

Workplace Culture and its impact on Organisational Efficiency

Introduction

According to Mullins (2016) internal environment is in relation to culture and climate of an organisation and the atmosphere surrounding the organisation. External environmental factors outside of the organisation is referred as influences that can affect the performance of the organisation such as economic, social, technical and governmental.

McDonalds

McDonalds are aware of the issues regarding the environment and recognise the need to preserve and protect the environment and continually monitor the impact the business is making. McDonalds have a policy in place whereby food is sourced close to home and 70% of the food comes from the UK and Ireland (McDonalds, 2019).

Definition of PESTLE

“A technique for analysing the general external environment of an organisation in terms of the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, environmental and legal aspects” (Christy, 2016, p. 622).

Definition of Cultural Web

The Cultural Web (Leadership for change, 2019) is described by Johnson and Scholes as a paradigm which identifies six crucial elements of organisational culture consisting of a set of beliefs and ideas which influence how people make sense of things. These elements are:

- Stories
- Rituals and Routines
- Symbols
- Organisational Structure
- Control Systems
- Power Structure.

Pestle Analysis of McDonalds

Political

According to Independent (2017) staff at two of the McDonald's restaurants voted to go on strike over working conditions such as low pay and insecure working hours. The workers' wanted at least £10 an hour and more secure hours. The strike was raised by MP Jeremy Corbyn in parliament. Some workers were paid as little as £4.75. Jeremy Corbyn did ask the Prime Minister to support the McDonald's staff's case for an end to zero-hour contracts and a fair wage. Theresa May however replied that it was a matter for McDonalds to resolve internally and zero-hour contracts are beneficial to a lot of people due to flexibility. McDonalds said that they have given workers the choice to choose between fixed and flexible hour contracts and that 86 per cent picked the latter. Since April 2016 McDonalds have increased wages by the hour three times by 15 per cent. McDonalds stated that the strike was in relation to internal grievances rather than pay and hours contracted. Flexible working conditions is one of the selling points as it allows people to work as much or as little as they want. Flexibility allows employees to balance work with personal commitments. Organisations who offer flextime are reducing the likelihood of losing great employees in whom the company have invested greatly in. It is essential for organisations to view flexible working as a way to help retain workers (Curzon, 2018). UK workplace regulation protects and promotes equality. The government promotes an equal and fair business environment and is shaped by regulation and legislation. Due to a rise of a multigenerational workforce organisations are implementing reward strategies, developing and training workers to manage differences (Chartered Management Institute, 2018). McDonalds (2019) are proud of the diverse workforce in the UK and have a policy of employing local staff which conveys a true reflection of the community they serve. McDonalds ensure that all employees are not discriminated against based on gender, age, religion or sexual orientation and even run programmes to encourage diversity. CMI (2014) states that managers need to engage with employees up to four generations with different expectations of workplace environment, different sectors and cultures.

Economical

Turill (2017) stated that the economic impact of Brexit since triggering Article 50 has left some businesses within the food industry under strain. McDonalds said that though the market was facing tough times and uncertainty the business was averaging with sales growth and they are committed to training and developing staff as well as making no compromises on the quality of ingredients. A McDonald's spokesperson has said Brexit will have little impact on the business and the driving factors in survival amongst competitors are the things customers deem most important such as quality of food, value, convenience and an enjoyable experience. McDonalds have demonstrated compliancy through the introduction of McDelivery and a vast menu option including opulent designs for the signature collection boxes to improve aesthetics. CMI (2014) reports that many organisations are too focused on short term results and lack the patience needed to innovate for long term results. Many managers are unwilling to take risks and due to the economic crisis managers are more risk-averse and unwilling to contemplate failure.

