



University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Developing Workplace Critical Thinking – St Ermin's Hotel Case Study

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Introduction

Defining workplace critical thinking is a complex task, due to differences of theories and opinions. Critical thinking and ethics are going in pair with the responsibility of social and professional interactions. Critical thinking is especially important when it comes to managing people with different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Therefore, it is used on daily basis in order, to make important decisions, solve the problems and conduct new ideas. When deciding on which management methods to use when dealing with employees it is important to take in consideration their values, beliefs, and attitudes as they differentiate from person to person and can have an impact on one's behaviour and perception. This report will begin with short background of my workplace - the St Ermin's Hotel - company to which further managerial theories are applied. Further, definition and importance of the critical thinking is introduced. Followed, by description of the values, attitudes and beliefs and evaluation of their impact on one's behaviour. Next, using critical thinking I will assess my personal attitudes, beliefs, and values and their impact on my workplace behaviour. At last, I will examine different management theories, some of which are relevant to my role at St Ermin's Hotel and explain how a person with different values, belief system and attitudes can interpret those theories in a different way.

1. Company Background

St Ermin's Hotel was built in 1899 and is owned by Ten-Fu Chen family. St Ermin's is a boutique style hotel based in hart of London right next to St James Park Underground Station. Following vast refurbishment of thirty million pounds, this extravagance hotel is a unique combination of textural design and historical interiors that gives a feeling of affection and peace, whilst offering inventive amenities. The St Ermin's perfect location makes it an attractive base for business and pleasure. The hotel specialises in meetings and events, cooperate travel, hospitality, and luxurious relaxation getaway. It is also suitably situated for gain access to majority of London's conference centres. St Ermin's hotel is nothing less than exceptional (Linkedin, 2019). St Ermin's hotel is open to guests from all over the world. Therefore, human resources employ people from various countries, making this hotel unique, friendly, and multicultural place to visit as a guest, and work at as a member of staff.

2. Concept of Critical Thinking.

Critical thinking is known as essential components of organisational mission statement. According to The Foundation of Critical Thinking a critical thinking is defined as the mood of thinking in which the person develops the quality of hers or his ability to think by reviewing, reconstructing, and analysing in a skilful manner. Critical thinking involves effective problem solving and communication abilities, as well as commitment to overcoming our socio and ego centrism. Critical thinking is self-focused, self- restrained, self-correcting, and self-monitoring way of thinking (The Foundation of Critical Thinking, 2019).

The Pearson developed **RED** Critical Thinking model which defines the way for understanding how critical thinking helps in development of skills which are essential (SlideHUNTER, 2019).

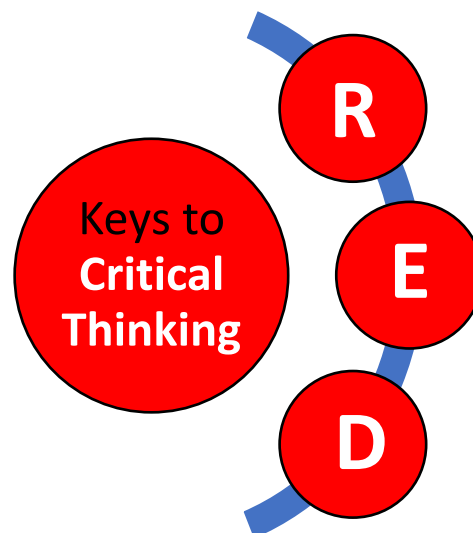
Where RED stands for:

R - recognise assumptions (listening to what people says, gather information)

E - evaluate arguments

D - draw conclusions

Figure 1. Pearson's RED Model of Critical Thinking



R- (recognise assumptions), people who possess the skill of recognise assumptions have the ability, to separate opinion from facts.

E- (evaluate arguments), evaluation of arguments is an important skill to have, it helps to analyse information objectively and precisely.

D – (draw conclusions), when drawing conclusion, we are able, to connect various information and reach the conclusions from the evidence gathered.

In the current climate of cutting the costs, shortage of staff and high expectations for quality products and services, being dexterous in critical thinking is crucial in order to be able to solve organisational problems, otherwise failing to overcome these issues and problems might result in customer unsatisfactory, complaints, bad reputation of the company, unhealthy work environment, and even employee turnover.

