

Analysis of current
culture in randd
department in
astrazeneca. lund,
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Introduction Basically, organizational culture is the personality of the organization. It is one of those terms that are difficult to express distinctly, but everyone knows it when they sense it. For example, the culture of a large, for-profit corporation is quite different from that of a hospital, which is in turn quite different from that of a university. You can tell the culture of an organization by looking at the arrangement of furniture, what they brag about, what members wear, etc. – similar to what you can use to get a feeling about someone's personality. A number of studies have shown that organisational culture does make difference with respect to long-term performance. For this to happen, the culture must be rare, adaptable and non-imitable. Even though Organisational culture is manageable, the direction and impact will not always be subject to full control. This will imply that many leaders need to rethink how they view the organisation, how they set the strategic direction, and how they manage people processes in their organisation.

This assignment will focus on organisational culture in Astra Zeneca, Lund, Sweden. Theories of organisational culture Organisational researcher originally focused strongly on the surveying of the corporate climate, but in the 1980s, the organisational climate concept was to some extent replaced by concept of organisational culture. Climate was redefined as the visible expression of organisational culture. Organisational culture is said to mean, for example, an organisation's values, an organisation's generally accepted system of meaning or an organisation's operating philosophy.

According to Schein's theory, organisational theory, organisational culture is defined as " A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as

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it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as a correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. According to Schein, organisational culture is the learned result of group experiences, and it is to a large extent unconscious.

Schein considers culture to be a three-layer phenomenon (see fig. 1). Figure

1. Schein's (1992) model of organisational Culture As figure 1 shows, organisational culture can be examined on different levels. The first level of culture consists of visible organisational processes and various artefacts. For example, dress codes and the general tidiness of the workplace are the artefacts that tell something about the organisation's culture. According to Schein, this level is difficult to interpret, however, because it represents the most superficial culture phenomena, i.e. only a reflection of the true corporate culture. For example, behaviour, which is a cultural artefact, is also influenced by countless factors other than a company's culture. Cultural artefacts can be considered to include accident statistics, sick leave etc. The interpretation requires effective and diverse research methods and an understanding of the internal dynamics of the culture. The second cultural level in Schein's model consists of the organisation's espoused values.

These are apparent in, for example, the organisation's official objectives, declared norms and operating philosophy; however, this does not always reflect a company's everyday operations. Underlying assumptions relate to the group's learned solutions to problems relating to external adaptation and internal integration. These solutions gradually become self-evident

assumptions. Problems related to external adaptation concern views of an <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-current-culture-in-rd-department-in-astrazeneca-lund-sweden-assignment/>

organisation's tasks and objectives as well as the means to implement and assess them. A solution has to be found for them so that the organisation can function and succeed in its environment.

Problems related to internal integration and to maintain operating capacity concern the creation of a common language and concepts, defining group limits, the level of authority relationships and interaction, as well as methods of reward and punishment. A solution has to be found for these so that members of the organisation can function together in an organised and predictable working community. Schein also distinguishes so-called deeper underlying assumptions, which relate, for example, to views of human nature as well as to the nature of information and the human activities.

These are strongly influenced by national culture, but an organisation always forms its own view of them in its operations. Underlying assumptions function as an unconscious basis for action and a range of decision that shape the culture further. According to Schein, even though underlying assumptions direct the actions of a company's members, the organisation's underlying assumptions cannot be inferred from such an action. Actions are also always influenced by situation-specific and individual factors. Espoused norms and an organisation's official rules may, however, be in conflict with everyday actions.

Thus, they can also be in conflict with the underlying assumptions, which in the end direct these actions. Schein's theory covers the central element of culture, namely its holistic, partly unconscious and learned nature.

Organisational culture, therefore, is not merely a single new variable which

describes organisations and which can be examined separately from the other variables that affect an organisation's activities, such as organisation's structure, strategy, market orientation, technology it uses etc.

Individual employee's motivation to do work; some seek security from an organisation; others look for challenges and risks, has an influence on how organisation's culture is experienced. Astra Zeneca Company briefing
Founded in 1913 and headquartered in Sodertalje, Sweden, Astra was an international pharmaceutical group engaged in the research, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceutical products, primarily for four main product groups: gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, respiratory and pain control.

Some research effort was also aimed at the central nervous system. Additionally, Astra marketed a range of other pharmaceutical products, including anti-infective products, and operated Astra Tech, a medical devices group. AstraZeneca was formed on 6 April 1999 through the merger of Astra AB of Sweden and Zeneca Group PLC of the UK – two companies with similar science-based cultures and a shared vision of the pharmaceutical industry.

