

Corporate Culture and Performance Management in Apple Company

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Introduction

The global economy has been a key witness to the ever growing importance of Human Resource Management. Turbulent business economy climate such as liberalization, globalization, changing technology and technological advancements have made it a challenge for organizations to manage its human resource. HRM as an organization science has not developed in complete isolation but rather in the context of industrial change and development. Individuals bring to their jobs diverse skills, needs, goals and expectations.

The coursework will try to describe and analyses HR practices of an organization. For the purposes of this paper, the selected organization under consideration will be Apple Inc. founded in 1976 by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. Apple Inc. is an American-based electronic company that deals in both hardware and software production. It does the creating, designing, production, and selling of computing devices for education, consumers and businesses. In addition, it also operates retail stores that sell third party software and hardware besides its own merchandise. The company operates with the support of approximately 20,000 employees worldwide (both permanent and temporary) (Edson et al. 2012).

Before a company ventures into a given project, it first tries to familiarize itself with the organization's goals, objectives and mission for a successful completion of the project. By understanding what drives an organization, it becomes easier to identify areas where the company needs to focus for maximum efficiency. Apple Inc. though a leader in computer technology, has received its own share of good and bad times in this dynamic industry. Survival in the technology industry requires skill to foresee changes and to react to market demands (Chaturvedi 2013)

To position itself in the industry, Apple Inc. understood the need to have the right persons on the job. Moreover, to maximize the returns, it realized the need for training the human resource was necessary for the organization to achieve its goals. For the training to be effective, three strategies were followed by the HRM that is; organization analysis (appropriate training given the company's business strategy), person analysis (determining a person's skills, knowledge and ability) and task analysis (what task will this individual do and what skills will he/she require) (Lashinsky 2012).

The end result of the strategy was that Apple Inc. was able to have a competitive edge in the market in terms of quality, design, service and uniqueness of their product. This coursework will further explain some of the practices such as; organization culture and performance management that Apple uses not only to stay ahead of its major competitors but also retain its gigantic workforce (Edson et al. 2012).

Organization Culture of Apple Company

Organization culture refers to a system of shared beliefs, assumptions or values held by members of an organization that distinguishes them from other organizations. Apart from creating a sense of identity and distinction within the organization, culture also offers guidelines and mechanisms that shape the attitude and behaviors of workers in the organization.

Given the success record that Apple Inc. boasts, its traditional corporate culture is widely known by most companies. One of the most commonly known concepts of culture within Apple Inc. is the informal corporate culture whereby the company favors a flat organizational hierarchy

rather than tall. Another illustration of Apples' culture is that employees are not required to wear formal attire but can freely show up at work with casual clothing (Lashinsky 2012)

Organization culture has four different theories or dimensions that give a perspective on how it works. The first dimension is the consistency hypothesis; it explains the idea of common perspective, beliefs and communal values amongst the organization's employees in trying to promote meaning and sense of identity amongst themselves. The second dimension is the mission hypothesis which brings into perspective that the shared sense of purpose, direction and strategy can galvanize members towards collective goals.

The third theory is the involvement or participation theory: this is the idea that participation will contribute to a sense of responsibility and ownership hence the need for commitment and loyalty. And lastly is the adaptability hypothesis. It brings into perspective the norms and beliefs that enhances an organization's ability to receive, interpret and translate data from the environment hence creating an organization's ability to thrive and survive in the industry (Lunenburg 2011).

Successful companies apparently have strong culture characterized by closeness to the customer autonomy and leadership and productivity. Strong cultures encourage cohesion within the organization and are likely to offer innovative ways to attain desired work behavior (Bacal 2012). A more business focus organization culture strategy in apple Inc. is known for creating an environment where individual talent is highly fostered. This approach contributes to the notion of informal culture by respecting people's identities.

