



CURRENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Dr. Pravin Vitthal Yadav

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

Since the early periods of the industrial revolution, technology has witnessed a dramatic progression from primitive steam engines to robotics and AI shaping up present-day shop floors. Albeit, people remain the most critical resource of any organization. The fact that economic efficiency can be achieved only when organizations optimize their human resource was realized long ago. But, how to optimize it continues to be the greatest *Yaksha Prashna*- intriguing the industries, managers, and academicians for a long.

Innumerable books have been written, experiments have been conducted, and research has been undertaken; man's endless pursuit to know the best way to manage his/her fellow beings continues in the realm of Human Resource Management. The book "Current Trends in Human Resource Management is a sincere effort from the author-editor Dr. Pravin V. Yadav to mobilize contemporary trends in HRM driving the industry.

Each chapter of this book seeks to present a critical review of its subject and to provide both practical and theoretical insights.

I am sure, the book would equip the students, teachers, and practicing managers with useful inputs in bringing the best out of human resources.

Wishing you a great reading....



Dr. A. B. Dadas

Director

Neville Wadia Institute of Management Studies & research,
Pune

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Understanding and Developing Organizational Culture

Dr. Shriram S. Badave

Introduction-

The key to a successful organization is to have a culture based on a strongly held and widely shared set of beliefs that are supported by strategy and structure. When an organization has a strong culture, three things happen: Employees know how top management wants them to respond to any situation, employees believe that the expected response is the proper one, and employees know that they will be rewarded for demonstrating the organization's values.

Employers have a vital role in perpetuating a strong culture, starting with recruiting and selecting applicants who will share the organization's beliefs and thrive in that culture, developing orientation, training and performance management programs that outline and reinforce the organization's core values and ensuring that appropriate rewards and recognition go to employees who truly embody the values.

An organization's culture defines the proper way to behave within the organization. This culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods, ultimately shaping employee perceptions, behaviours and understanding.

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Organizational culture sets the context for everything an enterprise does. Because industries and situations vary significantly, there is not a one-size-fits-all culture template that meets the needs of all organizations.

Strong culture is a common denominator among the most successful companies. All have consensus at the top regarding cultural priorities, and those values focus not on individuals but on the organization and its goals. Leaders in successful companies live their cultures every day and go out of their way to communicate their cultural identities to employees as well as prospective new hires. They are clear about their values and how those values define their organizations and determine how the organizations run.

Conversely, an ineffective culture can bring down the organization and its leadership. Disengaged employees, high turnover, poor customer relations and lower profits are examples of how the wrong culture can negatively impact the bottom line. Mergers and acquisitions are fraught with culture issues. Even organizational cultures that have worked well may develop into a dysfunctional culture after a merger. Research has shown that two out of three mergers fail because of cultural problems. Blending and redefining the cultures, and reconciling the differences between them, build a common platform for the future. In recent years, the fast pace of mergers and acquisitions has changed the way businesses now meld. The focus in mergers has shifted away from blending cultures and has moved toward meeting specific business objectives. Some experts believe that if the right business plan and agenda are in place during a merger, a strong corporate culture will develop naturally.

What is Organizational Culture?

An employer must begin with a thorough understanding of what culture is in a general sense and what their organization's specific culture is. At the deepest level, an organization's culture is based on values derived from basic assumptions about the following:

- **Human nature.** Are people inherently good or bad, mutable or immutable, proactive or reactive? These basic assumptions lead to beliefs about how employees, customers and suppliers should interact and how they should be managed.
- **The organization's relationship to its environment.** How does the organization define its business and its constituencies?
- **Appropriate emotions.** Which emotions should people be encouraged to express, and which ones should be suppressed?
- **Effectiveness.** What metrics show whether the organization and its individual components are doing well? An organization will be effective only when the culture is supported by an appropriate business strategy and a structure that is appropriate for both the business and the desired culture.

Culture is a nebulous concept and is often an undefined aspect of an organization. Although extensive academic literature exists relating to the topic of organizational culture, there is no generally accepted definition of culture. Instead, the literature expresses many different views as to what organizational culture is.

Organizational culture can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including leadership behaviours, communication styles, internally distributed messages and corporate celebrations. Given that culture comprises so many elements, it is not surprising that terms for describing specific cultures vary widely. Some commonly used terms for describing cultures include aggressive, customer-focused, innovative, fun, ethical, research-driven, technology-driven, process-oriented, hierarchical, family-friendly and risk-taking.

