The Positive Deviance Phenomenon of Leading Successful Strategic Change
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Abstract
The focus of this phenomenological study was to explore how the positive deviance phenomenon and strategies manifest through the lived experience of successful Canadian financial services strategic change leaders. The 4 leadership dimensions culminate in the Leading Successful Strategic Change: The 4 Factor Formula.

Problem
The general business problem was that strategic change program failure undermines the sustainability of competitive organizations. Leading strategic change effectively is a fundamental leadership skill (Drenkard, 2012; Krummaker & Vogel, 2013). The positive deviance approach to change can result in exceptionally successful results (Allio, 2011; Cameron & Pews, 2012). The specific business problem is how the phenomenon and strategies of positive deviance manifest while leading successful strategic change in Canadian financial services organizations.

Purpose
The purpose was to explore how the positive deviance phenomenon and strategies manifest through the lived experience of successful Canadian financial services strategic change leaders. The findings highlight how leaders manifest positive deviance in complex, polarized environments.

Research Questions
Central RQ: What strategies do successful Canadian financial services strategic change leaders use for positive deviance?
Support RQ1: To determine patterns in what is currently working well, how might successful strategic change leaders perceive organizational strengths and potential?
Support RQ2: How would successful strategic change leaders describe their unique lived experiences of positive deviance strategies and processes?

Findings
Influence Factor
1 Organizational Context
Direct Control Factors
2 Leaderful Identity
3 Deep Skill Set
4 Strategic Behaviors
Outcome
• Leading Successful Strategic Change: The 4 Factor Formula

Limitations
Potential researcher bias was addressed through integrated bracketing, peer review, inclusion of rich data descriptions, and triangulation of several data sources (Finlay, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Conclusions
The 4 Factor Formula captures the positive deviance patterns, strategies, and processes of strategic change leaders. The findings highlight how leaders manifest strategic change in complex, polarized environments.

Social Change Implications
Successful strategic change leaders serve as a positive deviance role model for achieving extraordinary results.

Improving the results of strategic change has broad application for assuring resilient organizations, industries, communities, and countries. Incorporating the positive deviance approach into University, College, and corporate development course materials could improve the understanding of both how to lead strategic change successfully and how to identify exemplary change leaders.

Giving strategic change leaders a voice, a means to advocate and an opportunity to articulate how they engineer results have built the roadmap for others who also aspire to lead positive social change.

Committee
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