Managing Work Place Diversity - The Challenges of Human Resource Management

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Abstract: *Today's HR Manager is on strategic personnel retention and talents development HR manager can meet the challenges of workplace diversity, how to motivate employees through Productivity incentives, Management information system and Changes in Organisation Structure and Management System through proper planning, organizing, leading and controlling their human resources. HR managers have to undergo cultural - based Human Resource Management training to further their abilities to motivate a group of professional that are highly qualified but culturally diverse workforce. Diversity Mentoring Program seeks to encourage members to move beyond their own cultural frame of reference to recognize and take full advantage of the productivity potential inherent in a diverse population. People simply use an MIS that lacks critical information is of no value - add to the organization.*

Keywords: Challenges, Diversity, Productivity incentives, MIS

1. Introduction

The role of the Human Resource Manager is evolving with the change in technologically advanced and competitive global market environment. As the importance of diversity in the organizational context has increased manifold, most organizations would like to research on diversity–organizational culture linkage, its effect on diversity openness, and between diversity and performance both at individual and organizational levels.

With the increase in competition, locally or globally, technologically, organizations must become more adaptable, resilient, agile, and customer - oriented to succeed. Today's HR Managers are on strategic personnel retention and talents development. HR professionals will be guides, coaches, counselors, mentors, and succession planners to help motivate organization's members and their loyalty. The HR manager will also promote and fight for moral values, ethics, beliefs, and spirituality within their organizations, especially in the management of workplace diversity. There is a strong empirical confirmation that successful diversity management and a resulting improvement in organizational performance are positively correlated (Ozbilgin and Tatli, 2008)

This article will highlight on how a HR manager can meet the challenges of workplace diversity, how to motivate employees through productivity incentives, Management information system and Changes in Organisation Structure and Management System through proper planning, organizing, leading and controlling their human resources.

Workplace Diversity
Workplace diversity include, but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, parental status, and work experience.

The Challenges of Workplace Diversity
The future success of any organizations relies on the ability to manage a diverse body of talent that can bring innovative ideas, perspectives and views to their work. The challenge and problems faced of workplace diversity can be turned into a strategic organizational asset if an organization is able to capitalize on this melting pot of diverse talents. With the mixture of talents of diverse cultural backgrounds, genders, ages and lifestyles, an organization can respond to business opportunities more rapidly and creatively, especially in the technological advanced stage which must be one of the important organisational goals to be attained. More importantly, if the organizational environment does not support diversity broadly in the global arena, one risks losing talent to competitors.

This is especially true for multinational companies (MNCs) who have operations on a global scale and employ people of different countries, ethical and cultural backgrounds. Thus, HR managers needs to be mindful and may employ a '**Think Global, Act Local'** approach in most circumstances. Thus, many local HR managers have to undergo cultural - based Human Resource Management training to further their abilities to motivate a group of professional that are highly qualified but culturally diverse. Furthermore, the HR professional must assure the local professionals that these foreign talents are not a threat to their career advancement. In many ways, the effectiveness of workplace diversity management is dependent on the skilful balancing act of the HR manager.

One of the main reasons for ineffective workplace diversity management is the predisposition to pigeonhole employees, placing them in a different silo based on their diversity profile. In the real world, diversity cannot be easily categorized and those organizations that respond to human complexity by leveraging the talents of a broad workforce will be the most effective in growing their businesses and their customer base.
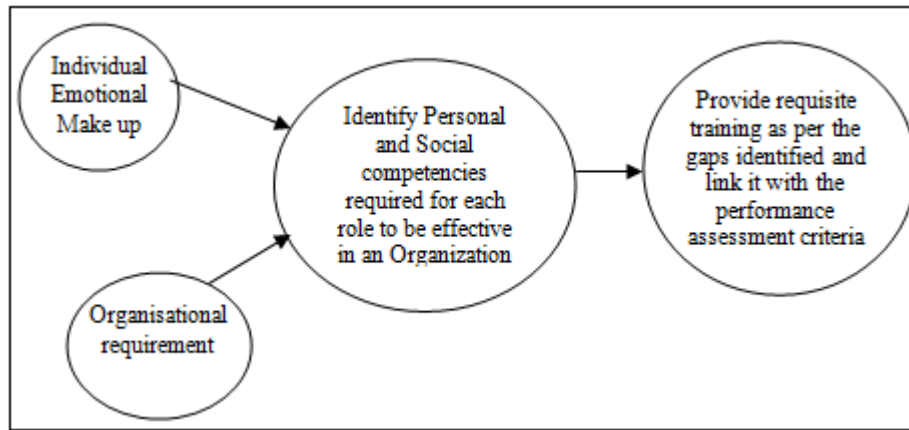
The essence of the model as depicted is to try and define the most frequent emotions an employee comes across during the course of the work

2. Model

The Management of Workplace Diversity

HR Manager needs to change from an ethnocentric view ("our way is the best way") to a culturally relative perspective ("let's take the best of a variety of ways"). This shift in philosophy has to be ingrained in the managerial framework of the HR Manager in his/her planning, organizing, leading, innovating and controlling of organizational resources. Managers should expect change to be slow, while at the same time encouraging change (Koonce 2001).

