

The Role of Women Leadership in Organizational Change

Marja-Liisa Tenhunen
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Study problem

The study problem in this article is:

*How to create the functional strategy at the university?

Subtitles:

*Through what kinds of methods and tools organization can implement the strategy?

*How to solve the resistance to change?

*What kind of experiences and examples are there from women leadership at some Finnish higher education organizations?

Literature

This article is based on the most famous literature and research in the field of strategic management and practice of women leadership. Higher education in this article consists of the reform which started in Finland in 2010 and continues at present. Practical cases of higher education consist of the four new cases at Finnish universities, where the strategy has been changed totally. Data of these cases are based on interviews and published documents. Women leadership cases consist of Finnish higher education organizations, especially two of them.

Strategy

Contemporary strategic plans have multiple components and each component serves a specific purpose. One of the purposes of the planning process is to ensure these individual components are aligned with each other. The most important statements and components of the strategy and strategic planning are **Mission, Vision, Values, Strategic Goals and Objectives which mean also Strategic Business Areas (SBAs), Decision of Final Strategy Document, Implementation and Follow-up**. Between all these statements and elements lot of identification, analyzing and evaluations are needed. If the purpose of the planning process is to align mission, vision, goals and resources, it is critical to ensure those who will be called upon to implement the strategic plan are all “pulling in the same direction”.

Strategy process

Most universities use either a five or ten year cycle for their plans. These cycles are often driven as much by the reaccreditation schedule as any internal issue. For this reason, most strategic plans have overarching themes that are very general and **do not tend to change over time**. In fact, in many planning processes, these overarching themes can be carried over from one planning cycle to the next with only minor modification. **It would be worth criticizing this proven fact. How to respond quickly to the demands of the changing world.**

Strategy process

A demand for costing out is often an attempt to scale back the scope of the plan, but can also be seen as a misunderstanding of how the planning process works. It is important to remember the ultimate purpose of a strategic plan is **to drive resource allocation**. The strategy process is **a yearly process**. The strategy is updated every year normally during the planning process of next year. **This is a rolling system.**

Women Leadership

Women will need encouraging to becoming presidents and highest leaders in higher education already during the education. Professor of Leadership and Governance Lucy P. Marcus has found in her research five universal factors that make a real difference in encouraging young women to reach success. These factors are **Basic skills, International exposure, Mentoring, Role models and Starting Early.**

Young women will need them all over in the world especially in higher education. It is mostly hard work and perseverance that brings women to the top of their field, be they academics, scientists, entrepreneurs or artists.

Women Leadership

The factors that contribute to the development of the next generation of women leaders can be gleaned from their experiences. Some of the characteristics of successful people, such as **motivation, natural curiosity, courage, self-management, enjoying being stretched and rising to a challenge, personal will and fortitude, drive, and flexibility** may be innate, but there is no doubt that these characteristics also need to be nurtured and encouraged.

Higher Education in Finland

In Finland there are at present 15 universities and 25 universities of applied sciences. The major reforms in the Finnish higher education system were scheduled to start from 2010 and continue still at present in the second phase. As is the case in many European countries, Finland had become used to inflexible higher education structures and a reactive university system. This had led to a heavily bureaucratized administration, slow decision making and a permanent funding deficiency in the publicly owned universities. The government had decided in the reform that the major problems of the 21st century are not likely to be solved by traditional means. **Two main changes have been that higher education institutions had to have own vision and strategy and they became responsible employers with own economical administration with the purposes of productiveness.**

Results

Four cases of Higher education organizations:

Case Aalto University (Helsinki area)

Case Tampere³

Case Lahti

Case Lapland (Rovaniemi)

Two cases of Women Leadership:

University of Jyväskylä

Centria University of Applied Sciences (Kokkola)

Cases: Case nr 1

During the first phase of the reform the new **Aalto University** was established. During the second phase starting 2016 -2017 three other projects have started. They are cases **Case Tampere3, Case Lahti and Case Lapland**. Structured interviews were carried out to get data for the newest cases. The questions were: What are the purposes of the project? How the project has been realized? Whether there was resistance? Who opposes and why?

