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"Cultivating Organizational Culture within Globalized Companies Using the Wellness Kickoff Tool"

Sullam Yoel*

*^aDoctoral School “Education, Reflection, Development”, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, 7 Sindicatelor Street, Cluj-Napoca, 400015,
Romania*

Abstract

This article will suggest a new model for organizational wellness; after the assimilation of the model into the organization, it will produce a work environment where employees work with more freedom and with the feeling that their opinion is important to the organization; in this situation, they will be the ones that will increase the commitment and their contributions to the workplace and they are the ones, who can help organization's to be ready for the challenge that tomorrow will bring.

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1. Introduction

During the last decade, the academic world tried to help the professionals solve the dilemma that the organizational world faces today of growing demands from employees and the decreasing resources available to compensate, by searching for isolated values that can influence the organizational culture and the workplace performance, addressing issues such as spirituality (Marques et al, 2007; Marques et al, 2009; Krishmakumar and Neck, 2002), quality of work life (Edvardsson and Gustavsson, 2003), courage to act (Klein and Nepier, 2003), and wellness

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 0031618361707.

E-mail address: yoel@yayacon.com; ad-atid@inter.net.il

(Grosebeck and Van Aken, 2001).

However, when examining the solutions suggested by the academic world, one can identify that the research is focused on temporary or superficial problem solving, rather than a genuine attempt to get to the root of the problems caused by the changing environment. Although there may not be one solution or perhaps any solution at all to deal with dynamic environment, we believe that better understanding might give us tools to handle better the dynamic changing environment. The lack of knowledge in this field prevents us from finding solution even if those are only partial solutions. Our professional experience has led us to a better understanding of some aspects related to this dilemma.

I believe that the use an isolated value might be insufficient, since it might affect other organizational values, which comprise the organizational culture. Therefore, I would like to try to develop a more comprehensive approach to this dilemma by creating an organizational culture tool that will include several core values, which can be useful as a group in solving this dilemma, in order to help organizations survive. I believe that such a tool should include some leading values that have a synergistic influence on the firm. Each firm could use different values or volumes in order to meet its needs so the model is adaptable to different contexts and different cultures.

The focus of this model is an organizational culture tool, which promotes wellness. However, the term 'wellness' needs to be discussed and defined. It implies all the main themes emerging from the first part of the literature review that were not yet discussed in detail. The mission of creating such a tool is not an easy one, as changing the organizational culture is a very difficult task. For example, a study conducted by Troy in 1994 among 166 European and American companies showed that only 32 percent succeeded in changing their values, vision, and the organizational culture (Smith, 2003). Therefore, I do not intend to suggest a change of the entire organizational culture, but rather focus on developing a tool that would kick off a wellness process within the organization.

2. Theoretical foundation

2.1 Organizational Culture and Organizational Performance

Research findings indicated that organization culture has a great influence on the organization's function. Organizational culture may serve as an indicator, which can help distinguish one organization from another, based on employees' perceptions with regard to policies, practices, cohesiveness of co-workers, recognition of task performed, supportiveness of management and regard for personal concerns, innovative style of performance and fairness in rewards, norms of behavior and attitudes that influence the behavior of employees at work (Ahmad et al, 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising that the term has gained in power and popularity over time (Ogabonna & Harris, 2000).

Organizational culture influences greatly many aspects in the organization, for example employees' interaction, organizational functioning, decision making process, as well as employees' success in coping with challenging situations. It also proved as being creative of information relationship, which can lead to innovation, improving the business outcomes, and preserving competitiveness (Lopez, Peon & Ordas, 2006; Graham & Nafunko, 2007). Organizational culture might also contribute to the improvement of decision making, and consequently might improve business results (Ibarra-Colado, 2002). Moreover, it is also core component for the success or failure of organizational innovation efforts (Detert, Schroeder & Mauriel, 2000; Scheeres & Rhodes, 2006).

