

HR INITIATIVES FOR ENHANCING QUALITY OF HUMAN RESOURCE IN ORGANISATION

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Abstract:-

Nowdays businesses are being forced to make tough decisions impacting their workforce. So leaders and human resource professionals should not lose sight of the effort put forth by employees, as many are working harder to boost productivity and meet business objectives. With fewer resources and increased responsibilities due to layoffs, cutbacks and restructurings, employees are being asked to contribute at higher levels. But it is in times like this that leaders need to invest more in engaging their employees to reap the utmost commitment, productivity and focus. It is important to recognize and reward high performing employees for their resilience, hard work and loyalty during this period of recession. They need to look for innovative solutions to invest in people and demonstrate commitment to them as failure to do so may result in higher turnover once the economy rebounds. It is a leader's responsibility to ensure their workforce is skilled and motivated in order to stay competitive and perform at the expected levels of productivity—both today and while also positioning for future success as market conditions improve.

Leaders can't afford for their workforce to become complacent, stagnant or sustain "quit and stay" employees—those who are disengaged but won't leave. Many people feel vulnerable now and it is an opportune time for employers to deepen loyalty. Don't let cyclical market conditions be a distraction from creating a workforce strategy that focuses on the skilled talent needed to meet business goals—now and in the future.

FULL PAPER

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource development is a very sensitive function of an organization. It affects the employee right from the point of entry till the time of exit from the organization. Workforce is the bedrock of an organization on which the coordination of all other factors of production depends. It is when there is job satisfaction that employee will work towards increasing their productivity level. There are some practical approaches to reinforce the value of employees and their efforts, helping to keep the talent critical to organizational success:

- ***Share with employees that they are part of the future.***

Many organizations focus their employee communication on what is happening right now, or worse, limit them to the historical context of what has happened and how they performed last quarter. Let employees know that they are part of the future by taking a long-term view and helping employees to understand it. Position the current economic crisis in the context of a cyclical event and identifying opportunities beyond the immediate situation.

- ***Invest in building a career development culture.***

Create a culture that places importance on career development and balances the business objectives with the individual career goals of employees. Such investments will capture the very best of employees' contributions in the "here and now" while also establishing an environment that can focus their contributions across a much longer and more strategic timeline.

- ***Understand how employee motivators differ.***

What motivates one employee may not necessarily motivate another. Take time to understand the different engagement drivers of the workforce. Listen and learn how employees feel about their work and their environment and what motivates them in this context.

- ***Prove to people they are valued.***

Training and development are often the first initiatives to go when cutbacks are put into place. This isn't always the best course of action. It's often the acquisition of new skills and the development of untapped talents that will help the company survive the downturn and be positioned for future success. Provide employees with a process to better assess to their strengths and put them in roles where their skills can be put to best use to meet individual and organizational needs. Be overt in recognizing their talents and contributions to the organization's success.

- ***Act with credibility.***

Gain the respect and trust of employees by being an exceptional communicator demonstrating the utmost integrity. Be accessible, open, honest and appreciative. If a commitment is made, no matter how big or small, keep it and deliver it. Be thoughtful and engaged in each communication. Model a sense of urgency, not a sense of panic. Choose the forums and the messages carefully to create alignment and focus.

- ***Ethical treatment of employees***

Improved employee ownership and accountability will be the result of fair and ethical treatment of employees and the creation of a culture that breeds empowerment, loyalty and high-performance. History provides countless examples of people that found opportunities during adversity, reframed it or rose above it. Now is the time to invest in positioning for competitive advantage for when the economy turns around. The best organizations will find ways to harness the motivation, commitment and contributions that their employees are providing today and sustain them in improved times. These are the organizations whose performance will accelerate as they reap the benefits of the internal investments they make now. Remember, workforce productivity and engagement is what will make the difference in an organization's success during crisis times and beyond.

- ***Productivity and quality improvement of workforce***

An understanding of the concept of productivity improvement programmes requires clear definition of the issues, productivity, quality improvement and programmes. According to Ulrich (1997), productivity refers to a ratio of output to input. Input may include labour hours or costs, production costs and equipment costs. Output may consist of sales, earnings, and market share. Many firms now assume or have shown that productivity is affected by employee's knowledge, skills, abilities, attitude, motivation and behaviour. The improvement programme starts with this assumption and proceeds with different intervention strategies.

