



The Intercultural Workplace

Amazon



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Executive summary

The intercultural workplace report will discuss an organization's culture, their internal and external factors and their mission as a business. It will target their values and beliefs, the importance of keeping a business successful and how they do this. It is important for a business to assess and develop their functional strengths and identify any weaknesses. In order to keep a business striving is to identify many things such as SWOT which allows a business to look deeper into their organization.

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Introduction

The report will focus on the world's largest online retail provider and a prominent cloud services provider called Amazon (Wigmore, 2022). The report will provide an overview of the organization along with SWOT analysis, and what the organization such as Amazon has to offer staff, their benefits, mission statement and their vision. It will include detailed information regarding their management approach and the organizational culture. The report will give a better understanding of how a successful business such as Amazon started with only selling books to now selling everything we all need and want at our fingertips. Behind the scenes with every business becomes hard work and determination to give the best service/products to their customers.

Human Resource Management will also be included in the report which will give a brief overview of what HR is about and more of an understanding of what they do for businesses. It will include what Amazon does in regards to HR management and how they take care of their staff and what opportunities they offer. Amazon is located in a variety of places, this report will focus on one area which will be Amazon in the UK.

'If you have been trying to make changes in how your organization works, you need to find out how the existing culture aids or hinders you - Edgar Schein (Toolshero, 2022)'

Amazon and its organizational context

Amazon is known worldwide with their fast delivery services which offers us a variety of products and services online to purchase at any time of the day at the comfort of our own home. Amazon began by selling books, but has now expanded to include a wide range of products as well as its own electronic gadgets, such as the kindle fire, e-book reader, and the Amazon Fire TV (Wigmore, 2022).

Amazon does not only offer us everything on their website but offers customers great deals. Amazon offers a 'prime' membership which allows customers to pay £7.99 a month to be able to receive packages the next day or same day delivery in certain residential postcodes for free, Amazon entertainment such as music and TV and also get the best deals on products first before non members (Amazon, 2022).

Amazon was founded on July 02, 1994 by Jeff Bezos, although the business started with only selling books the founder Jeff Bezos had a vision that he would soon be able to sell everything to customers. He decided to call the company 'Amazon' after the largest river in the world. Within one month of Amazon launching they already sold books in all 50 states and 45 countries which is a massive achievement in only a short period of time. Amazon expected their staff to work extreme hours as work/life balance did not exist back then. Jeff Bezos started the company from his garage but with business becoming successful he would need a bigger place to store stock and hire the correct amount of staff (Hartmans 2021). Amazon has warehouses located in a variety of places which first started in Seattle in 1977 (Rattner, 2020). Amazon is located in areas such as Spain, Italy, China, Australia and the UK.

Since 2010 Amazon has invested £32bn in the United Kingdom being the most advanced workplaces of their kind in the world (Amazon, 2022). There are 21 fulfillment centers located in the UK where they dispatch packages to their customers across Europe as well as the UK (Amazon, 2022). Amazon in the UK has been a great success and has seen revenue jump 20% in the UK in a year. With Covid-19 seeing many businesses struggle due to strict

guidelines closing many stores, and businesses having no option but to shut their doors for good, Amazon sales are up by 82% as people had no choice but to shop online and with delivery being so easy especially for Amazon prime members receiving packages the next day (Wright, 2022).

'Latest filings in the US show sales in the UK leapt to £23.6 billion in 2021 from £19.6 billion in 2020. In 2019, the figure was £13 billion (Wright, 2022)'

Amazon's mission is to make sure their customers have the best experience by using the internet and technology to be able to purchase anything they want and discover new things. They will continue to improve their services and make the economies of the countries where they operate more competitive.

'We believe this mission is important for the UK because digital empowerment for customers and businesses improves living standards for people up and down the country and drives our economic competitiveness and productivity in a global economy (Amazon, 2022).

Amazon has also opened a store in London called 'Amazon Fresh' which allows customers to purchase fresh food and daily essentials which is very easy to use with a scan of a barcode to enter the store on the app which allows customers to purchase what they need. Whatever a customer takes off the shelf is recognised by the app which will be automatically added to their bill, when they place the product back on the shelf it will be removed from the bill. Customers can bag their shopping as they walk around the store and once they leave they will receive the bill via the app (Amazon, 202).

Amazon's management approach and Human resource management

"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." - Peter Drucker (Pasha, 2018)'

Human resource is a department within the business that focuses on their people to make sure they are satisfied in their workplace and have all the

resources needed to be able to perform at a high standard. They provide personal support and raise concerns. They mainly focus on the important assets of a business (Williams, 2021). Human resource management has a number of areas to focus on such as recruiting staff, compensation and benefits, training and learning staff and organization development.

