

# Emirates airline: management and leadership across cultures

[Environment](#), [Air](#)



## **1. 0 Introduction**

In today's competitive business industries, travel and tourism industry is one of the world's biggest and fastest growing industries. Now People are travelling for leisure, recreation, business purpose and most of them are travelling as a part of their employment than ever before. Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. According to United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2009) there were over 922 million international tourist arrivals in 2008, with a growth of 1. 9% as compared to 2007. Now travel and tourism industry has become one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of economic industries. A country can earn a massive amount of foreign currency by travel and tourism. The development and growth rates of tourism industry, significant volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development, and introduction of new management affect various sectors of economy. It completely contributes to the social and economic development of a country. Travel and tourism business makes an important connection to the world, which provides services to people from another region or country.

Airline industry makes a vital role to increase tourism and travel industry. It's one of the most important parts in tourism and hospitality sector and Emirates airlines is not an exception as it play an important role in the hospitality and tourism sector.

## **1. 1 Overview of Emirates Airline:**

Emirates Airline is one of the major airlines in the Middle East. It is a subsidiary of The Emirates Group. The Emirates Story (2010), states that Emirates had started the air business with only two aircraft-Boeing 737 and Airbus 300 B4 and had flown its first route out of Dubai on 25th October 1985. Now with a fleet of 137 aircrafts, Emirates Airlines fly to over 100 destinations in 60 countries around the world and almost 700 Emirates flights depart from Dubai each week on their way to destinations on six continents. Yearly the expansion of Emirates has never been lower than 20% and the airline has recorded an annual profit in every year since its third in operation (The Emirates Story, 2010). From Emirates website, the Emirates Group (2010), Sky-Cargo division is the freight division of Emirates airlines which under take their cargo activities and provides inclusive cargo solutions to more than 100 destinations in over 60 countries on six continents. According to The Emirates Group (2010), in 2008, Emirates Sky-Cargo stimulated its operations into the 43, 600 square metres state-of-the-art Cargo Mega Terminal and yearly it can process 1. 2 million tonnes of cargo. In 2001, Emirates announced the largest valued at \$15 billion order in aviation history which confirmed its future growth in Airline industry. It was staggering 58 new aircraft, a mix of Airbus and Boeing for its rapidly growing fleet. Now Emirates is growing rapidly and carried a lot more passengers than before. The Emirates Story (2010) also shows that in 2007/2008, Emirates carried 21. 2 million passengers and carried 1. 3 million tonnes of cargo which indicates that Emirates is one of the fastest growing airlines in the airline business.

## **1. 2 Leadership and management roles of Emirate Airline:**

Leadership and management which are seen very differently by diverse group of people. Some individuals see these terms as synonyms, while others approach them as extreme opposites; so extreme, in fact, that they would argue that at the same time a good manager and a good leader cannot be the same person. Still other people reside somewhere in the middle. But the fact is these two terms are often interchanged. Pascale, R. (1990) defined Leadership as the sculpture of creating an environment and influencing people to follow a chosen direction willingly. It requires a clear vision and guide followers along a path that realizes the vision. In 1980, the president of American association defined (cited by Patrick J, M. et al, 2000) that management is getting things through other people. Patrick J, M et al (2000) pointed that the current definition of management is working with and through other people to accomplish the objectives of both the organisation and its member. Management organises, controls or directs people or resources in a group, these are done according to morality that have already been established. Management and leadership, both are necessary to make teams and organizations successful. Just like the right or left wing of an airplane's flight.

Without leadership and management business cannot attain its organisational goals. Emirates leadership and management process play an important role for the continuing success of Emirates Airlines. Sheik Ahmed Bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline who is highly talented and under his leadership, Emirates has grown from a

local airline operating three destinations has become a highly praised international airline and fastest-growing international carrier which operates more than 100 locations in over 60 countries (The Emirates Story, 2010).