Case nr 3

The concern preparation between **Lappeenranta Technical University (LUT)** and **Lahti University of Applied Sciences (Lamk)** started in autumn 2016. The action plan was made by a preparation group denominated by the major of Lahti city. Lahti city is the main shareholder of Lamk. The plan was published at the end of the year 2016 and it was received by great enthusiasm in Lahti. **Lahti is the only regional city in Finland without an academic university.** The concern solution follows the principles, which were followed, when **Saimaa University of Applied Sciences** located in the city of Lappeenranta was joined as a part of to LUT Concern earlier. The shareholders of Lamk accepted the concern plan in spring 2017.

Case nr 4

Lapland University of Applied Sciences was launched in connection with the Education and Research Development Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture (2011 - 2016). The establishment of it was formed by **two former universities of applied sciences, Kemi-Tornio and Rovaniemi**, which merged together as **Lapland University of Applied Sciences**. Next step would be **the concern of Lapland University and Lapland University of Applied Sciences**. The economical volume of about 10,000 students, 1,100 man-years and about 100 million euro would be much stronger than earlier. It would be a strong center of excellence with sufficient critical mass to respond to the economic and operational challenges and continue to be a pioneer in the development of higher education policy. Particular strength is the knowledge and know-how of the **Arctic regions** (compare Arctic council).

Women Leadership in Finland

In Finland there are as mentioned 15 universities and 25 universities of applied sciences. In three universities there is at present a female president (20 %). In four universities of applied sciences there is a female president (16 %).

Dr. Aino Sallinen **was the first female president in Finnish universities.** Her period was exceptional long and successful from 1992 to 2012, together 20 years. She created several new strategies, which were implemented concretely. She has been a very good exemplary person and showpiece for other female presidents and students.

Women Leadership in Finland

The author of this article was the first female president in Finnish universities of applied sciences in years 1995 – 2012, together 17 years. She was the founder of Centria University of Applied Sciences. Universities of applied sciences are based in Finland on the same way as in Netherland and in Germany on earlier professional higher education institutions. The responsibility of the first president was to merge together the highest level regional professional institutions and to start all functions including the strategy of the new higher education organization. The next step was to pass the assessment process made by Council of Higher Education Evaluation. After passing the assessment university of applied sciences got the permanent status. Centria University of Applied Sciences got the first Quality and Excellence Award in Finland during the first female president's period.

Strategy

The strategic thinking and strategic planning are comprehensively quite new purposes in higher education. Strategies were needed after the special decision of the Ministry of Education and Culture in all higher education organizations. In Finland higher education is funded by government and is an important element and player in Finland's innovation system and competitiveness. Strategies of higher education organizations are public information for all.

Conclusion

The main resistance originates from the region, especially if the university or university of applied sciences is located outside the capital area. In the small country like Finland all small cities want to have own independent university or university of applied sciences. To have collaboration with universities located in other cities is difficult. It seems that decision makers will see in the collaboration the treat as a fear of losing the independence. There is a clear distinction in Finnish society between two different higher education sectors. Regional decision-makers appreciate more universities than universities of applied sciences. Cities and towns want to become “university-cities” comparing Case Lahti.

Conclusion

The unions of staff and students have a lot of power and they are active to have communication with the parliament members and in social media about the reform of higher education. Higher education organizations do not have a business logic because they are funded by government. Only a small part of funding is coming from EU, technology organizations and companies. In 2017 the discussion about tuition fees for Finnish students has started.

Conclusion

In May 2017 Ministry of Education and Culture decided to establish Finnish Institute of Technology (FIT). This new Institute is network and consists of all seven universities which offer any kind of engineering and technology education in City Turku. The goal is to respond to the labor shortage on the manpower in the new industrialized technology.

Blue stars are Strategical cases: Helsinki, Tampere, Lahti, Rovaniemi
Red stars are Women leadership cases are Jyväskylä, Kokkola

Thank you very much!

