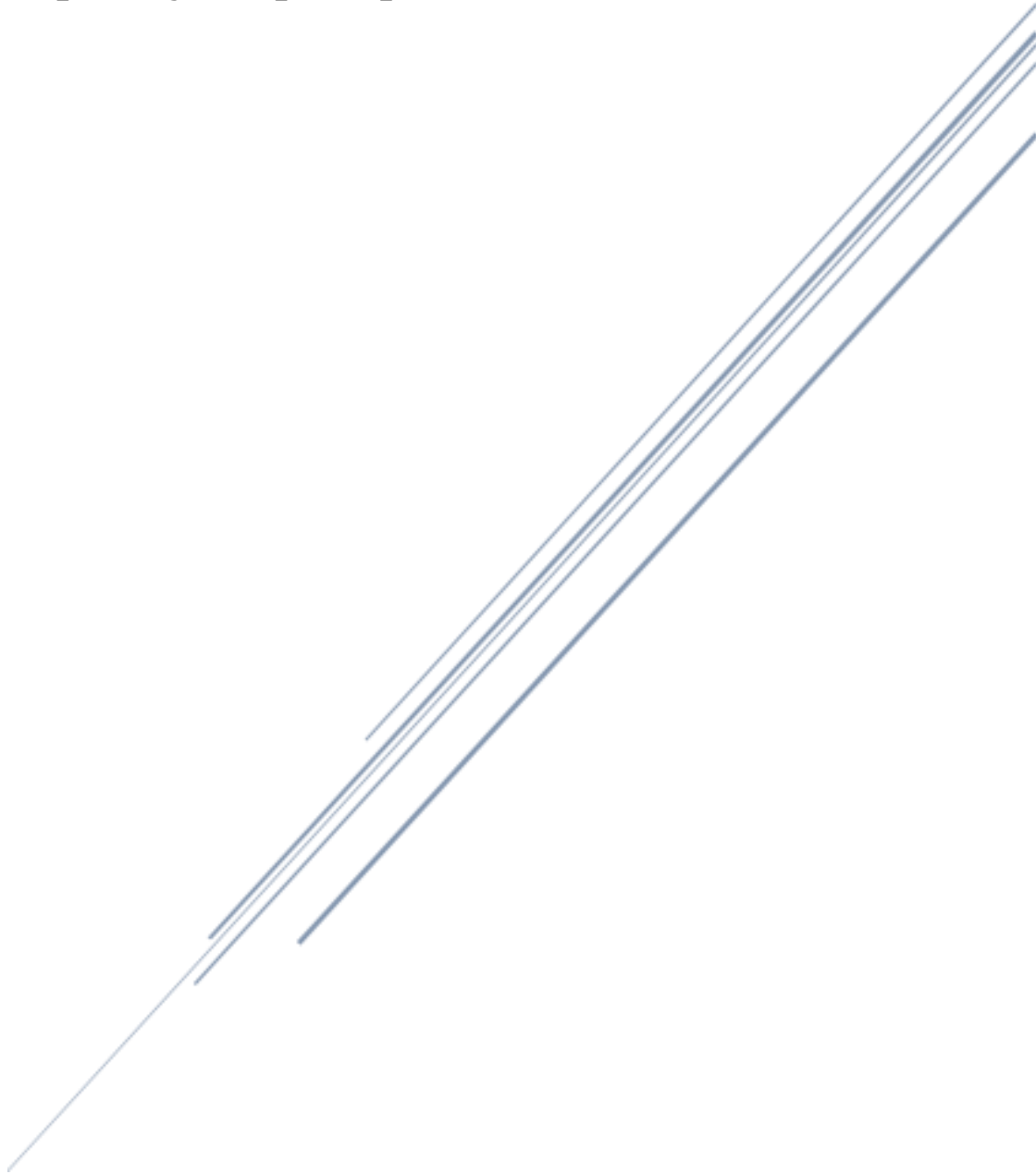


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Superbuy Shapes Up for the Future!



Managing in Complex Environments: Strategies, Insights and Solutions
LCDB7002

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Executive Summary

Successful organisations in the competitive environment of global markets entail a common element; agility to change into the complexity. It is because change will eventually happen, and it is inevitable. Therefore, to adjust the change and compete in the existing market, organisations need to evaluate the internal and external factors and study the dynamics that could expedite the competitive advantages to the organisation over their rivals. Changes that have been identified from the business environment and the discrepancies observed from employees have led to review the business context at Malone Superbuy Ltd. and propose new strategies to disentangle those tribulations. In a time of vigorous competitions form in and outside of the company, adequate examinations will help the managers and employees of the organisation to face complex situations and manage the uncertainties smoothly.

Therefore, this report discusses the critical actions that are required for Malone Superbuy in detail and proposes recommendations to address the most challenging human resource management issues to the company, especially labour turnover and improving employee motivation and increase their loyalty to the company. The analysis of the current situation on employees draws attention to the level of employee turnover, which is relatively higher compared to the competing businesses. Effective implementation of a diversity policy into the organisation and facilitation of flexible working will help to reduce employee turnover. Moreover, the organisation needs to constantly work on employee motivation and maintain an easy mode to discover the required talents that might help to address some of the HR challenges that are affecting with the change of the business environment due to the uncertainty of Brexit and the panic of Covid-19 pandemic.

After analysing the organisational context of Malone Superbuy by using PESTLE model, I propose.

- 1- to implement an effective Diversity Policy
- 2- to establish a culture where Flexible Working is allowed and support Work/life balance
- 3- to build a stunning 'Talent Pipeline.'
- 4- to introduce an active Total Reward System.

