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**LCBB4003 – Introducing the Modern
Workplace (Essay on Unilever)**

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Contents

Introduction	3
Leadership styles followed by Unilever	4
Management styles followed by Unilever	4
How leadership and management styles shape the behaviour of employees in Unilever	5
The functions and responsibilities of a line manager in meeting the needs of the company	7
Conclusion	9
References:	10

Introduction

In the challenging competitive world choosing the best leadership and management style is a must to achieve organizational success. Implementation of these styles is also important under circumstances for the companies. These styles also shape the behaviour of the employees. Some leadership and management styles are not employee-friendly and some of them are employee-friendly. A line manager is an important part of a company's success or failure. His functions and responsibilities are necessary to keep the environment of the workplace stable and his effective management behaviour helps the employees to give their best. Unilever is a UK-based multinational company that has expanded its branches in many countries. It follows the best leadership and management styles and its line managers are very proactive and help in achieving the company's success.

Leadership styles followed by Unilever

For any organization leadership and management, styles are very important and good coordination between leadership and management helps an organization to gain organizational success. Simply leadership deals with influencing, motivating, and finding out the best part of an employee to do work perfectly and management refers to the ways and directions needed to do the work perfectly (Taucean, Tamasila & others, 2016). Unilever is a popular British multinational company and it surely follows the best leadership and management styles to get maximum organizational success.

At present Unilever is a big multinational company and it has worldwide popularity having branches in many countries. Besides, it is also important for Unilever to maintain its popularity as their competitors in the market. So, it can be assumed that Unilever follows a transformational leadership style. Unilever inspires and motivates its employees to be creative in their work so that company becomes more successful and unique (Maak, Pless, & others 2016). Unilever trains their employees and gives them the authority to make decisions in their assigned work so that new ways or ideas can be found (Lan, Chang & others, 2019). It is very appreciable that leaders follow moral standards in the company and encourage others to follow the standards. Besides ethical environment of work is maintained with authenticity and an open communication process is encouraged. As Unilever deals globally it has to compete with other competitors and always needs to think of new ideas and products, sometimes it follows democratic leadership. So, inputs and feedback from the employees can be a great asset for Unilever. Sometimes as a big multinational company, Unilever needs to take immediate decisions and, in that case, it cannot use democratic leadership. So, Unilever combines different styles of leadership under different situations.

Management styles followed by Unilever

Every organization follows some management styles to run its organizational activities and it plays a vital role in the success of any organization. Through a management style, a manager of an organization makes plans and organizes and manages staff to fulfil the organizations' goals (Bucata, Rizescu, 2016) Most of the well-known companies and

organizations select their management styles following both productivity and employee satisfaction and as a popular organization, Unilever tries to maintain the factor while selecting management styles. There are some types of management styles including – autocratic management style, democratic management styles, and laissez-faire management styles. As a big multinational company, Unilever mainly follows democratic management styles as in that case managers and employees are important (Dyczkowska, Dyczkowski, 2018). Again, some management styles are part of democratic management styles such as consultative management style, participative management style, collaborative management style, transformational management style, and coaching management style. But mainly transformational management style is preferred. In this style, the management is very active and the main focus is always on the growth of the company. In Unilever managers always support their employees to do works in the best way (Sinulingga, 2019). Employees are always get motivated by the managers and it helps them to break their comfort zones. Even in some cases managers trust their employees and do not supervise the works and leaves decision making on the employees and managers only receive the final submissions. Sometimes Unilever applies the other types of styles of democratic management style. In some cases, employees are encouraged to share their ideas by managers to take a good decision and even directly encouraged to share ideas in the company's decision making (Rolková, Farkašová, 2015). But as a big multinational company, Unilever has to face different kinds of challenges and problems and in these situations. Unilever changes its management styles to tackle these challenges and problems. This can be thought of as a situation-based management style.

How leadership and management styles shape the behaviour of employees in Unilever

The leadership and management styles of an organization impact the behaviour of the employees of the organization and it is also the same for the employees of Unilever. Organizational leaders can always influence the employees and their behaviour towards employees can be positive or negative. Big multinational companies like Unilever always want that their leadership style will put a positive impression on employees and as a

result, Unilever takes employee-friendly leadership styles. Unilever gives importance to their employees and the leaders always motivate and encourage them in their works and for this reason employees work more fluently (Fiaz, Su & others, 2017). As the leaders trust the employees they always remain positive and confident while taking on new and challenging tasks. Stress is a common problem for employees in the workplace and working under good and motivating leaders in Unilever decreases the stress in the works of employees. Health and safety issue for employees is important for organizations and it is carefully monitored by the leaders of Unilever otherwise it will create a bad impression on the brand image of Unilever. Employees are ensured proper health safety in the workplace and so they do not need to do extra tension for safety and they can concentrate fully on their works (Zhang, Chen & others, 2015). They have faith that their company gives priority to their health safety. Even the leaders also think of their employees' health consciousness like they encourage stop drug-taking, taking healthy foods and drinks. Sometimes employees' assistances programs are conducted to increase health consciousness. So, the employees become more health-conscious. Even while working employees are given time to sleep and as result, they do not face any problems due to lack of sleep and concentrate fully on their works. Sometimes leaders ask for suggestions while taking organizational decisions and this approach from the leaders gives employees the feeling that they are respected in their workplace and they consider the environment of the company as their home environment. They love working for the company and hopes for the progress of the company.