Factors That Shape an Organization's Culture

Organizational leaders often speak about the unusual natures of their company cultures, seeing their domains as special places to work. But organizations such as Disney and Nordstrom, which are well-known for their unique cultures, are rare.

Most company cultures are not that different from one another. Even organizations in disparate industries such as manufacturing and health care tend to share a common core of cultural values. For example, most private-sector companies want to grow and increase revenues. Most strive to be team-oriented and to demonstrate concern for others. Most are driven, rather than relaxed, because they are competing for dollars and market share. Some of the cultural characteristics that distinguish most organizations include the following

Values

At the heart of organizations' cultures are commonly shared values. None is right or wrong, but organizations need to decide which values they will emphasize. These common values include:

- **Outcome orientation.** Emphasizing achievements and results.
- **People orientation.** Insisting on fairness, tolerance and respect for the individual.
- **Team orientation.** Emphasizing and rewarding collaboration.
- **Attention to detail.** Valuing precision and approaching situations and problems analytically.
- **Stability.** Providing security and following a predictable course.
- **Innovation.** Encouraging experimentation and risk-taking.
- **Aggressiveness.** Stimulating a fiercely competitive spirit.

Degree of Hierarchy

The degree of hierarchy is the extent to which the organization values traditional channels of authority. The three distinct levels of hierarchy are "high" having a well-defined organizational structure and an expectation that people will work through official channels;" moderate "having a defined structure but an acceptance that people often work outside formal channels; and "low" having loosely defined job descriptions and accepting that people challenge authority.

An organization with a high level of hierarchy tends to be more formal and moves more slowly than an organization with a low level of hierarchy.

Degree of Urgency

The degree of urgency defines how quickly the organization wants or needs to drive decision-making and innovation. Some organizations choose their degree of urgency, but others have it thrust on them by the marketplace.

A culture with high levels of urgency has a need to push projects through quickly and a high need to respond to a changing marketplace. A moderate level of urgency moves projects at a reasonable pace. A low level of urgency means people work slowly and consistently, valuing quality over efficiency. An organization with high urgency tends to be fast-paced and supports a decisive management style. An organization with low urgency tends to be more methodical and supports a more considered management style.

People Orientation or Task Orientation

Organizations usually have a dominant way of valuing people and tasks. An organization with a strong people orientation tends to put people first when making decisions and believes that people drive the organization's performance and productivity. An organization with a strong task orientation tends to put tasks and processes first when making decisions and believes that efficiency and quality drive organization performance and productivity.

Some organizations may get to choose their people and task orientations. But others may have to fit their orientation to the nature of their industry, historical issues or operational processes.

Functional Orientation

Every organization puts an emphasis on certain functional areas. Examples of functional orientations may include marketing, operations, research and development, engineering or service. For example, an innovative organization known for its research and development may have at its core a functional orientation toward R&D. A hospitality company may focus on operations or service, depending on its historical choices and its definition in the marketplace.

Employees from different functions in the company may think that their functional areas are the ones that drive the organization. Organizational leaders must understand what most employees perceive to be the company's functional orientation.

Organizational Subcultures

Any organization can have a mix of subcultures in addition to the dominant culture. Subcultures exist among groups or individuals who may have their own rituals and traditions that, although not shared by the rest of the organization, can deepen and underscore the organization's core values. Subcultures can also cause serious problems.

For example, regional cultures often differ from the overall culture that top leadership tries to instill. Perhaps aggressiveness that is common in one area may not mesh with a culture emphasizing team building. Or an organization with a culture built around equality may have trouble if the national culture emphasizes hierarchy and expects people to bow to authority. Employers must recognize those differences and address them directly.

An organizational culture tends to emerge over time, shaped by the organization's leadership and by actions and values perceived to have contributed to earlier successes. A company culture can be managed through the cultural awareness of organizational leaders and management. Managing a culture takes focused efforts to sustain elements of the culture that support organizational effectiveness.

How Culture Develops

An organization's customs, traditions, rituals, behavioural norms, symbols and general way of doing things are the visible manifestation of its culture; they are what one sees when walking into the organization. The current organizational culture is usually due to factors that have worked well for the organization in the past.

Founders typically have a significant impact on an organization's early culture. Over time, behavioural norms develop that are consistent with the organization's values. For example, in some organizations, resolution of conflicts is hashed out openly and noisily to create widespread consensus, whereas in other places disputes are settled hierarchically and quietly behind closed doors.