In other words, it is all the concerned efforts of an organization to gain competitive advantage over its competitors to accomplish the organization's mission at a low enough cost. Better training and development programmes have been shown to improve the performance of current employees, while certain incentive and compensation systems translate into higher productivity and performance.

Impact of 'The Role of Money as a Motivator'

Some behavioural scientists have been interpreted as implying that money is not a motivator of behaviour. Herzberg, categorized pay as hygienic factor. However, in considering the role of hygiene factors, we must remember that if they are not adequately supplied, employees will become dissatisfied and restrict their productivity. Therefore it seems that money plays an important role in employee behaviour and motivation. The role of money as a motivator is not deniable. The question is "To what extent does money motivate?" For individuals with strong physiological needs, pay would likely serve as a most important of the basic necessities. The organization must however reward employees according to their productivity. A clear relationship must exist between performances and pay if money is to serve as an effective motivator.

Problems of Human Resource Manager

The work of human resource manager is not in any way smooth sailing. A number of problems confront the human resource manager. Some of these problems are.

- The resentment of the position and authority of a human resource manager by heads of department.
- The difficulty of solving personnel problems because of the great deal of investigating time involved.
- The difficulty of finding in one person the required knowledge of sociology and psychology as well as the knowledge of human resource principles and practices.
- The implementation of human resource policy which he is averse to and the process of formulation which he is not at all involved.
- The position of being a middleman between the top management and staff in which case he has to support both the employees and management.
- Lack of clarity and specifications of the authority and responsibilities of a human resource manager by management.

How HR improves productivity

The changing role of HR has made it a key player in improving employee performance and consequently organisational growth. What is the root cause of an organisation's success? Is it path-breaking and innovative technology? Great products and brands? No. It is a workforce of dynamic and motivated individuals who take the organisation forward with their hard work and passion for excellence. It is consequently very important to develop their skills and competencies and provide the right environment for individual and organisational growth. The HR department of a company can play a strategic role in this effort. Earlier the role of the HR department in most companies has primarily been recruitment. Their function was restricted to finding the right talent, recruiting them, giving them a basic introduction to the company and addressing issues from time to time. But now this role is growing. With people being a company's biggest asset, it has become essential, if not critical for companies to keep their employees satisfied and fulfilled, for them to reach their maximum productivity. This is where the HR has a significant and crucial role.

Gone are the days when the HR was recognised just as a support function and was seldom involved in core business decisions. Present generation HR plays a vital role in strategic decision making and is treated as a business partner. It is a known fact that human resources (people) are the key to success in today's competitive world. Organisational performance is the sum total of the performance of every individual in the company. Productivity is nothing but the outcome of individual performance.

Creating a work environment in which employees are productive is essential for the growth and development of any organisation. Employee productivity usually centres around two major areas of focus: personal motivation and the work environment (including infrastructural facilities). Personal motivation encompasses a wide range of areas like the current role, career progression, training, appreciation, compensation and benefits, culture, value etc. Infrastructure includes the actual physical layout of an office, facilities, hardware and software, communication equipment, etc.

The obvious incentive for increasing employee productivity is often thought to be based on salary and promotions, it has been found that in a large number of cases, salary has less to do with motivation than a key factor—employee relations. Motivation of good employees is the ability to work on challenging assignments and projects, thereby adding value to their own knowledge base. For the employees, understanding their own career paths and their future growth potential is very vital to their level of engagement and therefore productivity. The biggest challenge that affects employee productivity is when they start thinking 'Where do I go from here?' this usually arises when an employee feels stagnant and is not stimulated by the work they are doing.

The other issues that affect an employee's productivity are small process bureaucracies that consume time, lack of requisite facilities, conveniences and even the lack of an effective HR department that can address concerns and issues.

HR-A strategic function

If the HR department wants to achieve a strategic role in improving an employee's productivity, it needs to be sensitive to their requirements, proactive in understanding the issues that employees may face and address them. It should work towards providing an environment that is not only conducive to work in, but also clearly defines roles and responsibilities of each individual and relating his/her contribution to the bigger organisational picture.