Besides, proper management style plays an important role in the behaviour of employees in any company (Asgari, M.R., 2014). Unilever chooses the best possible management style to keep their production at maximum level and also to influence the behaviour of its employees positively. In authoritarian management style employees are given tasks by managers with given directions and the employees just submit the works according to the directions (Zhang, Xie, 2017). In that case, most of the time recommendations from employees are not taken. So, they feel not like the member of the company and compare themselves as machines. They also feel underrated or undervalued and replaceable. They do not feel comfortable working under this management style (Szczepańska-Woszczyńska, 2015). As a multinational company, Unilever always thinks about employee

satisfaction and so it normally doesn't apply that management style. So, the employees working in Unilever do not feel undervalued or replaceable and they feel comfortable working in Unilever. Unilever only follows an authoritarian management style in times of emergency and the employees also accept this style because of emergency. But most of the time Unilever follows a democratic management style where active participation of employees is maintained. In that style, the employees get a chance to discuss ideas about their assigned tasks and it helps them to improve their communication skills (Miao, Newman & others, 2018). As the managers are very co-operative employees share their problems to the managers in doing works and they can easily overcome their weaknesses which makes them confident about their skills. Managers trust their employees and sometimes they give tasks that are not in the comfort zones of employees and after finishing the task they can break their comfort zones and get to learn new skills also. Laissez-Faire Management Style is also applied if necessary and, in that style, the employees complete their tasks in their task in their way and can charge whatever they want and submit the final copy to the managers. This kind of style develops the mindset of taking responsibility for work to the employees and they find themselves more attached to the company. This can also develop the leadership and management quality of the employees.

The functions and responsibilities of a line manager in meeting the needs of the company

The post of a line manager is very important in any company and the responsibilities and functions of a line manager play a crucial role in achieving an organization's goals. A line manager is an important person of an organization who directly manages and instructs other employees and reports to the higher-ranked managers. He manages and supervises the assigned works of employees daily. He is the bridge between the employees and upper management. In Unilever, the role of a line manager is very important as Unilever is a widely expanded popular multinational company. Concerning the fact of employees, a line manager has to do different kinds of functions. He has to recruit and select employees for the works of Unilever. Besides, he has to train, monitor, and focus on employee development (Crawshaw, and Game, 2015). He has to motivate

employees in their works and also take care of the health and safety issues of employees. Apart from these, he has to do functioning to keep the workflow of the company like planning the goals, tasks for the related department and discuss these with employees. Besides a line manager has to arrange regular meetings with the employees to know the work progresses and guide the employees. He has to check the quality standards of the works submitted by the employees. Finally, he has to submit reports on work performances and future goals to the higher authority.

A line manager has to take a lot of responsibilities on his shoulder to fulfil the company's goals. Line managers in Unilever always give importance to their responsibilities and they not only work as a manager to the employees but also as a leader who cares for their employees (Brewster, Söderström, 2017). Identifying talent in work is very necessary for companies and line managers to need to hire talented employees suited for targeted works and he should encourage them to do more for the company. It is also important for line managers to set up work expectations and monitor the works and need to rectify the works if needed. A line manager should also focus on engaging more quality employees in the company so that they can be used in decision-making (Ulrich, Younger & others, 2008). Good communication is the key factor in line management and a line manager communicates effectively with the staff or employees. He should be able to brief works details clearly so that the employees understand what they need to do. He also needs to share necessary things and ideas with the employees for satisfying the company's goals (Ling Zhang, Wong, 2020). He should give employees acceptable freedom to discuss ideas or problems with him so that lacking in the work can be solved. He also should check whether employees are having problems or not and if any problem is found he should try to help the employee to solve the problem. To increase the abilities of employees and introduce new skills he can arrange grooming sessions also which will be beneficial for company's productivity and quality. Overall a line manager should maintain a friendly environment in the workplace and spending some qualities like having coffee together or a mini party after a successful project will increase the bonding of employees and they will be more engaged with the company.

Conclusion

Nowadays, the success of an organization mainly depends on how management and leadership are followed in a company and how much employees love working in the company. Line managers are an asset for companies as they are the connection between the higher authority and employees. Unilever always focuses on these factors and also sets its leadership and management styles according to the situation and that's why it has become a successful and world popular company.

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