Organisations should hire skilled critical thinkers for the managerial positions to ensure that high demands can be dealt with in professional and reasonable ways. Manager who is able, to think critically understand the values that underline the tasks and can easily adapt to the changes of environment. Moreover, critical thinkers are qualified in creation and acceptance of innovations and change needed in today workforce (Root, 2018).

As an employee in order, to evaluate various problems in the workplace person should have better understanding of the critical thinking process and basic logic because both are essential in workplace relationship and decision-making process. For example, when dealing with difficult client in the restaurant, as a manager or member of staff. We should remain calm and show our empathy, letting the client speak up. At same time using critical thinking skill to evaluate cons and pros of the conflict or issue and think of reasonable solution that would satisfy both the client and organisation. According to Paul and Elder (2010), intellectual morals must be used for aspects of reasoning in order, to grow intellectual traits.

3. Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes.

This section focusses on the difference between attitudes, values and beliefs, within workplace context.

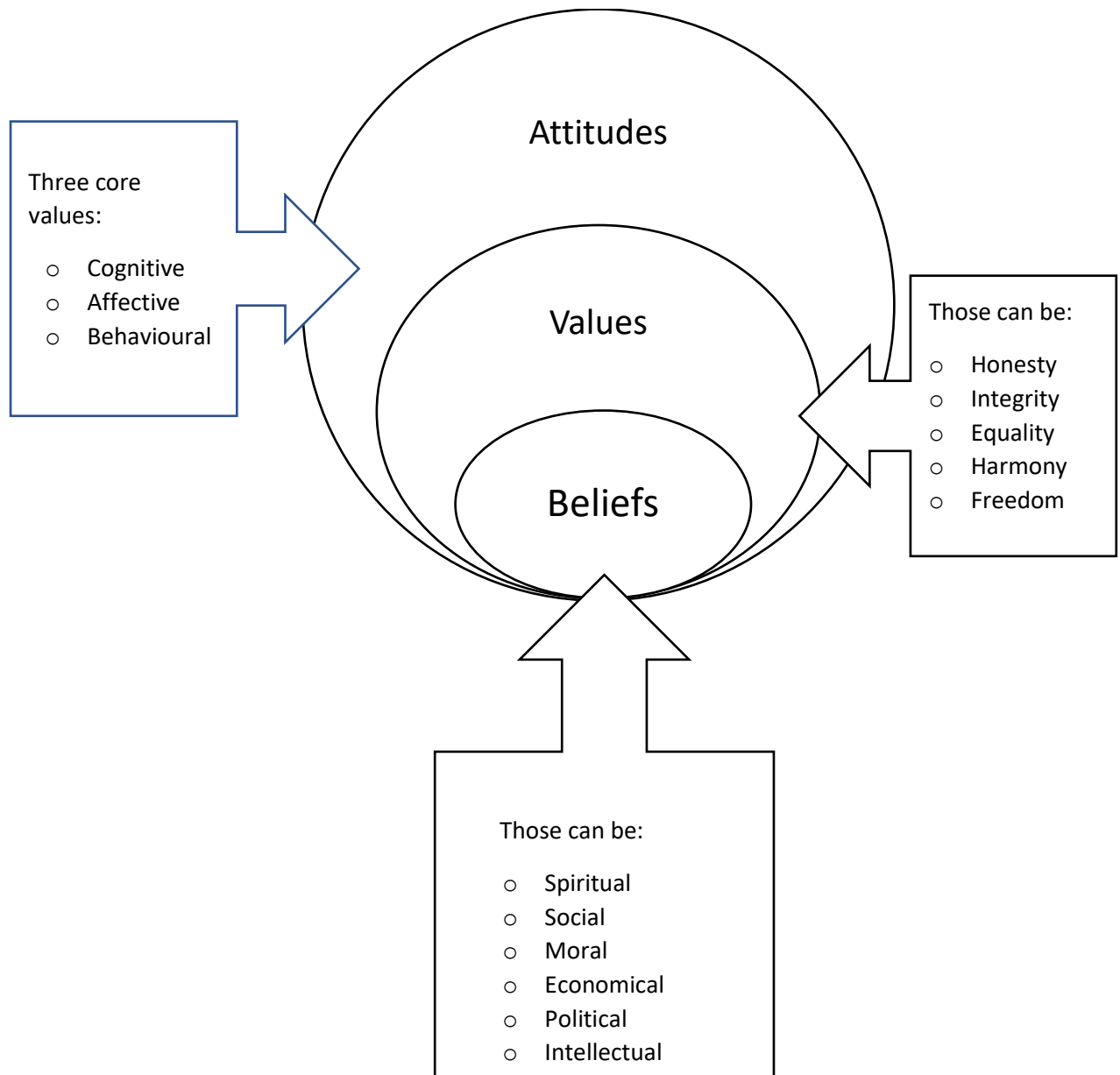


Figure 2. Beliefs, Values and Attitudes (Kumar, 2018).