Sociological

January is the time of year where people abstain from old habits and start to try new thing after an indulgent Christmas. This concept has now been evolved to Veganuary where people consume a vegetarian diet. The movement has proved popular over the last few years as many big brands have also joined the movement. McDonalds has finally catered to the UK'S growing vegan population and have added vegan options to the menu. Veganism is a lifestyle choice, not just a dietary choice. Veganism may soon be a protected characteristic and will be a crime to discriminate against vegans. People are more considerate towards the environment, veganism is not just about animal welfare but the reduction of carbon footprint (Graham, 2019). The government have plans to tackle obesity and proposed to help people make healthier food choices. McDonalds have voluntarily displayed nutritional information in the stores (Daily Mirror, 2018). The organisation needs to enhance consumer beliefs about the product's superiority and the business needs to improves features in order to have their brand selected (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2009). The future of the UK's workforce will be older, the numbers stand at 10.4 million people aged 65 years and over, an equivalent to a third of the UK workforce.

Management need to address this demand and consider the health and workplace design to suit staff including flexible working and ensuring the creation of age-friendly workplace culture (CMI, 2019). The average age of an employee in McDonalds is 20. McDonalds do however employ 120,000 people of all ages from school leavers to people in their 80s (McDonalds, 2019).

Technological

“The manner in which tasks of the organisation are carried out and the nature of work performance: the materials, systems and procedures, and equipment used in the transformation or conversion process” (Christy, 2016, p. 79).

McDonalds have bought an artificial intelligence (AI) machine-learning company which will automatically change drive-thru menu options depending on factors such as weather, time, restaurant traffic and recognition of car number plates. The technology can suggest ice creams on hot days and instantly offer suggestions based on customer's previous orders. Plans to bring in AI to the restaurants would enhance customer experience by providing greater convenience on their terms and create a more personalised experience. The same system will be implemented to the self-order kiosks and ordering apps. Sensitivity will be assured while implementation takes place (BBC News, 2019). Organisations do not exist in isolation, but rather a part of a larger environment where challenges are presented and threats for survival are established. Unless organisations adapt to innovate or improve products and service, customers will flee to newer improved offerings (Contanza et al. 2015). World Economic Forum (2019) states that new technologies are fusing the digital, physical and biological worlds, impacting economies and industries and challenging humanistic traits. This potential can dramatically improve efficiency of organisations and potentially undo previous damage done by industrial revolutions. There are concerns however with government regulation on new technologies, security concerns (data breaches), and fragmented societies.

Legal

According to BBC (2015) McDonalds employment practices in the physical sense are more open than most where kitchens are visible to customers. Rather than just a short-term job role, the company have an established training centre in the UK and offer teenagers in Wales the chance to study apprenticeship in hospitality and catering. McDonalds is very progressive in terms of educating their workforce. McDonalds (The Guardian, 2017) have offered 115,000 UK workers on controversial zero-hours contracts the option to shift to fixed contracts after staff complained they were unable to get loans and mortgages because there was no guarantee to employment each week. Zero-hour contracts are controversial as some companies use them to exploit workers, offer unpredictable working hours and changing shifts with short notice. McDonald's chief executive added that they were not bowing to government pressure but wanted to invest in the people who work for them so they can deliver a quality service to the customers. According to Gov.UK (2015) everyone who is employed on a zero-hour contract should be entitled to the same rights as a contracted employee such as national minimum wage, rest breaks and protection from discrimination. Zero-hour contracts can provide flexible working hours for individuals. Contracts should be transparent and clear allowing the employee to consider all rights and implications and management should be fair as employees are not obliged to accept all work offered and under short notice.

