

Analysis of bbc at the time of greg dyke

Philosophy



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1. Analyse the culture of the BBC at the time that Dyke took over. To what degree is it facilitating the success of the BBC? The BBC was set up in 1922 as a public service broadcaster. The BBC quickly became a household name and played a part in shaping British culture. Company culture is the values and beliefs shared by the members of a 'group' and the BBC is a 'group' which has both internal (BBC employees) and external (general public) members.

The BBC is financed by a TV license fee paid by each household and represents the cultural artefacts: the concrete aspect of the BBC which is its ability to maintain its 'independence and impartiality' (Keys, 2006) due to public funding and a not for public service ethos. The BBC's biggest critic: the UK press, are always at the helm of every attack and question over the quality – guarding the BBC on behalf of every person. The public values and principles that the BBC is based on were publically declared by the first director general.

The BBC's role was in 'inform, educate and entertain' and to 'bring the best of everything to the greatest number of homes' (Keys, 2006) and this became the espoused values for BBC culture. The culture of the BBC is so deeply ingrained in its employees that Dyke commented that what the BBC 'does has enormous value and helps to define culture. People work at the BBC because of this value. Their commitment to the BBC, not necessarily to management, is very strong-at a level other companies would only dream of' (Keys, 2006).

These basic underlying assumptions of unconscious commitment to the organisation result in an unwillingness to tolerate change, whether good or

bad, as it is an unconscious belief that it is interfering with the national heritage that belongs to each and every British person. The BBC culture is so strong that it has the ability to transport the general public on the same journey as its employees. They too, feel that the BBC is national heritage that they own a little piece of. It has a strong external identity of independence and impartiality which creates a sense of unshakable commitment by many employees that what they do is more than a job. When Dyke took over the BBC it had been through a period of cost cuts, staff cuts, implementation of new management controls and the formation of an internal market for services. While the new structure and aggressive cuts left the organisations morale low, the managerial reforms had not affected the core culture which underpinned the ethos of those who worked for the BBC. There was a strong belief by BBC employees 'that what they achieved, they achieved despite management' (Keys, 2006).

This strong culture had facilitated continued success through a period of uncertainty for both employees, during cuts and managerial reforms, and the general public, during a period of technological advancement in the digital space. However, with strong cultures can come dysfunctions and the BBC shows warring factions of low levels of agreement (with management) but high levels of intensity (believing they achieve without management) which if not addressed could become a barrier to future success. 2. What source of power does Dyke have? How do you predict he will manage in the upcoming political battles that he faces?

Dyke has three forms of power: decision making, symbolic power and process power. One of the main sources of decision making power is the

formal power of authority. Charisma is one of the forms of authority and Dyke is described by his own friends as ‘commercial, colourful and charismatic’. People with decision making power have the ability to inspire and to attract followers and this can be supported by Carolyn Fairbairn, director of strategy and distributions description that those who knew him ‘were excited [by] his reputation as an inspiring leader... who was instinctive..... (Keys, 2006). Dyke’s showed symbolic power in his method of gaining a sound understanding of the business situation in his first weeks in post. Dyke undertook an extended ‘walkabout’ away from the BBC’s corporate centre in London in a bid to get to the grass roots of the business. He met with employees and asked ‘How can I make a difference?’ and he listened to what people had to say and did not express any opinions. He also quickly gained respect at the top of the organisation using similar tactics and Mark Byford described what he really liked about ‘... him and me is we talk a lot about the wider BBC together, not just World services. He doesn’t say everything he does is right, he asks, ‘what do you think’. ‘ On his appointment Dyke was not a popular choice as Director-General only gaining his position on a 7-5 vote so his ability to influence at all levels was important. Those with symbolic power can change people’s understanding of a situation so that they adopt your goals as their own. Dyke’s process power due to his formal status held in the organisation hierarchy allows him to be able to stop/start or influence processes in order to achieve a desired outcome.

Immediately after starting, Dyke launched an organisational review of the broadcast division and he later extended this to the whole of the BBC (Keys,

2006). Dyke's process power is strong due to his position as Director General and his previous experience. Dyke's ability to change peoples' understanding of a situation and move them in the direction of his own goals, his charisma and ability to influence higher and lower in the hierarchy, and his innate understanding of the process of running a media company set him in a strong position to manage the upcoming political battles that he faces.

Gaining trust is essential after the tabloid attack due to share issues and history of working in the private sector. While Dyke is able to overcome these issues it is essential that he is transparent at all times and shows empathy to the public service ethos on which the BBC is based. 3. The organisational members that Dyke encountered on his walkabout were "despondent, down, and dismayed". What underlying problems contributed to this lack of motivation?