The merger aimed to improve the combined companies' ability to deliver long-term growth and enduring shareholder value through: The company has many of the characteristic of a collaborative organisational culture. The company has management structure but it tends to be a flat structure rather than deeply hierarchical. For example, senior management, in the guise of the CTO, will frequently visit the individual research area for ad hoc

discussion with research staff. There is minimum emphasis on formal procedures, policies and rules for managing aspects of working life.

There is no formal dress code where all employees wear casual dress. From my 5 years working experience in the company I can summarise the beliefs, attitudes and values of the company as lean, responsive, open and collaborative ways of working. The company has emphasis on supporting the individual and the team so that they could work effectively on high-quality products. The Lund office has an open and accessible design with no sense of crowding. There is a modern dining area and kitchen, with everything that may be needed for making drinks or light snacks.

The company provides showers and lockers available for staff that chose to cycle or run to work. Considerable space and furniture is devoted to setting that facilitate meeting and the sharing of ideas and views. Employees from different department are encouraged to take breaks and lunch at the same time in order to improve communicating between different departments. The company emphasise “ on innovation, and encourage people to be continuously creative, to question assumptions and systems, to challenge each other and build on fresh insights to find new and better ways of doing things.

Within our culture, “ we have always done it this way” is the best reason to think again. ” Organisational culture and its impact The company’s beliefs, attitudes and values is such that provide a very sympathetic (ambition, creativity, responsiveness) environment in which R&D might flourish. The company’s commitment to shared vision, openness and localness; the

support for the individual and the team in working on top quality science but also to high ethical standards, and the emphasis on collaboration are all factors that powerfully support R&D department.

Employees are tapped for good ideas regarding job improvement. The reward schemes is designed to meet our employees' varied and changing needs by introducing individual choice in how each person receives their benefits package. In this environment marketing product manager worked closely with R&D department understand the need for customers and translate these needs to facts finding missions. This was done via sit-down meetings of 30 minutes to around an hour, as well via shorter ad hoc discussions throughout the day.

I believe this form of relationship between marketing product manager and R&D department was effective due to the open and collaborative nature of the company and its physical setting (the marketing department and R&D department were in the same building). The success has not been without burdens. The organisational culture and the ideological commitment to R&D have raised issues of sustainability and the "social health" of the team.

These issues manifested themselves in a variety of ways such as lack of communication between research groups within R&D department (for example no communications between gastro research group and oncology research group) and between manufacturing and R&D (manufacturing has normally been classes as a lower job status within organisation). In order to tackle the problem the company decided that different research areas have to have monthly group presentations for each other. The company also

decided to set a fix time for coffee breaks and lunch breaks so that the whole department has more time to see and communicate with each other.

As far as I know, it has not been any attempt to narrow the gap between manufacturing staff and R&D staff. This could be because differences in wages and skills for each group make it difficult for the company to give same level of job statues and wages for both departments. Another factor for the gap could be the distance between R&D department and manufacturing department as they are sometimes located in different countries or different towns and is not economical feasible for the company to have a R&D in each manufacturing sites. Conclusions

In this assignment I have tried to emphasis the important of organisational culture for the performance of the organisation, meaning that leaders and managers must to a larger degree than what we have seen in the past perform management in order to build the organisation and capitalise on the culture. Studies have shown that organisational culture does make a difference with respect to long-term performance. Studies have also shown that even though culture can be manageable to some degree its direction and impact will not always be subject to full control.

In order to achieve a sustainable performance, organisational management must conduct cultural management by facilitating common interpretation systems, by perpetuating values and norms across generations of organisational members, by binding organisational members together. This will imply that leaders need to rethink how they view the organisation, how they set the strategic direction and how the manage people process in their

organisation. This assignment also shows that organisational culture makes a difference. There is a time and place for everything.

Now it is perhaps the time for many leaders to move from the past years “ build to sell” activities towards a “ build to last” philosophy involving capitalising on the intangible assets and the cultural side of the organisation. Leaders have to build cultures that endure and adapt through multiple generations of leaders and product cycle. And finally, they have to preserve the core of the organisational culture as an anchor point in changing and uncertain time. References 1. [www. astrazeneca. com](http://www.astrazeneca.com) 2. Brown, A. , Organisational Culture, second edition. 3. Schein, Edgar, Organisational culture and leadership, Second edition.