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its impact on Organisation Efficiency**

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Introduction

During this module we looked at how the workplace culture can directly affect the calibre of the employees and by extension the quality of the services provided by that business. Workplace culture can affect everything from overall job satisfaction, how efficiently the work is done, if internal and external stakeholders perceive the company having a good future, etc. All these factors also contribute to employee retention.

In this report I will discuss some of the factors described above in some detail and give examples of similar events that I have come across in my work environment. Ultimately, I will try to use the knowledge gained in class to assess if my workplace has a good working culture and or if things can be made any better.

Structure of the report

I will subdivide this report into four major sections in the following order:

- 1- A brief background theory section where I will cover the basics needed to understand workplace culture and will use this as a the foundation for later discussion and analysis
- 2- I will discuss a little about the work culture where I work and analyse what can be made better
- 3- I will not delve a bit deeper and present hypothesis on how work culture can be affected by market forces and try do use S.W.O.T and P.E.S.T analysis to demonstrate my arguments
- 4- In the last major section of my report I will discuss how continuing improvements to workplace culture throughout the past century have made many treat their employees more ethically

The ultimately aim of this report is to use it as helpful tool to aggregate all my previous experience from work and merge it with the new things I have learned in class

Literature review into workplace culture

Culture in a broader context including environments outside of work

It's something often discussed commonly among colleagues during lunch break, during family dinners, on the television, on the youtube video comments, in

short every where. However, what is it? What is culture? And more importantly how does one go about defining what this phenomenon is?

In some literature it is suggested that culture is the shared values that people from a country, ethnic group, region, etc, all adhere to. It may be argued that culture is at the heart of things the daily habits that a sizeable number of people do. For example, lately in the United Kingdom it has been customary to discuss Brexit and makes jokes about the deadline being extended until the end of time or that Boris Johnson's prime ministership making its way into the Guinness world record books as the shortest one ever. These are some comical examples, but it highlights the point: lots of people criticize, and often make fun of their leaders in the United Kingdom. This culture of criticizing and mocking leaders, being so common among the people can be said to constitute part of British culture. This assertion can be further extrapolated to say that this is common culture among all people who live democratic societies. (Gittell, 2011)

In some countries it is common for women to cover themselves more than what would reasonably be considered modest and this is very much in contrast with the environment in the United Kingdom. In this situation we have two different examples of culture across two different regions.

What all these examples of attitudes and values have in common though is that they developed over many many years, in some cases over centuries. These values have become engrained in the societies that follow them and it is likely that when people oppose these long held values, they may be looked down upon for not following tradition. This is a brief intro of what culture is.

[A look at culture centered around the workplace](#)

Workplace culture has some overlap with the general country wide culture. For example in the choice of days for the weekend, some places have Friday-Saturday others have Saturday-Sunday. Or it can be a more significant difference, as is the case with the average working hours which can be contrasted very heavily if we look at the differences between Japan (long hours, over fifty hours a week) and Norway (much shorter in comparison, being close to 30 hours a week). (Kenji IWASAKI, 2010)

The driving forces behind many of these changes were studied in the last century by Elton Mayo and he and his colleagues proposed the foundations of many of today's management theories that are used throughout the world in small to multi national companies.

In the past, over many centuries in fact, the closest resemblance to a workplace culture was that a manager would set the rules and everyone would follow or if the management was lax the employees would eventually bring themselves into daily routine of work and that would be the culture. Be it an efficient one or not and this is what Elton Mayo observed and wrote about. In his publication he wrote that workplace culture is enforced through rigid structures and routines, such as a fixed lunch time, or a specific dress code if not an uniform, etc. (Mayo, 1999)

However, in today's modern work environment we often do not see this rigid hand of management. Granted, in industries such as retail or warehouses the employees would still be treated much like in the past. In many technology or higher skill based jobs, the workplace tends to be much more relaxed with a lot more decision making power given to the employees. We can see this in many software companies such as Google or Facebook where we are unlikely to find any such rigid rules of conduct. Instead what we are likely to experience is that the employees are given a general goal, for example get a piece of software ready with a given time, and then the managers let the appropriate work culture that gets the job done develop itself organically. (Hazzan, 2016)

Regardless of this broad overview that we just discussed. They can all be at heart broken down into elements belonging to some main management theories that were proposed a long time ago. We will now go over some of these briefly.