Another important aspect of the organizational culture is its possible influence of actual performance in the organization. For example McKay, Avery & Morris (2009), explored the culture effects on the firm's performance in relation to the mediating mechanisms linking organizational climates to subsequent tasks performance. For example McKay, Avery & Morris (2009), explored the culture effects on the firm's performance in relation to the mediating mechanisms linking organizational climates to subsequent task performance. Their findings indicated that this mediation pathway encourages methodological work and is necessary to develop measures of potentially intervening climate-related behaviors and attitudes. Another research suggested that organizational culture, which is

based on humanistic values, such as caring for the welfare of the employees and for their development, encourages the employees to contribute more of their efforts in the workplace, feel more involved in the workplace, and support the firm's growth. Those consequences might help the organizations to acquire competitive advantage, and as a result open a gap between them and their competitors in terms of keeping customers and exploiting the opportunities in their surroundings (Gittel, 2002; Bellou, 2007), thus, creating competitive advantage (Lee & Lai, 2007) and enriching intangible assets of firms that are the key for their success (Kaplan & Norton, 2004).

Petersson et al. (2004), found in a study performed in manufacturing organizations that different aspects of culture, such as concern for the employees' welfare, lead to increased employees' satisfaction, which is later expressed in higher productivity (Mathew, 2007). Employee satisfaction is a function of climate influences and firm performance through its effects on cognitive and affective states (e.g., work motivation and job satisfaction), and salient organizational behaviors (e.g., employee attachment, performance, and citizenship) (McKay et al., 2009).

3 Wellness in the workplace – The Solution

First, we must understand the meaning of organizational wellness in the work environment. In recent years researchers have approached the term from several angles: There are those, who see in organizational optimality the physical and mental health of a work environment (Currie, 2001); others define it as being connected to a wider range of concepts that include the welfare of the employee, the degree of stress in the work environment and the employee's emotional, physical and psychological state (Woodall & Winstanley, 2001).

In a study conducted by Baptiste (2008) in governmental organizations in North Britain, it was discovered that the support of managers led to a positive relationship between employees and managers, which was reflected in the development of optimality within the working environment, the outcome of which was a higher commitment, greater satisfaction and a balance between family and work. Another study that was conducted among 250 managers of mid-level managers in North India found a direct link between organizational commitment and optimality (Jain et al, 2009).

Therefore, we can say that organizational wellness is the product of a more open and free work environment, which we are seeking to enable the employee to express and contribute more to the work environment in terms of the best perspective, namely that a healthy work force is the presence of positive feelings among employees, which finds its expression in happiness and higher productivity levels; there is no need to explain the importance of this topic in today's business world.

3.1 Wellness Kickoff Tool

The importance of an optimal structured work environment poses, without doubt, the question of how to create it, and what are the values that can lead us to success. After a preliminary research and focusing on leading values among organizational cultures in leading companies worldwide, we came to the conclusion that the combination of the three values and their integration within the organizational framework can create the necessary environment that is the necessary breeding ground for the growth of organizational optimality.

3.1.1 Spirituality at work -

Spirituality, in fact, expresses an internal and personal experience, which is related to a man's journey towards self-realization (Marques et al, 2007); the development of the issue of spirituality is gaining its place, especially in recent years, as the workplace becomes central and is increasingly related to the personal growth of the individual, and this at a time, at which we can identify a decrease in the importance of the local environment and the family unit (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004).

The study by Rego & Cunha (2008) provided us with support for the issue when 361 employees from 154 organizations indicated that when their work is meaningful and when they feel more involved in the workplace, hence the level of happiness and health is much higher and therefore, they wish to contribute their full ability and

talent to the workplace.