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Introduction

In a world of competition and uncertainty, businesses need to secure their position and remain at a competitive edge. This difficult objective cannot be achieved to any organisation unless they utilise competitive organisational advantages over their competitors. For some organisations, their quality product or service, the pricing and technology could be identified as advantages; however, most of the organisations have established their competitiveness through their human resources. Effective human resource management is one of the critical success factors to retailers and supermarkets where diverse human effort is highly involved in delivering its products and services.

Malone Superbuy is a large food retail company prevailing in the UK for more than two centuries and has maintained its reputation for quality foods. The company has 4000 employees; however, the shops or the outlets are highly depended on part-time female employees and students. Though the company offers an average wage for its employees, a high turnover of employees has been an area of concern for the management. Moreover, growing competition among retail food companies has been identified; as a result, market leaders are taking appropriate measures in terms of pricing, quality, the introduction of new technologies and offering more varieties to remain in the competition. These developments and increased competition in the industry has been affected by Malone Superbuy so that the management of the company has acknowledged the importance of improving the quality of the services that deliver to the customers and the need for reduction in labour costs. In addressing these challenges, the management has shown their interest to explore how a diversity policy adds value to the organisation and its role in addressing employee turnover and establishing a talent pipeline. Therefore, this report will propose a strategy that would increase the competitiveness of the company by introducing diversity policy initiatives to address the existing turnover problem of the company and improve the talent pipeline of them. This will be supplemented with recommendations for improving other related human resource functions.

This study investigates the distinctive organisational context of Maloney Superbuy using PESTLE model. Through this model, the organisation is analysed in terms of political, economic, social, legal, technological and environmental factors that might affect the human resource management, especially employee's turnover problem. Even though multiple factors are disturbing the overall management and business operations of the company during this devastating time of COVID -19 pandemic, this report refrains from addressing all those factors. Apart from this, I will discuss the importance of adopting a talent pipeline as well as the improving reward policies for their effectiveness in motivating the employee and increasing employee loyalty for the company.

I have investigated the problem by using the available reports and background information on Malone Superbuy and literature on similar organisations in this industry to learn how those organisations implemented HR policies, especially policies on diversity and inclusivity.

Materials from industry leaders and experts have been widely researched to study the implications of relevant ideas and models that might help to remain in complex environments. For this report, I will use the term ‘diversity’ to mean diversity and inclusion.

Analysis of the Issue

Introduction of the Context

Malone Superbuy operates in the UK, and its’ outlets are established in different regions of the country. Most of its outlets are in London, South West and South East of the UK. Therefore, it is perceived that the organisation runs not in a simple environment or standard settings so that the contingency model or ‘best fit’ approach is being used in developing HR strategies of Malone. The contingency model is commonly used to develop HR strategies of the businesses that operate in the complex environment settings considering that company’s HR strategies are one of the competitive advantages of the organisation and it could be established to fit into the business environment seamlessly. HR strategies of a company in one geographical location or country may be different from another so that a best-fit remedy in HR practices are seldom. Therefore, organisations must have effective HR strategies that could be aligned to the environment of the business setting. Thus, to cater to this need, the PESTEL model was used to analyse the competition and figure out the external context of the organisation in the setting of Malone regarding its markets.

To get a better understanding of Malone’s position in terms of the strategic group that the company belongs in the industry, similar organisations in the same industry has been mapped and compared with Malone. According to the literature available on retail food companies in the UK, Aldi and Lidl have been identified as the companies that hold the closest similar characteristics of Malone in terms of structure and target markets of the company. Both Aldi and Lidl have been categorised as ‘discounters’ among leading supermarkets in the UK.

According to the UK Retail food Report (2017, P:5) *“The main features of discount supermarket shopping are everyday low costs rather than special “sale” prices; limited product ranges and a focus on price. Stores are smaller and relatively uniform in size and layout. Stores range from 800 square meters (8,600 square feet) to 1,500 square meters (16,000 square feet). They carry predominately private label products; however, these are exclusive labels rather than store name.”*

The chart below depicts the market share of most common supermarket brands in UK

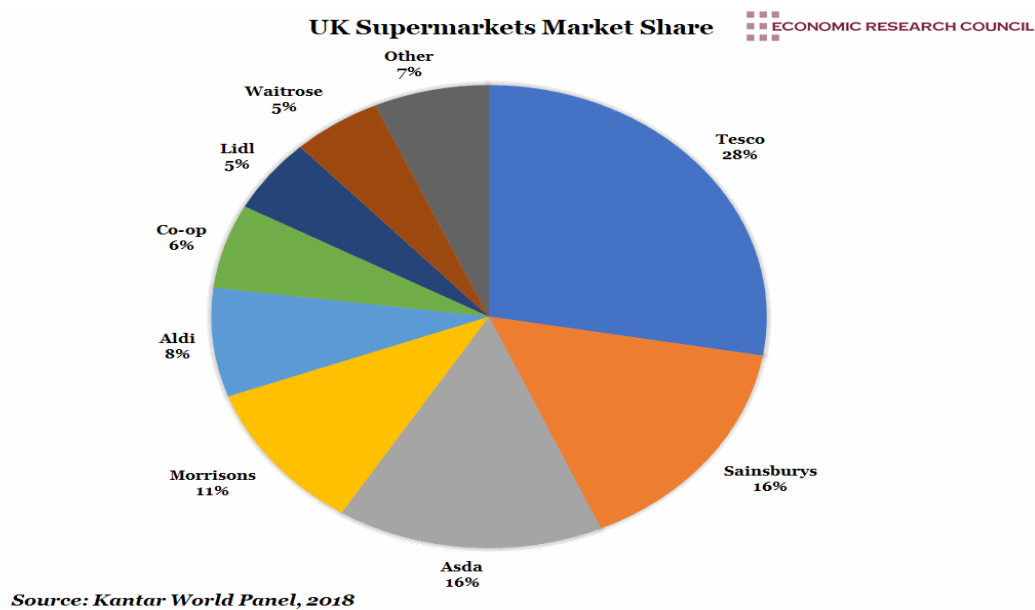


Figure: 1 UK Supermarkets market share (Economic Research Council 2019)

Therefore, the policies, strategies that are effectively implemented in these organisations and other similar organisations have been matched with Malone.