Managers have to believe in strategic partnership of HR in the overall business. HR initiatives, which contribute towards employees' productivity enhancement, like a programme called "WIPE" (Waste Identification and Planned Elimination) needs to be added. This can help in identifying the non-value adding processes and improving employees' productivity. The HR department can contribute in the development of tools to improve employee productivity, helps in enhancing competitive advantage through talent management, creating solutions to strategic business problems and opportunities, leadership development and succession planning. The HR staff can play a vital role in making sure employees are psychologically ready to hear and support the mission, values and goals of the organisation. Impetus Technologies growth has been driven by its employees and they are the pillars on which the company rests. It is consequently essential to enhance their productivity. Offer the employees a flexible and free work environment and do not impose unnecessary restrictions that hamper them from being themselves. HR department should constantly work at identifying issues that may arise and addresses them at the earliest.

Focus on employee engagement. But keeping all employees engaged is a challenge. The approach is a little different while dealing with new recruits and old-timers. New recruits require help in settling down and getting oriented to the organisation, the team and their new role. HR can assign a 'buddy' to each new joiner, "The buddy is an old-timer who helps making the new joiner feel comfortable and makes him familiar with all the people and processes. The HR team can have "gup shup" sessions with new joiners to get their feedback and address the pain areas. A mentorship programme can be very effective. It encourages team meetings, relationship meetings with HR personnel and conducting special sessions. For the old-timers in the company who are going through a transitional phase, are encouraged to talk to the HR personnel to voice their concerns and help them through this phase.

Results of HR initiatives

Higher engagement levels in employees will result in higher productivity. Hence a well-articulated and clearly documented engagement policy and process helps. HR initiative for organisational development in some organizations had launched 'BiScope', a filmmaking competition. In this competition the contestants had to focus on the life in their organization in a short film of about three to ten minutes. The themes for the films had the organization as a centre point and aimed to bring out the perception of the company as viewed by its internal customers. Although people management is a core responsibility there is no denying that the role played by the HR in guiding the spirit that binds an organisation together.

Directing a company's growth

Employee productivity is directly related to the growth of the company. The role of HR in such situations is critical. Very often as a company is growing and new recruits come on board, the HR team has a crucial role to play in keeping the culture of the company intact and introducing the new joiners to the company's traditions.

We see that today transformation of organisations and leadership hold the key to success. For this, the role of the HR strategists as facilitators and catalysts is crucial. It is they who can develop a self-sustaining culture of continuous learning, nurturing creativity and shared goals.

Hence a strong HR department is essential for the healthy growth and success of the organisation. Adequate compensation of employees will invariably enhance performance. The role of training and development in an organization and individuals' productivity are immeasurable. Proper implementation of training enhances individual performance and productivity. So wages and other financial benefits of employees should be structured and upwardly reviewed by management for employees to improve on their level of performance. Proper working environment and condition of the employees should be adequately provided. Incentives such as medical cares, housing allowances, etc., should be adequately provided to bring about job satisfaction.

The growth and advancement of the employees on the job through training and development should be efficiently implemented and indiscriminately carried out by the management to avoid dissatisfaction. For higher performance as well as for employees to have sense of belonging, management must introduce Management by Objective (MBO) approach so that all staff will take part and be able to contribute meaningfully to the development of the organization. Employment of staff must be based on merit by Human Resource Department in order to give room for best hands to work in the organization. Management must encourage equity between effort put into the job and promotion to encourage hard work. Management must encourage job satisfaction through the provision of enabling environment to enhance employee's commitment to duty.

Conclusion

Quality can be assessed by looking at performance, reliability, conformity to standards, durability, serviceability, aesthetics and complying with customer requirements. Crosby defined quality is "conformance to the requirements". Improvement refers to the deliberate efforts of an organization to increase in value or excellence. In other words, the enhancement or betterment of a company's performance, for example, increase in a company's share turnover from year to year gaining the company's share of the market or a continuous research and development activities of a company.

Programme means a schedule of plan to be followed. It is an intended plan of action to guide the activities of a business organization. By quality improvement programmes, it means the various schedules or plan put forward by an organization to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency.

The success of any organization can be rightly asserted to people centric activities along with development oriented HR practices and policies focused on quality improvement. Besides this, the top management needs to inculcate the spirit of holistic development in each and every employee working in the organization irrespective of their departments and the levels to which they belong. In the context of the new economy where changes of technology and development of new competencies would be critical for the survival of many organization, it would be worth watching how the organization would steer its people development perspective for its sustained growth and enhanced competitiveness.

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