CURRENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Dr. Pravin Vitthal Yadav

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Editor & Author

Dr. Pravin Vitthal Yadav

Assistant Professor,
Anekant Education Society,
Anekant Institute of Management
Studies (AIMS),
Baramati, Dist-Pune (MAH)

Title: Current Trends in Human Resource Management

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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Toxic Work Environment

Dr. Pravin Vitthal Yadav

Introduction-

A toxic work environment results in increased stress in your day-to-day work life. We all have our bad days or even a month at work. Managers pressurizing to work on specific projects, the communication gap between employees and the management, etc. several challenges are sign of a toxic workplace.

Lack of recognition, favouritism, unhealthy communication, gossiping, and high turnover are a few reasons that cause a burnout work culture. Toxicity at the workplace also includes bad leadership, poor management skills, loosened code of conduct, and lack of communication.

A hostile workplace faces such issues daily without a pause. It can create trouble, conflict, low morality, excessive tension, negative results, illness, high turnover, and even abusive behaviour amidst employees. A toxic workplace defines the conflict, where personal problems also affect productivity.

Toxic workplaces are assumed to be the outcome of poisonous managers lacking credibility and poor leadership skills. A toxic employee affects everyone around, and when they spread negativity at work, other employees tend to take frequent sick leaves, lack productivity, and remain stressed. These people's

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purpose is to retain power, money, or special status or to distract attention from their failures and misdeeds in their work performance.

What is a toxic work environment?

When the work, the people, and the environment cause discrepancies in your life, a workplace is referred to as toxic. These disruptions can adversely affect your physical health, resulting in sleepless nights, constant vigilant feel, sweaty palms, and a racing heart. When personal battles harm one's productivity, workplace toxicity is identified with significant drama and infighting.

A toxic work environment is one where negative, antagonistic, or bullying behaviour is baked into the very culture. In a toxic work environment, employees are stressed, communication is limited, blame culture is rife, and people are rewarded (tacitly or explicitly) for unethical, harmful, or nasty attitudes and actions.

How Does a Toxic Work Environment Come About?

Often, toxicity begins when the rules of a company's psychological contract are violated. It may begin as early as the first day – if an employee arrives full of hope and ambition, only to discover that the job as advertised on the jobs board, or the culture they were promised was a lie.

Or it may happen over time, as confidence in the company erodes.

Sometimes, despite their best intentions, toxic workplaces evolve because employees get unhappier and unhappier – creating a

festering well of discontent. When this happens it's often because employees originally believed in the company's mission but, somewhere along the line, they fell out of alignment.

A toxic work environment may also arise if a high-ranking employee who doesn't care how people feel rises to the top. Their lack of awareness of the importance of motivation theory and its impact causes them to prioritize results over all else. Human relationships and employee relationships start to suffer.

A toxic work environment can also evolve when there is unhealthy competition for resources. Employees may be competing for budget, time, over-worked people who are critical to projects, or even for a manager's time or attention.

When this happens, psychological safety starts to disappear.

Signs of a Toxic Work Environment

1. Negligent Communication

A toxic work environment has bare minimum communication. If you find your co-workers rarely talking among themselves or suddenly the workload is sulking everyone deeper into their assigned cubes, the work culture is becoming stressful and toxic. The biggest red flag of a toxic work environment is the breakdown of communication.

What makes a fully functional organizational culture is trust, transparency, and communication. Once this gets tampered with, there are misunderstandings and other downsides to it. Managers must initiate and encourage communication from their end. This

will provide motivation to the people to speak their minds and put across their thoughts.

2. High Turnover Rate

The most common and troublesome sign of a toxic work environment is a high turnover rate. People generally switch jobs due to a toxic work culture. Other times it is ongoing issues with the manager that causes them to quit. The cost that a company has to bear in such a case is huge as can be seen above. Additionally, it reflects poorly on an organization's goodwill and standing in the corporate or business sphere.

3. Harassment

While other forms of toxicity at a workplace may function undercovers and unnoticed, harassment and abuse is the biggest sign of workplace toxicity. If you as an employee experience sexual or mental harassment, firstly you must immediately report it. Secondly quit the organization without sleeping upon it.

4. Discriminatory Attitude

One of the many detectable toxicities of a workplace after harassment is discrimination. This discriminatory attitude can manifest itself in various ways. There can be gender discrimination, age discrimination, racial discrimination, among others. Gender discrimination can be spotted if there is groupism among men at your office or if the decision making positions rests with the men solely. Also, prevalent gender discrimination against women at workplaces manifests in the form of negligence

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5. Continuous Fights or Arguments

Be it a workplace or elsewhere, the very visible sign of prevalent toxicity is frequent fights or arguments. Disapprovals or disagreements are a common occurrence in the workplace. But this can immediately take an ugly turn if they go unchecked. In a workplace, the urgency to resolve fights is heightened with the possibility of a many people who can get involved.

An organizational culture that allows fights or heated arguments is not healthy for the mental well-being of its employees. As an employee, you must necessarily report a fight, for it may negatively influence your productivity levels too.

6. Tons of Workload

Another commonly noticed sign of a stressful work environment is burdening employees with piles of work. This is toxic as it shows no regard for a worker's saturation levels or capacity. The primary responsibility of HR managers is to look out for signs of drowning employees in a pool of work. It is exploitation that most people fall victim to. Additionally, it creates stress.

7. Manipulation and Blame Games

Any kind of negativity can be easily associated with and equally contribute to toxic work culture. Along with fights, company or internal politics is a serious matter of concern for HR professionals. They must be aware of any politics or manipulation doing rounds. As for the employees, they must make informed,

and smart decisions in order to avoid any criticism. However, if your work culture itself is woven around manipulative treatment from top to bottom, then you have fallen prey to toxic work culture. For instance, if superiors are able to manipulate juniors to take on extra work off of their hands, it is simply bullying and an abuse of power. This hints towards toxicity.