Analysis of Malone's external environment using PESTEL Model

Companies struggling to survive and compete in the highly competitive markets require to identify their competitive advantages and align their business strategies accordingly. In order to identify those advantages, organisations need to analyse the environmental forces that might affect organisational operations and their effectiveness. Therefore, for this reason, PESTEL model proposed by Harvard professor Francis Aguilar (1964) is used to access the external organisational environment through which the information could be utilised to draw appropriate business strategies for the business. According to Kotler et al. (2005), it is believed that if the business can audit their existing environment and expected changes that might affect the organisational performances, the organisation will be at a better position than its competitors to respond the uncertainty and unexpected situations.

PESTEL is a combination of initials of diverse factors that affect not only Malone Superbuy instead, all the businesses in the same industry. These influential factors include Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal.

Political Context

The outbreak of Coronavirus to different parts of the world has led to a worldwide pandemic with full of panic and uncertainty. Starting from China, it has spread to 130 countries, tolling

142539 infected cases and 5393 deaths worldwide on 14th March 2020 and UK has counted more than 800 infected cases and 22 deaths (WHO, 2020). Undoubtedly, this has created anxiety amongst the employees as well as employers, especially where employees are needed to travel to other areas for meetings and other work responsibilities and frequently contact many people. Since WHO acknowledged COVID-19, a health emergency to the world and later declared it as a pandemic, countries are taking severe measures to stop spreading the virus; as a result, flights have been cancelled, travel has been curtailed, and leading supply chains throughout the world got interrupted (Mark 2020). As the fatalities and infections keep growing, governments will take people's health as the utmost priority, which will lead to enforcing more severe measures that will finally bring more uncertainty and turmoil to the economic activities. In that situation, a recession is inevitable (Mark 2020). Therefore, organisations and employees need to be fully prepared for all the scenarios to the extent where layoffs and close down of some outlets are also expected.

Currently, most of the crucial decisions by the governments are taken to mitigate the crisis; therefore, Melone needs to assess the situation and manoeuvre their strategies accordingly. Concerns related employee's health and safety, extensive paid leaves, flexible working arrangements, provision of sanitary products, additional expenses for hiring employees are some of the areas where political decisions may affect in addressing the current crisis management phase.

Apart from the complexity and uncertainty brought by COVID-19, the decision to leave the UK from the European Union has been an issue of uncertainty and insecurity to the future of UK businesses and economic movements. Even the UK has formally left EU from 31st January 2020; no finite answers are available for the most queries of its future relationships and deals. Though this is the transitional period to negotiate the best possible arrangements for both parties, the fear and uncertainty are still vigilant for businesses. It is because it has spread the fear and nervousness to business leaders about the prevailing trade agreements and the business opportunities with European countries. Tax levies on goods and services and import-export regulations may be affected in the event of no-deal Brexit. These issues would upset the supply chains of Malone and similar businesses which will encumber extreme stress and intense pressure to managers and responsible employees in organisations.

To ensure employment rights, promote equal opportunity and flexible working environment to employees, many employment regulations have been in place as good employment practices, however, due to the newly formed relationship of EU-UK, any bid unravelling those regulations will not only slow down the economic activities or bring complexity into the business environment, it will be seen as counterproductive and reverting which will be detrimental for employees as well as business owners and politicians in the long run.

Brexit implications on immigrants and employment sector are significant. According to the report 'Brexit implications employment and social Affairs: Facts and Figures (2017)', around 3 million immigrants from European 27 countries are living in the UK in 2015, and a significant

number of those are young people age between 25 and 34. However, the number of UK citizens living in European countries is estimated at around 1.2 million.

When compared these statistics of UK domestic workforce and the EU citizens living in the UK, the employment rate of EU nationals is higher than the unemployment rate, and they are more likely to be employed in lower-skilled works unlike the UK citizens living EU countries. UK citizens are more likely to be occupied in high skilled employment. Therefore, it is highly expected that business-like Malone will be significantly affected by the Brexit because of the high risk of losing many of their immigrant workers even though a supportive program is in place to cater the immediate visa issues of those immigrants.

Employers will be experiencing skill shortages during this period of 'BREXIT incubation' and recruitment difficulties due to post-Brexit migration restrictions. This will hamper businesses, especially companies like Malone, who employ many unskilled workers from the EU.

