

CROSS CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This paper aims at better understanding the dynamics of international project groups by grasping the strategies project leaders set up to cope with cultural diversity. Three kinds of cross-cultural practices emerged from the comparative study of European project groups: (1) to draw upon individual tolerance and self-control, (2) to enter into a trial-and-error process coupled with relationship development and (3) to capitalize on transnational corporate or professional cultures. An alternative method to enhance the functioning of cross-cultural projects is also suggested. It consists in the construction of cross-cultural patterns based upon a structured examination of the cultural sense-making processes of project members. The paper concludes on the necessarily culture bound approaches of cross-cultural management in transnational project groups.

Key words: culture, climate, diversity, barriers.

INTRODUCTION

Due to globalization, many companies are now operating in more than one country. This crossing of geographical boundaries by the companies gives the birth of multicultural organization where employees from more than one country are working together. It may be true that companies are finding these expansions as attractive and lucrative but operating and managing a global business is normally a lot tougher than managing a local company. The main reason for the expansion of companies is to create global competitiveness by reducing production costs and exploiting market opportunities offered by trade liberalization and economic integration. Effective knowledge and use of cross cultural diversity can provide a source of experience and innovative thinking to enhance the competitive position of organizations. However, cultural differences can interfere with the successful completion of organizational goals in today's multicultural global business community. To avoid cultural misunderstandings, managers should be culturally sensitive and promote creativity and motivation through flexible leadership.

Emphasis on the main core elements of culture in general. Basic strategy for managing cultural differences. Case studies in doing business in different cultures and doing business in the Cambodia. Understand the importance of culture in business and general management. Use basic strategy to manage businesses in different countries. Be able to work effectively in

a multi-cultural working environment. Identify Cambodian business and the culture .AssesmentAttendance and participations (10%)and Mid-term exam (20%)and Quizz and group assignment (10 to 15 pages) (20%) and the Final exam (50%)

cross cultural management in India :

India has a very different business culture from the US. This causes challenges that are not intentional, but none the less are extremely frustrating and make a lot of Americans feel like their project is spinning out of control.

This does not have to be the case – everyone can manage teams effectively if they have the right techniques and are aware of the challenges India’s business culture brings to the table.

In India time is perceived very differently. Time is somewhat irrelevant to the average Indian. There is little consideration about when something will happen, rather there is a sense that it will happen “when its supposed to.”

This sense encourages Indians to double and triple book their days with the intention that the meeting that is the MOST important being the one that he will attend when the hour arrives. This leaves many Americans waiting on empty conference calls completely confused about why no one has showed up — and further furious that she is wasting her time waiting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cross-cultural management is obviously important and has a great effect on the success of international business operations. Cullen and Parvoteeah (2008) have reported that international business management is inseparable from the sphere of patterned cultural behaviors because culture is represented in terms of the pervasive and shared beliefs, norms, values, and symbols that guide the everyday life of different groups of people. International managers have to decide to choose and adjust their strategies aligned with each country’s culture. The traditional strategies used by management to manage culturally diverse workforce are proving inadequate and may not be able to solve the problem of cross cultural diversity in the era of globalization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of data used in this study was mainly secondary data. The data primarily consists of extensive review of existing literature comprising of Journals, Internet, Books, previously conducted research in the field, white papers, websites dedicated for culture and diversity, magazines etc. . . . The data was used to find out the contemporary cross cultural diversity strategies employed by the organizations, and all other previously conducted research in the field so far. This had enabled to identify the prevalent gaps in the existing literature and prompted me to undertake this study.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

When people join an organization, they bring with them the values, beliefs they have been taught. However these values and beliefs are generally insufficient to help the employee succeed in the organization. They need to learn that how that particular organization functions and need to adapt to it accordingly. Organizational culture has a number of important characteristics; some of them are given below-

Observed behavioral regularities:

When organizational participants interact with one another, they use common language, and rituals related to deference and demeanor.

Norms:

These are the standards of behaviors, it includes the guidelines on how much work to do etc...

Dominant values:

These are major values that the organization advocates and expects the participants to share. Some of the example includes are- high product quality, low absenteeism, and high efficiency.

Philosophy:

These are the policies that set forth the organizations beliefs about how employees and /or customers are to be treated.

Rules:

These are the strict guidelines along in the organization. New comers must learn those ropes in order to be accepted as full-fledged members.