Values – those are our moral and ethical standards, our sense of what is wrong and/or right and what we experience during reflection or analyses of our responsibilities, obligations, and duties. Our values are governing our actions and the way we change and lead our life. We ask our self-questions like: Should I only mind my own interest? Should I consider my co-workers opinion? Is the living successful and wealthy life without carrying about how does it affect people around me my only value? Reviewing and reflecting on our actions are helpful in measuring the sense and outcome of our actions (Taneja, 2016).

The workplace values are the most important principle that guide the way of working. Those principles are there to help people to make correct choices at same time understanding what is wrong or right (Mind Tools, 2018).

Examples of workplace values:

- respecting company rules and policy
- delivering quality service
- being good team-worker
- tolerating others
- being communicative
- being passionate
- being trustworthy
- being responsible
- pay attention to detail
- hard working

The workplace values identify what the organisation really bothers about and set the character for the culture of the company. It is important that the employee values associate with these (Mind Tools, 2018).

Attitudes – according to Business Dictionary (2019), attitudes are impacting persons responses to challenges and their choice of actions. There are four components of attitude: cognitive (opinions or consciously held belief), conative (action), evaluative (positive or negative response) and affective (emotions or feelings). When having positive attitude employees tend to be more productive and show more carriage when in contact with customer's they can also lift the spirits of their colleagues at work. On other hand when worker have negative attitude it will most likely cause customers to complain which will affect the ego of the worker and have big impact on performance (Lumen, 2019).

Beliefs - according to Om Taneja (2016), beliefs are not the knowledge gained from teachers based on measurements, logics, or physical experiences. Instead they are based on past life experiences or religious beliefs generally propagated by promises of wealthy life as return for our practicing of these beliefs. Beliefs are otherwise described as convictions or assumptions that are believed to be true, by group of people or individual (Business Dictionary, 2019). The Act of Equality 2010 is defending the rights of workforces to practise their religious conviction with no discrimination or concern. This includes some of the philosophical beliefs (Acas, 2019).

According to Acas (2019) an Employment Appeal Tribunal in 2009 demarcated the criteria of a philosophical belief. Those must:

- be a belief not point of view or opinion, based upon the current state of information available
- be a belief as to a substantial aspect of human behaviour and human life
- be harmonious with human rights and dignity, be worth of respect in democratic society
- conquer a certain level of cohesion, seriousness, importance, and cogency

Everyone has their own set of values, beliefs, and attitudes. Being a manager, working with customers, clients and staff with different beliefs, attitudes, and values we need to avoid imposing our own views onto other people respecting their choices and preferences.

The St Ermin's family motto is "Fun, Love & Energy", it is believed that without these ingredients people would not be able to make others feel special. St Ermin's believe in emotional connection between employees and customers, as well as between hotels team itself. Going an extra mile to deliver breath-taking hospitality is a company objective (Best Companies, 2019).

3. Impact of Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values on Workplace Behaviour.

American theorist David Allen Kolb created experiential learning cycle, which is based on persons own experience. In this learning cycle experience is reviewed, analysed, and evaluated using three stages in order, to prevent repetition of mistakes (Brown, 2017).

We are shaping our beliefs from early age and strengthening them as we grow. Those beliefs are the assumptions of what we trust to be true. They steam from our life experiences. The behaviours which we consider as important to us and which we admire in others are usually reflecting the values we have established trough the influence of culture, religion, education, and people (Breines, 2015).

In our various jobs, our values, attitudes, and beliefs are interfacing with those of our family members, friends, work colleges and clients. Unconsciously we seem adore people who share same beliefs and core values as ours. Therefore, harmonising our beliefs and values contributes to successful relationships and friendships (Kumar, 2018).

According to Juliana Breines (2015), beliefs can shape our reality by impacting on our behaviour. To support this statement some examples are given:

1. If person believes in his or her ability to achieve will therefore be determine, to make steps in order, to search for opportunities and succeed within the workplace.
2. If interviewed person have negative thoughts about his/her ability to achieve at same being miserable and showing lack of self-confidence, will look incompatible and most likely fail to be successful.