8. Nepotism and Favouritism

Picking out favourites or appointing close friends or family in significant positions without considering the hard work pitched in by other people shows biases. This biased behaviour is not motivational for the employees at all. Instead, it makes them believe that making progress won't allow them to succeed if they don't lick the boots.

9. Disregard for Employees' Personal Life

The most commonly heard of a rant from an employee is the overtime he has to put in. But many organizations pay extra for pulling overtime and have strict policies related to it. However, there are other organizations that exploit its workforce by extracting extra work hours from its people. This puts their personal life at stake. The "always-on" kind of working attitude is directly signalling towards your lack of commitment to your personal life. For example, working during vacations or holidays or odd hours of the day is sheerly employee exploitation and disregard for their personal life. More than often people aren't able to create a work-life balance due to such working patterns.

10. Lack of Growth and Developmental Opportunities

All an employee asks for is appreciation for his work, motivation, proper guidance, and growth. A seemingly stagnant position in an organization is a toxic trait of that workplace. If you as an employee find yourself stuck doing mundane and monotonous work with no clarity or growth, it is time to rethink your role in the organization. Regular growth is the quintessential motivation for the future.

On the other hand, an organization's toxicity level might be influencing your motivation or growth zeal. It is seen that a toxic workplace environment culminates a feeling of unwillingness and a lethargic attitude gradually develops. You must maintain social distancing from such a toxic environment.

11. Draining Workplace Energy

Any company's work culture is composed of several different elements. But the human resources or people are what actually shape it. The combined energy of everyone working in an office and managing it, in association with its ethics, makes up the energy of a particular workplace. But in a toxic setting, this energy is filled with cynicism and gloom.

12. Unclear Vision and Guidance

The most ideal way in which an organization can function is in the presence of proper vision and guidance. This calls for expert managers who would communicate and synchronize the efforts of their team seamlessly. Vague or ambiguous instructions and

guidelines will leave you stranded mid-way. In such a case, it would be wise to ask for better guidelines.

But toxic work cultures do not entertain such requests as there is a lack of communication and consideration for their employees' needs. In such a case, an employee will be baffled regarding the work to be done and won't fetch the required outputs. The consequences of vagueness and unclear guidance in a toxic work environment can be catastrophic.

13. Gossip Circulates About

Robust work culture has healthy communication and a toxic one has unwanted gossip circulating about. Some amount of gossip at an office is very typical. But in a toxic work environment, with the insufficiency of productive communication, there is a lack of focus on work. Employees become less engaged and more interested to spread and receive gossip. The presence of such gossip-mongers as employees and co-workers is any day non-productive and brings about negativity.

14. Credit is Always Due

A dysfunctional organization never gives due credit or recognition to outstanding work. Other times your colleagues or superiors may take credit for the work you do. Toxicity also persists when a single person carries around the weight of the entire team and does all the work.

15. Suppressed Employees

Toxicity will blatantly operate if the employees' opinion is rarely acknowledged. What's more condemnable is if the management fails to meet the needs of its workforce and practices suppression. An ideal organization would always pay heed to its people. If you feel unheard, unwanted, and feel overpowered by superiors or co-workers, your work environment is unequivocally toxic.

How to cope with Toxic Work Environment-

Find a support system

If you're experiencing a toxic work environment, chances are you're not alone. Finding supportive co-workers to lean on is critical during this time. While you don't want to be perceived as gossiping, you want to surround yourself with people that have a positive mindset. You may also want to find a support group outside of work. Having people to turn to that aren't your work colleagues gives you another safe outlet to vent your frustrations.

Seek out a coach

Symptoms of burnout can sometimes be confused with those of a toxic work environment. If you're wondering whether the problem is you or the company culture, seek a professional coach. Having an unbiased third-party sounding board can help you sift through your feelings and get to the root cause of the issue. They can also help you develop strategies to deal with a toxic work environment and set realistic career goals.

Implement mindfulness techniques

Mindfulness techniques can be a great way to manage work-related anxiety and stress. Start by doing a short, guided meditation or try some visualization exercises. Mindfulness in the workplace can help you focus on the present and be more intentional about engaging with the world.

Take time to de-stress

After a long workday, it's important to find ways to unwind. Find activities that help you get your mind off work. Some examples could be engaging in your favorite hobby, journaling or scheduling an outing with friends. Finding your identity outside of work will also help put things in perspective.

Establish healthy boundaries

If you find yourself in a toxic work culture, it's important to set healthy boundaries. For example, consider turning off your work phone after a certain time each day and only responding to emails during business hours. Practice communicating your boundaries clearly to your manager and co-workers. If a boundary is crossed, address it immediately, so it doesn't happen again.

Start planning your exit strategy

If you've decided that the status quo is worse than the thought of change, it's time to start looking into other job opportunities. Reach out to your network and update your professional social media profiles. Take this time to document all your achievements and create a timeline for when you'd like to leave your current position. Then develop an action plan with specific milestones to hold you accountable.

Finding yourself in a toxic work environment doesn't mean the end of your career. Instead, focus first on implementing coping strategies. That way, if you do decide to move on, at least you know that you tried your best to improve your surroundings.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

He is Assistant Professor at Anekant Institute of Management Studies, Baramati. He has 15 years rich experience in teaching & research esp., in the field of Human Resource Management. He has 15 research publications in Scopus Indexed / Care Listed/Peer Reviewed Journals.

Dr. Pravin Vitthal Yadav
(Ph.D, LL.B, MBA, M.Com, MCM)

AFTERTHOUGHT

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 encapsuled 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 controlWith Warmest regards to the Authors, Editor, and all those who have contributed to this book.

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