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Developing workplace critical thinking - BMSK5001

Abstract:

The way in which people's values, attitudes and beliefs in the workplace can have different impacts and consequences for a company. An individual's decisions and choices are influenced by these factors and these factors also lead people to interpret theories differently.

In this report I will be talking about the importance of critical thinking within the workplace and how it can impact an organisation leading to greater success rates. I will be talking about the Apple Technology Company that was founded by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Ronald Wayne on 1 April 1976 in Cupertino, California, United States. The company started off with the two founders; Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak building the blue boxes phone phreakers used to make free calls across the nation. Not long after, they began building computers and Apple I was the first Apple product ever sold, this was a kit for building a PC. However, it was Apple II that really made the company and Apple was officially incorporated in 1977. Apple Inc. is the world's largest information technology company by revenue, it is also the world's first £1trillion company. Critical thinking is thinking that is more in-depth, it concerns the analytical abilities of an individual, being able to dissect a concept objectively weighing the facts and differing perspectives and coming to a logical and rational conclusion. The development of critical thinking skills is especially important in the workplace as it enables an individual to become highly valued and go further than simplistic thinking. Simplistic thinking is that of which people think 'uncritically' and their thought process is often based on irrational emotions, self-interest and personal biases. This type of thinking leads to less productive and effective ideas and decisions being made. For me personally, critical thinking is being able to look at every perspective of an idea and make a well-informed decision that lacks bias and leads to the greater good of an organisation. Thinking critically is a skill that is sought after many employers as it shows that individuals are able to make good decisions and have the ability to analyse concepts and ideologies in complex ways which can only benefit companies. Frederick Winslow Taylor was an American mechanical engineer who sought to improve industrial efficiency. He developed several management and organisational theories that many businesses implemented, this implementation led to significant breakthroughs and great success for organisations. I will be exploring the extent to which Taylor's Scientific Management Principles are present in the



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current management practices of the Apple Company as well as the importance of values, attitude and beliefs in the workplace and improvements that can be made in the organisation.

Building the brand is one of the most important and vital aspects of building a business. The brand is what “sells, markets and promotes the products in the eyes of potential customers”. The key to success for a business is if it evolves from a business to a brand. A brand is the core of the business. Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple stated that marketing is about values. This shows that the Apple company is focused on its values and the belief that values are most important as this is what gains trust between the customer and consumer. It has been observed that people buy Apple products because of their affinity to the brand. Many people buy Apple products because they trust the brand and believe that they are buying the best quality.

How did Apple build this trust with its customers? Apple did this by pursuing their values and integrating their values within the service that they provide. The core values are that of which build a brand and therefore builds the company. “The core values are the fundamentals of the company’s beliefs, philosophies, principles, and code of ethics for doing business.” The core value of Apple “is to make the best products in the market and focus on a few selected products so that they can develop and innovate”. From this core value, eight other values are derived which consist of different focuses. Their values set out to strengthen the fundamental aspects of the business that are crucial in order to be successful, for example by focusing on customer-consumer relationship, employee-employer relationship and marketing values.

Firstly, aggressive goals are set and employees are driven to achieve them, they are driven by a motivating workplace environment with strong workplace culture. Apple’s seven other values consist of: empathy for customers/users, innovation and vision, team spirit, individual reward and performance, positive social contribution, quality/excellence and good management. The Apple Company emphasise their values through their actions and the service that they provide. The company makes an effort to offer products that fill the needs of customers and last for a long time, they do not believe in compromising their ethics because of profit. Furthermore, the company build products that help people achieve things, they make products for the convenience of other people, they care about solving customer problems and their customers are their first priority. They state that they aim to make the world a better place to live through the use of their innovative technology. In addition to this, their company has been built on innovation, introducing new products that changed the world, they accept risks in order to follow their vision and to develop products that reach the profit margins they work towards. Moreover, the employees of the company are valued highly as they hire employees who show commitment and exceptional performance to fit the standard of their industry - choosing employees who are committed and perform well is crucial and is a part of critical thinking on the part of the employer, Apple believe that the employees are a crucial component of the company's success and they are the factor that lead to reaching profit goals, each employee makes a difference and

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the employees of the Apple company represent the values and beliefs of the company. Apple also value teamwork as they believe that this is the key to success, individuals are encouraged to work together and interact with all members of the company, sharing ideas, suggestions for improvements and general feedback. Another important value of the Apple company is to deliver the best service to customers and to build the Apple products to the best level of quality and performance so that the loyalty and respect of customers can be earned. Quality management is critical for the success of Apple. Apple also believe in rewarding individuals as they recognise how people contribute to the success of their company, furthermore they share financial and psychological rewards for high performance and strive to create an atmosphere where individuals can share the thrill and joy of working at Apple, therefore they create and maintain a positive workplace environment. Lastly, Apple identify that 'the attitudes and behaviours of managers towards their people are of primary importance', it is essential that supervisors are deemed trustworthy and motivational by individuals, management are responsible for ensuring that the environment at Apple is full of productivity, motivation and positivity and where Apple values are applied and intact.