Everyone has different values that shapes our life experiences. Therefore, people's behaviours and actions differentiate from each another (SmartMinds, 2019).

For instance, in my workplace employees see great value in food waste reduction and recycling. This organisational value has big impact on the way I behave. Now days even outside my workplace I make all efforts in order, to reduce the food waste and recycle trash accordingly, and by doing it I unconsciously influenced my flatmates to participate in this environmental-friendly behaviour.

Values reflect what is important in our life affecting the choices and decisions we make daily. Some of the values which I consider as crucial are the happiness, healthiness, relations, family oriented, openness, equality, financial security, discovery, acknowledging, development, trust, kindness, respect, joy, optimism, helpfulness, independency, recognition. Obviously, each of them plays different role in my life some of them are important more than the others.

My family taught me that if we behave in a positive manner and treat others with respect it will be “paid off” in the future. This kindness value has great impact on my behaviour towards clients and members of staff in the hotel. This belief taught me how to deal with my emotions and hold my negative thoughts aside while facing critical and stressful situations.

When dealing with difficult clients I bear in mind the differences in people’s beliefs and values. This help me to avoid unnecessary discussion and keep up the good name of the company. Although we cannot please everybody, it is good to present positive attitude.

Luckily, my workplace aligns with most of my values. Therefore, it is easier for me to energise and motivate myself during my job activities. However, it happens sometimes that my work colleagues’ conflicts with my values. Like for example, I do value when people are helping each other and at my workplace, some colleagues mind only their own business and show resistance when it comes to helping our new employees, I do not like this type of attitude. I believe that by explaining the way of doing things to new members is important, so that we can avoid errors caused by lack of knowledge and speed the food delivery process assuring appropriate customer service.

In order, to remain professional, it is essential to leave personal beliefs and values aside when dealing with member of staff or clients. We should be aware of the differences in people’s attitudes and instead of passively trying to encourage them to do things the way we think is right, we should show some empathy and allow them to make own decisions.

4. Theories of Management

This section is focused on management theories. Firstly, I will be giving short description of management theories. Next, I will talk about managerial theories related to my role and critically assess the impact of own values, attitudes, and beliefs on this theory. At the end of this section, I will be evaluating how people with different values, beliefs, and attitudes can interpret theory differently.

Management theories were designed to assistance managers in structuring the successful organisations. Managers are expected to handle different sets of tasks such as: decision making, problem solving, communication, team leading, delegating, organising, supervise and so on (Elkins, 2019). Therefore, management theories are treated as strategies which includes sets of tools such as guidelines or frameworks which can be used in modern organisations in order to successfully and efficiently handling center responsibilities (CFI, 2019). Management theories were developed over the years, and today professionals instead of relying on one single management theory can combine thoughts as of different management theories which are finest for their organisational culture.

4.1 Types of managerial theories

There are three major groupings for the theories of management: Classical, Modern, and Behavioural. Each of these classifications break into sub-theories, these are:

a). Classical Management Theory

Classical Management Theory is focused on creation of standards and on the operations in order to rise production. It also considers compensation as the key motivation for employees. Managers using this type of theory ideally focus on gratifying high-performing employees through bonuses or wages (Elkins, 2019).

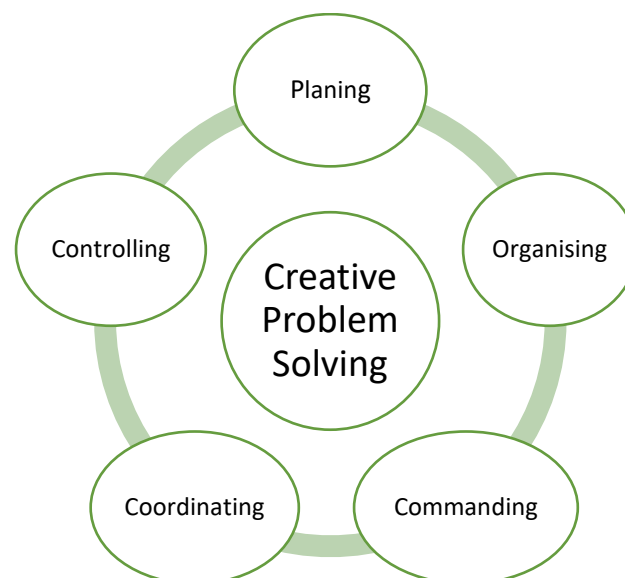
There are three primary theories that embrace the Classical Management Theory:

- Administrative
- Bureaucratic
- Scientific

Administrative management theory was developed by French mining engineer Henri Fayol.

