

The organizational structure of initech



Abstract

This research paper looks at the organizational structure of Initech office in the movie Office Space. The paper makes reference to the movie in analyzing organizational behavior in terms of motivation, group dynamics, and organizational structure and culture. The paper critically analyses these aspects. The mode in which these elements have been exposed in the paper is also brought out.

Plot Summary

The movie Office Space revolves around the Initech office where Peter Gibson works. He is an office drone and just like other employees he hates the monotony in his life. His attitude towards work is further altered by the death of the occupational therapist that he used to admire. When asked to come to work on weekends he responds by reporting to work when he feels like, in case he reports to work on weekends he spends the entire time playing computer games and making different arrangement of the office furniture to give himself a better view. The company associates this peculiar behavior with good managerial skills, so instead of being fired, he is regarded as a potential manager. His life is chaotic since apart from being miserable with his job, his girlfriend is cheating on him and he happens to have a very unbearable neighbor (O'Brien 2006).

Motivation

The working environment at Intitech is not conducive. White (2006) notes, that working conditions have to be favorable so that the employees can feel motivated to work. The author describes the working environment as

soulless. The employees are not proud to be associated with this place. Milton complains that he has to constantly move to the basement that is infected by cockroaches yet he no longer receives paychecks. The working environment does not favor Gibson and his workmates. Although the environment might not be the main factor as to why these employees hate their workplaces, it is a contributing factor. Milton's act of torching the building shows that he loathes the workplace. He was heard saying severally that he would torch the building and he did exactly that.

According to Leczkowski (2007), the job of the manager is to get the work done by the employees. Proponents of the motivational theory are of the view that managers have the power to motivate their employees. Squire (2004) suggests that for one to understand the art of motivation, it is important to understand human nature first. Bosses determine the degree of motivation that the employees are going to display. The four workmates namely Gibson, Milton, Michael and Samir are constantly harassed by the management particularly Bill Lumbergh, the vice president. The study of human nature can be very simple but at the same time very complicated. The appreciation of this aspect is important since it enhances employee motivation in the work place. The fact that the vice president humiliates employees shows that he does not have the knowledge to learn the needs and wants of individual employees, this is a de-motivating factor since as Khurana (2010) confirms, employers who openly show disgust to the employees act as the de-motivating factors. Employees will not perform tasks well since they do not expect praise even when they do the work quiet well.

The issue of having excessive management is uncalled for hence the newly appointed experts are not important. Firms only need a single management panel to solve the issues surrounding the company. Employees become confused on whose orders to follow and who's not to. Aniston (2010) sees the issue of having more than one manager as unnecessary unless the firm is too big to be managed by one manager. There are very many factors in Initech that are not pleasant and this tops the list. Companies that have a simple management are likely to be more organized than one that is managed by many managers. Effective management does not depend on the number of people in the management team, rather the skills of those in charge of the management is what matters most. The aspect of serving two masters is hard; one has to choose what master to serve. It is difficult to please all of them hence it is important to make a choice.

Promotion in work places comes about after one shows that he or she is ready to handle harder tasks. It is ironical to see that Gibson is promoted despite his negative attitude towards work, he does not work. Further, he tells Joanna plainly that he hates his job. He does not deserve a promotion since the qualities that he displays are those of someone who is not willing to work. The author states that he (Gibson) spends his time staring at his desk instead of doing the work that he is assigned to do. Any worker looks forwards to the time when he or she will be promoted. According to the Accwl-Team (2010) one's attitude towards the job assigned play a big role in determining how the job is going to be done. One wonders if other employees need to behave like Gibson in order to earn a promotion.

Gibson's promotion definitely acted as a de-motivating factor to those who had been working hard to be promoted. Such people cease to see the need to work hard since their efforts are not reinforced, this will definitely have a negative effect to the company. There is no work related virtue in Gibson that other employees can imitate; he can be a nightmare to any employer. The policies that govern the company can be put into question. The laying off Samir and Michael cannot be understood well, they are among the most hardworking employees of the company. It is ironical that the experts lay off hard working employees and promoted a lazy person who is less concerned about the work. The experts do not consider his poor attendance record, laziness and rebelliousness at the work place.

Salary acts as a motivating factor for employees (Igbal 2010). Four of Gibson's workmates do not love the work place but since they are paid at the end of the month they opt to remain there. They complain about the poor working conditions and the harassment from the boss but the issue of salaries is not talked about. It is evident that if this was voluntary work, none of the employees would have opted to continue working there; therefore the issue of salary acts a motivating factor that encourages them to continue working since their efforts will be reinforced even if the boss does not feel that they put a lot of effort to make things run smoothly. Gibson realizes that he needs the job since he has to pay bills although he hates doing so. This makes him not to quit his job at the moment since he realizes that the salary he earns is very important.

