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CertHE Skills for the workplace

Problem Solving and Decision Making

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INTRODUCTION

Problem solving as well as decision making are being regarded as one of the most crucial skills in the workplace due to the fact that these skills can render a supportive hand in navigating assortment of situations that might come across at work. Pertaining to this, the main aim of the current research report is to recognize problem solving tools and techniques for determining and proposing solution to any work related problem (Russ and Wallace, 2016). In this context a UK based organization known as AXA group of companies will be taken as a case company where I have worked in past. The report will define complex problem being faced by the firm and propose range of solution to the problem. It will also going to develop a plan for executing the solution and evaluate review strategies for ensuring effective execution of the solution.

DEFINING A COMPLEX PROBLEM IN THE WORKPLACE

Overview of the company and its problem

Speaking in relation with the AXA, it is a UK based group of companies being famous for their financial services all across the globe. It has its operations in almost 64 nations of the world and giving services to more than hundred million clients. The firm offers services related to insurance and healthcare services at reasonable prices. Presently, it was testified that the firm was coming across with an important drop in engagement of their workers soon after an unexpected alteration in the business structure. The management and staff members were divided and this in turn resulted into loss of integrity among the workers (Senge, 2016). Further, it was difficult for the workers to engage as there was no particular communication barrier amid the novel manager and workers. Due to the lack in communication, the sales of AXA was declining at a fast pace. Each and every firm come across with the problems related to communication and it is really important to overcome the same for attaining the goals of the firm.

Defining a problem

Communication is being defined as a method which helps in facilitating interchanging of ideas, data and messages by using visual speech, words, behaviour and writing. With effective communication process in place, the firm can attain their pre-determined objectives in given period of time. There are two ways of

communication being prevalent in every company that is verbal as well as non-verbal. Throwing light in relation with the verbal communication, it is being performed by using word and languages. Utilizing language can be regarded as a best technique because if it is used effectively then it will support in transforming correct information as well as knowledge undoubtedly (Russ and Wallace, 2016). On the other hand, non-verbal communication is quite broader as it encompasses the manner through which information is sent devoid of any use of words or languages. Since, AXA is service based organization and thus, communication plays a very significant role. Non-existence of improper communication will result in building up of ambiguities amid both the employer and the employee and customers and thus, there will be more complications.

Scope of the problem

At times when there is an alteration in the management as well as structure of the business, it is quite problematic for the people holding a leadership positions in the company to bring all on the similar page. The similar condition took place in AXA as there has been decline in the sales of the firm due to some communication problems within the groups. The scope of this problem is relatively wide. It can also impact the complete operations of the firm. Separate to email system and messaging there also exists a verbal communication that happens to take place amid colleagues by casual meeting as well as interactions. In case, this professional interaction between the peer groups is positive, it will be useful at the workplace (Proctor, 2014). Seeking help from panel discussions as well as presentations, people in the leadership roles of the company must ensure effective communication between the different groups. If the scenario will be ideal then this will progress further, nevertheless there might be some problems which involve poor communication, hinders the profits and productivity of the business. Moreover, there are several issues that take place in the workplace such as sexual harassment, passive aggression and bullying. Further, controlling scripts is not being regarded as the one and only option as it restricts the acquaintance of the worker at the time of interacting with the clients and miss the mark in offering data to them about the services being required by them. If employees will fail in this phase or part then it might have negative influence on the firm.

Impact of the problem

The communication problem being faced by AXA Company will have different impacts. The very first is rise in the stress level at the workplace. Improper communication will increase stress among the groups and there will be development of a feeling of tension, overworking and hurry. In addition to this, poor communication does not include stability of a situation and sense of predictability and also gives way to fear which augments the tension level and result into improper work. Secondly, this problem will also leads towards non-fulfilment of expectations (Lanier, 2018). There might be chances that the teams of groups will miss their deadlines and customers might miss their appointments and ambiguity in understanding the role in a group task. On a whole, it can be said that this work based issue will have noteworthy influence on the finance, business, and human resource, revenue and marketing of the business. Overall, there will be a significant impact on the business, marketing, finance and overall revenue of the company if there is a lack of or poor communication going on in the business.

EVALUATING INFORMATION ON THE PROBLEM TO INFORM DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Speaking in volume in regards with the workplace communication, it is very significant as it helps in ensuring teamwork. It not only helps in maintaining as well as building association rather it also accelerates innovation in the company. AXA is also coming across with the same problem wherein the workers were not in a position to communicate effectively with their new manager. Further, due to change in management and business structure, their fellow workers were also shifted to different department which created a big communication gap (Anderson and et.al, 2015). Different communication issues that have occurred in the firm are prevalence of swift and quick replies by emails and texts, wrong assumptions in regards with the assigned task, unmet deadline and unprepared workers and finally, utilization of wrong communication tool.