This theory specifies five managerial activities: controlling, commanding, planning, and coordinating, and organising (Vliet, 2019).

Figure 3. Fayol's Five Functions of Management (Shah, 2017).



The above, Figure 2 demonstrates five steps which are used as guidance to creative problem solving.

Bureaucracy management theory was established by sociologist Max Weber. This theory emphasizes recognised authority systems promoting reasoning of management decisions. Authority and the unity of organizational hierarchies are vital to Bureaucratic Theory. Weber's theory stresses strict rules discouraging collaboration and creativity within the workplace (Mind Tools, 2019).

Scientific management theory created by mechanical engineer Frederic Winslow Tylor. Together with his companions they were the first individuals to scientifically study the work process. They observed the employee performance checking how does it affect their productivity. Frederic Taylor held belief that rather than making people work as hard as they could, it is more effective to optimize the way job is done (MindTools, 2019).

According to Tylor money were the main motivating factor for the employee. Therefore, he indicated "Fair day's wages for, a fair day's work" concept. Where employees would be rewarded for high productivity instead of being punished for minor mistakes (Caramela, 2018).

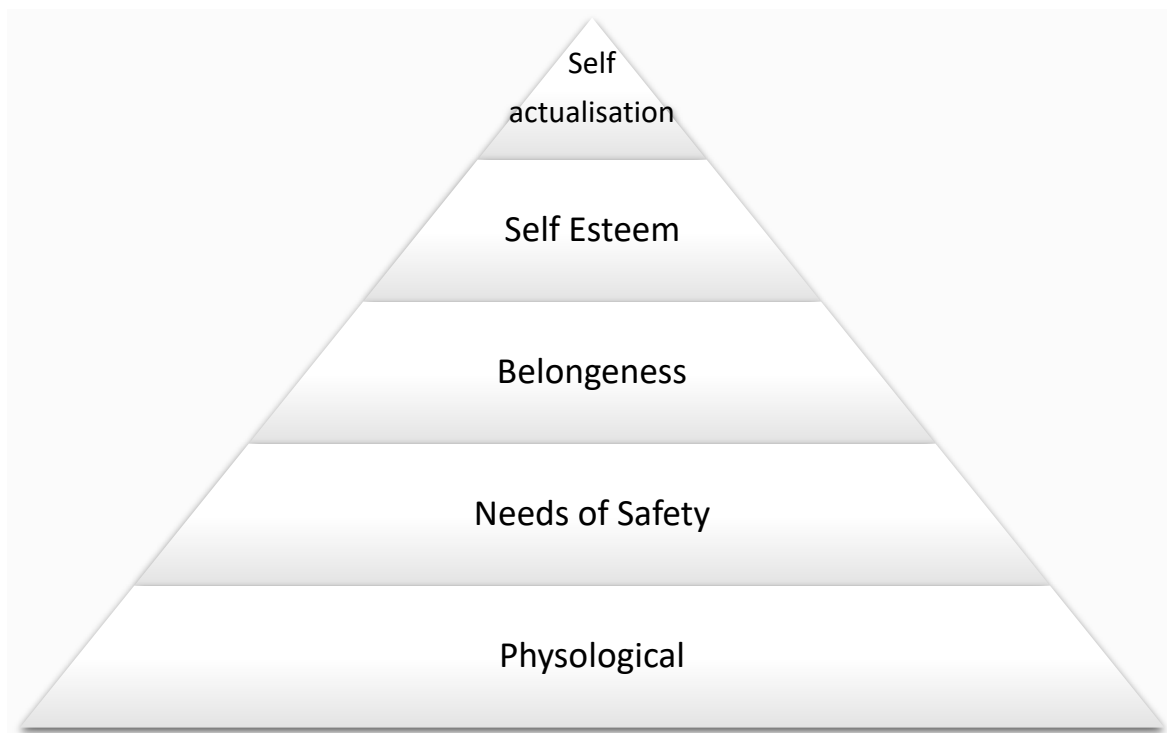
Taylorism separates mental form of work from the manual. This scientific theory is focused mainly on the mechanics, forgetting about people's valuation. In modern production, workplace satisfaction and employee motivation are essential in a successful and efficient organisation. Taylors scientific management theory, although is not often practiced in modern production, it did contribute, to the advancement of management practice, introducing systematic training procedures and encouraging systematic organisational design (MindTools, 2018).

b). Behavioural Management Theory

This behavioural theory is related to human relations and human dimensions of work. This theory was created in belief that better understanding of persons expectations, inspiration, group dynamic and conflict leads to increase of productivity (Cliffs Notes, 2016).