Gibson feels de-motivated to the point that he starts removing items from work place to demonstrate his melancholy. He does not see the need to

continue working since he hates his work and his boss. He even removes inspirational banners since he does not feel inspired, all he wants is to quit working and do nothing (Contreras 2007).

His life long dream of ‘doing nothing’ motivates him to attempt to leave his job. At his work place he does not perform the duties assigned, he just wants to stay idle and do nothing this is what he has wanted to do always. He absents himself from work for no apparent reason indicating that he does not care about his job. Motivational factors depend on how bad we want to attain our goals; we follow the path that is reinforcing so as to attain our goals. The notion of leaving his work and staying idle is prompted by the fact that through this, he will realize his life long dream.

Group Dynamics

Group dynamics are the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics in a group. They can affect organization performance if the employees have negative attitude towards their work place. These groups are common where the employee welfare is not taken care of; this is mostly the case if the management fails to attend to complains of the employees. Mr. Bill Lumbergh is cruel in the way he treats his employees, he does not give them the treatment that they deserve. This makes the employees to team up and plan to attack the company. Fair treatment of the employees cannot lead to the formation of groups that protest the management.

Gibson, Milton, Samir and Michael hate their workplace for different reasons. Gibson hates his work because he hates to work here, Samir gets irritated that no one in the company can pronounce his last name correctly, Milton

murmurs to himself about how his workmates borrow his red stapler and his plan to torch the workplace, Michael on the other hand complains that he shares his name with a famous singer whom he hates. These are personal attitudes of the characters in this movie, apart from having different complains, these individuals share one thing in common; they hate the company they are working for. They have complaints that they would rather keep to themselves rather than present them to the management. This is a unifying factor that brings them together with the intention of bringing the company down.

They decide to interfere with the accounting system. They successfully interfere with the system although they end up stealing more than they intended to due to a misplaced decimal point. The three come together to bring down the company since they have been oppressed in the past. The three had agreed to steal a smaller amount but the displaced decimal makes them to acquire more that they could have ever wished for. This was a way of getting back with the company management for the bad treatment that they have tolerated over the years. The three also steal a manufacturing fax machine and end up destroying it in the field. They have all faced difficult times under the management hence they see this as a good chance to get back at the company.

When group dynamics are bounded together by a will do perform social evils, then the driving force is very high. This may have been impossible if it were one of them who were conspiring to perform such as act. When people are in a group, the motivation to undertake social evils is very strong since the group members encourage each other, also the accord that the group

members sign regardless of the fact that it is oral or written further drives them into undertaking the act. Each of the members must show commitment by at least doing something that contributes to the successful completion of the process (Nicoteria & Clinkscales & Walker 2003). The idea behind the formation of such groups is to have a strengthened union that works together to accomplish set goals.

The three employees were an asset to the company. The author presents Michael and Samir as among the most hardworking people in the company, the fact that they were laid off means that the company lost two dedicated employees. The promotion of Gibson was a further waste of the company resources since he was not up to the task. He hated both his position and the company he worked for hence he could not be lured into working for the company by promoting him. What he needed was time off this job since there was some other work that he believed he could do better.

The three employees of Initech wanted to see the downfall of the company slowly. The virus infected into the system is supposed to divert only a small amount of money to their accounts. The three were therefore not planning to gain maximum benefit at once; they wanted to bring down the company slowly without anyone noticing. In most instances, groups that do not present their woes to the management plan such antics that will enable them to bring down the company so that the management can feel hurt due to the collapse of such a firm. Revenge is the driving force that motivates them to carry out the social evil, they are fed up with how the management has been treating them hence they see this as a good chance for the management to fit into their shoes. Apart from financial gain, the three

friends were willing to go at any length to ensure that the company is rendered weak in that it will not be in a position to carry out its operations normally, generally, the three friends wanted to slowly but totally paralyze the operations of the company. Their involvement was seen as a way of fighting for their right which the company had failed to observe over the years.

When employees are driven to destroy the company, the economy is affected since these individuals rarely work towards attaining company goals, the tasks they perform are completed because they have to but not because of their will. When willingness lacks in an individual, then tasks cannot be performed effectively. They either fail to work or do the work half heartedly. The formation of such groups serves as a unifying factor that brings them together to accomplish what they set out to do. White (2006) sees that group dynamics as an effective way of presenting woes and making demands known to that management, if the management fails to heed to that conditions set, then the group can apply force to attain its objectives. This is basically because employees are important in any business since success and failure of the company largely depends on them.

