

Critical analysis of spotswood as an example of organisational culture



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INTRODUCTION

People are the asset of an organisation and without them, nothing can be achieved. Theories from these topics: Change, Power and Politics, and Culture are used in this essay to critically analyze the case study Spotswood. Statt (1991: 102) “ Organisation involves integrating a set of people together who have skills that are developed to achieve a strategic goal through a culture that is imbedded in them to be identified as who they are and what they do, through the perception of symbols e. g. company names, logos, uniforms which symbolize the organisation”.

1. 1 SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE SPOTSWOOD

The movie Spotswood, a drama of 95minutes released on January 23, 1992 directed by Mark Joffe and written by Mike Myers revolves around a small factory owned by Mr Bulls, Australian producers of moccasins shoes named The Balls Factory. The factory was running at a loss, so Mr Bulls hired Mr Errol Wallace an independent consultant and an expert from the Time & McGregory Consultancy to assess the company financial performance as well as offer managerial to the company.

BODY

2. 1 Change

Change is constant in the current business environment, organisations especially need to change in order to cope and succeed in this ever changing environment. Anand & Nicholson (2004: 10) defines Change “ as the process of altering, reshaping or transforming a business to improve the way it works or interacts with its environment”. Change occurs in an organisation that is

determined to grow and this can be achieved only when the people in the organisation decides to accept the change for the betterment of the organisation as well as themselves. Andriopoulos & Dawson (2009: 14) defines " Organizational Change as the process of moving from some current state to some future state, whether planned or unplanned, comprises the unexpected and unforeseen as well as the expected". Organizations react to their environment and this happens through change which organizations take.

Why do organizations need change?

Change brings about a difference in the way an organization does things which affects both external and internal environment of an organization. In Spotswood, Mr Wallace, the consultant was the force that triggered change in The Balls factory because he was not satisfied with the way it was been run so decided to change the way it was. Robbins (2005: 551) Mullins, (2006: 495) " Organisational change aims at changing the behaviour of individuals and groups within the organisation, for a better ability to adapt to changes in its environment".

Huczynski & Buchannan (2007) " developed various external and internal environments that could trigger change of an organization through the factors in the table below:

External Internal

Changes to social/cultural values

New product and service design innovations

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New technology

Low performance/morale

New materials

High stress and staff turnover

Change in customer requirements and taste

Appointment of new senior manager/top management

Competitor activity

Inadequate skills/knowledge base

Legislation

Office/factory relocation

Changing domestic and global conditions

Innovations in the manufacturing process

Political shifts

New ideas about how to deliver services to customers.

The consultant's purpose of visit to the factory is to advise and make amendments where necessary which he did by reducing the number of hours spent eating and also the amount of people who leave their various departments thereby abandoning their duties and also making sure that the men separate themselves from the women. He noticed their low performances to work and

also the way they interact with each other, subordinates gives no regard to the boss e. g. Organisations have to continue in change in order to survive which means it's a continuous process of change.

A mechanism does not function without all its parts not working, the management must inform and involve employees in an organisation about the change process so they could be carried along to make it a success. People in an organisation know that there should be a change but should be told the reason why there is a change which can be dangerous to the whole change process. Obviously in the movie, Mr Wallace did try to change the factory but the change was not carried out taking into consideration the Kurt Lewin (1947&1951) described the process of changing individual behaviour in an organisation consist of three steps:

Refreezing

Changing

Unfreezing

Source: Robbins (2000: 255)

UNFREEZING

Senior (2002) " It concerns the shaking up of people's habitual modes of thinking and behaviour to heighten their awareness of the need for change".

People in an organisation need to be convinced why the present state requires a change. Goodstein & Burke (1993) " It includes selectively promoting or terminating employee's also extensive consultation with heads

of department and decision makers". This can be criticised because firing employees does not resolve organisations problems but destabilize the workers, in the movie Mr Wallace later advised Mr Bull to call back his workers and make them shareholders of the factory. Heffron (1989) this behaviour means disturbing the equilibrium of the organisation sufficiently to make the organisation ready and willing to change.

CHANGING

Senior (2002) " The Process of making the actual changes that would move the organisation to the new state involves new types of behaviour by individuals e. g. establishment of new strategies and structures with associated systems to help secure the new ways of doing things". The change requires new behaviours, values and attitudes of the past to a new state. Heffron (1989) " This involves the introduction of Change" i. e. this was executed by Mr Wallace in Spotswood.

REFREEZING

Senior (2002) " This last step involves stabilising or institutionalising changes. This requires securing the changes against ' backsliding' and may include recruitment of new staff that is ' untainted' by the old habits, continuing involvement and support of top management is crucial here". The people involved in the change process must not revert back to the past ways. Johnson & Scholes (1997) " elements of cultural web are important in establishing new ways of doing things".

