ABSTRACT

In the past efforts have been made to identify links between “Work Ethos” and “Organisational Effectiveness.” This study identified a correlation between culture and organizational growth. Human Synergistic and Deakin University have also studied and found positive links between culture and staff satisfaction, staff turnover, absenteeism and customer service. If it is anything, improving organizational performance is a culture change proposition. Achieving that culture requires an understanding of the underlying assumptions and values that determine what is important in an organization and what behaviors are expected and appropriate when it comes to the way members approach each other and their daily work.

Keywords: Work Ethos, Organization, Human Resources, Satisfaction, Culture

INTRODUCTION

Rapidly changing technology has been creating new challenges for the human resource management. In this turmoil situation Human Resource Management must need to play a more strategic role in the success of an organization. Organizations that do not put their emphasis on attracting employees may find themselves in dire consequences, as their competitors may be outplaying them in the strategic employment of their human resources by giving more work satisfaction. The human satisfaction focuses on how the company should manage its staff to assist the organization in the achievement of corporate objectives (Walker, 1992, Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Tregaskis (1997) also found that organizations with a formalized culture had a higher probability of adopting strategies in line with high performance work systems than those with informal culture.

In a recent article by the same title, Eric J. Sanders and Robert A Cooke, Ph.D. from Human Synergistics / Center for Applied Research, Inc. revealed perhaps the most convincing findings to date on how “Culture change initiatives can lead to real financial returns.” Here’s some of what they found:

1. Strong correlations between constructive (as opposed to defensive) cultures and business success (i.e., higher earnings/sales ratios and lower volatility).
2. Retail stores with more constructive cultures showed stronger growth in revenue and higher revenue than their defensive-culture sister stores.
3. Newspapers with constructive cultures had higher satisfaction, more cooperation and teamwork, lower stress, better readership, and higher profit.
4. A large university medical center, over a 4-year period, was able to move its culture from defensive to constructive through leadership development and an organization-wide emphasis on culture change resulting in improved research, education and patient care performance, a 50% increase in budget, and movement from $40 million deficit to a $7 million surplus.
5. A large liquid manufacturing company gained strong financial returns on their investment to redirect culture (beginning in 1996) and for the last eight years has reported increases in revenues, earnings before interest, taxes and amortization (EBITA), and net profit after taxes (NPAT, before significant or abnormal items). The price of their common stock has also risen every year since 1999, more than doubling from A$3.58 to A$7.58 in 2004 (a 12.8% annual increase).

6. Work is a source of sustenance to human beings. The environment where the person works has a lot of effect on the efficiency and effectiveness. In a layman’s language we can call this environment along with the processes working in it as the ‘Work Culture’ or the ‘Work Ethos’.

With the opening up of Indian economy and the flourishing of knowledge based industries in India, there is a growing need for a healthy environment where the knowledge workers can be given space to utilize the best of their talents.

WHAT IS WORK ETHOS?

‘Work Ethos’ refers to work related activities and the meanings attached to such activities in the framework of norms and values regarding work. These activities, norms and values are generally (but not always) conceptualized in an organization. An organization has its boundaries, goals and objectives, technology, managerial practices, material and human resources as well as constraints. Its employees have skills, knowledge, needs, expectations and behavior. These two set of factors – organizational and orgasmic interact and over time establishes roles, norms, and values pertaining to work. It is this totality of the various levels of interacting forces around the focal concern for work, which is labeled as work ethos. Work ethos also has its roots from the socio-cultural values and systemic features of the surrounding environment.

WHY DO WE NEED TO HAVE A WORK ETHOS?

Whatever work we do as an employee, it is always influenced by the society we live in. Irrespective of organizational setting, we may tend to work hard, feel positive towards working and consider work to be central to our identity depending on our geographical or cultural region. A very clear example is the Japanese culture that socializes its members in cultivating a work-centric culture. The Indian cultural environment is collectivist. Hence any culture in the organization should give due consideration to the group activities to a certain extent for success.

The social hierarchy existing in India makes Indians feels comfortable in the superior-subordinate framework. Once a hierarchy is established the juniors goes to anyextent to please their seniors. Hierarchical relationships are maintained by taking care of those who are inferior and maintaining deference and respectful compliance to superiors. The hierarchical groups in India are very supportive and inter-dependent and this is what is termed as ‘vertical solidarity’. In India it’s the family that is the most dominant in group. Even in work related matters its the family that a person seeks advice from. Decisions are generally made in a group and this results in Indians becoming more dependent and seeking attention, advice, support and help even in situations where they can handle it all alone. It is the family values and principles only, which a person tries to extend to the organization where he/she is working.