Economic Context

Since the Coronavirus has been recognised as a health emergency to the world by WHO, people's lives have been severely affected including their social habits and economic conditions which has almost brought a halt to the normal life of the many. According to the World Economic Forum, Central Banks of three among five of G7 countries have lowered their interest rates in this month; where Federal Banks of US and Canada have lowered from 1.75% to 1.25%, and Bank of England from 0.75% to 0.25% which is a reflection of the expected economic impact of the current pandemic (Yik 2020). In terms of COVID-19, the impact is not only for a single market or industry; however, it is broader than that. According to studies, though the immediate effect is mainly on transport businesses, tourism and hospitality industry and small business owners, the spread of virus continues as expected, industries relying on manufacturing and production will not survive due to the disruption of the global supply chain (Yik 2020). As of now, many neighbouring countries of the UK has taken a strong measure to fight the virus; as a result, the transportation has been interrupted. Therefore, there is a tendency that the supplies coming from European markets will be disrupted and prices of those imported goods will get increased.

The UK has observed the weakening of pound during the campaign for Brexit, and the depreciation of the sterling has been approximately 10 per cent (The Brexit Vote, Inflation and UK Living Standards, 2017). In general, the UK relied on most imports (almost 40 per cent of food consumed locally) which has an effect on price with currency exchange rates (United Kingdom Retail Foods, 2017). This significant drop in sterling value will lead to an increase in the cost of living in the UK. Gasoline is priced in US Dollars so that the energy prices will go up (Ranking, 2017) increasing inflation; as a result, some businesses like Malone may need to downgrade its operations which may decline employment opportunities and particular types of occupations. Moreover, If UK and EU cannot agree on any trade deal and cannot ratify by the end of this year, there will be an increased tariff on all the exports of UK to the EU.

The changing pattern of the economic situation may alter the consumer spending habit; certain goods and services may be on hold. The rising cost of imported items have already increased its price, especially groceries, retails, and consumer goods; as a result, supermarket leader have engaged in a price war. However, Malone and small retail firms cannot remain long in this position of price cut for customers. As a result, Malone and similar companies need to look into areas where they can cut down their expenses mostly what they spend for the employees.

Recent statistics show that the bank interest rates in the UK have been dropped up to .25 per cent to stimulate the economy, and the government has proposed economic incentive packages for the affected businesses of COVID-19, there is a high possibility of increase of inflation. However, the Bank of England has the mandate to raise the interest rate to curb inflation if a sudden increase in price occurred. If they found the need for the increment of salary or increase in the minimum wage, the total expenditure for employees' benefits will be increased. In the event of this situation, businesses will move their HR strategy to minimise their expenditure for their staff. Malone will not be an exception.

Social Context

People living in the UK enjoy a high standard of living due to a solid foundation of economic growth which leads to building a robust social infrastructure. The education and health care systems have been identified as a reliable and trustworthy system that delivers its service to the people of diverse backgrounds and demonstrating equality among the citizens. These two pillars of the social infrastructure depict diversity and inclusivity in the country. However, disturbance of income inequality and wage differences are issues of concern for many people in UK. Especially wage differences between male and female workers and developmental prospectus for different genders are serious reservations for employees. According to the Market line report (2014), the UK is among the top countries of OECD in terms of increasing inequality. In the context of Malone, female employees take over male employees in the shop floors where more turnover do experience.

Demographic changes and increase of ageing people make the labour market and other markets to open new opportunities because most disposable income lies with ages between 40 to 65 age categories. In some areas or regions, specific local demographic labour markets refuse to be employed in certain types of jobs like working retail outlets for a minimum living wage (Office for National Statistics 2015). Remarkably, about 60% of these people use to shop through online (ONS 2015), which demonstrations that Malone and other similar organisations could consider utilising the effectiveness of these people belonging to this cluster, who are better off in adopting modern technology into real life.

Work-life balance is a buzz word across all the business contexts and "for many employees throughout the world, balancing their work, and personal lives is a significant concern" (Mathis and Jackson, 2011, p.67). Malone and other companies require to acknowledge the work-life balance due to the employee's demand and recognise the importance of a balanced life for all the employees. This allows employees getting flexibility in work time, working environment,

maternity leave, and so on. Therefore, it is considered that workers are more attracted to organisations which facilitates these demands and are more successful in retaining their loyal employees.

Technological Context

Since R&D and IT is crucial to ensure a robust economy, "the UK is renowned for the quality of its R&D and its strengths in science and innovation" (Marketline 2014). People working both public and private industries have witnessed the introduction of new technologies into the workplace and boosted competitiveness in the business. Development in technological areas brought efficiency to the businesses; however, in most areas of the businesses, it offsets the need for human workers. Especially, disruptive technology is shaking up the markets, and online businesses and e-commerce platforms are taking over of in-store buying across all the age groups of the people. Increasing automation, easier online ordering and the increasing use of smartphone apps overshadow the human aspects of employment in some areas.

Due to panic created with the spread of stories related to Coronavirus on media, many customers prefer online ordering and delivery of their grocery shopping. Moreover, many people will prefer automatic checkout options to eliminate human contact on the shopping floor. This help to contemplate about incorporating new technologies into the business processes. The growth and fast-tracking expansion of e-commerce among supermarkets leaders are significant, and it enhances more competition for traditional retail businesses in the UK and elsewhere. This innovative network of distribution opens up more competitive space for Malone and other businesses because of its low cost and relatively easy operational platform.

Legal Context

UK's legal system is efficient, transparent and organised. "This makes for an environment that is conducive to business, as legislation is passed in a practical manner, keeping all stakeholders in mind" (Marketline 2014). As a result, the system allows a high level of business freedom (5th among European ranking and 14th in world ranking; 2014 Index of Economic Freedom) compared with some of the OECD countries (Marketline 2014). Apart from creating an environment of commercial freedom, fundamental employee rights, their health and safety, along with many other aspects of workers' wellbeing, are guaranteed through prevailing laws and regulations. Malone and other businesses are required to take appropriate measures compatible with these changes.

