

CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN UZBEK COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT:

Change management (sometimes abbreviated as CM) is a collective term for all approaches to prepare, support, and help individuals, teams, and organizations in making organizational change.

Keywords: Change management, processes, crisis, customer, Communist Party, self-government, corruption.

INTRODUCTION:

Drivers of change may include the ongoing evolution of technology, internal reviews of processes, crisis response, customer demand changes, competitive pressure, acquisitions and mergers, and organizational restructuring. It includes methods that redirect or redefine the use of resources, business process, budget allocations, or other modes of operation that significantly change a company or organization. But beyond these are a third and more credible group, who applaud the new directions and wish them all success, but perceive them not as a revolutionary break with the past but as the logical next steps after what came before, and the culmination of Uzbekistan's post-independence development. It cannot be denied that the differences between Uzbekistan's two post-independence leaders are striking. Mr. Karimov, who was 53 when he was named Uzbekistan's first president, had spent two decades working for the State Planning Committee of the USSR, known as "Gosplan," the powerful agency that was responsible for developing detailed plans for every sector of the state-controlled economy. Gosplan prepared the overall plan but it fell to others, mainly the regional First Secretaries of the Communist Party and managers of the great

industrial and agricultural enterprises, to make sure they were faithfully implemented. Karimov then served as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. In this capacity one of his main concerns was to manage the republic's always-complicated relations with Moscow, where most decision-making in the USSR was concentrated. In addressing this important issue, Karimov inevitably drew on his republic's prior experience in dealing with the imperial center. The Seeds of Sovereignty, 1959-1991 In the decades since the death of Stalin in 1953, Moscow had been intent on extracting the maximum volume of cotton, minerals, and vegetable produce from Uzbekistan. It also called for certain manufactured goods, including key parts for airplanes. It placed similar demands on the other republics of Central Asia, including wheat from Kazakhstan, meat and electronics from Kyrgyzstan, etc. Under the powerful leadership of Sharof Rashidov (1959 -1983), Uzbekistan managed to meet these demands, while at the same time working out a practical modus vivendi Moscow that allowed a high degree of local autonomy. Along with neighboring republics of Central Asia, Uzbekistan thus carved out and maintained a significant sphere of self-government, even as it remained under Soviet rule. To be sure, some of the practices by which Rashidov and his regional counterparts achieved this were considered illegal under Soviet law, but they brought undeniable benefits to Uzbekistan and all Central Asia. This system lasted until Mikhail Gorbachev, in an effort to reintroduce strict centralization, accused Uzbekistan of gross corruption, especially in the cotton sector. But by then Rashidov was dead

and the USSR itself was tottering on the brink of collapse. Western and Russian pundits have often argued that President Karimov was in fact a holdover ruler from the Soviet era, in other words, that he owed his position to Communist Party leadership in Moscow. But his appointment to the role of First Secretary of Uzbekistan's Communist Party occurred only after Gorbachev had twice failed to appoint someone who was acceptable to the Uzbeks. It was fellow Uzbeks who advanced his promotion and it was Uzbeks who then confirmed him by election as the country's first president in 1991. In short, Karimov's rise was intimately a part of the move towards sovereignty and self-government that had started in late Soviet times. However, like other post-Soviet leaders in Central Asia, Karimov knew the Soviet system from the inside and harbored no illusions about its actual workings. Like them, too, he was accustomed to functioning in a "top-down" world. He observed how small changes in the economy or government could have immense and unanticipated consequences. This focused his attention on the intricacies of policy making and inclined him to leave details of practical implementation to others. Protecting Sovereignty, At All Cost: 1992-2003 Following the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Uzbekistan was assaulted by pressures from every side. Observing this situation from the inside, President Karimov was acutely aware of the fragility of his new country. He therefore committed himself above all to preserving and strengthening the sovereignty of a newly independent Uzbekistan. This was his main strategic goal, which he pursued with impressive focus. Karimov knew that the collapse of the USSR had unleashed expectations among the Uzbek public that would be difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy. He listened patiently as international financial institutions and western governments pressed him to undertake what they called "shock

therapy," a rapid-fire privatization of state assets and plunge into the bewildering world of market economics. Others counselled him to seek to maintain or rebuild the old economic ties with Russia and slip back under the Moscow's umbrella. This advice came just as Russia was forming a web of new institutions designed to embrace the former Soviet Union, including a military alliance (subsequently created as the Collective Security Treaty Organization), which Moscow pushed Uzbekistan to join. Then, too, President Karimov had to face fringe domestic groups that dreamed of turning Uzbekistan into some new kind of Islamic theocracy. When these radical Islamists beheaded the local chief of police in the city of Namangan and took over the city hall, Karimov rushed to the site and faced down the insurgents. He prevailed that time, as discussed elsewhere in this volume, but he knew that there could be other extremists like those he confronted at Namangan. Faced with such formidable pressures, President Karimov concentrated on harboring the existing strengths of Uzbekistan's economy and society and making sure that they were not eroded by ill-conceived or reckless reforms. Rather than embrace any of the nostrums that others dangled before him, he instead chose his projects solely on the basis of how much they would protect and strengthen sovereignty. He was also quite prepared to brush off domestic or foreign criticism. Thus, Uzbekistan's early strategy was thoroughly defensive in character.

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