Bureaucratic management model

Many of us are familiar with this sort of management, it bases around a hierarchy where the managers up at the top set the policies on how things are supposed to be done and pass it down and expect the employees to follow. If we go to a government office, or a large restaurant chain such as Nandos, or Tesco, etc. In these large organisations with hundreds if not thousands of employees this system of prescribed procedures is a good way to ensure consistency in the quality of service provided among all the employees. (Gregory, 2011)

The downside of this type of work culture is that it can become very monotonous and over time the employees can start to resent the boringness of their jobs. This has been one of the main ways work culture is portrayed in the popular culture, we are all familiar with the stereotypical image of a tired employee sitting at his cubicle following some long and tedious protocol and being sad.

The downside of not using a bureaucratic management structure for large companies: can you imagine if they made big macs of different sized at different McDonalds? One branch would most likely become the preferred over all the others in that region, and while at first that may seem great, it would destroy the overall brand image.

Tribe Culture

This type of management is most common in smaller to medium sized companies where the complexity of the business is not yet large enough to justify having a full on bureaucratic system. This may things such as all the employees knowing each other or that they only have one production facility and because of all those factors they do not need to have many strict rules and procedures to maintain quality. In these cases, actually having a complex management system as is proposed in a bureaucratic system would be counter productive as it would be adding unnecessary complications to the production line. (Slocum, 2015)

In these settings it is often common to see many employees forming close friendships in the workplace. These small to medium companies are also often run by a family and hiring predominantly family members.

From my research, the main advantage of an organisation maintaining a similar work culture is that it boosts employee moral and as a result creates a very productive environment which in turn allows the employees to do their jobs more happily and increase overall work satisfaction.

Another long term benefit of this kind of work culture is that employees are likely to stay within the company for longer and thus experienced staff are retained for longer.

Market driven culture

In this setting, an organisation would value the end results above most other things. There are some successful industries where this is the norm, say for example the banking industry where most banks or financial institutions will want their employees to focus solely on the task at hand without worrying too much about the social impact of it on their potential customers. It is also commonly known from sources such as GlassDoor or Indeed that the working hours at these work environments tend to be much longer when contrasted with other industries. Again, these long and often unhealthy working schedules are

driven purely by the goal of maximising the product (in this case profit for the bank). (Bauder, 2010)

This type of work culture can be beneficial in the right places, as we all know most banks are successful and make a lot of profit. But the downside is that it can have detrimental effects on the employees from the long hours.

Me personally, I would not work in a place where the management care so little about the people working for them and their end customers.

Risk taking or entrepreneurial culture

There are some companies where risk is not looked upon favourably, for example in a company that manufactures car tyres the management is likely to keep production a few percent above the required safety factors to make sure they the risk of failure is low. In this particular example, the ultimate risk is that a bad tire could lead to someone dying.

However, there are other organisations where risk is looked upon positively and actively encouraged. For example, a small technology start up in the mobile apps business would undoubtedly have to take a few risks during the start of the company in order to come up with something new. The risk being in the fact that new things tend not to work. (Covin, 2011)

In these work environment employees would often be encouraged to take on responsibilities and risks beyond the scope of their job.

How to find out what kind of culture is present in the workplace?

The type of culture the management have implemented can be seen from a variety of factors. It can be deduced from things as simple as there being or lacking a formal dress code. Letting people work flexible hours and from home. Letting the staff have more than the bare legal minimum of holidays.