Now Emirates is one of the largest airlines in Middle East. No doubt that their talented leaders play a vital role but this has been made possible through their excellent management techniques, quality customer service and highly skilled diverse workforce. Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline alongside with other leaders have been capable to show their natural ability that they can lead the company economically and effectively (The Emirates Group: Leadership, 2010).

Leaders of Emirates are always responsible, being very grown up, treating people equally, being honest, working hard, prioritising and planning, connecting their staff in their thinking and especially in managing change. The management and leadership teams know how to make the airline business attractive to customers and how to admire those who are worthy of praise for making the company successful.

## **2. 0 Concept of Management, Leadership and Motivation**

Management, leadership and motivation play an important role for the success of company. Emirate Airline like any other organization or company needs effective leadership and excellent management to direct their staffs to get the achievement of specific objectives.

## **2. 1 Management Theories:**

The unique behavioural pattern adopted by a leader to motivate and influence the behaviour of subordinates, is called Management theories. It is an ongoing process which helps to get something through people or to use resources to generate profit. Management can create a condition and by the appropriate implication of this condition, organization can achieve their goals. Mainly there are three different types of management styles; bureaucratic management style, participative management style and strategic management style.

Emirates Airline is trying to be competitive and marketable by using different management styles. The management style of Emirates typifies a combination of participatory and strategic management. Lamb (1984) pointed “ Strategic management is an ongoing process that evaluates and controls the business and the industries in which the company is involved; assesses its competitors and sets goals and strategies to meet all existing and potential competitors. The company’s strategic apex deals with planning and developing initiatives on behalf of owners, connecting proper use of resources to increase the performance of company in their external environments. Emirates use strategic management style to establish the mission of company, vision and objectives, initial policies and plans, often in terms of projects and programs. All these are designed to achieve a competitive advantage in the travel market.

Participative management is the management style where decisions are consulted with the subordinates, by their manager, before implementation.

This management style helps to create good relation between manager and employee . Participative management is like democratic management which allows employee to take strong decision making role. After establishing this management, company will get more profit and can reduce its cost. The management of Emirates involves their employees and other stakeholders to take part in making decisions. Emirate encouraged their employee to give their own ideas to identify and get organizational-goals, to solve problem and other decisions that can straight affect the company. The management of Emirates take decision in consultation with their subordinates

## **2. 1 Leadership theories:**

Leadership means having an ability and desire to inspire and influence others. From trait theory, leaders are born with leading leadership qualities and also inherit positive qualities and personality that make them to be leader. When someone has five traits such as honesty, inspiring, forward-looking, competent, intelligent, he will be a good leader. The spirited advantage and position of Emirates can be endorsed by their leaders.

Behavioural perspective of leadership holds that anybody who demonstrates the appropriate behaviour can be an effective leader. Leaders are made by learning appropriate behaviour and not trait. The key contribution of the behavioural perspective was the identification of effective management systems working inside an organisation.

The contingency or situational model of leadership emphasise on the nature of the circumstance. Emirates Airline's leadership do not have one particular

leadership style and the leaders of Emirates are able to incorporate patience as well as the will to attain compromise with the ability to act rapidly and decisively. The leaders of Emirates are democratic and the leadership composes the ability and skills to motivate and influence the activities and the thoughts of people or subordinates. Their leaders make a social influence which encourages staff to achieve common goal.

## **2. 2 Motivation theories:**

Motivation was initially came from the Latin word “ movere”. “ Movere” means to move. Motivation is a process which influences people to do. According to Campbell & Pritchard (1976) “ Motivation has to do with a set of independent or dependent variable relationships that explain the direction, amplitude and persistence of an individual’s behaviour, holding constant the effects of amplitude, skill and understanding of the task and the constraints operating in the environment”. There are different types of theory such as Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory, Alderfer’s Existence-Relatedness-Growth theory and Herzberg’s Motivator-Hygiene theory. These theories are revealed to motivate people that help the leader of a company to motivate his employee. Maslow motivation theory is one of them which are most popular theory of human motivation. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (2002-2010) psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a motivation theory, in this theory basic and low-level needs such as physiological needs and safety have to be satisfied before higher-level needs such as self-actualization are pursued. Maslow motivation theory covers all basic requirements of an individual and it would please them. Maslow theory is