Amazon were placed second in the top 300 graduate employers list in the UK, they were also named one of the top UK companies for retaining talent on LinkedIn's 2018 attractors list. They were also ranked most popular Graduate Recruiter in the IT and Technology sector in the 2021 Awards in the UK. Amazon also created more than 55,000 jobs with wages starting from £11.10 per hour in London and £10.00 per hour in other areas of the UK (Amazon, 2022).

According to Amazon they provide staff members benefits and skills training opportunities which also includes private medical insurance, life assurance and income protection. Their staff get paid for breaks and are offered a pension plan. They also offer a Career Choice programme which launched four years ago to allow employees to gain degrees in game design and visual communications, nursing and much more. 95% of their tuition is prepaid (Amazon, 2022). Amazon also created a program to help veterans succeed by offering career support by their devoted military recruitment team. They offer roles at Amazon including mentoring and support.

Amazon also monitors their practices and procedures to assure health and safety in their sites are all safe places to work and reduce any risk to their staff. They improve their systems providing their employees with the skills they can use at the workplace but also outside the business. Amazon in the UK provides their staff a shift pattern which allows the employees to work four ten hour shifts per week with three days off each week. They believe this improves their ability to provide fast delivery and also staff get an extra day off in the week and less traveling to work saving time and money (Amazon, 2022). They also recognise the pressure the festive period has on their staff with sales higher than ever, Amazon recruit more than

20,000 staff to work the festive season with a possibility for a permanent position (Amazon, 2022).

Although on Amazon website the staff benefits and what the organization has to offer seems positive and a great opportunity, according to reviews on Indeed, staff seem to think otherwise. There have been written reviews by employees who have said the staff do not get treated very well and they feel as if they are just a number to the management team. They have also said they stand on their feet for a long period of time. Whereas some have explained how it's a great company to work for with friendly staff with a good work/life balance (Indeed, 2022).

However according to The Guardian News article Amazon have treated their staff like robots. Ambulance emergency services have been called to some of the UK centers due to staff experiencing major trauma or pregnancy problems. Staff are reported to have fallen unconscious and some experiencing electric shocks. Pregnant women have shared their experiences at Amazon who were forced to stand for hours on end whilst being heavily pregnant (The Guardian, 2018). Amazon had reportedly said they are taking action to change making sure staff health and safety improves and an increase in pay. They have also told 'The Mirror' that they do not recognise some of the allegations made (The Week, 2019).

'At Amazon, we provide all kinds of jobs for all kinds of people. It doesn't matter if you have a degree in astrophysics or no formal qualifications at all there's a role for you here (Amazon 2022)'

Amazon also allows visitors to book a tour to be able to see how the business runs and what staff do at the center. This is open to anyone who wishes to work there or would just like to visit. Although due to the pandemic it has been stopped for the time being the offer the tour via a live video (Amazon, 2022).

Amazon organizational culture

Organizational Culture is important for every business to understand and use this in their workplace. It's how the organization can succeed through growth. How people feel, think and their beliefs (Alvesson, 2013).

The culture of a firm determines how people work and operate, making it a critical component of its success. Organizational culture is the set of beliefs, values, and communication styles that make up an organization's environment. The basic principles of a firm or business are encapsulated by organizational culture. Many aspects of an organization's culture are governed by its culture, from how it makes decisions to how employees interact (Indeed, 2022).

Each company has its own culture, but most fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Clan Culture
- Adhocracy culture
- Market culture
- Hierarchy culture (Indeed, 2022).

"Organizational cultures are created by leaders, and one of the decisive functions of leadership may well be the creation, the management, and if – and when that may become necessary — the destruction of culture" - Edgar H. Schein (QuotesPark, 2022).

According to Amazon, they take pleasure in its distinct culture, which values and honors the difference that each employee contributes. Gender, ethnicity, age, national origin, sexual orientation, culture, education, and professional and life experience all contribute to their unique perspectives. They are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and they are always looking for new methods to expand their effect (Amazon, 2022).

'We want our employees to be empowered to speak their minds, and be heard. Every Amazonian should feel comfortable sharing their unique perspectives, and every Amazonian should seek the perspectives of others (Amazon 2022)'

Amazon thinks that creating a welcoming and inclusive culture is critical to employees performing at their best and to the company's success. They hire people from many walks of life in order to create a welcoming and inclusive environment. They also have 12 affinity groups with over 87,000 employees spread over hundreds of chapters worldwide. Through their connections with universities, colleges, and institutions, they recruit a varied range of people (Amazon 2022). They want to make a positive impact on the world. They adopt a new, more hands-on approach to what is generally known as corporate philanthropy, with a culture focused around tackling unsolvable issues. They understand the value of money, but they feel their actual strength lies in diving deep and collaborating with community partners to solve the world's most critical challenges (Amazon, 2022).