Spirituality was first introduced as an organizational research field during the 90's. It gained popularity over the years, as over 200 articles on this subject were published in management journals between 1999 and 2001 around the world (*Kale & Shrivastava, 2003*). The word 'spirituality' emerges from the Latin word 'spiritus', which means 'breathing', the breath of life. Unlike religion that can always be chosen and changed (at least, in principle), spirituality is related to a deep personal experience involving an individual journey towards fulfillment and personal meaning. (*Marques et al, 2007*). Furthermore, religion separates people by dogma since it emphasizes formal structure and excludes those, who hold different beliefs in contrast with spirituality, which are inclusive, tolerant, and open-minded (*Mitroff, 2003*).

This search for meaning is not limited to the individuals' personal life, but may also be expressed at work (*Evers & Reid, 2009*). Therefore, spiritual development at work becomes important, since work becomes nowadays more central to people's lives than in the past, especially with the decline of the significance of community and family in life (*Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004*). The ideal way for achieving optimal output without wearing out the employees, is to create a balanced four-tier action – task-oriented, spirituality, compassion, and methodicalness. It provides a solution for the person's needs provides respect for the person and for his personality and needs while affecting the performance and its quality (*Marques et al., 2007*).

3.1.2 Innovation -

There are quite a few definitions for innovation: Zaltman (*1973*) defines it as an idea or experience that is perceived as new in terms of its adoption and use; others relate to innovation as a method, by which new solutions come to use in the organization (*Ambile, 1998; Glunn, 1996*). Great importance is in the understanding that this is about a process, in which employees take part in improving the daily employment, whereby innovation has the ability to lead to higher business results by improving organizational efficiency and quality (*Mayfield, 2009*).

Innovative initiatives are examined in studies, which discuss the organization culture. They study the implications of innovation on the employees at different levels in the organization (*Mellahi & Wilkinson, 2010*). Researchers agree that the various elements of the organizational system are interwoven to a great extent. Thus, the element of innovation will result in the revival of the employees (*Spivack & Rubin, 2010; Morton et al., 2009*).

The power of Innovation is in shaping the organizational climate displayed in organizations striving for efficiency. Therefore, they look for innovative ways to produce and market their products. They integrate technological innovations (such as computerization) and carry out organizational changes, in order to demonstrate high efficiency and competitive prices.

Innovation raises the employees' motivation, as it leads to a variety in the workforce, coping with ethical and social problems, which improves the employee's motivation to work together towards reaching the goals (*Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013*).

The understanding that knowledge is important to innovation and that combination of knowledge and innovation, rather than physical assets, are the firm's competitive advantage, has triggered a fundamental change in management paradigm during the 90's (*Correia de Soussa, 2006; Von Stamm, 2009*).

Organizations in today's economic environment must change their thinking and focus on improvement and innovation. It is not good enough to be like the competitors. Survival means continuous development of new ways of doing things and new abilities (*Desmond, 2009*).

One of the biggest problems related to innovation lies in the fact that some managers do not know how to assimilate it within the organization. A survey conducted by the Open University in the UK (*Cottam et al, 2001*) found that the

majority of British companies acknowledge the importance of innovation, but the problem lies in the fact that they have failed in their attempt to assimilate it in their business strategies. In another study, conducted in the United States (*Ceswrani & Greatwood, 1999*), 750 managers from 150 organizations across the United States indicate that the 80% recognized the importance of innovation but only 14% felt that they can only assimilate and develop the intra-organizational framework. The importance of innovation these days is higher than ever before, at a time when business competition increasingly takes its toll every day, only organizations with the ability to integrate the employees that have in place a business improvement process and can create new business opportunities will be able to survive in the long run.

3.1.3 Trust

One of the effects of the business environment in the business world was creating more outspread organizations that can respond quickly to market demands. This organizational structure is based on a greater teamwork and on the fact that employees are required to carry out multidimensional tasks with the freedom to make decisions. For an efficient operation of this system a good measure of trust between employees and managers is required to lead to better results (*Connell et al, 2003*). Quite a few studies were conducted on the subject of trust over the years and all studies have shown that trust in the work environment has an important part in any successful enterprise.

