ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND CHANGE

Sarita Kumari

Lecturer in Commerce

D.A.V Girls' College kosli

ABSTRACT

Organisational culture is an emergence, complex, incalculable state that result from combination of different elements. The culture of any organisation includes the shared norms, beliefs, and values that guide employees' behavior in the organisation. Organisation needs to change with change in culture with passage of time. Change in the environment is inevitable with change in time, so there is a link between requirements of change in culture of the organisation.

Key words: Culture, values, norms, behavior.

Meaning

Organisational/corporate culture refers to the patterns of beliefs, assumptions, values, and behaviors' reflecting commonality in people working together.

Definition

According to Schein, Martin and Meyerson "Organisational/corporate culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that is invented, discovered, or developed by an organisation as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and validated enough to be taught to new members as the correct ways of perceiving, thinking, and feeling in relation to these problems"

According to Kroeber and Kluckholn (1952) culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts.

The Elements of culture

1. **Basic assumptions**: The basic precepts that characterize an organisation in terms of what it is, what it stands for, and what it is all about.

2. **Artifacts:** The visible manifestations of culture as seen in the physical and social environment of the organisation such as its structure, its rituals, observable behavior of its members.

3. **Values**: The social principles, goals, or standards held by members of an organisation, individually and collectively.

4. **Norms**: They are unwritten rules of behavior-the informal rules of the game telling employees what they are supposed to be saying, doing and what is right and wrong.

Nature of organisational culture

The culture of an organisation may reflect in various forms adopted by the organisation. These could be:

- The physical infrastructure □

- Routine behavior, language, ceremonies

- Gender equality, equity in payment

- Dominant values such as quality, efficiency and so

- Philosophy that guides the organisation's policies towards its employees and customers like 'customer first' and 'customer is king', and the manner in which employees deal with customers.

All the above factors together reflect organisational culture.

Dealing with Change

- Organisation culture could be a help or a hindrance to organisational change.

- Implementing new business strategy generally results in failures because of strategy-culture incongruence.

- In any change attempt the existing culture to be diagnosed.

- Changing corporate culture can improve the organisation ability to implement new business strategies and to perform better.

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Identifying and diagnosing organisation culture

Diagnosing corporate culture requires uncovering and understanding the basic assumptions, values, norms, and artifacts underlying organisational life as perceived and felt by organisational members.

Techniques used in diagnosing organisation culture:

1. Interviewing employees at different levels of an organisation
2. Administering relevant questionnaires and conducting attitudinal and morale surveys.
3. Analyzing the process aspects.
4. Examining the organisation's external relations with its customers and clients etc.

Developing new culture

Sometimes it is more appropriate to develop a new culture rather than diagnosing the existing one. Prevailing values may be examined with reference to the desired value to determine:

1. The needed changes in value orientation
2. Employee attitude, skills, and behaviors that would be congruent with the new values.
3. The changes required in current employee skills and behaviors.
4. The needed changes in the current organisational practices.

Employees need to be involved in developing new culture if it is to be accepted by all.

Employee-Culture Compatibility

While it is easy to test whether an individual matches a particular job description, it is difficult to determine whether he/she is right for the company culture.

Culture compatibility is difficult to judge and at best can be fostered through mentoring or coaching a new hire.

Assessing Culture risk

- This is to assess the degree to which the planned change fits in with the organisational culture. The extent of cultural risk depends upon two issues:

    1. How important the changes are to the strategy and

    2. How compatible the changes are with the culture.

- The risk is greater when the changes are highly important to the strategy but highly incongruent with the culture.

- Changes are easier to make when strategy aligns with organisation culture.

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Changing the corporate culture

- Culture is deep seated in an organisation as much as the personality in an individual
- Any attempt to change the culture requires an understanding of the cultural dimension as artifacts, norms, values and basic assumptions.
- While outward layers of organisation culture such as artifacts, norms are easy to change than deeper layers constituting the values and basic assumptions.
- Changes in corporate culture should be considered as last resort.
- While changing culture the depth of cultural change has to be identified.
- Cultural change may involve certain issues of ethical and legal sensitivity.

Change is necessary in corporate culture when there is change in business environment for growth and expansion, survival, mergers

Checklist for cultural change

1. Formulate a clear picture of firm's strategy, shared values, and norms.
2. Identify the aspects needs to be hanged.
3. Identify the aspect which is still valid and which needs to change.
4. Identify the depth of the cultural change needed.
5. Communicate the change translated into goals, sub goals etc.
6. Make changes from top down; involve employees in the change process.
7. Check on the leadership and support process to overcome anxiety among managers
8. Monitor the progress from time to time

Cross Culture Management

In recent years multi-cultural practices and values have become significantly conspicuous in corporate business. Cultures and managerial values become co-terminus when organisations cross boundaries. The synergy between corporate culture and managerial values institutes cross-cultural practices garnering effective strategic options, helping to perform a set task successfully. This has a far-fetching effect on what people in different cultures perceive and how these cultural values affect business affairs in an altogether different environment.

Four common illusions

1) People are people, wherever they come from

Yes, but in a multi-national environment, where they come from will affect expectations of productivity and working procedures. Managers and team members come from different backgrounds with different histories, religions, schooling, background and

training. They think about things differently. If manager understand those differences he\she will know the colleagues better and able to manage them.

2) Its corporate culture that matters

Even corporate culture varies according to where the company is based. Emphasis on seniority, expectations of respect, degrees of formality, reporting lines and even business procedures, such as accounting procedures, can differ dramatically between countries. It's the people who seem most familiar who are often the most different.

3) Its just about whether bow or shake hands

It goes much deeper than that, although the perception of politeness or impoliteness matters. Help to discover the values and attitudes of the different nationalities that make up team and show how these are manifested in business and social behavior. Effective cross-cultural communication eliminates delays.

4) Its the task that matters

Of course, task based qualifications matter but in a multi-national, multi-ethnic environment people skills are just as important and that means developing sensitivity to other cultural ways of doing things. Aim to strengthen hand by adding cross-cultural skills to existing task-based competency. This makes more fully rounded and competent international manager

Cross-Cultural Contents

- Values and attitudes and behavior
- Understanding cultural synergies and differences
- Recognize and deal with cross-cultural communication issues
- Motivate and run an international team
- Deal with overseas meetings, presentations and negotiations
- The role of hospitality and gift giving in international business

Change Architecture Principles

Leading any change in a complex organisation can be confusing. This is especially so when changing a culture. However, much of the messiness and many of the common mistakes can be 'headed off at the pass' by paying attention to some key principles from the start. As clients create detailed plans (blueprints) for their culture change efforts, these basic principles help ensure success.

- Realize the need for change
- Lead with a vision that provides focus and inspiration
- Let the vision not policies and procedures shape choices and actions

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- Make a break with the past

- Use every opportunity to develop more leadership

- Build momentum by creating early successes

- Ensure alignment of systems, structures and work processes

- Take risk and play to win

CONCLUSION

To change the organisational culture there should be a clear mission with concrete goals. Change may be proposed from within, quite often as the result of interaction with the outside world, enlist the commitment of the top of the organization. organisational culture is like the blood flow in the human system that connects and energizes the various internal groups. Changes made in the systems/subsystems may not be effective until they are compatible with the organisational culture. Otherwise, cultural incongruence/resistance will defeat the purpose of any planned change. Organisationl Culture determines the success or failure of the organisation in long run. It is the shared perception that organisational members have about its characteristics. The impact of culture goes far beyond the human side of the organisation to influence its basic mission and goals.

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