Organizational climate:

This is an overall feeling that is conveyed by the physical layout, the way participants interact, and the way members of the organization conduct themselves with customers of other outsiders.

DIVERSITY

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity can be defined as, —Cultural diversity is when differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, religion, and sexual orientation are represented within a community. A community is said to be culturally diverse if its residents include members of different groups. The community can be a country, region or city. Cultural diversity has become a hot-button issue when applied to the workplace.

REASONS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF DIVERSITY

Changing demographics is the main reason for the emergence of diversity. Women, older workers, minorities, physically challenged people, and those with more education are entering the workforce in a record numbers. Some other factors too are responsible for the emergence of diversity like – It can help organizations in meeting competitive pressure faced by them globally. The pace at which the global business is expanding, it too contributes to the emergence of diversity. Also diversity helps organizations to recognize and strive to obtain diverse view points in their decision making processes and teams.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DIVERSE CULTURE IN THE WORK FORCE

A diverse culture in a workplace means the organization employs workers from a wide array of backgrounds, including ethnicity, race, gender and religion. However, a number of other less common and more minor distinguishing traits contribute to a culture in which employees work with others who aren't their mirror images.

Improved Morale:

One benefit of a diverse workplace culture not as routinely discussed is improved morale. However, this is an important advantage. When diversity is well-managed and employees are trained on cultural sensitivity and awareness, the ideal result is a workplace where all people are validated and regarded as important, regardless of differences. This affirmation of value improves individual worker morale and the collective positivity in the workplace.

Broader Perspectives:

An advantage that is more often pointed out about a diverse workplace is broader perspectives and deeper ideas. A collection of people with varying backgrounds and life experiences are more likely to share different perspectives on a workplace challenge. They are also more likely to present and ideas. By increasing the quantity of perspectives and ideas, the quality of the final decision or solution is typically optimized.

Global Impact:

In a global world economy, having a work force that is diverse from a cultural and country perspective can help companies establish roots and develop business in foreign

markets. The ability to communicate effectively with global business markets, to establish strong relationships with partners and suppliers in non- domestic markets and to understand the cultural implications of doing business in different parts of the world are key benefits.

Community Relationships:

As communities become more diverse, it is important that organizations become diverse as well, for both functional and psychological reasons. Functionally, companies need employees who speak customers' languages and understand their needs. Psychologically, communities and customers typically prefer to do business with companies who employ people from their own backgrounds. Thus, companies in diverse communities often make hiring for and managing a diverse culture an important strategic element.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO CULTURAL ADAPTATION

In spite of the strong evident need for employees moving on foreign assignments to understand local culture and be adaptable, they often arrive unprepared. Their selection is typically based upon their job performance in the home country. Because of their parochial, individualistic or ethnocentric beliefs, they might not be concerned about the fact that they will be doing business with people whose traditional beliefs are different from their own. They may not know that local language and might have little interest in becoming a part of the community. They may also have been selected based on their technical knowledge by their employer.

MANAGERIAL GUIDELINES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL SUCCESS

Cross-cultural proficiency helps managers connect with their foreign counterparts. Seasoned managers attest to the importance of a deep knowledge of culture and language in international business. Managers can achieve effective cross-cultural interaction by keeping an open mind, being inquisitive, and not rushing to conclusions about others' behaviors. Experienced managers acquire relevant facts, skills, and knowledge to avoid offensive or unacceptable behavior when interacting with foreign cultures. They undergo cultural training that emphasizes observational skills and human relations techniques. Skills are more important than pure information because skills can be transferred across countries, while information tends to be country specific. Various resources are available to managers for developing skills, including videotape courses, cross-cultural consultants, and programs offered by governments, universities, and training institutes. Planning that combines informal mentoring from experienced managers and formal training through seminars and simulations abroad and at home go far in helping managers meet cross-cultural challenges.

CONCLUSION

Organizations' ability to attract, retain, and motivate people from diverse cultural backgrounds, may lead to competitive advantages in cost structures and through maintaining the highest quality human resources. Further capitalizing on the potential benefits of cultural

diversity in work groups, organizations may gain a competitive advantage in creativity, problem solving, and flexible adaptation to change. Multi-cultural workforce is becoming the norm. To achieve organizational goals and avoid potential risks, the managers should be culturally sensitive and promote creativity and motivation through flexible leadership.

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