The annual increment of minimum wages and living wages will be a burden for many businesses, and the amendment that has taken place to the Workplace Pensions legislation will have an impact on Malone and other the retail supermarkets in the UK. This amendment makes it obligatory for businesses to contribute 3 per cent to their workers as a workplace pension besides the 5 per cent contribution of the employee. Till April 5, 2019, employees are required to contribute 3 per cent of their wages and 2 per cent from the employer (the pension regulator 2019). So, the increment from both sides may imply businesses.

Environmental Context

Increase of ethical and environmentally conscious people among organisational workforce and shoppers in supermarkets influence Melone and other organisations to be careful on their product sourcing from ethically sound and reliable sources which push the increase in the price of products and services. Employees who are more conscious to environment and nature lovers prefer to work organisations who are more socially responsible, firmly implement the regulations on environment restrictions imposed by the laws and regulations.

Recommendations

Though this report reveals varieties of challenges that are facing to Melone Superbuy by undertaking the PESTLE analysis of Melone, the main objective of this report is to recommend a diversity policy initiative to reduce the consistent labour turnover issue, improve the talent pipeline and reward policy of the company. Therefore, the recommendations proposed are entirely to address the assigned need of the company and will not cover any other business requirement that may be essential for the company.

1. Implement an Effective Diversity Policy

1.1- Diversity and its implications

Diversity is a boiling topic in the workplace environment. It is because individuals need to be respected and appreciated with their differences, valued their knowledge and experiences and primarily accepted by others as who they are to maximise the individual contribution and performances for the organisational success. However, many organisations have failed in understanding the burning sensations of the workers and the massive loss for the organisations when employees are treated poorly and discriminated on the basis of their personal differences and prejudice. The ultimate result is loss of most valued talents and a high turnover of employees.

According to CIPD 2019, diversity values the differences in people and is expressed as recognising everyone as a distinctive individual; however, not leveraging organisational success actively on it. It recognises the advantage of having a very different range of views in problem-solving and the employees being representative of diverse followers and customers of the organisation. One of the most significant benefits that diversity and inclusion may deliver is enriched problem-solving (Rana, 2013). Since individuals from different cultural backgrounds come with distinctive experiences, and cognitive processes and very different perceptions to a business that could be extremely helpful for solving unique problems that exist in the organisation. Organisational acknowledgement of these viewpoints not only help to effectively solve the problem, but it results in bringing more creativity into the organisation.

Diversity and inclusion sometimes help safeguarding a company against “groupthink.” According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, groupthink is “a pattern of thought characterised by self-deception, forced manufacture of consent, and conformity to group values and ethics.” Groupthink is believed as a risky propensity because it obstructs effective decision-making in the organisation. In addition, diversity in the organisation helps in fostering creativity among the employees by interchanging ‘original of thoughts’ among one another within the organization (Hassan 2015). This creativity is a indispensable prerequisite for most successful innovations.

The concept of workplace diversity not only helps to organisational development however, it creates lot of opportunities for personal development and growth. According to Bearman et al. (2017), the opportunity to expose to different cultures, mingle with individuals of different ideas and mindsets foster an atmosphere to grow intellectually, that gives a broader understanding of the workplace that leads personal growth and development.

Though diversity uplifts organisational productivity and efficiency, it has number of drawbacks that need to be considered. For example, some researchers believe that improved diversity sometimes create more conflicts due to the different perspectives and ideas which leads increased tension among the employees and these conflicts are basically originating due to the lack of understanding among the employees or their incompetence to settle the differences (Jordan, et al. 2010). In organisations, all the conflicts arise among employees are not accounted as bad conflicts. However, if the employees fail to acknowledge the difference of opinion among them, employees loose respect and fail to promote unity among the employees and teams in the organisation as a result, diversity could be an extreme challenge for the organisation (Jordan, et al. 2010). This could be especially problematic when the organisation requires change, and the resistance to change is happened due to poor change orientation among the team members and this will result in destructive behaviours from the employees and obstruct organisational productivity (Jordan, et al. 2010).

Individuals from different backgrounds and cultures tend to communicate differently and process information very distinctive ways. This difference is believed to be a significant barrier in achieving the anticipated result. Some studies suggest that homogenous groups perform better than culturally assorted groups if there are serious communication issues among the group members and it is because of communication barrier, some of the group members are unable to contribute their optimal support to the group success (Barbara 2010).

Though diversity sometimes bring some undesirable energy into the business, researchers have established that overall diversity accelerates organisational performance and creativity (Investors in people 2019). According to Culture Amp 2019, businesses with inclusive culture are expected to be three times higher in their performing, eight times better in overall business outcomes and two times better in beating financial objectives. Apart form these benefits, allowing people of different backgrounds to work in the organisation benefits from different language skills, that helps to sell the products and services to global markets and provide customer service support. Therefore, organisations require to have an inclusive working environment, empowering a distinct range of workers functioning together effectively.

Therefore, in implementing a diversity policy, Malone needs to manage diversity policy in a way that both employees and organisations are mutually benefitted. According to Snyder et al. (2008), effective execution of organisational diversity policy delivers a balance in organisational power and carries a competitive advantage for businesses. These advantages include strengthening the organisational brand, develops corporate reputation and attracts the best talents and qualified personals as well as more customers to the organisation.

The management of Malone is aware of the implementation of diversity policy by many similar businesses in the industry. For example, Aldi is one of the companies in a strategic business group with Malone, who has effectively implemented the diversity plan. The message about the organisational commitment to diversity and equal opportunity is stated as.