based on five levels of needs; these are from bottom to top- physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization. The lower level such as physiological and safety needs has been met by employee then higher level needs become important. Emirates Airline motivates their employee strongly. For this reason lots of diverse people are interested to work with Emirates group. They offer a number of employee rewards, recognition, incentive and performance programmes, all designed to encourage the best from individuals who chose to build their careers with Emirate Airline(About Emirates Group: Our People, 2010) . Well trained and skilled employees are the key for the success of a company. So Emirates provide vocational training and development to ensure their people are able to do their job well. The Emirates Group Carriers Centre, FAQ's ( 2010) stated that high performing Cabin Crew have been able to attain the position of Flight Purser within five years and many have also become trainers in cabin service.

### **3. 0 Cultural diversity**

A variety of different societies or peoples with dissimilar origins, religions and traditions all are living and interacting together -That is cultural diversity.

Many people from different part of the world are not treated fairly in their work place because of their race, nationality, creed, sexual orientation, background, age or even disability but it is essential for every organization that all people are treated with respect. If individuals treated unfairly or inaccessible by their managers or other employee because of their race, nationality, cultural differences and other reason , company will loss

productivity. Cultural diversity plays a vital role to reach out on a worldwide level for an organization which has a varied or diverse group of employee. Managing diversity focus organisation to obtain a better perceptive of how other cultures do business which is a fundamental element for doing business in today's worldwide marketplace. Developing diversity provides different types of ideas from different people and variety of viewpoints give larger pool of idea that can provide a competitive edge in company. All Successful and winning company need to take urgent action to establish managing diversity in the workplace.

### **3. 1 Managing culturally diverse workforce of Emirates Airlines:**

In today's global market managers of every organisation should focus on culturally diverse workplace or employees in order to increase organizational effectiveness. In the Middle East, Emirates Airlines also weigh up and evaluate diversity process which is a significant part of their management system. Emirates employee diversity of over 160 nationalities is a unique strength for them as a global organisation and their divers employees are from different nationalities, cultures, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Their diverse employees get new ideas, innovations and thinking styles which help them to lead the business to success (Emirates Group: Cultural Diversity, 2010). Emirates Airlines recruit and endorse or promote people without discrimination and treat all people with respect and give every employee with the opportunity to build up to the full. Emirates Airline ensures cultural diversity through the following means:

Communication: Language plays an important factor to understand others. In a company where there is more than one native language or different cultural background, communication problems will arise. In some company they have interpreters but this double translation offers more opportunities for misunderstanding. In Emirates Airlines, they use international language English for communication and it is used within the industry throughout the world. As English is an international language and learn by different people from different countries Emirates use English as a common language to manage a culturally diverse workforce. The website of Emirates, recruitments process and advertisement is also done in English.

Equal opportunity: Equal opportunity means when all people in company are treated equally and fairly. In Emirates, they consider all people individually, treat them fairly and also provide opportunities for development and progression. As the management of Emirates treat their employees well, they too can treat each other with respect and provide best service to their clients. In Emirates Airlines men and women employees are treated equally and recruitment process provides both men and women an equal chance of selection.

Recruitment: Emirates airlines recruit from a diversified workforce. They recruit both men and women and do not think that talented is the exclusive preserve of men, white population or their countrymen. Talent does not lie exclusively with the white men, Arabic, Asians or Chinese. The management of Emirates policy is only searching talented and suitable people. They are

not bothered where these talents came from, what is their religion, sex or culture.

### **3. 2 Managing culturally diverse customers of Emirates Airlines:**

Managing culturally diverse customer is fundamental element for business because customer is business and without customer there is no business. Every organisation has its own cultural frame and successful leadership should shift ahead of its cultural structure of reference to support well-built intercultural communication and also produce and build up culturally designed or culturally considered services, products or goods that provide international standard. As Emirates presently fly to over 100 destinations in 60 countries around the world (The Emirates Story, 2010), it means they are serving or operating different origins and backgrounds with different work habit, different cultural attitudes, different ethnic group, multinational and diverse people.