Senior (2002) " Lewin's theory can be criticised mainly for its concept of refreezing that is the idea of cementing the changes into place to create a

new organisational reality, the aim to prevent backsliding mentioned earlier is laudable, it tends to ignore increasingly turbulent environment within which many modern organisations operate and the need for continuous change". Heffron (1989) " It integrates the change into the organisations culture and behaviour". In Spotswood this was evident because employees were placed in different sections by Mr Wallace.

No matter how good or bad change is, planned resistance to change must occur because there would be conflicting interest. Every organisations needs a change, Salama & Smith (1994) says " there are four reasons of resistance from employee to organisational change 1) Parochial self-interest 2) Misunderstanding and lack of trust 3) Contradictory assessments, 4) Low tolerance for change". Bartunek (1993) " Resistance can be reduced if all employees are well educated about the change process". In Spotswood we could see that Mr Wallace brought in new ideas of segmenting the women from each other at first they obliged but went back to their former sitting positions. Heffron (1989) " Resistance to change takes two forms passive resistance: reluctance and unwillingness to cooperate and overt, active conflict - disagreement about change if it is implemented it must be routinized - behaviour, attitudes and values must be refrozen because change is disruptive and involves real cost in time and money". An example of active resistance was shown in the dormacks factory, when workers rioted by destroying properties

Ivancevich and Matteson (2002) " Other resistance to change within an organisation poses as barriers e. g. maintenance of an existing culture, threat to job security, identification o problems with the planned change, <https://assignbuster.com/critical-analysis-of-spotswood-as-an-example-of-organisational-culture/>

power balance and previous failure to the implementation of changes in structure, tasks, technology and behaviour”.

Theory of E & O assumes that there is just a three dimension to change but in our case this theory seems valuable it points that Mr Wallace was at the beginning on the path of theory E, all is ways of change were structured around theory E but Mr Wallace also went through a change process himself to really discover that the Combined Theory of E & O could work for the factory, details of all assumptions of the theory would be stated in the table below.

The Dimension of Change

Theory E (Hard)

Theory O (Soft)

The Combined Theory of E&O

Goals

Maximise shareholder value

Develop organisational capabilities

Explicitly embrace the paradox between economic value and organisational capability

Leadership

Manage change from top down

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Encourage participation from bottom up

Set direction from the top and engage the people below

Focus

Emphasis structure and systems

Build up corporate culture: employee behaviour/attitude

Focus simultaneously on the hard (structures and systems) and the soft (corporate culture)

Process

Plan/establish programmes

Experiment and evolve

Plan for spontaneity

Reward system

Motivate through financial incentives

Motivate through commitment (pay as fair exchange)

Use incentives to reinforce change but not drive it.

Use of consultants

Consultants analyse problems/shape solutions

Consultants support management in shaping solutions

Consultants are expert employees who empower employees

Source: Beer M. and N. Nohria (2000)

2.2 Power and Politics

The term Power affects an organisation in different forms as employees are constantly looking for power either directly or indirectly. Lee & Lawrence (1985: 129) “ Power is the capacity to affect people, things, situations and decisions”. Power in management terms is mostly used with politics, everyone plays politics one way or the other even if it is called a dirty game. Heffron (1989: 201) defines Politics as the process of gaining, maintaining, and exercising power. Farrell & Peterson (1982) suggests that “ Organizational Politics pertains to individual activity”. Robbins (1976) “ argues that any behaviour by an organisation member that is self-serving is political”. In contrast Mintzberg (1983) as cited by Ferris et al (2007) that “ politics is the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that will enhance one’s personal and/or organizational objectives”. In organisations behaviours of employees sometimes could either be for the interest of the organisation or for the employees self interest.

Power is generally described as the ability to make someone do something he or she would have not done otherwise, In Spotswood power was exercised in different scenes, There have been so many views to power which include: Unitary, Pluralist, Structural and Relational

Crozier (1973: 214) " The relational view is one of the recent views of power it assumes that if A can tell B to do something he would not have done, it is quite likely that B, for his part, is capable of making A do something he would not have done without B's intervention". This view is drawn from French & Raven (1958) which claimed power has five bases but these bases has been developed further by Benfari et al (1986) " who identified 8 power bases and they include: Reward, Coercion, Authority, Referent, Expert, Information, Affiliation and Group"

The most important power base that was obvious in Spotswood was authority and expert power.

Authority: This is a type of power perceived to be exercised by an individual who is in a position of authority and Mr Wallace was perceived to have this kind of power because Mr Bulls had vested in him power to enact change.

Expert: This is a type of power perceived by others to be owned by someone that is well vast in a particular field and his seen as the ' Efficiency Expert'. Mr Wallace was this individual who was full of knowledge that the factory could benefit from.