Research findings taken from survey, which was done at the end of the 90's caused concern in the field of organizational consulting, as they found that the degree of trust in the organization/workplace declined over the past decade. For instance, the trust level dropped in 3 out of 4 workplaces surveyed by Manchester Consulting during 1996 and 1997 (*McCune, 1998*). Another survey, which was conducted in Canada, points out that 3 out of 4 employees do not trust their colleagues in the workplace (*Davis & Landa, 1999*). In Australia, the result of national survey among 19,500 employees also revealed low levels of manager-employee trust; mainly in the public service sector (*Morehead, Steele, Alexander Stephen & Duffin 1997*). Trust is so important, as it encourages people to act with integrity and openness from both sides (*Suff & Williams, 2004*).

This data, although partially anecdotal rather than being empirical, suggests that trust is a major contributor to employee's success at the workplace, and the success of the firm as a whole. An empirical study by Connell, Ferres & Travaglione (2003) examined the importance of trust at the workplace with 275 employees from a health authority. Results showed that trust among managers was a significant factor of workplace effectiveness, higher level of affective and continuance commitment to the workplace, and reduced turnover. The strongest influence of trust was on affective commitment to the organization, which contributed to lesser absence and increased efforts made by the employees, even more than when they were obligated to contribute as organization members.

How is trust created in the workplace and who can lead the way? Bennis (2002) and De Pree (2002), claimed that leaders generate and sustain trust through their behavior, as leaders shape the organizational culture (*Joseph & Winston, 2005*). This is done by devotion of attention and reward and the way the leader raises resources including the identification of the leader role model and the way he acts in critical situation. The claim that leadership is essential to the trust atmosphere in the organization is supported by the study of Joseph & Winston (2005), among 69 employees in Trinidad and Tobago. It showed that there is a strong connection between leadership behavior and organizational trust. Another research by Tzafirir et al. (2004), among 450 employees in Israel, found that employees' trust in their managers is derived from organizational communication, procedural justice, empowerment, and employee development. Everyone is inspired by managers.

4 Research contribution

This current study will propose a new model for the development of an organizational intervention. The advantages of the new model will be that this is about a short-term organizational intervention of only six months and a model is in fact a combination of three key values: innovation, trust and spirituality at the workplace, (and this) of course, through proper integration and adaptation to each company individually, the future results of which will boost encouragement to the organizational optimality through teamwork among the employees and the creation of a

supportive work environment that allows self-expression. The proposed model will be tested in three different companies: an American company, a European company and an Israeli company, and this in order to examine its impact on organizations that operate in a global environment.

5 Conclusions

Something changes in the work environment in which we operate, the demands asked of us as managers of organizations to deal with issues we did not know before and which require us to pay more attention to employees have increased dramatically; in the past we, as managers, had to act in accordance with principles, such as strict discipline, keeping organized, maintaining a stable staff and work power; however, those give way to a new approach that calls upon us, as managers, to try and focus on jobs and new principles that include more communication, motivation and the development of employees.

The question is how to change the way we worked for years and still produce innovations and business solutions that can help us cope in a period that is not at all simple? In recent years, we discover again and again a new approach that has proven time and time again. There is only one factor that can lead you out of the crisis when you are in a good position, as you move towards further confrontation and challenges ahead that we may expect tomorrow, and those are the employees: put your faith in your employees, emphasize how important they are and do everything to harness them to exert an effort, with the help of various tools that are at your disposal as managers, only this way will you be able to create a winning team that could rush forward toward each goal.

The model of organizational wellness is one solution that can help you; it is an instrument for intervention, which, after its assimilation into the organization, will produce a work environment where employees work with more freedom and with the feeling that their opinion is important to its operations and operation of the organization; in this situation, they will be the ones that will increase the commitment and their contributions to the workplace and they are the ones, who can help you to be ready for the challenge that tomorrow will bring.

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