Thus we see that our society has such a great impact on our style of working because of which there is an increasing need to develop an appropriate work ethos in our organization and HRD plays an important role here.

IMPACT OF WORK ETHOS ON ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The nature of the work ethos prevailing in an organization directly affects the performance it delivers. If everybody in the organization is complacent enough, the motivation level of the employees to do something new is very less. On the other hand, if the organizational culture is conducive to excellence at work, high productivity, the centrality of work in employees’ life space and a high quality of work
life, the motivation levels of the employees will be very high and the overall productivity of the organization will increase manifold.

If an organization enforces strong work norms, maintains strict work disciplines and makes profits, but neglects and exploits its human resources or if it neglects the social needs of its employees in achieving technological excellence, again the performance of the employees and subsequently the entire organization will be adversely affected.

The criteria which determines the centrality of work for an individual are job affect and job clarity, time to devote to work, i.e., work pressure, job and life satisfaction, value addition from the job, peace of mind, working conditions, up-to-date technology, superior-subordinate relationship, reinforcement (reward for hard work), status/prestige associated with the position/designation, extent of responsibility and freedom for making decisions, security of job and last but not the least money.

Thus a strong and an appropriate work ethos is what makes an organization a winner or a looser.

**HOW TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE WORK ETHOS USING HRD?**

We are going through an era of accelerated change where speedy action is required. Strategic HRM is the buzzword, and aligning HRM strategy with business strategy of companies is the challenge that HR faces today. As such, HR personnel have to play an active role here. It is very important that he portrays and builds trust within the organization. He must build confidence within the organization and must strive to be people champion. Also, he should be able to implement what is relevant for the organization or the business and not be a 'yes man' trying to please the bosses always in order to save his own career. There should be 'self competent integrity' that is, he should be able to speak his mind. Apart from this the companies should have ‘listening posts’ to hear employee grievances, special task forces for important issues, fair and efficient system, promptness in decisions, risk taking and inspiring individuals to perform beyond its capacity. Also, there should be a system of rewarding successes and failures as failure means that efforts were made but could not succeed and only inaction should be punished. The responsibility for developing and sustaining positive work culture lies with the management and there is a growing importance of enlisting the support of trade unions in promoting positive work culture.

Apart from the HR people, the CEO of the company plays an important role in building a positive work culture. The CEO must involve employees in his decisions and guide the creation of a shared vision, take the responsibility of being the main change agent, model the desired management behavior and above all maintain credibility. He must be a role model and should be prepared to be the first one to change.

Just as people’s personalities tend to be stable over time, so too do strong cultures. This makes strong cultures difficult for managers to change. When a culture becomes mismatched to it’s environment, management will want to change it. But as the point-counterpoint debate for this chapter demonstrates, changing an organization culture is a long and difficult process. The result at least in the short term is that managers should treat their organization cultures as relatively fixed. One of the most important managerial implications of organizational culture relates to selection decisions. Hiring individuals whose values don’t align with those of the organization are likely to lead to employees who lack motivation and commitment and who are dissatisfied with their jobs and the organization. Not surprisingly employee misfits have considerably higher turnover rates than individuals who perceive a good fit.

**PRIMARY OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the level of satisfaction among the workers towards the HR practices of the concern aimed at building a congenial work atmosphere.

2. To understand what counts when it comes to culture building.
3. To compare the self modeled HR practices of different organizations with that of similar successful organizations.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES
To determine the extent to which self modeled HR practices have been put to practice in the undersigned organizations.

LIMITATIONS
1. It is difficult to draw generic conclusions about Work Ethos and its effectiveness just by studying three sectors.
2. In the questionnaires filled through email, in case the respondent had a doubt, the same could not be clarified.
3. Due to lack of a sampling frame enumerating the entire population convenience and judgment sampling was done which may inherently lead to a sampling error.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Management scholars and practitioners alike have become increasingly interested in learning more about the ability of certain 'progressive' or 'high-performance' human cultures to enhance organizational effectiveness. There is growing evidence to suggest that the contribution of various cultures to impact firm performance may be synergistic in effect yet contingent on a number of contextual factors, including workplace climate. A contingency theory perspective suggests that in order to be effective, HRM policies and practices must be consistent with other aspects of the organization, including its environment.