Durbin- Robert & Lawrence (1985: 50) explains " Political manoeuvring refers to actions that are directed more toward self-aggrandizement than toward the good of the company as a whole. Playing politics connotes a degree of deception and dishonesty" Furthermore, Lee & Lawrence emphasized (1985: 51) " the pursuit of personal goals to the detriment of organizational goals constitutes political behaviour". For example this political behaviour was displayed in the film when Mr Kim brought the complete company ledger to <https://assignbuster.com/critical-analysis-of-spotswood-as-an-example-of-organisational-culture/>

Mr Wallace's house to inform him of the problem faced by the factory and his lustful interest for money (self-interest) but Mr Wallace acted on behalf of the organization

Valle and Perrew (2000: 361) defines " Organizational politics as the exercise of tactical influence which is strategically goal directed, rational, conscious and intended to promote self-interest, either at the expense of or in support of others interests". This definition has its weakness and can be criticised because politics is not only used to promote self interest but could also be used for the interest of the organisation, for example an employee with a good idea would have to promote the idea with the use of politics to support this claim. This is seen in this definition: Vigoda (2003: 31) defines Organization Politics as " Intra-organizational influence tactics used by organization members to promote self-interests or organizational goals in different ways. In the film, Mr Wallace partner in the dormacks factory played politics because of his selfish gain.

2.3 Organisational culture

Lee & Lawrence (1985: 104) Culture consists of shared meanings and common understanding and culture is variable from company to company. This was seen in the movie Spotswood where we could see how employees in their various companies behave official to work in The Time & McGregory Consultancy (employee's hands are always on deck) and The Balls factory was unofficial (free minded and not under pressure) to work.

Organizational culture is defined " a pattern of shared basic assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a given group learned as it learns to

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solve its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” Schein (1992). In contrast to Schein’s definition J Barney as cited by Grant M (2005) believe that “ Culture should be viewed as an asset of a company”. In an organisation, culture emerges from different aspects of people or groups of people who make decisions in an ever-changing business environment. Schein (1992) argues that as culture becomes entrenched in an organisation, it gradually loses its flexibility therefore becoming a hindrance to the organisation’s change and success.

The culture in a particular organisation determines how the organisation would behave. Culture symbolises what an organisation is all about. People tend to think managers could inculcate their own culture to the people in an organisation but that is just a superficial way of looking at culture. Gareth Morgan (1997) described “ Organizational culture as the set of beliefs, values, and norms, together with symbols like dramatized events and personalities that represents the unique character of an organization, and provides the context for action in it and by it”. Beliefs and values are words that will pop up frequently in other definitions, as well. Norms might be described as traditions, structure of authority, or routines.

Source: (Edgar H. Schein 2004) Organisational Culture and Leadership

Levels of culture is being used in the film Spotswood

Artefacts: These are tangible things that can be easily noticed but very hard to translate, Artefacts cannot be used to understand the culture of an organisation e. g. in the movie, the appearance of the workers putting on moccasins as their dress codes in the factory was strange to Mr Wallace and he found it very hard to understand because his group of culture believes in formal sense of dressing in a business environment.

Espoused Values: This is the philosophy of the organisation or that of the people that work in the organisation, in the case study we had various philosophies, Mr Wallace's and his partners saw an organisation as a place of profit making only and that employees were tools in achieving that, they saw life as a win or lose situation on the other hand Mr Bulls the owner of the Bulls factory had a philosophy that is employees were his greatest assets and felt they should be treated with respect because they were loyal, and didn't not see the factory as a place of only profit making.

Edgar H. Schein (2004: 31) defines Basic Underlying Assumptions " as the degree of consensus results from repeated success in implementing certain beliefs and values". When certain beliefs work for a group over time it is always taken for granted, and it becomes an unconscious way for them to do things or solve problems. In the Bulls factory the workers had a set belief of how to work, they appreciated the free informal environment, but Mr Wallace came to the organisation with different assumption, He believed that work should be done in a very formal and uptight environment and tried changing their culture. If a group of people are used to a way of doing things it becomes very difficult to change their ways and this was evident in our case.

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3 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this essay has analyzed Change, Power and Politics and Organisational Culture using Spotswood as the case study. The essay has discovered that the three topics discussed above are interwoven.

THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE THREE TOPICS

Buchanan D. & Huczynski A (2004) " Sometimes when organisation's external or internal environments change it must adapt its present culture to survive in the industry". Schein (1992) argues that " as culture becomes entrenched in an organisation, it gradually loses its flexibility therefore becoming a hindrance to the organisation's change and success".

Every organisation needs to change over time a force to trigger change and for a ' Change Agent' to carry out that supposed change in any organisation but firstly one must understand their culture by having to know their beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, values and different norms before a change can happen. Schwartz & Davis (1981) " Changing an organisation's culture is not easy". Thus the need to apply power and politics to carry out this mission by making them to realise why they need a change and why they should change their way of doing things to make the organisation achieve its goals and objectives. Frost and Egri (1991) similar argue that " Political behaviour is not only inevitable in the context of organizational change but also necessary". In all Organisations, employees always have internal conflicts amongst themselves at the expense of the image of the organisation this brings about politics for their selfish interest but sometimes could be for the betterment of the organisation.

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