Communication: Effective communication are fundamental for the success of business, it is in terms of advertising company products and services which is provided by company to their clients. Emirates must know what their customers want and also listen to other business contact, such as banker, investor or supplier. If Emirates does not know what their customers want, then it is impossible to create business market. For providing good service and creating understandable communication with their customer Emirates provide international language. Their customers are diversified; in this case they use English which is understandable for all types of people. When

people have communication problem then it creates a great disaster for their future business, company will not exit because they have failed to make relationship with their customers.

#### Food service

The cultures of Emirates are Middle Eastern culture. They provide Arabic style food which is really tasty and they give very open-handed portions. Their food taste has already attracted different religious, different ethnic group and different customers from different cultural backgrounds. As Emirates follows Islamic food handling procedures, so in their flight they never serve alcohol so that if passengers want they may serve themselves. Travel House UK on Wednesday 11 August, 2010 posted that during Ramadan period they provided iftar to their customers. According to travel news (2010) Emirates' Vice President Aircraft Catering of Emirates Robin Padgett told that even as they take pride in their cultural diversity, the foundation of Emirates is based on Islamic culture so they are committed to ensuring that their Muslim passengers are well looked after during the holy month of Ramadan and their non-fasting passengers will continue to enjoy the world-class meals that Emirates provide globally.

### **4. 0 Effective Management, Leadership and Motivation across culture:**

In today's business leaders should know how to lead and motivate workforces across many diverse cultural backgrounds and take action to the requirements and expectations of different types of customers those who come from different cultures.

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Management is a process and company activities which involves getting people together to achieve wanted goals and objectives economically and effectively. Principles of effective management based on planning, organizing or directing and controlling. Planning is an important element for effective management and it is a process, determines what action needs to be done to achieve company goal and what their future goal is.

Organising and directing involves employee of company and resources like finance, materials and time. Organising is a way in which work is done. An effective management always organises and direct that employees are engaged in working on performance to meet plan and goal of company. It also involves motivating staff because motivating employee is the way to the determined hard work which is needed for efficient performance.

Organizational relationship is important for effective management.

Companies are concern about cultural diversity because almost every organisation operates different types of people from different ethnic group or multicultural that means company operates diverse customers and diverse employees. An effective management always focus on customer satisfaction because customers are the main element for their business, without customer business cannot exist. If the management focus on diverse employees in their organisation and give them equal opportunity they can get the idea how to deal with diverse customers which is beneficial for global business.

Controlling is the way of monitoring and modifiable performance to ensure that it conforms to the plans and the goals of the company and involves taking the proper corrective act to make sure that what is really phenomenon or happening is in accordance with the expectations of planning process. Effective management is not only selected according to the culture of business but also with the environment of workforce. Management style run by a leader, so effective leadership is essential to create effective management. Management is not possible without a suitable leader.

According to Fullan M. (2001), effective leadership has to have a clear “making-a-difference” sense of purpose, bring into play strategies that assemble many people to solve problems, be held responsible by calculated and arguable indicators of success and be eventually assessed by the amount to which it awakens people’s basic commitment which is none other than the mobilizing of everyone’s sense of moral purpose. Effective leader has to have clear idea how to deal with diverse people; he is democratic and encourages his employees in decision making process which help him to make relation with his employee, more concerned with communicating vision and also succeed by motivating, encouraging, stimulating and connecting their employees.

A good leader knows how to motivate his employee who comes from different cultural background. In an organisation people have the right equipment, right knowledge, skills and abilities and the right type of organisational framework. But even after that they need something which

drives them willing to do the work for the success of company or organisation. According to Peters and Waterman (1982) pointed that management should be dedicated to the motivation of its human resources and successful companies stress strategies which empower employees and give them control of their work and their work environment. Jacson, T. (1995) said that work motivation can be accredited to the nature of person needs and to the allocation by managers of work related outcomes perceived by employees as both valid and relevant.