Environmental

McDonald's are rethinking ways to become more sustainable by challenging themselves and using a global platform to influence people to change too. Initiatives such as recycling can help the environment. Since 1982 McDonalds have been collecting litter around restaurant's locality. Litter patrols walk and clean up events have covered 150,000 miles a year and McDonalds are supporters of charities such as Keep Britain Tidy and Keep Wales Tidy. Education is key to persuade people to recycle and bin rubbish (McDonalds, 2019). According to BBC (2018) McDonald's decision to implement packaging from sustainable sources by 2025 has been taken due to overwhelming demands from customers who emphasised on packaging such as straws, wrappers and bags to be environmentally friendly (recyclable or renewable materials). UK stores no longer use foam

packaging but as McDonald's are a global business, some restaurants might struggle to recycle packaging by 2015 due to infrastructure, regulations and customer behaviour. Alongside outcries from the public, Prime Minister Theresa May has pledged to ban all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. Adaptation is an organisation's reaction to external conditions impacting the environment (Moon et al. 2012). Characteristics of adaptive culture is demonstrated through an organisation's attention in respects of external focus such as external environments, especially the needs of the customers. Another characteristic is the organisation's interpretation of factors faced and proactively working to identify external problems and having the ability to change (action-orientated). Organisations with adaptive culture are receptive to change, innovation and new ideas. The organisation is flexible and not bound by procedures and rules. The organisation can sustain through collaborative action planning in dealing with environmental situations (Contanza et al. 2015). McDonalds have installed recycling units in over 1000 of UK restaurants making separation of paper and plastic easier. The paper and card packaging used is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) ensuring sustainable sources (McDonalds, 2019). According to Chartered Management Institute (2018) new technology and global competition are fast altering corporate structures.

Cultural Web

Stories

McDonalds (BBC, 2015) key area where McDonald's have immortalised to perceive values and great behaviour are:

- Burgers are still at the core of what is on offer, but the menu have a varied healthier option
- Cost is always low with nutritional information as this is important
- Training of staff to enhance motivation and retention
- Innovation such as café style stores, coffee and salad.

According to BBC (2015) staff are set time targets for service, efficiency and profit margins are key. The "McJob" is defined by the English dictionary as low paid and unstimulating with limited prospects. McDonalds have

insisted a change to the definition as the organisation feels that the job teaches responsibility. Staff are called “crews”, a military sounding operation to ensure the need for teamwork. Some staff say they have never felt pressured and felt the job was fun and not taken too seriously while others described working conditions as degrading and dehumanising as every action was robotic. According to Barrett (2016) the importance of values in building performance culture leads to a value led culture where employees feel fulfillment driving mission assurance, which results to customer satisfaction.

Routines and Rituals

Since 1989 Ronald McDonald House Charities have helped support families with children in hospital and donate part of the profits to support the cause as well as hold annual fundraising events (McDonalds, 2019). McDonalds (2019) say working for the company is more than just a job and want to leave a positive impact on every action taken. Alongside offering good quality/value of food they want to leave customers with lasting experience and allowing employees flexibility, equality and development sharing a common approach of positivity. Happy employees create happy customers, so it is essential to have job satisfaction. McDonalds employee benefits include:

- Holiday pay
- Discounts on major high street brands
- Pension scheme
- Flexible scheduling
- Performance reviews
- Free meal during work hours
- Learning and development
- Service awards.

Schein’s model (Schein, 2017) of culture level ‘Artefacts’ demonstrates the need of observed behaviour of routines and rituals which becomes organisational process such as emotional displays (charity work), observable rituals and ceremonies (service awards). Schein’s model of culture level ‘Espoused Values’ is a person’s original reflection of values

and beliefs and his/her sense of what ought to be and what will work (employee benefits).

Symbols

According to Maze (2017) the golden arches not only signifies McDonalds but represents fast food itself where fast food is readily available at a competitive price. McDonald's status does leave exposure to pressure on changes such as wages and packaging used. Eating at McDonalds gives a sense of predictability in terms of menu and pricing. Advocacy groups believe McDonalds can influence other industries to change. Schein's model level 'Artefacts' relates to visible products such as the signature McDonald's logo and the unseen underlying assumptions of culture associated with the organisation such as behaviour and how the organisation works (Schein, 2017).