"At Aldi we value diversity above all else and offer fair and equal opportunities for all of our colleagues and job applicants, regardless of age, sex, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, part-time or fixed-term contract status, pregnancy or maternity. Our commitment extends to all levels of the company, and our Equal Opportunities and Prevention of Discrimination policy forms part of the contractual obligations of all colleagues." (Aldi.com)

Even though, Aldi, and most other supermarket chains have initiated diversity policies in their organisations, introduction and effective implementation of a diversity programme is challenging. One of the reasons is that organisations most of the time misjudge the time and effort required in implementing an effective policy. Management never acknowledge the importance of integration of diversity policies with all the other HR policies due to that organisation believe it is an impartial project that could be carried out separately from all other policies of the organisation. In fact, it is difficult to align the structure and leadership style with diversity policies in large organisations.

Apart from this, Malone require to abide the existing laws and regulations in relation with diversity and inclusivity. The aim of the existing Equality Act in UK is to encourage equal opportunity, promote effective relationships among people and eliminate unlawful discriminations. According to this act, it is unlawful to discriminate against workers on age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Therefore, it is an obligation to the employers to take all the measures in eliminating prejudicial behaviours against employees.

Therefore, Malone has to consider these factors in introducing the new policy and have a general understanding in connection of diversity with Equal Opportunities. Equal opportunity focuses more on distinctions at the societal or group level, whereas diversity management focuses more on individual level, in the companies where they attempt to recruiting and retaining people of different backgrounds and experiences (Glover, J. and G. Kirton, 2006). Apart from these

factors, Malone must focus on the key principles in implementing the policy in order to implement effectively.

1.2- Guiding Principles to Implement Diversity in Workplace

In implementing the diversity policy, Malone can follow these principles.

- i. *Leadership Commitment*: leaders in the company should display their commitment by linking diversity policy with the organisational strategic plan and efficiently introducing the appropriate policies and practices in the organisation. Their unswerving effort should be seen to all the employees and the public through frequent communications on the achievements against its action plans.
- ii. *Introduction of Key Policies that support diversity*: Diversity policy is meaningless if other vital policies and procedures are not introduced promptly. A complete diversity policy must be sustained with the modifications of other HR policies. For example, recruitment, flexible working, reward, and performance management policies are some of the interdependent policies with diversity policy.
- iii. *Education and Training*: Education and training could be the most crucial element to change Malone's managers and employee's mindset, foster an inclusive culture and advance organisational practices. Managers and employee's mindset must be aligned with the anticipated objectives of the company especially on equal opportunities and other related areas of diversity, and it could be only achieved through awareness, education, and cultural sensitivity training.

2- Establish a Culture Where Flexible Working is Allowed and Support Work/life Balance

Offering flexible working options to employees working at Malone is crucial for their sustainability and extremely important for the implementation of diversity policy in Malone. Workplace flexibility provides flexible options to the employees in doing their work concerning how, when and where the work is carried out. Such opportunities create a competitive advantage and a remarkable financial advantage to the organisation in this competitive economy (Corporate voice for working families 2005). It is no longer an issue of women with children or people with parental responsibilities; however, it is a business for everyone. It is because all in the employment in the UK have the right to request for that arrangement of flexible working, according to the law passed on June 30, 2014 (Breathe 2014). In fact, flexible working is

supported by many UK employees especially employees of Generation Y. According to the CIPD report 2019, one third of the employees feel empowered when they are allowed work flexibility and remote access to workplace (CIPD 2019). Subsequently businesses are increasingly recognising the importance of flexible working. According to the statistics, almost 94% of UK companies offer their employees some sort of working flexibility and 73% of managers confirm that the organisations they belong mostly support for it (ILM, 2013).

2.1- Advantages of flexible working

Workplace flexibility is recognised as one of the most potent instruments for recruitment and retention.

Workplace flexibility is recognised as one of the most potent tools for the recruitment and retention of employees in the organisation. According to statistics, almost one-third of US employees consider flexibility in working as an essential factor in taking up a job offer (Hudson Highland Group 2008). This scenario is quite similar to the low-income hourly workers like the shop floor employees in Malone. In a survey carried out among hourly workers and low-income employees and their line managers in 2008, 80% of workers stated that workplace flexibility is one of the crucial factors for them in remaining in a job and accepting a new offer as a job (Corporate Voices for Working Families 2009). According to the ILM (2013), 78 percent of UK companies believe that flexible working arrangements make easier to retain employees and 79 percent employers says that flexible arrangements inspires high potential female employees to return to the job after their maternity leave.

Flexible arrangements in work make employees happier and healthier.

Many employees believe that the flexibility in their work arrangements is a great support to feel good and make a quality life with their families. According to the CIPD Report (2019), 78 percent of employees agree that flexible working improves quality of life and 86 percent of flexible workers in the UK report that they are satisfied with their job compared with 77 percent of nonflexible workers. Most of the employees rank work-life balance as the second-best predictor after economic security which makes workers quality health, reduces stress and good sleep (Auman & Galinsky 2009).

The opportunities created to the employees on their work flexibility is determined one of the critical elements that reduce employee's stress that affects absenteeism and turnover (Corporate Voices for Working Families 2005). Among parent employees, especially mothers who take the primary responsibility of the children, requires some flexibility in their work concerning children's school time and their academic programs. Parents need to pick up the children from school and available for other essential school functions which are hugely stressful to single parents when they are not allowed the flexibility. Meanwhile, employees who take eldercare responsibilities of caring a sick relative experiences stress to a great extent which requires flexibles options for such situations.