Amazon Affinity groups

- People with disabilities - Amazon helps disabled employees by increasing awareness, assisting with professional development, participating in community outreach, and improving accessibility for all employees and consumers.
- Women in engineering -Amazon Women in Engineering (AWE) is working to make Amazon a great place for technical women to work
- Black Employee network - BEN's main goal is to provide a support system for Amazon's Black employees while also pushing for inclusion and diversity across the company.

There are many more such as educating their staff on LGBTQ and an affinity group for non-binary people (Amazon, 2022).

Amazon want employees to take risks. This element of the corporate culture may be seen in how the company pioneered the use of

data-intensive information technology to sell a wide range of items online, starting with books. Employees at Amazon are encouraged to take risks, such as investigating new business opportunities. They promote boldness while also encouraging openness to new ideas through an organizational diversity policy. This enables the organization to find the most cost-effective solutions to problems (Meyer, 2017). Employees at Amazon are encouraged to focus on consumer's wishes and needs. Their company is constantly on the lookout for new consumer trends and preferences, one which incorporates itself into the online buying and related services. As the e-commerce business grows, Amazon's success in satisfying consumers is maintained by this trait of the corporate culture. The cultural characteristics of the company have the benefit of encouraging innovation. Boldness and audacity, for example, encourage fresh ideas to better Amazon e-commerce operation. Another benefit of this organizational culture is customer focus which ensures that the company consistently meets customers' expectations and desires (Meyer, 2017).

Amazon would fall into the Adhocracy culture category as they encourage employees to come up with new ideas and experiment. They also seek to grow in their business and to develop new products/services.

Amazon SWOT & PESTLE Analysis

Strengths • Strong brand name • Selection of products • Third party sellers • Subscription services • Technology adoption • Local Marketing • Delivery service with free same/next day delivery for subscribers • Supply chain	Weaknesses • Failed products • Care of employees • No physical stores other than Amazon fresh
Opportunities • Careers • Global growth • Partner with other companies • Build retail stores	Threats • Competition • False reviews • Security threats

Amazon has a very strong brand name known world wide selling a massive range of products suitable for everyone with fast delivery and next day delivery if subscribed with prime. Amazon has also experienced failed products such as Amazon kindles and echo devices which were pulled off the market (Green, 2021). Amazon has also experienced false reviews on their website which are not easy to spot, once investigated the reviewers were engaged in fraud. This can put customers off buying from Amazon and unable to trust the website (Schoolov, 2020). There is room for Amazon to grow and to have retail stores where customers can visit to purchase products and to partner with other companies.

Recommendations

1. Amazon should keep staff complaints under control and make sure the way their staff get treated in their workplace is done correctly and this is something that should be assessed further. They could have monthly reviews with all staff to make sure everyone is happy and if there is a problem this is the time staff can open up and

express their feeling in a safe confidential place. Any issues should be dealt with straight away and managed.

2. False reviews should be kept under control and stopped. There could be ways to be able to spot false reviews and be able to block them from posting on the website again.
3. Amazon should consider retail stores across the world, although they do have 'Amazon Fresh' which is a food store, they could consider selling more products

Conclusion

After conducting research into Amazon, it is apparent to see how the company has grown over the years since Jeff Bezos founded it in his garage in 1994. Amazon has a powerful brand name that is well-known internationally. Many people have benefited from their quick delivery, especially when customers subscribe to Amazon Prime for a little monthly price that guarantees next day delivery. Seeing many individuals suffer with the pandemic or those who are unable to drive to stores. Amazon Prime has aided millions of people by delivering to their doorstep and providing easy access to their website at any time of the day or night. Customers can choose from a variety of products and services. Amazon is on a mission to ensure that their customers get the best possible experience.

In London, Amazon has also opened a 'Amazon Fresh' store that offers fresh food and has an excellent check-out system. This could also be an opportunity for them to consider opening a retail store also. Their Human Resource Management strategy to be successful, since they have won awards and created thousands of careers. They offer training and advantages to employees at work, and they support people from all walks of life. They also assist employees in obtaining degrees and provide support to military veterans. They also ensure that all employees' health and safety is up to par, as well as that they have a good work/life balance. Despite the fact that research has found several accusations from Amazon employees alleging that they were treated unfairly and like slaves. Amazon needs to take immediate action. Amazon had a great idea of inviting visitors to their sites so they can see how it all works for themselves and meet the friendly staff.

When it comes to Amazon's organizational culture, they said they enjoy the company's unique culture. They are welcoming of all genders, ages, ethnicities, and other factors, which is nice. They want their employers to be able to speak up and give their views. They have fantastic affinity

groups that help a variety of people, including those with impairments. They appear to be optimistic and supportive of their employees.

There is also room for improvement at Amazon when creating a SWOT analysis, such as the way staff are treated and room to grow. I believe Amazon will continue to succeed and will continue to come up with new ideas and offer customers new products and services in the future.

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