Power Structures

Vice President Jon Betts has responsibility of all restaurants in the south region and is passionate about championing customer experience and collaborative approach. Victoria Hodson holds responsibility for the strategy of the business and consumer/commercial insight functions and has led to a significant increase of customer footfall, improved customer satisfaction and improved brand image. Victoria's research backed by consumer behaviour has led to initiatives such as McDelivery, click and collect app and low-calorie options. She also champions women's' rights within the company. According to CIPD (2011) seeking alignment and addressing barriers between management needs people who are willing to influence change further down the hierarchy as senior management can be focused on self-interests and only their departments. Creating a collaborative work party with new structure can overcome resistance.

Control Systems

McDonalds (2019) believe in a low-cost strategy but will not compromise on quality of food to retain customers satisfaction and experience. Quality and sustainability are at the forefront of corporate responsibility. Most ingredients are sourced locally and are organic and take farmers in to consideration. The employees are paid minimum wage or above to ensure job fulfillment and training and development are offered to enhance

productivity and retention. According to Sergeant (2018), organisations who adapt to change will succeed long term (locally sourced ingredients) as embracing the reality of chance implies an openness attitude. Corporate ethics is defined as standards that guide decision making for the greater good. Ethical leaders build a strong ethical culture that take the right action and accept accountability.

Organisational Structure

McDonalds have a hierarchal organisational structure with the top-level executives who are responsible for decision making (Hierarchy Structure, 2018) and then lower down with many managers and departments (layers) who are just as important in functioning such as:

- Chief executive officer (CEO)
- Chief operating officer (COO)
- Chief people officer (CPO)
- Chief financial officer (CFO)

The department are the broken down into:

- Corporate affairs
- Marketing
- Human resources
- National operation
- Regional managers
- Finance
- Information and strategic planning.

Functional departments:

- Legal
- Customer service
- Franchising
- Safety, security and licensing
- Property and construction
- Supply chain.

(McDonalds, 2019).

The structure is formal and has given each department operational responsibilities in supporting autonomy and organisational flexibility (Panmore Institute, 2019). Charles Handy's Role Culture is based on individuals who are role occupants and the role will continue if the individual leaves the position. Interactions between senior management is formalised and controlled by procedures and rules and settlement of disputes can be lengthy. Job position is the main power source and employees are selected to perform the duties. Work allocation is based on rationality rather than individual personalities. This type of organisation tend to thrive in a stable predictable environment. Role culture jobs allow employees' security and performance to a required standard but can be limited for ambitious people who are power orientated (Open Learn, 2018).

Conclusion

The researcher believes that a positive environment with integration, diversity and inclusion aligns with personal values and beliefs (McDonalds, 2019). Flexibility in a job role can give opportunity to work around family commitments and personal constraints (CMI, 2019). Though flexibility of work hours is offered, the researcher needs to be able to decline if the shift is not doable and not feel obliged or pressured by management (The Guardian, 2017). The national minimum wage will provide the researcher motivation and retention as a steady income would provide stability (Gov. UK, 2015). McDonald's ethical stance on sustainable ingredients and ethical production of recyclable packaging demonstrates corporate social responsibility and the need to reduce the impact on the environment (McDonalds, 2019). The researcher believes that organisations can influence change in people as a global brand (Maze, 2017).

Recommendations

Burger Kings has maintained a culture that champions high performance from employees. Like Mcdonalds (2019), Burger King's market position is also a leading fast food service but rather than a 'crew' military style culture (BBC, 2015) the company's culture is reliant on values, traditions and behaviours that influence the workers and impose a unified effort. Burger King support numerous initiatives to support local communities and

distinguishable amongst competitors by creating a culture that is accountable, taking responsibility for employees, the service and products provided (Burger King, 2019). McDonalds can take on this approach and avoid strikes led by working conditions by ensuring from the offset that all legislated needs are met (The Independent, 2017). Unlike McDonald's workers where some staff felt dehumanised and robotic (BBC, 2015) Burger King (2019) have a culture where employees feel empowered as each individual are vested with power and control to achieve their goals regardless of which hierarchal position they are within the organisation.

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