

Example of essay on employment relations in singapore

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Executive summary

This article describes how the National Trade Union Congress 5 Pillars approach addresses critical contemporary issues affecting Singapore employment industry. Singapore carries the indignity of high unemployment and high poverty levels among several residents. These issues challenged the government to come up with a long lasting solution that would regain public confidence. NTUC emerged with an aim of rescuing Singapore from issues related to job market.

With support from NTUC, the government addressed these issues in a way that it assures the population of persistent development and economic stability. In order to support Singapore in industrial development, NTUC launched five pillars that attempts to promote employability while addressing the contemporary issues facing the country's industrial relations. It also undertook several measures to improve economic condition of Singapore employment pool. The union emphasizes on training workers in order to increase their chances of securing employment in the job market. The livelihood of the population has been enhanced by NTUC effort to launch a program of assisting low-income earners through annual donations. NTUC also launched the labor movement to address several issues affecting workers in employment industry.

Singapore has a unique tripartite model for balancing employers' corporate goals, workers' aspirations, and the government's desire for long-term prosperity and stability. The tripartite model embarks on three

transformations. The first transformation involves the government commitment to industrialization. The second transformation shield the government from unemployment affect due to British decision to withdraw its military from Singapore. The third transformation is due to the urge of improving the country's living standards. Industrial relations in Singapore continue transforming with an aim of restructuring the Chinese economy and competing well at global level.

The following management paper is based on the topic of critical issues in industrial relations and human resource management. It describes how NTUC's five (5) pillars address issues of industrial relations.

The National Trades Union Congress

Following an increase in the employment related issues, NTUC embarked on a mission of networking social enterprises, associations, staff members and unions. The first beneficiaries of this union were people working in Singapore. Establishment of the union dates back to 1961 following an urge to promote living standards across all ages, collars and nationalities. The National Trades Union Congress incorporates more than 50 unions. After years of continuous growth, the Congress has been able to serve more than 2.5 million members.

Studies insist that the success of National Trades Union Congress results from a 'symbiotic' relationship with the government. National Trades Union Congress acts as a third party due to its continuous involvement in the labor issues at the national level. Because of the union, the two have successfully

provided important services while constructing a set of rules and regulations guiding implementation of their goals (NTUC 2012).

The five pillars of NTUC

This is the first pillar that addresses issues in the industrial relations in Singapore. The Union has enhanced its effort in increasing the employability of individuals through various strategic plans and implementations. The National Trades Union Congress understands that most people in the current world are facing problems when it comes to employment. The most affected category is older generation. In most cases, people complain that they hardly get any worthwhile employment where they can comfortably experience job satisfaction (Chew and Chew 2008). This emerges due to job loss and lack of the needed skills in the contemporary world. These people struggle for the few available opportunities. In other cases, people do find occupations but retrenchment follows even before their retirement age. This may take a toll on such individuals leading to frustrations in life.

This is where the National Trades Union Congress comes to the rescue of all the vulnerable in the contemporary Singapore's job market. For instance, in the year 2006, the union launched a program that would improve employability for older workers in the society (Chew and Chew 2008). This move was aimed at ensuring that people got a chance to work up to their retirement age, and if possible continue working even after their 62-year retirement age. During the launch, approximately 23 organizations together with their unions agreed to support these efforts with an aim of enhancing employability of older generation in the country. Several years after this

launch, the union has managed to get more support from about 84 companies that have vowed to support people throughout to the retirement age and beyond. The union also encourages continuous training of older employees so that their chances of securing employment and climbing corporate ladder (Leggett 2007).

Strengthen Competitiveness

The second pillar of the National Trades Union Congress is to strengthen competitiveness. The union believes that competitiveness leads to enhanced innovation and productivity (Singapore Country Profile' 2005). There is a contemporary issue facing all workers in various sectors when it comes to their occupation sustainability. For instance, most workers suffer from unsustainable growth in their wages due to poor financial outcomes of their companies. This is mainly due to lack of competitiveness in organizations and companies. This leads to a business that hardly grows. To enhance competitiveness, it is vital to ensure that there is healthy competition between organizations. This is possible through improved cooperation of all tripartite partners. Without competition, it is difficult for companies and organizations to enhance their productivity and innovation.