#### **4. 1 Impact of Emirates Airlines Motivation, Management and leadership Styles**

Today Emirates airline has gain competitive position and getting market place by their effective management and leadership. The leadership of emirates airlines are based on the leadership style of family. Emirates airlines leadership analysis(2009), found that Emirates leadership style are democratic which means their management encourage other members to connect themselves and other members of the conglomerate especially the shareholders are engage to take the final decision.

Leaders of Emirates are motivating employees; motivation is their way to inspire their employees to do willingly which help the company to get marvellous success in airlines market. Under different situations, individual will respond differently. Now Emirates have been operating flights in different cities all over the world and corporate plan gives importance with the diversity of their stakeholders, specifically with their clients. They are also dedicated with the diversity of their clients and their management



approach are diverse which involves that the clients and communities of Emirates obtain marvellous service and their fervent and committed staff and employees provide very good service to their clients.

According to Emirates airlines leadership analysis (2009), the present move of Emirates Airlines is to set itself as an airline industry leader with a focus strategy in the airline industry. Emirates Airlines aims to expand their business to reach more clients which will enable them to be more profitable. Their management are customer focus, they know that if they involves huge amount of money they will get marvellous profit and by this Emirates can gain a competitive position in air market.

Change management are very important because it allow the company to adjust with the stable changes in the worldwide market. Emirates leader have declared a major misshapen in the company. Their change is to develop their airline services and by means of more enhanced information technology system. These technologies have led to a boost within the community of the airline industry which allow them to have more employees from different countries. The key elements of continuing business success of Emirates are not only their management but also their employment of high quality multi-cultural team who come more than 160 nationalities (Cultural diversity: Emirates Group, 2010).

Emirates Group (2010), article states that Emirates effective management and talented leaders help employees to become one of the world's best

airhostess winning more than 400 awards which help them to recognize a name for superiority in aviation and travel industry.

H H Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Executive Chairman of Emirates, he thinks that sponsorship is fundamental in the airline's marketing strategy and it is one of the best ways to incorporate with passengers or clients which allows Emirates to share and support their customer or clients interests and to build a personal relationship with their customers. Rick Helliwell, vice president recruitment of Emirates (sponsorship, About Emirates Group, 2010) pointed that the broad range of worldwide sponsorships that the airline supports parallels the diversity of the workforce on the airline and in Emirates as there are a huge amount of diverse employee who comes from 140 nationalities working together and their high performance team competing internationally are able to provide the customer superior services and best products. Now it can be said that Emirates management and leadership make an impact for them to become one of the world's fastest growing airlines.

## **5. 0 Recommendation and conclusion:**

It can be said that in competitive and worldwide accepted airline market, Emirates Airline has been capable to have a competitive and well-known position by its effective management and leadership in Dubai and global recognised airline industry. It is recommended that the diverse employee of Emirates must be able to give superior service to their customers, because their effective leadership have been able to bring together a group of people with diverse background which is a powerful team and a source of strength.

To provide superior services to their clients, they have recruited talented and superior people from different countries or different ethnic group or different culture. It is also recommended that their management must do more in working with diverse people. The leadership should provide new ideas which are beneficial for the company and every time the company upgrade their service delivery to provide number one services to their customer. Emirates need to empower its employees to get profit and competitive position in competitive global business market. To enhance the satisfaction of employees, the leadership can choose to send some of their staff on continuous professional training which will expose them to new idea, better motivated and will also help to make good relation among employee and leader.

It is recommended that the strategic management of Emirates Airlines give significance with the diversity of their stakeholders, especially with their customers, because the diversification management systems provide excellent services and products to their clients by their trained, fervent and enthusiastic staffs and employees. The strategic management should do more to guide Emirates from the motivation theory and challenges and opportunities which appear in the market environment as they have done in the latest of the 2000s if they are to build on their successes.