Organizational performance and productivity largely depends on the attitude of group dynamics. If the employees develop a positive attitude towards that management, then they are likely to produce quality work, this is determined by how the employers have been treating them. Employee treatment determines the relationship between employers and employees, if the employees receive fair treatment, then it will be easy for them to air concerns when they feel that certain factors are not favoring them. On the

other hand, poor employee treatment is dangerous since employees are likely to form groups that aim at destroying the company's reputation as well as interfering with the success of the company. Khurana (2010) notes that if the employees are comfortable at their work places, then organizational performance and productivity will definitely produce positive outcomes.

Organizational Structure and Culture

Effective organizational structure facilitates the working relationships between the key players in the organization. Organizational structure refers to the way that tasks and subtasks necessary for the formation of a plan are arranged. The organizational structure is supposed to give a general idea on who performs given tasks within the company. The organizational structure of Initech does not look effective as the employees are not comfortable with the work that they are doing (Igbal 2010). It would seem like the employees were just fixed to work in the various departments without considering their qualifications and interest. This may be the root cause of all complains that the employees were presenting.

The organizational structure has not effectively handled the issue of a conducive environment for workers. Milton complains that the basement that he is regularly forced to visit is infected with cockroaches. The working conditions are not favorable since the Vice president of the company publicly harasses some of the employees for no apparent reason. The employees are therefore under pressure since apart from working in poor conditions, the management of the company continues to treat them unfairly. This is very de-motivating especially to hard working individuals such as Samar. The employee may feel demeaned hence feel like the company does not

appreciate individual efforts. Proponents of reinforcement theory suggest that behavior that is reinforced is likely to occur again while the likelihood of recurrence of behavior that has not been reinforced is low (Igbal 2010). The absence of kind words of appreciation or gifts to those who have performed well lacks, on the contrary, Michael and Samar who are regarded as very hardworking individuals are fired while a very undeserving Gibson is promoted.

The environment around which Gibson and his friends work is very demotivating. While the working conditions are poor, the company does not apply realistic strategies in offering promotions. It is evident that Gibson is lazy since he never does his work, it can be argued that the company is likely to regress since it is clear that Gibson hates working in this company and that no amount of promotion will compel him to perform his duties. The company allows external forces to make major changes to the organizational structure yet it is the management that would be best suited to do this since it knows its employees well.

According to Aniston (2010) the values of any given organization govern the interactions between the key players. There seems to be communication breakdown in this company since employees use mischievous means to get what they want. This has been fueled by the fact that employees and employers have not been communicating well. The only way that the vice president can communicate with the employees is through use of harsh words and harassment. This cannot be regarded as communication within an organization since the plight of the employees is not looked into.

Communication helps to raise concerns and issues to the concerned

authorities for reviews. This company seems to have a history of disregarding the views of its employees even on issue that affect them.

The rules that govern the behavior of the employees are not strict. Gibson fails to report to work frequently and when he does, he fails to perform the duties assigned to him. One would question the rules set since any given organization ought to strictly follow the rules and regulations set by the company, failure to do this could land the company in danger since the degree of productivity may go down. The vice president of the company does not have any rights to over exercise his authority, this act has been going on for a long time, hence the company's commitment towards ensuring that their welfare of employees is taken good care of lacks. Aniston (2010) confirms that where rules and regulations are observed strictly operations run smoothly since the rules govern the conduct of the employees.

The current organizational culture of Initech reflects the past organizations. The description of the company creates a mental picture of an old building that has not seen any innovations since history. Michael's complains show that the working conditions have been poor for a long time. The hiring of two efficiency experts was uncalled for since the experts did not bring any good to the company, their expertise in examining the best person for the promotion was not satisfactory. The so called expertise deprives the company of two very hardworking employees and to make the matter worst, they grant the promotion to the most undeserving employee in the company.

Conclusion

Office Space is a comic movie that revolves around the working condition of Initech Company. Peter Gibson, the protagonist hates his job that he does not perform the tasks that are assigned to him, all he does is stare at his desk and complain about how much he hates his job. The management and the environment around this company does not offer any motivation to the workers since the welfare of the employees is not looked at well. Despite being lazy, rude and rebellious Gibson is promoted while hardworking individuals such as Michel are fired.