This is why National Trades Union emphasizes on need to strengthen competitiveness amongst organizations and companies in the whole region. The Labor movement achieves this through the strengthening of the companies and unions in the industry to advocate for increased production, innovation, and competition (Lee 2012). The NTUC Sec- Gen Lim Say stressed on the need to strengthen competitiveness in March 2012, during

Women's day celebrations for success of the movement. He noted that combination of competition, innovation and production would form significant benefits for workers too in terms of growth of their real wage. In order to achieve such economic restructuring, all stakeholders in the industry need to work together for a common goal. Moreover, all associations, departments and leaders must find a way of remaining competitive across all sectors in Singapore. The union believes that strengthening of competitiveness in the country must vary according to the type of sector because different sectors have different needs (Tan 2007). Therefore, the cluster levels usually vary from one sector to another, but the bottom line is the strengthening of competitiveness in whole region.

Building healthy body and healthy mind

The third pillar that is important to the National Trades Union Congress is building of a healthy body and healthy mind. This aspect of the union's concerns show that workers' health (both body and mind) should be taken care just like other workers' aspects (Van Dyne and Ang 1998). In the contemporary world, there are many issues affecting workers in organizations especially health wise. In most cases, employers overlook these problems. However, the effect of such negligence is negative to individuals and their productivity. Therefore, organizations or companies suffer from under productivity thus leading to losses. Most employers do not take seriously the issues of body and mental health of their employees. This makes it very expensive for employees to handle their own health care costs and bills.

This pillar can address the critical contemporary issue of the work productivity in the industries in Singapore. One way in which the union has managed to work towards creation of healthy minds and bodies is through establishment of NTUC Unity healthcare (NTUC 2012). Through this program, many workers in Singapore can access dental and pharmaceutical drugs at reduced costs. The center has many branches all over the region to ease the workers' access. It also maintains a strong relationship with movement.

Care and share more pillar

This is the fourth pillar approach used by the National Trades Union Congress to address some contemporary issues in industrial relations in Singapore. The union believes in taking care of others and sharing with them whatever resource one may have (Singapore 2012). In the contemporary world, many people cannot take care of themselves due to various problems that they may have. In addition, there are those who are in need of assistance due to problems that they may be having. For example, the disabled people may not be able to take care of themselves as other people. These people may need assistance and those who are able must be willing to assist them in order to form a cohesive society in Singapore. Most of such disabled people cannot work like the rest in order to gain their daily bread and other necessities. This is the real situation in every society and it is a hardly ignorable issue. Therefore, National Trades Union Congress came up with the pillar of taking care and sharing with less fortunate.

According to 'Life Insurance Industry Profile: Singapore' (2011), the union addresses contemporary issues in industrial relations through a program

known as the NTUC Gift. Through the program, the members aged less than 65 years are all covered against death and total disability. The policy also covers the members' spouses who are aged less than 65 years. However, members who would like to extend their insurance period beyond the permitted 65 years may do so at a fee. This policy is very beneficial to all people because once a claim is made within 90 days of incidence, the whole amount is paid to the member or the next of kin, covering the costs incurred due to death or permanent disability. In addition, the union cares for less fortunate by collecting donations and giving them to such families through assistance programs. This program is known as U Care. In the year 2012, the union collected an amount close to \$10.5 million that would be part of back to school assistance to 100 thousand low-wage members in Singapore (Singapore 2012). This shows that this pillar is vital in addressing issues that affect people and their families, and they do this through Care and Share programs. This approach reaches many people who would otherwise be devastated by their unfortunate circumstances.