RANGE OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

After evaluating the whole issue being faced by the company, it can be said that the company can go for range of solutions which will help them in overcoming

communication barrier and will make their employee more engage towards their work and manager. Some of the solutions to the identified problem are as follows:

- Keeping communication simple
- Seeking out feedback and taking action
- Organizing get together and parties for better employee engagement
- Making the workers feel that they belong to the company (McWhinney, 2017)
- Focus of leaders during group or panel meetings
- Implementing alteration for fixing poor communication

DECISION MAKING TECHNIQUE FOR ANALYZING RANGE OF SOLUTIONS

Fishbone analysis

Fishbone analysis is being referred as a decision making technique which involves visual manner of looking at cause and effect and it more structured as compared to the other tools. Seeking help through this evaluation technique, it was explored that the change in the business and management structure of AXA was strongly linked with breakdown of communication of the firm. The workers of the company were not in a position to communicate with their newly appointed managers as well a peer group. In addition to this, they were also feeling uncomfortable (Haas and Yorio, 2018). Moreover, the leadership positions were also altered and thus, it was problematic for the, to motivate the workers and create a cordial and healthy communication with the new group until and unless the leader takes initial steps. The overall results of the firm was affecting and there might be loss of customer, finance and reputation of the organization. Considering this impact and problem in intellect, out of different options suggested for the communication issue, below are some of the most suited options which will help in overcoming the communication issue being faced by AXA.

Most suitable solution

After utilizing different decision making technique, it can be said that the most suitable option for AXA is to use appropriate communication tool. The very first suitable solution to the identified communication issue making arrangement for get together and meetings so that employees feel motivated and gel up with the newly appointed managers as well as colleagues. Secondly, it is also important the managers and

leaders must make their employees feel that they belong to the company and the management cares for them too. In addition to this, it is also significant on the part of leaders to ensure that they are focusing on each and every individual in the meetings or formal get together (McWhinney and et.al, 2017). Seeking help from these solutions firm will be able to overcome the communication issues. Along with this, a big communication gap being created due to change in the management and business structure and shifting of their fellow workers to different department will also lessen down.

DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN AND COMMUNICATING TO THE STAKEHOLDERS

Now, after finding the right solution for solving the determined problem, it is important at this stage to develop an action plan for executing the solution. In this regard, it is firstly noteworthy to understand the objectives and thus, the main objective here in this case is making employees engage with their jobs, lessening down of communication gap and improving the level of communication between the employer and the employee. Here are some of the action plan and the manner in which it will be communicated to respective stakeholder. Firstly, it is crucial on the part of the new manager and company to send a greeting to their workers on certain special days such as valentines' day, Christmas, New Year etc. in order to reflect their significance in the company. This can be communicated to the workers via emails, messages and greeting cards. Such kind of gestures will help in increasing the bond between the employer and the employee and will help in reducing gap in the communication (Fischer, Greiff and Funke, 2018). In addition to this, leaders and managers can also plan a meeting or panel discussion. At the time of meetings or group discussion, it is obligatory on the part of leaders to stay focus on each and every member because through this greater level of communication can be attained. Having undivided focus, differences in the communication pattern can be easily identified and feedback can be given based on that. Finally, AXA should also plan a get together or party for their workers which should be informal session. In such parties, employees can communicate with each other and gel up with each other meritoriously. With this, collaborations along with learning process within a team will increase.

MONITORING AND REVIEW TECHNIQUES FOR ENSURING SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

It becomes essential for the managers or leaders to monitor as well as measure the progress on a continuous basis for making sure that their solutions to the problems are working or not. In this regard, information can be accumulated along with feedback can be taken from the employees through survey or questionnaire for determining whether the solutions are meeting out their requirements (Holmes and Stubbe, 2015). Based on that feedback and information collected, adjustment should be made in the process or strategies if something unanticipated arises. Moreover, if it is ascertained that the solution is not working as per the plan then it is important to return back to alternative solution and execute a novel action plan.

CONCLUSION

Thus, from the above analysis, it can be said that barriers in communication are related with many different issues like physiological, physical, technical and psychological barriers. If effective communication is in place, the firm will be able to augment their profits level and will also acquire flawless comprehension of amid the transmitter as well as receiver of the information. Every organization faces problems however it is important to solve them through effective decision making process is very vital.

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