscious efforts towards good management practice, such as open communication, high levels of trust, and employee involvement, were the ones that more clearly reached their objectives. From the above one might summarise that the use of good management practice is one answer to solving issues of stress during times of organisational change and by addressing organisational stress employees are more productive and inevitably will be more likely to positively contribute to the successful outcome of change. The use of general good management practice, which can

be likened to the content of SMIs, seems to be associated with better outcomes from change efforts.

Limitations of the Study

The answers given by the managers were their perceptions of the questions being asked of them. This presents a limitation to this study as their ideas and suggestions are personal to the individual and may not relate directly to any objective reality as this was a small and selected group of managers. Therefore results may not be generalisable. The success of the change the managers were involved in was also their perception of success. Success was not defined as the same by all managers so showing that one was more successful than the other is difficult to do. Success was gauged by the initial objectives set by each manager (or their organisation) as being met.

The size of the organisations and the managers' backgrounds were chosen to cover a wide range of sizes and industries. This was necessary to gain a broad understanding of the area but didn't allow the researcher to make conclusions specific to any industry. Focusing on one particular industry or sized organisation may offer more practical tips for managers working in that size organisation or industry.

Practical Implications and Directions for Future Research

From this research it appears that careful use of good management practice may be an answer to managing stress and ensuring a successful change outcome. The literature has suggested that formal SMIs are most likely to ensure the greatest success. However, according to the managers, organisations do not possess the necessary resources to implement such formal interventions. A lack of resources such as time and money have been noted to be the main reason for not implementing any formal interventions. Good management practice therefore seems more relevant and practical to suggest as a solution than formal SMIs. Realistically, there is not a great awareness for formal SMIs among the managers that were interviewed and EAPs appeared to be the obvious and 'easy' choice for many. Much of what the managers suggested when addressing stress was curative and not preventative hence the use of EAPs. However, from this study EAPs seemingly having little to no affect on employee well-being. Through the encouragement of good management practice we may be able to see a reduction in workplace stress during times of major change.

In addition, the apparent attitude of the managers was quite contradictory. On one hand their replies showed clear implications that the management of stress did help employees to be more productive and that productive employees would probably contribute to the increased success of change. However, they overtly stated that they thought SMIs did not improve the outcome of change. Much of what the literature states is that the elements that make up formal SMIs are similar to that of good management practice. From this research good management practice appears to be of greatest benefit not only in terms of resource usage but also for the well-being of the employees. Further research is required to clarify the above statements.

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Appendix One

Research Questions

Work history...who you are, what you do...

1. Can you tell me about a recent major change that you were responsible for?
    - What was the change?
    - Scale?
    - Process / structure / product / service?
    - Technology
    - Involving leaders

2. How successful was the change? How was it measured?
    - What were the initial aims?
    - What was the outcome and how was it measured at the end?

3. Who else was involved in this change and in what way?
    - Scale of the change?
    - Peers / supervisors / subordinates?
    - Resistance to change?
    - Support for change?

4. Can you tell me about the communications involved in executing the change?
    - Who communicated to whom?
    - How did the managers themselves find out about it?
    - Their role?
    - Successful communication?
    - Why?
    - How did the receivers react?
    - WAS THERE A GOAL SET AND COMMUNICATED?

5. Can you explain your role in the change process?

6. Can you tell me about the reactions to the change from the people around you?
    - Employees / subordinates
    - Peers
    - Positive
    - Negative
    - Did the reactions hinder the progress / success?
    - Any serious reactions?
    - Stress / anxiety

7. What role did stress play in the change process?
    - Causing resistance
    - Effecting the outcome of the change
    - Effect on performance during the change
    - Absenteeism
    - Health problems or sicknesses
    - (literature)

8. Where there any specific stress management techniques or interventions used during this change?
    - Individual?
    - Organisation wide?
    - Set up by an expert / consultant?
    - Communication, leadership, workshops, one-on-one
    - Think about how they managed their employees or what did they do that was out of the usual day to day running of the organisation?

9. If there were can you describe or tell me about them? (this question is only if they said yes above)
    - If the answer is no then find out how the deal with stressed employees or plan for a stressful event?

- Good management practice...

10. How effective were they in reducing stress? (if no SMI was identified then could ask if faced with a stressful situation, how would that have been dealt with?)
    - In improving the change?
    - Evidence for effectiveness or ineffectiveness
    - Good management practice

11. What, if any effect, did the SMI have on the change? (If not, then what did you base that on?)
    - Success
    - Speed
    - Process
    - Employee satisfaction

12. Can you give me some more detail on how you specifically managed certain aspects of the change?

- Roles
- Authority
- Demands on people
- Communication
- Role conflict, pressure, confusion

13. (If it is no, then turn it around to say) ...If there had been SMIs in place do you think it would have made a difference to the outcome?

14. Was the organisation's environment analysed before any objectives were set or any SMI was planned? If no, how much consideration would be given to the environment before any decisions would be made?

- Need this question to satisfy the literature – goals and plans should be specific to environment

15. Can you explain if there was any reluctance from you as a manager to implement an SMI for any reason?

16. What do you think is necessary for long-term change to be sustainable?