Develop a strong labor movement

The fifth pillar of the national Trades Union Congress is development of a stronger labor movement in Singapore. In the current world, it is not always easy to push for reforms and changes if a union is not strong enough (Van Dyne & Ang 1998). This is because there are many other opposing forces that may lead to underachievement of a union's goals and objectives. For instance, if a union or movement is inactive, it may not be in a position to form concise goals and follow them through implementation. It may also not

be able to put a strong stand against all odds especially during economic downturns. This is why the members of unions who are not strong enough end up complaining about the failed projects and increased failure to achieve most of their goals. However, with a strong movement, it is always easy to form strategic plans that are viable and it becomes a routine to follow goals and objectives through implementation.

The movement has managed to achieve this through a number of ways through the years. According to 'Business and Networking Groups and Other Resources' (2011), the NTUC started a work place advisory service that would enhance programs and services meant for professionals, managers and various executives. The movement aims at incorporating people from different sectors to become members so that it can benefit from knowledge sharing through such programs. In addition, the movement has been in the forefront at strengthening the small and medium enterprises in in different sectors of the economy. Such approaches make the union stronger. As a result, it is able to handle most of its goals and objectives with an increase in the number of members and companies it attracts. Therefore, the union is determined to establish the movement in a stronger way every time.

Measuring success of the five pillars

The five pillars are successful in meeting goals and objectives aimed at enhancing industrial relations in the Singapore. For instance, enhancing employability for life has successfully been implemented in the region. The number of companies and unions that have joined the support for enhanced employability in the country is high, meaning that most companies have

taken up the issue of supporting those who are in employment (Van Dyne & Ang, 1998). The union also sensitized employers on the issues of training employees to ensure that their chances of employment after the current jobs remain high. This shows that the enhancement of employability for life has been implemented successfully.

Building healthy body and mind has also been successful as evident in the number of companies and unions that are joining the NTCU health care programs. These programs ensure that the members' health is taken care of to ensure that their productivity is maximized. Through the realization of the benefits associated with healthy wellbeing, the union remains successful in implementation of healthcare pharmacies and units in the country (Low 2001). The union makes these health care units accessible to many people by spreading them throughout the country. This has made it very convenient for people in different regions to access affordable medical care.

Success also spreads in care and share pillar of the National Trades Union Congress. For instance, the insurance policy is very beneficial to all members since it covers death and permanent disability of members and their spouses. The years covered are from 16 to 65 years (Tan 2007). This is a convenient insurance cover that has helped many people who are in dire need of such assistance. In addition, the union managed to establish a program that assists thousands of low-income earners and their families through annual donations. The money collected is audited and published. Afterwards, the union finds the best way to reach out to those families through assistance programs in the country.

The union has been successful in developing a stronger labor movement. The National Trades Union Congress is a strong union that has reached out to many workers in Singapore. It has managed to achieve this through collaborations with various societies and associations in order to reach their goals and objectives. This has been a very important move for the union and it continues to grow stronger every day.

Conclusion

This article clearly portrays challenges facing Singapore's industrial sector. Despite the government endeavors towards economic growth, the country continued ravaging absolute poverty and unemployment. As these challenges continued weakening the economic growth, a solution was eminent. The five pillars of the National Trades Union Congress have revived Singapore's economy by addressing the most pressing issues in the economic sector. Using the five pillars, the congress has been successful in addressing several issues emerging in industrial relations. Eventually, the union has increased employability of individuals through various strategic plans and implementations.

NTUC also emphasized on the need to strengthen competitiveness amongst organizations and companies in the entire region. To achieve this goal, this paper has explained how the Labor movement strengthens companies and unions in the industry to advocate for increased production, innovation and competition. Following the establishment of NTUC, Singapore has taken the right direction towards economic development. However, the economic issues affecting the country are not yet over. This is because the country is

yet to achieve full employment. In addition, a section of the population is still poor. The union believes in taking care of others and sharing with the less fortunate in the society whatever resource one may have.

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