One of the key reasons is that organizational commitment is negatively correlated with turnover intentions, which have an important effect on employees’ behaviors. Therefore, both organizational commitment and turnover intentions are important employee attitudes in maintaining a productive workforce (Wasti S.A. 2003)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Data for Study
The data for the report were collected from a combination of primary as well as secondary data as laid down herewith

1. Primary sources: The primary sources for our data were the direct interview conducted by the respondents of the organisations. In the interview, a judicious mix of workers and middle level cadres were chosen by us to form an opinion on the objectives set forth in the study.

2. Secondary sources: The secondary sources for our study was basically the Internet as well as the library materials (a list of books by us have been indicated in the bibliography).

Administering the Study
For each study, we develop an overall communications plan for working with study participants. We primarily use e-mail to contact and recruit employees for our studies. In the initial stages before we select participants, we ask our internal communications group to approve all messages we send to potential participants.

As part of our overall process, we always send major communications to a small set of test employees first. That lets us test our survey tools, data storage, and results analysis. We also verify that the message is understandable, that the survey is complete and answerable, and that employees know how to respond.
DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Creating and Sustaining Culture

An organization's current customs, traditions, and general way of doing things are largely due to what it has done before and the degree of success it has with those endeavors. This leads us to the ultimate source of organizations' culture - its founders.

Keeping a culture alive

Culture is in place, practices within the organization act to maintain it by giving employees a set of similar experiences. Three forces play an important role in sustaining culture.

1. Selection – here they identify whether the employee fits into the way they do business
2. Top management – senior executives establish norms that filter down through the organization.

A strong organizational culture increases behavioral consistency.

How organizational culture impacts performance and satisfaction?

Objective factors
- Innovation and risk taking
- Attention to detail
- Outcome orientation
- People orientation
- Team orientation
- Aggressiveness
- Stability

Organizational culture

Perceived as

Strength
- High
- Low

Performance

Satisfaction

Culture is a Descriptive Term

It is concerned only with how employees perceive the characteristics of an organization's culture, not with whether or not they like them, i.e., it's a descriptive term. This is important because it differentiates this concept from that of job satisfaction.
Culture as a Liability

Culture enhances organizational commitment and increases the consistency of employee behavior. But we shouldn’t forget the potential dysfunctional aspects of culture, especially a strong one, on an organization’s effectiveness.

Data Analysis

Our goal at the end of final phase is a study report or white paper, or both. To prepare those, we carefully analyze the data we’ve collected, calculate the ROI, prepare the report, get approval as needed for publication, and publish.

Compiling Qualitative Data

Interviews, surveys, and activity logs provide a wealth of information on usage and participant behavior. We analyze this data to understand participant’s positive and negative comments, and to identify any new behaviors. We compile top issues and comments, and the participant’s level of satisfaction with the system bundle.

Analyzing Performance Data

The activity log, field studies, and lab studies provide task completion data. Data we obtain from these studies are coded and compiled in a spreadsheet. To evaluate the differences between conditions, we perform standard statistical tests such as a t-test or an analysis of variance (ANOVA), using standard statistical software packages. Although we don’t set a specific minimum value, we typically consider a result of 0.05 or below significant. Although we perform statistical tests, they aren’t necessarily required in order to draw conclusions about employee productivity. Rather, the statistical analysis allows us to better understand how confident we are in the difference. A significant difference, however, isn’t required to achieve a significant employee productivity impact on the ROI. As long as the data have been collected objectively, we’re confident about the results.

In training and developing employees, it is important that managers and supervisors know how; to assess employee training needs, to set performance goals and, to plan developmental strategies accordingly.

These three steps make development an individualized, systematic process. This article explains these concepts and suggests a process that will meet the goals of the organization and the career development aspirations of individual employees.

CONCLUSIONS

In India to build culture we have to be India-centric and moreover they demand a dynamic HR department which is foresighted and both reactive as well as proactive. Innovative and self made HR practices and policies are the key here. The best employers over perform other companies in virtually all aspects of the employment relationship investigated by the study. They surpass other companies not only in terms of the number of initiatives they have in place, but also excel in delivery and execution. Best employers in India have highly engaged and committed people. Best employers position the overall employment experience as a key factor in keeping their employees happy. Most have tried to create a distinct “employer brand” to distinguish their employment experience with those of competitors. They take care of personal needs (e.g. HR services, administrative help, through flexibility in hours) so the level of commitment towards the organization is strong.

REFERENCES