Workplace flexibility decreases interruptions in the office environment and expensive absenteeism.

Since Malone Superbuy has many student labours in their shop floors, flexible arrangements may be required during the last weeks of the semester or on the verge of assignment due dates. Companies like Malone who are more dependent on specific social groups like students, need to consider the commonalities of those groups and give consideration for their periodic priorities and allow flexibility on changing their working schedules or changing the shifts. This would help the company to decrease the absenteeism and ultimately reduce employee turnover. Employees acknowledge the flexibility in work and believe that it is one of the most effective means of decreasing unexpected absences from employment, and in a study, 63% of labours enjoying flexible arrangements in their work appreciate the arrangement and assured they were less absent from work than before (McGuire et al. 2010).

Workplace flexibility circumvents excessive turnover and saves millions of dollars each year.

The loss incurred with departing of a skilful employee from an organisation is enormous, which sometimes takes an extended period to recover the emptiness in the organisation. Most of the time, employees who have high esteem and is carrier oriented would never leave the organisation for an impractical reason. Many employees acknowledge work-life balancing approaches and consider family-related matters seriously. Therefore, Malone should consider the issues related to family caring and offer flexibility in working to eliminate high employee turnover. According to researches, many employees depart from businesses in each year due to family caregiving responsibilities and the replacement cost of this individual worker is expected to be more than \$6.5 billion a year to the US employers (MetLife Mature Market Institute 2006). However, 65 percent of employers believe that flexible working arrangements in the organisation promote a higher degree of motivation and commitment among the employees (ILM, 2013).

2.2- Some drawbacks of flexible working

Managers and employees widely agree that flexible working brings added advantages to the organisation as well as employees' performance. However, there are some implications that flexible working could create to the organisation. When employees are allowed flexi time, supervisors may find difficulties in arranging meetings and organising important discussions among employees which may adversely affect decision making among team members (Scott, 2016) and when the time of a quick fix is required while employees are working remotely, it could be difficult to get an immediate fix which will lead a further delay and disruption in work progress. In many organisations, flexible arrangements cannot be provided equally to all the employees as a result, some disagreements could be seen among staff. For example, flexibility of time may not be approved to jobs that are highly interdependent like assembly line. Moreover, it is believed that the desired commitment and innovation from employees may be hindered due to the employees being kept away from other employees and the office environment.

2.3- How Flexible Malone Could be?

There are several types that companies apply in flexible working. The most common type that is applied in most organisations is part-time working which requires labourers to work fewer hours than standard, full-time hours. Apart from this, there are other types of flexibilities that Malone would apply when it is needed.

- Working from home – workers are allowed to spend their working time away from the company premises and can work from home, or anywhere they like. However, this flexibility cannot be given to Malone's shop floor employees who require to be present at the shops.
- Job sharing – the designated responsibilities and time is split among two employees who decide the hours among them. This could be appropriate for Malone's shop floor employees.
- Compressed hours – workers are allowed to work fewer working days to over their typical working hours. Students and parents who may need this flexibility could be offered with the consultation of line managers and their respective team members when they agree to take the workload for essential reasons.
- Flexi-time – workers are given the autonomy to choose where and how they work outside a set of core hours determined by the employer.

3-Build a Strong 'Talent Pipeline.'

Companies like Malone who consistently requires looking for hiring new employees, it is imperative to establish and update an active talent pipeline which will help the organisation to get the appropriate talent quickly, saving organisational resources, money and time. A talent pipeline is referred to as a pool of qualified potential candidates who are readily available to take up the appropriate roles in the company when they get available. This competent pool could be entailed with both internal workers who have the right skill set and aptitude as well as candidates from outside sources like online job portals, referrals, and career webpages.

Today, the business environment is exceptionally dynamic so that employments are abundant; however, appropriate qualities and skills are not sufficient. Especially in the time of Brexit, such a pool of competent and potential employees will be an excellent help for Malone. Therefore, Malone shall not wait for the applications; instead, the company may initiate the process and offer the prospective candidates because the machinery and processes are ready for the move before the need arises. Sometimes, management may not perceive talent pipeline beneficial for the low skilled workers; however, maintaining and updating of a database of potential candidates will help the company to access the prospective candidates easily and fill the vacancies quickly.

3.1- Benefits of a Talent Pipeline

Establishing a talent pipeline, Malone will enjoy these benefits:

3.1.1- Decrease time to hire: Finding a suitable candidate to fill the vacancy in companies is the time-consuming activity of a human resource function. An established talent pipeline reduces the time-to-hire by 50% (Intra worlds 2019).

3.1.2- Reduce business interruption: Sudden decisions employees to leave companies to disrupt organisational functions and might increase the workload to other employees. Besides, some of the work may not be completed or delayed. However, companies will be able to fill up the gap quickly with an active and updated talent pipeline and decrease negative impacts.

3.1.3- Increase success in interviews: Based on the bond with the prospective candidates, the success rate of interviews is expected to be increased, and researches show that candidates approached from talent pipeline are seven times more successful in interviews than other candidates (Intra worlds 2019).

3.1.4- The drop in the cost of hiring: To build an updated talent pipeline, an initial investment will be required. However, researches show that it will pay off in the long run with a higher margin, and it shows that businesses use to enjoy a 10 to 15 times higher return (Intra worlds 2019).

3.1.5- Locate the appropriate talent: Organisations search for the best or the most appropriate talent. Keeping a good repo with potential candidates before opening up for a vacancy will help to lower the chance of a rival salary war because the existing relationship helps to get contact and convince the candidate easily (Intra worlds 2019).