A Harvard Professor Elton Mayo contributed to Behavioural management theory. He realised that human beings play important role in successful management and business. By studies and experiment which took place in between at the Hawthorne Western Electrical Company in Chicago and the textile mill near Philadelphia, Elton Mayo proved that employee productivity largely depended on the workplace satisfaction. He was able to show that sense of belongingness, recognition and social interactions are sometimes more important than financial rewards (CLEVERISM, 2018). Psychologist Abraham Maslow also contributed to behavioural management theory. He introduced the theory of motivation built on human needs.

Figure 4. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



The above figure 3, shows hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow. This theory states that each of us is obligated to satisfy each of mentioned need in turn starting from necessary physiological human needs. Only when the lowest needs are satisfied, we are able, to concentrate on the highest needs of self-satisfaction and development (BUSINESSBALLS, 2019).

For example: As supervisor I cannot expect my work colleague to critically solve the problems at work, when he/she is facing issues involved with situation such as divorce in personal life at that period. The successful organisations and managers are those who understand and care about people's needs of growth and self-actualisation.

c). Modern Management Theory

Contingency Theory The theorist Fred Fiedler anticipated that the efficiency of leading is related to traits of a leader. According to this theory, there is a set of leadership attributes convenient for every single kind of situation. It suggests that a manager have, to be enough flexible to adapt to the shifting environment. Moreover, contingency management theory states that leader should identify suitable management style when facing issue or dealing with situation and that there is no one definite technique for managing the business or organisation (CFI, 2019).

System Theory According to CFI (2019), the system management theory proposes that businesses consists of numerous components that work in harmony with each-other so that the greater system can operate optimally. This theory states that organisational success is depending on elements such as: relations between subsystems, interdependence, and cooperation.

Example: An organisation structured by different sections, units and departments composed of independent groups and individuals, but working as whole towards common goal.

4.2 Management theories practiced in the St Ermin's Hotel

Management theory which is in practice at Marriott's chain - St. Ermin's Hotel is the behavioural/human relation theory. I am using the human relation theory in order to show understanding and empathy in various situations. I personally feel very comfortable at my workplace, often line manager relay on me by allocating extra tasks at same time showing trust towards my abilities which makes me feel appreciated. As a supervisor I am in charge of group of five to ten people, when large capacity events takes place I am trying to allocate workers to specific and individual tasks at same time it allows them, to contribute own ideas and apply own solutions to the problems. After such events are over, employees often say that it is very challenging and motivating.

I see the organisation which I work for in a good light for several reasons, one of which is the opportunity of development and ability to work in different departments as part of the cross-training program. Behavioural management theory helps managers understand motivational factors. I believe that providing the right work environment and concerning the needs of employees is crucial in organisational success.

Another Theory which St. Ermin's Hotel have in practise is Fayol's classical management theory. Henri Fayol theory is based on fourteen principles: delegation of authority, division of work, self-control, centralisation, chain of command, pleasant workplace, interrelation between organisational goals and individual interests, compensation, scalar chains, order, job guarantee, equity, initiative and team spirit (Mind Tools, 2019).

-  St Ermin's Hotel have well-formed hierarchy, where each employee is answerable to senior management. In the hotel each department is leaded by the head of the department and employee duties are clearly specified.

- ✚ In St Ermin's delegation of authority, senior manager or department head is in power to take decisions which might have impact on efficiency of entire department.
- ✚ St Ermin's divide working hours before employees fairly and does not tolerate any offenses this include discrimination, corruption, and sexual harassment.
- ✚ Top down chain of commands, orders are given from higher to lower positioned employees
- ✚ St Ermin's hotel provides work opportunities to people in all ages and both genders, creating pleasant work environment
- ✚ Organisational growth and performance are linked with personal performance and growth
- ✚ Compensation – depending on agreement perks and salaries are given to employees
- ✚ Centralisation – power is centralised as per need of the hotel
- ✚ Scalar chains – not in use by St Ermin's Hotel
- ✚ Order – logical order of work is followed in order to meet with hotels objectives and goals
- ✚ Equity – managers are fair with the employees
- ✚ Guarantee of job – associated with work ability, performance, efficiency, and job satisfactory
- ✚ Initiatives – implementing modern technology, hiring new people and all the changes within organisation
- ✚ Esprit the corps –departments work in teams collectively towards the common goal, team unity is highly promoted

