

Examining the role of management consultants healthcare organisations



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Introduction:

Management consultancy is a management activity where a business or agency offers expert or professional advice in a particular field. Consultant can be defined as a professional who provides expert advice in contemporary business issues (Wickham & Wickham, 2008). Design of assignment is based on consultant role as facilitator and advisory in solving the production capacity related issues at the facet of Medicare private limited. Medicare is a small and medium enterprise (SME) in business of pharmaceutical manufacturing and marketing. Lack of qualified staff and size of SME's owners are increasingly forced to avail the services of external consultants (Cheok 1991).

The essay explains that what consultant is and role of consulting and management in organisation. Further in essay issues with the organisation are identified, explanation of the interaction between consultant and client, key skills and responsibility of consultant and what decision making approach is adopted by consultant is discussed. All these aspects are covered with reference to issues identified at Medicare private limited.

Who is Consultant?

Consultants are experts acquiring package and sell specific knowledge applied or acted on by their clients. However they have specific clients to whom explicit confidential information is furnished and usually bound by a agreement that demands confidentiality (Wickham & Wickham, 2008)

A consultant is an expert at recognizing problems and shaping solutions to those problems. The need for problem solvers among large and small
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businesses worldwide has never been greater. The ever-changing moods of the buyer plus the myriad of crisis situations that business people face almost daily have created a “seller’s market” for the alert consultant. (Victor Pryles)

The following is a short and formal definition of expert and consultants:

An expert has understanding and insight of business environment. He is a professional middleman between knowledge producers and its users.

A consultant is an expert who possesses, formulates and sells specific and confidential knowledge and charges a fee for their advice.

Identification of Issues:

Theories of Consulting and Management roles

According to Henry Fayol, a management guru, consultant roles can be described in the following basic functions.

Organising: In strategic terms organising means ensuring that the organisation structure is appropriate for its strategy and environmental situation (Wickham & Wickham, 2008)

Planning: Planning is the most important function as it has direct impact on the future of business and planning helps in deciding the future course of action.

Planning and implementation is a complex managerial task. For consultant planning includes critical analysis of the situation, identifying key factors affecting the situation, and creative execution.

Staffing: Staffing is one another important detriment of manpower planning and their positioning. Proper staffing ensures the planning and managing the right person at right place. In modern practices staffing function is commonly linked with human resource management functions

Controlling: Good consultant plans to optimise the use of resources available. Resources can be of various form viz. manpower resources, financial resources, inventory resources and distribution network etc. In today's competitive business world consultant must be sufficiently alert to new ways of achieving the path of success. Today controlling also include sustainability and environmental aspects.

Role of Consultant:

As per Wickham & Wickham the key skills of consultants can be explained as follows:

As the figure suggest we can define consultant as a professional who provides his/her expert advice in all business

Interaction between client and consultant

Henry Mintzberg defined consulting and client role into three categories such as interpersonal roles, informational roles and decisional roles. Interpersonal roles are related with the interaction of consultant with different organisation. The main Interpersonal roles are the figure head, the leader and the liaison (Wickham & Wickham, 2008).

The Figure head: Consultant as a manger in figure head role represents an organisation in a formal manner. While representing as the figure head of an

organisation consultant should be thorough with every aspect of the business which will enable him/her in effective decision making.

The leader: The leader role includes to an innovative comprehension about of nature of subordinates, delegation of duties, motivating employees and working in such a way that employee's moral become high.

The Liaison: Many consultants have a role in liaising with various organisation people etc and their main responsibility include gaining some resource from other organisation.

The Monitor: The role as a monitor includes identification and airing key information on behalf of organisation.

The Spokesperson: Role as a spokesperson involves the sharing of information with outside world. In an organisation employees involve in sales and marketing field, procurement play a significant role as spokesperson in sharing product information etc.

Key skills of consultants:

Key skills of Consultant

Source: (Wickham & Wickham, 2008)

1. Analysis Skills

Analysis skills include understanding deep down information about business, analysing them and finally working on them to get the result that could benefit the client

Consultant must have a good understanding of strength, weakness, opportunities and threats to the business. Swot analysis by a consultant may give rise to develop strength and opportunities in business and minimise weakness and threats.

Business is capable of performing well in the market if its internal conditions are flexible to change, , responsive to new possibilities and most important of all is financial and manpower resources should be in a good shape. As consultant is also responsible in value addition to client, he should possess an ability to analyse the procedure in which decision making occurs within the business.

2. Project skill management

It was a big challenge for the consultant to build a strong relationship with the client because most of the times employees in the organisation feel that services of consultants may harm their own interest and benefits and as a result of which they try to create unnecessary hurdles in consultants approach. Consultant is a connecting link between its own organisation and client and role of consultant is very important and crucial as he has to satisfy overall expectation of his own organisation and the client as well.

3. Relationship building skills

Apart from analysis skills and project management skills consultant should develop a rapport and trust with the client. People having good rapport among them can work together effectively. Relationship building skills also include good communication skills, leadership, negotiation, oratory and

writing skills so the consultant should have practitioner insight of all the aspects of business.

Responsibilities of consultant

Every consultant has dual responsibility one is towards his/her own organisation and another towards the organisation he is working for.

According to Carroll (1979,(Wickham pg 16 ch1)) economic responsibilities includes the role of consultant is to have a vision of long term financial growth of the business.

Legal responsibility: Every responsible business should abide the law of the land. This is the responsibility of consultant to follow legal implication after implementation of given advice.

Moral responsibility: Moral responsibility of business is to take care of social and environmental implication after implementation of suggestion made by consultant. It also include the common ethical issues to be followed by consultant

Decision making approaches:

It is a consultant's responsibility to influence decision making but not to change the decision made by client organisation. Decision making style varies from one organisation to another. Therefore it is essential of consultant to understand how decisions are being made in the organisation.

Traditional model of organisational decision making

Source: (Wickham & Wickham, 2008)

Decision making is a very important process of all professional activities. In any organisation decision making does not depend upon specific group or number of individuals but it includes the involvement of individuals. This involvement leads to proper interaction, conveying the information, analysing the whole issue and finally negotiation. Above mentioned model is a traditional model of decision making in organisations and explains that how decision making occurs in an organisation. In real terms the decision making in an organisation may differ from the picture shown. As per the traditional model of decision making consultant analyses the situation and provide the information to the client, as a result of which client provides his feedback about what action can be taken after.

The second step involves the rendition and submitting the advice by consultant and to this once again client requires the feedback about the possible course of action.

Third step involves providing the feedback by consultant in terms of choices available before client and the next move by client is the feedback of consultant about what is required to be accomplished.

Fourth step involves the authorisation of the consultant in terms of providing the solution to the specific situation and this is followed by another move of client in taking feedback of consultant on the authority.

Final step involves the proper execution of the matter and convincing the client about what has accomplished actually and finally its the time to take proper action towards the problem solving techniques.

Change process

Conclusion

Cheok, J. 1991. The Growing Management Consultancy Industry. Productivity

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