4-Introduce a Total Reward strategy

Organisational reward strategy is an essential human resource strategy which concerns in designing and implementing policies and practices to reward employee's performance and their productivity to advance and accomplish organisational goals. There are major two categories of reward systems; strategic and total reward. Companies like Malone could be better off in implementing a total reward system which consists of all the works that workers value and covers both tangible and intangible benefits that employees appreciate. Total reward creates a synergy by combining both transactional and relational rewards. Transactional rewards are the tangible rewards like pay and benefits; however, relational rewards are intangible rewards attached with personal experience, training and development. The total reward is the all-inclusive approach that embraces all the possible ways that employees could be rewarded and acquire fulfilment through the work. The objective of this approach for Malone is to amplify the total effect of an

extensive choice of reward initiatives on employee loyalty, motivation and their commitment to the job.

Total reward approach ensures a more significant impact on the employees because the combination of different rewards creates a long-lasting impact on employees' motivation and their commitment to the organisation. Moreover, it appeals to more individuals, attracts more talents and has the flexibility in addressing personal needs.

4.1 Reward strategy and its implementation

The Reward strategy is the approach that describes how the objectives will be achieved through the strategy. The strategy clarifies where the reward practices need to be in a shorter time frame and the long run and how the organisation will reach there. Therefore, Malone needs to clearly define its reward strategy and communicate it with all the levels of the organisation and all employees. That strategy is a declaration that defines the organisational interest and the need for a reward policy, relevant practices and processes meeting long-term organisational goals. Besides, it will help to develop the values and standards of the company on how employees will be rewarded and will be a source of motivation; as a result, improve employees' productivity.

Conclusion

Raising and maintaining a motivated workforce is a challenge for many organisations. However, thoughtfully implementing a Diversity Policy that appreciates individual differences and accommodates those disparities into the organisational policies will significantly help to build a motivated workforce in the organisation. It demands a constant management commitment to creating a difference in the organisational culture to progress and implement an interrelated set of policies and practices. In a time of uncertainty in the business environment due to the panic and turmoil of COVID-19 and loud sound of Brexit bell, Malone requires to be opened to accommodate employee demands and what they stimulate in working at Malone.

One of the most severe concerns of Malone is employee turnover problem which requires a set of unified policies and practices to instigate efficiently. To address this problem, Malone's organisational context has been analysed in terms of political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal aspects, to propose timely actions distinctive strategies to implement.

The actions and strategies that are proposed to implement are;

Implement an effective diversity policy

- Keep the connection with employees belonging to EU countries, show them their value to the business update and help them to follow the requirements to achieve settled status in this country.
- Plan upfront for potential staff requirements and how this could be met given reduced access to employees from countries of EU.
- Consider substitutes for hiring workers from EU countries. Workers from other talent pools including other races, older, disabled or long-term unemployed people, or ex-offenders.
- Develop or train the existing employees to decrease the dependency on EU workers.

Implement a flexible working arrangement policy

- Invest some in work-from-home technology- as most employees are likely to use smartphones, computer or laptop and internet connections, few may require a minimal amount for enough bandwidth to complete the work they do at the office.
- Introduce online platforms that allow effective team communications and collaborations during work from home. Meetings could be conducted through skype or many other platforms and real-time collaborations could be done through project management platforms or apps like Collabedit.
- Allow employees more flexibility in extending their leave during the pandemic period. The risk of an infected staff coming to work and the panic created due to his presence could be the more costly end of the day.
- Ensure a reasonably flexible and effective plan is developed to combat the difficult situation. This must be developed and reviewed with the consultation of the staff and share those plans with employees and explain the benefits and available for employees through those HR policies.
- Plan for the interruptions by analysing the essential business functions, job roles and critical elements of the supply chain. Identify the measures that could be taken and how the business could be operated when increased absenteeism has been identified or when any interruptions occurred for the supply chain.
- Consider establishing self-serve options for customers such as installing self-checkout machines and online services to minimise the risk of face to face contacts and reduce employment costs in the future.
- Provide training to employees serving in critical zones, that will allow workers to fill do the job well for absent colleges.

Introduce a total reward strategy

- Establish a medium that showcases staff success stories- this will help to show the employees that there are opportunities for upward mobility within companies.
- Offer employees something from their wish-list- Recognizing staff for a well-done job by offering them a useful thing that they want from their wish list could make an ongoing practice in the organization.
- Create a system where employees encourage a peer to peer recognition. Such internal employee recognition program allows to send thank you notes and cards and donate gift cards this will help to improve team bonding and self of belonging to the company.
- Offer rewards that help to uplift the career – sending the employee to short term leadership training or other online training that help to build the career is an excellent way to reward the employee and this will benefit the employee as well as the company.
- Encourage mentoring; this will allow the experienced employee to feel he/she has been given importance and authority. When it is done correctly, the mentored one day will become the mentor and it is a fine way to show the staff your trust and appreciation.

Build a strong talent pipeline

- Review job adverts and branding activities with local educational institutions to make the organisation more attractive and help to sell the organisation.
- Improve recruitment adverts with the consultation of Gen Y ERG;
- Post recruitment adverts on social media platforms
- Build a close relationship with local universities and colleges as a training base and integrate internship programs integrate modern technology into the business and support employees to use social media as an effective instrument to improve communication among colleagues and customers

One might think that the introduction of these policies and practices would be costly and time-consuming; however, several examples are available to prove that it will pay off in the long run and the company will be at a better position soon in terms of the concerns related with HR and employee productivity.

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