5. The Management Philosophy of Marriott. A Living Tradition of Beliefs and Values - Guideposts to Management.

The management style of the Marriott hotel is based on the values lived by J. Willard Marriott the founder of the hotel, those values are: treating people equally, paying close attention to details, working hard and providing customers with what they want and expect. He had his hands-on management, being concern for employees and showing his commitment to meet customer needs through breath-taking hospitality and quality service. He passed management guideposts to his son as form of guideline to run successful management (Marriott, 2019).

The following guideposts are:

Concern for Employees

"Treat your employees the way you would like to be treated - provide them every avenue to success. Get their confidence and respect. Have them like and be interested in their job." (Marriott, 2019).

In Marriott hotel chain, role of the manager is to listen and show understanding to employees, trying to prevent workplace problems and help them to resolve personal problems. It is strongly advised to meet employee needs, communicate with employees, develop, and recognise employees on a daily basis.

Hands on Management

"Managers should know their business thoroughly and how to follow through." (Marriott, 2019). Operational managers by "on the floor" supervision, are learning how to pay strong attention to details which lead to success of an organisation. Interacting with employees and customers and directly observing their behaviours will help to better understand their needs. Managers by showing their sacrifice and willingness, will positively influence employees causing them to be more supportive and to show better performance.

"The closer managers get to the action, the better and faster they can pinpoint and fix problems. By being there to show employees how and why to do things right, managers can reduce the chances of things going wrong". (Marriott, 2019).

Commitment to customers

Managers of Marriott train employees how to act in everyday situations assuring that workers see customer satisfaction as greater value. Personnel of Marriott are required to place customer need above their own. In order, to make this happen it is important to hire the accurate number of people. This leads to higher employee morale. At same time assuring that employees are not overloaded with tasks and are able to focus on their job. This makes them act in a friendly way and be happy to response to customer needs receptively (Marriott, 2019).

6. How Person with Different Attitudes, Values and Beliefs could Interpret The Management Theory in a Different Way.

Different managers have different schools of thinking and ways of directing people. The 21st century workforce is challenging for managers due to multi-cultural work environment. People might find it difficult to cooperate in the right manner with the employees who share different beliefs, and values. I do realise that when deciding on which managerial theory to use it is very important to bear in mind that no two staffs are the same and that some people might find certain tactics and methods of directing people as offensive while others might be happy to cooperate.

Relations theory by Elton Mayo emphasize teamwork and prize as main motivators. While keeping up good relationship with employees might seem to be a great idea, sometimes it might also lead into complications and awkward situations. Some of the managers practising this theory might be seen, as unfair and unprofessional. I am always making sure that I do not let myself favouriting any staff members. It is very important to keep distance between employees, separating work relations from the personal relations, as it helps to avoid unnecessary speculations and helps managers to look at every member equally and fairly. Over valuing work relationship could lead to romance between employee and manager or prioritising and promoting based on the preferences (Some of the managers might see greater value in promoting the male employees- based on cultural beliefs). (Conlin, 2019).

Although there are many different theories of management, it is not quite easy to choose which one is the right to use. As every workplace has different objectives, expectations, and way of doing things. Every person sees things differently, having different thoughts, values, and beliefs. Therefore, even if sometimes one theory in our eyes might be ideally suitable it will not be seen the same way for another person.

Conclusion

Critical Thinking is a skill which is crucially important when holding the managerial position. It is a valuable competency that is basis for problem solving and innovation. I believe that critical thinking when properly cultivated in the workplace can help in achieving organisational goals. This paperwork was produced using various theories and researches. It began with short information about the background of my current workplace - St Ermin's Hotel. Next, it explained the importance of critical thinking. It also told about the variances between beliefs, values, and attitudes, and about their impact on my own and other people's behaviour at workplace. At the end of this assignment, different managerial theories were evaluated some of which are relevant to my role at St Ermin's Hotel. In this last part of the assignment I also gave explanation of how people with different belief system, attitudes and values might interpret presented theories differently.

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