Though culture emerges naturally in most organizations, strong cultures often begin with a process called "values blueprinting," which involves a candid conversation with leaders from across the organization. Once the culture is framed, an organization may establish a values committee that has a direct link to leadership. This group makes sure the desired culture is alive and well. For values blueprinting to work, organizations must first hire people

who live the values and have the competency needed to perform the job.

Sustaining A Culture

The management of organizational culture starts with identifying a company's organizational culture traits or "artifacts." Artifacts are the core business activities, processes and philosophies that characterize how an organization does business day-to-day.

Identifying these traits and assessing their importance in light of current business objectives is a way to start managing culture. Three broad concepts help identify the traits specific to a culture:

Social culture. This refers to group members' roles and responsibilities. It is the study of class distinctions and the distribution of power that exists in any group.

Material culture. This involves examining everything that people in a group make or achieve and the ways people work with and support one another in exchanging required goods and services.

Ideological culture. This is tied to a group's values, beliefs and ideals the things people view as fundamental. It includes the emotional and intellectual guidelines that govern people's daily existence and interactions.

Leaders and managers within an organization should approach culture management by initially gaining an understanding of the common traits found in all businesses. Then, they should take the following steps to manage their organization's culture:

- Identify **common** artifacts or traits, including those from the **standpoint** of an organization's social, material and **ideological culture**.
- **Convene groups** of employees' representatives from all **levels, functions** and locations of the organization to assess the validity, significance and currency of key artifacts.
- Subject those traits to a rigorous **assessment** of their underlying **shared assumptions, values and beliefs**.
- **Summarize findings and share** them with all participants to solicit **additional insights**.
- Create a culture management action plan. The plan should enhance traits that support corporate growth or organizational effectiveness and correct traits that might hinder a company's advancement.

Typically, shared assumptions and beliefs originate with an organization's founders and leaders. Because those beliefs proved successful (otherwise the company would not exist and the leaders would not be in their positions), often they go unchallenged; however, those assumptions and beliefs might be out-dated and may hinder future success.

Practices to Develop Culture

When an organization does a good job assessing its culture, it can then go on to establish policies, programs and strategies that support and strengthen its core purpose and values. In aligned organizations, the same core characteristics or beliefs motivate and unite everyone.

There are many tools for developing and sustaining a high-performance organizational culture, including hiring practices, onboarding efforts, recognition programs and performance management programs. The biggest challenge is deciding how to use these tools and how to allocate resources appropriately.

Hiring Practices

Effective hiring practices can help an organization capitalize on its culture. Traditionally, hiring focuses primarily on an applicant's skills, but when a hire's personality also fits with the organization's culture, the employee will be more likely to deliver superior performance.

On the other hand, ill-fitting hires and subsequent rapid departures cost approximately 50 percent to 150 percent of the position's annual salary. Unfortunately, nearly one in three newly hired employees' leaves voluntarily or involuntarily within a year of hiring, and this number has been increasing steadily in recent years.

Some hiring practices to ensure cultural fit include:

Looking at each piece of the organization's vision, mission and values statements. Interview questions should hone in on behaviours that complement these areas. For example, if the organization works with a lot of intensity, then job applicants should display that natural intensity to be considered for hire.

Conducting a cultural fit interview. Ask questions that elicit comments about organizational values such as honesty or integrity. If a candidate's description of the worst place he or she

ever worked sounds just like the organization where he or she is interviewing, the candidate probably will not be successful.

Leaving discussion of company culture for later. Do not tell candidates about culture up front. First, listen to what they have to say about their experiences and beliefs. This tactic will reveal more candid responses to help determine whether they are a fit for the organization.

Making sure at least three people are involved in the hiring process. Different people will see and hear different things. These varied perspectives give a clearer understanding of the person being considered for hire.

Searching for employees who will fit in seamlessly can have drawbacks. The biggest mistake an organization can make is to paint an inaccurate picture of itself as it tries to attract candidates. If new hires discover they have been sold a bill of goods, they will not be happy; they will probably not stick around, and, while they are around, morale will decline.

Another possible drawback is that people are more reluctant to take negative actions against people like themselves. As a result, mediocre workers are more likely to stay employed if they share the cultural values. Similarly, although an organization's comfort level is palpable when the culture is aligned, experts say, too much comfort can result in groupthink and complacency.