Self-realization and inventive variables give rise to inner satisfaction while socio-development and status enhancement are extrinsic values. All these variables are exhibited within Apple's organization culture hence the workers are able to grasp their importance in their involvement in the success of the organization. In conclusion, organizations apply a number of mechanisms to achieve their HRM goals. As depicted by Apple Inc., employees who are incompetent and hardly committed achieve very little even with the best technology and resources at hand. Companies with weak cultures have no clear beliefs of how to succeed, the most common deficiency of a company with weak culture are morale problems, inconsistency and emotional bursts

Apple Company Performance Management

Performance management refers to a range of management initiative which are meant to check progress towards achieving company's goals and objectives. It can be viewed from a number of dimensions such as strategy, operation management, behavior or economics. It is portrayed as an integrated process where managers engage with employees to set expectations, review work and agree improvements (Bacal, 2012)

Consequently, it involves an array of HR activities such as induction, training, development and performance appraisal. All these measures are aimed at affecting individual and organization's overall performance. Typically, performance is measured and compared to organization's goals and objectives which in turn provides information on how an organization's current projects are working (Aguinis, 2009)

The ultimate goal of performance management is to ensure organization and its subsystems (departments, processes and teams) operate at optimal levels in achieving its goals

and objectives. Other reasons why an organization may need to measure performance include; to make a decision based on evidence, monitor process changes, recognize improved performance and allow performance comparison across departments. These points are supported strongly by Apple Inc. achievements and positioning in the market.

The most common method of managing performance is performance appraisal and employee development. Performance appraisal is the process through which an organization get information on how an employees is performing his/her job. One culture that Apple Inc. has adopted is the increased need to collect data from the customers, employees and its processes. Through performance appraisals, Apple is able to collect crucial data concerning its employees' ability to perform the job at hand. Based on the results obtained Apple is able to identify individuals who need training and are able to undergo coordinated educational, professional and technical programs related to their job description (Noe et al. 2012).

In other cases, Apple Inc. uses development to sharpen its employees' skills. In development programs, structured learning experiences are incorporated in the job. It includes programs such as coaching, mentoring and rotational assignments (Johnson, Li, Phan, Singer & Trinh 2012).

The HRM department has can have several choices when selecting performance appraisal and development tools. One tool that has gained lots of popularity is the 360 degree performance review is a summary of a two way discussions or interactions that focuses on an employee's performance in terms of, areas he/she is excelling, any goals for improvement and development needs. Since the process of conducting appraisals includes additional labor hours from supervisors to gather information to complete an evaluation and to time to compose and deliver feedback to an employee, it is perceived to be costly (Chanda et al. 2009).

An advantage of 360 review process is that it is purported to be superior compared to other traditional forms of evaluation because it provides a complete and accurate assessment of employee's competencies. While traditional performance reviews offer a single or limited viewpoint, 360 degree offers feedback from many sources that repetitive and consistent. Standard formats of performance appraisal have been considered bias towards the employees and are subjective. Moreover, they can only good at identifying poor performers or good performs but can't distinguish who is in the middle (Heskett, 2011.)

A disadvantage to this method is that employees may retaliate with a negative behavior upon receiving a negative feedback. Negative reactions to feedback can be evident in behavior changes such as withdrawal, reduced communication and unwillingness to commit; these reactions can also be costly as employees may be saddened, angered, feel rejected

Conclusion

From this literature, we can make conclusion that; culture is essential for success and maximizing the value of human capital. Secondly, while the right culture is necessary for an organization success, it is no sufficient enough impact an organization attitude towards work. For an effective result a combination with other HRM strategies is necessary for better results. Organization culture is shaped by multiple forces both from internal and external angles of the organization. In order to be persistently successful, people and organization need to adapt continuously to the ever changing environment needs (Chaturvedi, 2013). For instance Apple has

been very receptive to accommodate new ideas, as a result as part of its culture, talented employees are highly retained.

Being receptive to feedback is a clearly an important gateway to learning and practicing personal improvement strategies. Once a feedback is received, there is a problem in one looking at the ideal self and the real self. When open feedback is given, there is a risk of triggering emotional defensiveness. While most employees dread receiving 360 degree feedback, the attitude these individuals hold towards the feedback will impact the way feedback is perceived and used

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