I am now going to discuss the importance of values, attitudes and beliefs in the workplace. These factors are the basis of critical thinking as these will enable an individual to think differently. Furthermore, the selection process requires these factors to be taken into consideration. Firstly, values in the workplace are the guiding principles which impact the way you work. Values help a person make decisions and choices, therefore values in the workplace guide employees and employers when they need to make work-related decisions and choices. The values of a company represent what a company stands for. Customers are crucial for every company, customers are the most important component of being successful, hence companies should aim to incorporate values that appeal to their target consumers. Many workplace values include delivering quality, making a difference, reliability, team spirit and respectability. "Workplace values set the tone for your company's culture", values show what a company cares about and it is essential to align value with people's values. The alignment of values helps an organisation "as a whole to achieve its core mission", if the values of a company are not aligned with people's values it may be difficult to sell products and it would also be difficult to build positive relationships with consumers. Values link people together and create better understand between people, this understanding and common purpose helps build good working relationships amongst people. Furthermore, it is essential for companies to hire people that share their values as individuals who have different values to the company would initially work with different intentions and work towards different goals resulting in different outcomes. This could lead to a negative workplace culture and a lack of critical thinking in the workplace as values would not be aligned, ultimately this affects creative potential, productivity and job satisfaction. Therefore, aligning values is critical as the company must align values with its employees and customers too. Critical thinking is crucial when thinking of the values that your company should stand for, furthermore

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critical thinking is essential in the hiring process. Employers must apply critical thinking to the selection process of employees, when employers are interviewing individuals, one of the key things to do would be to understand their workplace values. Furthermore, it is important to evaluate how the workplace culture is and how individuals work alone and in a team. It is important to ensure that the company's values are being upheld by everyone that is a part of the company as they represent the company, this is crucial because if an individual defies a value that the company stand for, this would compromise the integrity of the whole company. Hence, the success of the Apple company could be down to the fact that they integrate values within their company that are aligned with that of their customers and employees. This alignment of values in a way creates trust between the company and customers, which essentially leads to a greater success rate.

As well as values in the workplace, attitude in the workplace is equally as important. Attitude affects individuals which in turn affects the company and ultimately the customers. Having a negative attitude in the workplace will lead to a weak workplace culture, this would lead to the company being less productive and less effective decisions being made, furthermore creativity would be suppressed and the drive in the workplace would be consequently lower. Negative attitudes from employers and employees can result in low motivation, when people are not motivated they are less likely to work to the best of their potential. This has a negative impact on the company's success rate as it slows down the rate at which people work at and it also affects the energy in the workplace. The snowball effect could occur in which the negative attitude of an individual is passed onto another individual and so on, this would have a huge impact on the company as motivation is an essential aspect for success. Furthermore, a lack of productivity means that the company is less likely to reach its goals and this could lead to many setbacks. Tasks are accomplished at a faster rate when there is harmony in a workplace, in addition to this, negative energy can cause stress amongst individuals. As the workplace is somewhere that an individual would spend a majority of their day, a negative workplace culture could seriously impact individuals and lead to severe consequences. According to the Health and Safety Executive, in Britain, 26.8 million working days are lost due to illnesses and 15.4 million of them are related to stress, depression or anxiety. When people take time off work, this leads to the economy falling and results in more demand for tax. Furthermore, a snowball effect is created as people, companies and the economy are all affected. The root of this problem is negative attitudes in the workplace. Therefore, having a negative attitude creates a domino effect as many issues can arise from this and the consequences range from little to severe. When employers have negative attitudes such as managers, it can be very difficult for employees to enjoy working and to feel comfortable at work. This is why there are employee rights and responsibilities set up as well as employer rights and responsibilities. A positive attitude in the workplace can be defined as maintaining harmonious energy and motivation in the workplace environment as well as contributing towards the company goals. Having a positive attitude is

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essential in order for a company to be successful. Maintaining a good workplace culture means to have positive attitudes, values and beliefs. This would enable employees to contribute more towards an organisation and would be in their best state of mind, therefore the productivity rate and creative potential would be increased. It is also said that attitudes are 'contagious', this means that the attitude you have can easily influence someone else. It is simple - if you have a bad attitude, it is passed onto others and if you have a good attitude, it is passed onto others. Positive energy within the workplace allows a company to strive and be efficient in working towards their goals, positivity leads to more ideas and this in turn leads to higher success rates for the company. In addition to this, positive attitudes impact customers as well as the customer service will be improved and this in turn leads to better relationships between the customer and company. Customers trust the company and become loyalty customers. The Apple company's great success can also be explained due to their high regard for positive attitudes within the workplace as they strive to create an environment at Apple where employees feel comfortable and enjoy working there. Furthermore, they ensure that their values are upheld which is the foundation for the company, they reward their employees and recognise each individual's contribution to the company. These efforts ensure that the individuals who are working at Apple Inc. are happy and that they have positive attitudes in the workplace therefore maintaining a positive workplace culture.