HR manager can adopt in ensuring effective management of workplace diversity in order to attain organizational goals. They are:

1) Planning a Mentoring Program -

Workplace diversity issues is through initiating a Diversity Mentoring Program. This could entail involving different departmental managers in a mentoring program to coach and provide feedback to employees who are different from them. In order for the program to run successfully, it is wise to provide practical training for these managers or seek help from consultants and experts in this field. Usually, such a program will encourage organization's members to air their opinions and learn how to resolve conflicts due to their diversity. More importantly, the purpose of a Diversity Mentoring Program seeks to encourage members to move beyond their own cultural frame of reference to recognize and take full advantage of the productivity potential inherent in a diverse population.

2) Organizing Talents Strategically -

As more and more companies are going global in their market expansions either physically or virtually (for example, E - commerce - related companies), there is a necessity to employ diverse talents to understand the various niches of the market.

An organization that sees the existence of a diverse workforce as an organizational asset rather than a liability would indirectly help the organization to positively take in its stride some of the less positive aspects of workforce diversity.

3) Leading the Talk -

HR Managers needs to advocate a diverse workforce by making diversity evident at all organizational levels. Otherwise, some employees will quickly conclude that there is no future for them in the company. It is pertinent to show HR Managers respect for diversity issues and promote clear and positive responses to them. Managers should implement policies such as mentoring programs to provide associates access to information and opportunities. Also, associates should never be denied necessary, constructive, critical feedback for learning about mistakes and successes (Flagg 2002). HR Managers must also show a high level of commitment and be able to resolve issues of workplace diversity in an ethical and responsible manner.

4) Control and Measure Results -

HR Managers must conduct regular organizational assessments on issues like pay, benefits, work environment, management and career advancement opportunities to assess the progress over the long term. There is also a need to develop appropriate measuring tools to measure the impact of diversity initiatives at the organization through organization - wide feedback surveys and other methods. Without proper control and evaluation, some of these diversity initiatives may just fizzle out, without resolving any real problems that may surface due to workplace diversity.

5) Motivational Approaches

Workplace motivation can be defined as the influence that makes to do things to achieve organizational goals: this result, individual needs being satisfied (or met) and motivated to complete organizational tasks effectively. As these needs vary from person to person, an organization must be able to utilize different motivational tools to encourage employees put in the required effort and increase productivity.

The development of an appropriate organizational reward system is probably one of the strongest motivational factors. This can influence both job satisfaction and employee motivation. The reward system affects job satisfaction by making the employee more comfortable and contented as a result of the rewards received.

The biggest driver for higher level diversity strategy is the need to tap the creative, cultural, and communicative skills of a variety of employees and to use those skills to improve company policies, products, and customer experiences. Diversity executives cite the importance of having an open mind because the job requires them to come out of their

comfort zone and experience things that they may not be familiar with or drawn to (Rodriguez, 2006)

6) Productivity Incentives

Productivity Incentives Pay programs generally refer to improve organizational performance, and are based on the concept that the resulting incremental economic gains are shared among employees and the company.

In most cases, workers voluntarily participate in management to accept responsibility for major reforms. This type of incentives is based on factors directly under a worker's control (i. e., productivity or costs). Productivity Incentives is measured and distributions are made frequently through a predetermined formula.

Managing productivity incentives

- The main idea of this incentives is to motivate members to increase productivity through their behavioral changes and working attitudes.
- An effective manager must ensure that the productivity incentives targets are challenging but legitimate and attainable. In addition, the targets should be specific and challenging but reasonable and justifiable, the business strategy and the competitive environment.
- A manager must have an effective mechanism in place to allow beneficiaries to participants to initiate changes in work procedures and methods and/or requesting new or additional resources such as new technology to improve performance and realize gains. Though a manager must have a tight control of company's resources, reasonable and justifiable requests for additional resources and/or changes in work methods from productivity incentives should be considered.

7) Management Information Systems

Management Information System (MIS) is the most common term used for the unified collections of computer hardware and software that track the essential data of organization performance and present it to managers as an aid to their planning and decision - making. With an MIS in place, a company can track inventory, sales, and receivables, compare today's data with historical patterns.

Managing MIS

As information is the basis of decision - making in an organization, there lies a great need for effective managerial control. A good control system would ensure the communication of the right information at the right time and relayed to the right people to take right decisions.

When managing an Management Information System, a HR manager must first find out exactly what information decision - makers would like to have available in the field of human resource management, and then to include it in the MIS.

8) Changes in Organisation Structure and Management System

In response to the emerging environment, organisation and undergoing major changes in their structures and management systems. Bureaucratic model of the organisation has given place in new model of organisation which is lean, flat, flexible, team - based/participative, diverse, quality focused and globally - oriented. Team work, people management, ability to network and sharing knowledge are competencies ensuring performance.

3. Conclusion

The role of the HR manager must parallel the needs of the changing organization climate. Successful organizations are becoming more adaptable, resilient, quick to change directions, and customer - centered. Within this environment, the HR managers must learn how to manage effectively through planning, organizing, leading and controlling the different cultural background of human resource and be knowledgeable of emerging trends in technological training and employee development. Diversity management benefits associates by creating a fair and safe environment where everyone has access to opportunities and challenges. Management tools in a diverse workforce should be used to educate everyone about diversity and its issues, including laws and regulations. Most workplaces are made up of diverse cultures, so organizations need to learn how to adapt to be successful.

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