It can also be observed in the more deeper aspects of work life such as the employees having a good work life balance. Employees being given the necessary support when faced with a new and unfamiliar work problem. There being an overall level of job satisfaction in the company and an accompanying low rate of people quitting the job. (Brayfield, 2016)

We can look at these factors to determine if the work culture is good or bad. Once that is established we can look into the technical details of the number of procedures and protocols, or the structure and hierarchy to then differentiate,

say for example, a bureaucratic work culture from market culture or a tribe culture from an entrepreneurial culture.

Because these cultures do overlap in some cases it may not be possible to fully draw a line in the sand. How we can describe them instead is a form of diagram where according to set characterises the cultures would move closer or further away from a set culture. (Bellot, 2014)

The last thing to consider regarding work culture is that it is often not written in stone and can change depending on the circumstances at hand. For example, the average office used to be a monochromatic open plan room full of cubicles where the management would try to fit in as many people as possible into one office to save on rent space. However, in today's offices we often find a lot of open space giving the sense of openness and the employees work in open desks where they can have face to face contact with other employees.

The work culture at my place of work

I work in small Indian restaurant, the total number of staff is less than fifteen. Within these fifteen there is wide array of roles and responsibilities ranging from the newly joined waiting staff (who are often students working part time) to the chef, the accountant and the owner. In this section I will discuss how the workplace culture is here and try to show my ideas at the employee and management levels.

At a personal level

When at work we try to keep a balanced environment where everyone is focused on getting the orders cooked, packed or prepared and sent out, but that also allows room for a nice conversation that helps keep the kitchen environment more bearable. This creates a nice bond between the staff and also helps make the difficult days, where we have too many orders or are very hot (in effect turning the kitchen into a small sauna room), go by more easily as it keeps us distracted from some of the problems of a standard kitchen environment.

There is a good level of cooperation and friendship between all of us and we often happily cover for each other's shifts when someone needs to be away for some emergency at home.

From this, we can say that we have very much a tribe culture amongst the kitchen and waiting employees.

Aside from the closeness of the staff, we also have relatively lax rules when it comes to dress code and procedures. Procedures in our case are things like going out to get produce, or who does what task in the kitchen, in what order food stuff such as sauces or curry is prepared. As long as things are done to a sufficient quality our boss doesn't mind us taking different routes depending on the circumstances.

At the leadership level

With this we can clearly discard a bureaucratic management style from our restaurant. In fact, we may be a better fit in the entrepreneurial culture. Our boss often encourages us to find and try out new ways of doing things, both behind the scenes in the kitchen and in terms of new menus. The leadership gives us some limited freedom, as long as it doesn't noticeably affect the day to day business, to take time away from work to learn new things that may be beneficial for the business and that also enriches our personal development.

The leadership allows our workplace to be a mixture of various work cultures, but leaning more towards the cultures that value the staff as much as they value customers and profits.

And this fits just perfectly with me.

Can workplace culture promote better and more ethical attitudes?

For us an ethical business means that we provide our customers with a good food for the money they spend, that the food is safe and prepared in clean conditions and sent to them on time and while still hot. And from the accounting teams point of view, ethical behaviour is not to overcharge the customers for something that isn't worth that much. And this is largely followed in our workplace.

Having this order come from the top management allows for these values to be passed onto the junior and new staff with much greater ease. As is the norm with almost all organisation, the new will learn from the old and having us, the more senior staff, promote a positive and ethical work practices.

Another factor that I observe at the restaurant where I work is that because the staff get along so well, we also find it a lot easier to share professional experiences. This helps further facilitate the transfer of knowledge on how to do our jobs better as we can learn openly from each others mistakes.

Conclusion

During the course of this module, I learned a lot about workplace culture. My view previously was that it was simply how each individual did the things they liked and had never really thought about it in such light. Being able to see workplace culture from a formal standpoint and understanding the impacts it has was perhaps the most important take from module.

I do believe that given the things I learned during class and research I did during writing this report will help be a more effective team player at work.

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