The decisions we make are a reflection of our values and beliefs. Our beliefs are a factor which makes up our identity, people's beliefs enable them to act and behave in a certain way. Many people make choices based on their beliefs, therefore as the workplace requires employees and employers to make decisions and choices, it is important that they have the right beliefs and morals to make the correct decisions and choices which will lead to the greater benefit of the company. The beliefs of a person that are considered while selecting individuals refers more to a person's morals. Religious belief is not a factor as people of all faiths can have the same morals and the morals are the factors which determine if an individual is a good candidate for a position in a company. Moreover, if a person has beliefs and morals that go against the company's values, this could lead to many consequences, the main consequence being that the company is impacted badly due to negative attitudes and the wrong choices and decisions being made. In addition, belief is important in terms of believing in the company's aspirations and goals, employees and employers must believe in what they are working towards otherwise they will not be well-motivated and this will lead to less efficiency, productivity and the inability to make well-informed choices, which will ultimately lower the success rates of the organisation. Moreover, it is important for employers to believe in the employees and vice versa to maintain positive energy and drive so that productivity can be ensured. The Apple Company emphasises the importance of beliefs in the workplace.

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Management can be defined as the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling organisational resources. Frederick Taylor defines management as “the art of knowing what you want to do in the best and cheapest way”. The characteristics of management are as follows: it is a distinct process which aims at the successful completion of set goals and aspirations and integrates humans and other resources, it is an organised activity and a group activity, the principles of management are comprehensive. Every organisation uses different management systems in order to fulfil the tasks required to meet the deadlines and objectives by using processes, procedures and policies.

Management theories are put in place to enhance productivity and there are several types of management.

Scientific management can be identified as “An approach within classical management theory that emphasises the scientific study of work methods in order to improve worker efficiency”(Kathryn and David, Page 41). Scientific management essentially solves the problems of improving product quality and improving product efficiency. It initially saves times and leads to the growth of a company as it promotes efficiency and effectiveness within the workplace. Scientific management includes the improvement of organisation in the workplace as well as maintenance, improvement of the work quota setting and the working conditions.

It has been established that employees play a crucial role in business performance. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is the focus of which many organisations use different strategies in order to provide motivation for their employees. To motivate employees, Apple uses many different strategies, many of these are above as I have discussed before, they use their values, attitudes and beliefs. Apple being one of the most innovative companies in the world has shown their efficiency in the strategies they use to encourage workers.

The human relations theory is managing actions regarding group dynamics, teamwork and social systems. The human relation theory was created so that the sociological, informal and psychological organisations within an organisation and the way that these factors influenced productivity and efficiency of employees, was involved within a theory. The classical theories such as scientific management, management theory and bureaucratic theory had these weaknesses as they disregarded the human and social factors in an organisation. The Apple company engages different management theories in practice, they do use the scientific management theory and the bureaucratic theory, however they also use the human relations theory as they do not disregard the human and social factors in their organisation. Apple provides various different forms of motivation for employees as well as training that they provided for employees in health and safety. Although it is essential for all companies to provide health and safety training for their employees, Apple conducted research in order to improve the workplace

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for the employees. Their research resulted in a change in their workplace considering work groups, employee-employer relationships and supporting social networks, this can be seen in the Apple 2013 report. Furthermore, Apple focus on rewarding employees, they put in place rewards to keep employees motivated. The fact that Apple incorporates the human relations theory of management shows that they are aware of the needs of employees, they used tactical procedures and this is what led them to becoming so successful. Overall, motivating employees is critical in order for the success of a company and Apple managed to do this in a way so that they fulfilled the needs of their employees and the employees contributed to the company in a more effective way.

The best practice of management is the human relations management of theory as it takes into account the social and human factors. This is very important as employees are very important and play a significant role in an organisation, they contribute ideas and must be efficient and productive. If employees are not managed in an efficient way then they may not perform to the best of their ability. If employees do not perform to the best of their ability because they are not being managed in the correct way this could lead to less productivity in the company meaning that the success rates will be lower. Furthermore, the other classical theories do not take into account the human and social factors as they focus more on scientific methods, for example. However, if multiple management theories are applied simultaneously, this could lead to better success rates. So, if the human relations theory is applied along with the bureaucratic approach, this could be seemingly effective within the organisation. The most important factor that leads to efficiency is motivation as this creates a domino effect. If there is a lack of motivation in the workplace by management, the workplace culture will be relatively weak and negative, this will lead to negative attitudes within the workplace and this in turn would lead to having employees not in their best state of mind meaning that they will not be very efficient in their work and they will be less productive. Therefore, employees must receive the motivation that they need in order for the success of a company. The Apple company integrates values and beliefs in order to motivate employees and this is the practice of the human relations approach. Apple Inc. focus on team work as team spirit is also one of their values, the human relations approach is based on group dynamics and team work. This is what the Apple company stand for. These systems are effective in meeting customer requirements as these systems lead to more productivity and efficiency which ensures that products will be of good quality, furthermore customer service will be enhanced.

In conclusion, people's beliefs, values and attitudes may affect how they interpret management theories as not every organisation employs the same theory. Some organisations employ the theories which are considered to disregard the human and social factors, some people may agree or disagree with this theory according to their beliefs. A person's values, beliefs and attitudes determine the choices and decisions that they make as well as opinions that they form.

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Report this a

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