Reward and Recognition Programs

These programs are key mechanisms employers can use to motivate employees to act in accordance with the organization's culture and values. For example, if teamwork is a core value, bonuses should value teamwork and not be based on individual performance. Employers should also put the spotlight on those who personify the company's values.

Performance Management Programs

Employees who share values and aspirations tend to outperform those in environments that lack cohesiveness and common purposes. Performance management programs can greatly affect corporate culture by clearly outlining what is expected from employees as well as by providing a feedback tool that informs employees about proper behaviour.

Communications

Conflicting messages regarding corporate culture may create distrust and cynicism, which can prompt, or help employees justify, actions as deleterious as embezzlement. Experts say that cultural inconsistencies may also cause workers to grow discouraged, to believe management is disingenuous, to doubt statements from higher-ups and to be less inclined to give their best effort.

Organizations may be investing significant time and money in creating a culture but may not be reaping the commensurate rewards especially if executives, supervisors and rank-and-file employees have differing perceptions of the company's culture. Employers must therefore ensure that the organization clearly and consistently communicates its culture to all employees

Metrics

Assessing organizational culture is a crucial step in developing sound strategies that support enterprise objectives and goals. But how do you measure something as potentially tough to describe as culture? After identifying the key dimensions of culture such as values, degree of hierarchy, and people and task orientations, performing these next steps will help organizations assess culture:

1. **Develop a cultural assessment instrument.** This instrument should enable members of the organization to rate the organization on the key cultural dimensions, as well as on aspects of the organization not covered on the assessment.
2. **Administer the assessment.** Survey respondents should include individuals at all levels, functions, divisions and geographical units of the organization.
3. **Analyse and communicate about assessment results.** Leaders and managers should discuss areas of agreement and disagreement about the organization's culture.
4. **Conduct employee focus groups.** Just because top management leaders agree on organizational culture does not mean that all employees see things that way.
5. **Discuss culture until consensus forms around key issues.** Focus on "Who are we?" and "What makes us who we are?" Organizations that decide that where they are

now is not where they want to be may need to look at moving the organization to embrace a different culture.

Cultural assessments, and other activities such as cultural audits and 360-degree feedback, may also help uncover cultural inconsistencies. Then leaders can eliminate the inconsistencies. For example, if customer service is a focus of the company's culture, evaluate how much time employees spend visiting customer sites, how much interaction they have with customers, what customer service training they receive and other indicators of a customer service focus.

Legal Issues

Employers that emphasize cultural fit in their recruitment and selection process can be vulnerable to discrimination claims if they are not careful. Employers should ensure that hiring practices and selection decisions based on a cultural fit rationale do not result in discriminating against any applicants who may not be "just like" the selectors.

Global Issues

Research suggests that national culture has a greater effect on employees than the culture of their organization. Organizational leaders should understand the national cultural values in the countries in which the organization operates to ensure that management and company practices are appropriate and will be effective in operations in those countries. National cultural differences should be considered when implementing

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organizational culture management initiatives in global
businesses.

Managers must be able to respond to nuances in communication
styles, as well as deal with different expectations that employees
have of their leaders across national cultures. Not meeting those
expectations may doom the global organization's chance for
success in particular countries.

These issues become even more complex in global business
mergers. Success in international mergers depends on the merged
organization's willingness to enable people with different cultural
perspectives to engage in meaningful and valuable discussions
about the new business.

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AFTERTHOUGHT



Dr. Umesh S Kollimath
(MBA, MA(Eco), Ph.D.)

Dear Reader,

I am sure, you are experiencing a mixed sense of awe, overwhelm and anticipation after having finished reading this book! Yes, the “Current Trends in Human Resource Management” penned and pivoted by an enterprising faculty of HRM, has encapsulated a gamut of insightful articles in this book. The authors of each of the articles have chosen most contemporary issues and woven wonderful articles replete with information as well as insights on their topic. Besides, the book at one end satisfies curiosity of the readers by revealing how cutting-edge technologies will be reshaping the HRM practices, on the other hand some of the articles raise subtle doubts as to whether the organizations and employees are diluting commitments of mutual welfare from the either side!! I hope the thoughts that have begun lingering in our minds after reading the book shall continue till we take some radical different decisions to nurture, retain and promote the Human Resource that is within our sphere of control. With Warmest regards to the Authors, Editor, and all those who have contributed to this book.

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