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory can be used to analyse the underlying problems which caused the BBC employees to feel 'despondent, down and dismayed'. Herzberg suggests that motivation will be enhanced by maximising the motivator factors and minimising the hygiene factors (Stilbiger, 2005). There are three main categories people can sit within an organisation when referring to overall motivation: a) dissatisfied and demotivated, b) not dissatisfied but not motivated and c) positively satisfied and motivated.

To move those who reside under categories a) or b) it is essential to understand what hygiene and motivational factors are lacking and attempt to rebuild. On Dyke's 'walkabout' of the BBC outside of London it became

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apparent that when he asked the question ‘ how can I make a difference? ’ that the issues were ‘ pathetically’ small. The hygiene factors such as ‘ fix the roof, get new paint’ were provided by employees (Keys, 2006). Maslow’s hierarchy of needs also explains why tangible issues such as ‘ fix the roof, get new paint’ are important to having motivation.

Maslow refers to these needs as safety needs and unless you have ‘ biological, physical and safety needs’ in place you are unable to move to ‘ belongingness needs’ which include work groups. These hygiene factors are important for a business to avoid the feeling of unpleasantness at work. When employees feel these factors are inadequate they cause dissatisfaction and no matter how well the company addresses the motivational factors they cannot work with motivational factors alone – the two go hand in hand. Motivational factors were also contributing to the overall lack of motivation.

Due to the period of cost cuts, staff cuts, implementation of new management controls and the formation of an internal market for services that the BBC had been through in the 90’s, the changes meant that divisions were ‘ competing aggressively to get a larger slice of the pie’ (Keys, 2006). This was potentially affecting individual’s opportunities for advancement, recognition of their work within the BBC, and sense of personal achievement and growth in their position. This was all being exacerbated by a ‘ very analysis based, almost obsessively so’ (Keys, 2006) business from the previous Director – General.

On an individual level the motivational circle can be used to understand where an employee is personally affected. This can be split into four categories: satisfaction, effort, recognition and performance and they link to

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each other. If the link between effort and performance is affected people feel that no matter how hard they work their performance will not improve. This could be due to a lack of resources, knowledge, training, tools and skills and also an ineffective process within the company.

This break in the motivational circle can be seen as a symptom of the formation of an internal market for the services of the BBC. The internal market was causing the commissioners to become 'king' and the impact of programme-makers on decision making fell dramatically causing producers to become unhappy and leave as they felt the move towards external, independent production was increasing and no matter how much effort they put in within the BBC the performance would never be enough. 4. Analyse Dyke's initial steps as he begins the change process. How has he done so far?

What do you think about his approach to organisational change? What do you see as his biggest challenges going forward and how would you suggest he tackle them? Dyke recognised that the organisation had been through a major change period of cost cuts, staff cuts, implementation of new management controls and the formation of an internal market for services that the BBC. While these changes were essential to improve efficiency and to make the finances more transparent the change had been pushed from the top down and not been embraced by the employees.

Dyke's approach to further change is very different to that of John Birt as he recognised that further major changes were needed within the organisation. Dyke begins his role as Director-General by putting distance between Birt and himself by going on a 'walkabout'. Dyke chooses to use his charisma,

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understanding of process and influencing powers to begin the change process. Dyke understands that as Director-General of the BBC you are ‘damned if you do, and damned if you don’t’ due the strong public service ethos and culture of the BBC that lives both within the organisation and within every stakeholder.

Dyke begins his change process by building relationships with employees both high and low in what Dyke termed ‘were too many hierarchies’. By asking employees views and building relationships before announcing major changes Dyke is able to build a network of people to support him through the changes and in turn influence others within the organisation. Dyke uses this time to launch a review of the organisation and learn where the inefficiencies reside in the organisation. By using both the relationships and analysis, Dyke begins to establish himself as a credible Director-General.

He quickly puts in place tactics which are quick wins: changing the internal competitive market and the use of resources. These high impact changes are important for Dyke to establish his power and leadership of the BBC. Dyke clearly recognises the employee ‘commitment to the BBC, not necessarily to management, is very strong-at a level other companies would only dream of’ (Keys, 2006). For Dyke’s success it is essential that he shows employees that he understands the underlying culture of the BBC and is able to listen to his employees.

Dyke needs to build a team that are able to discuss, decide and do real work. Dyke needs to select team members for their skills and set clear rules of behaviour and address the strong belief by BBC employees ‘that what they achieved, they achieved despite management’ (Keys, 2006). If Dyke can

build a team within the BBC he has a very strong chance of success. 5. Analyse the structure of the BBC at the time Dyke took over. How appropriate was the structure given the goals of the BBC at that time? The structure of an organisation should follow strategy and for this reason company structure can change often.

The structure of an organisation should exploit the core competencies of its employees and managing organisational behaviour. John Birt had created an organisation based on bureaucracy due to the resistance to change that he met when restructuring the BBC. He found the internal resistance to change and the press hostility difficult and his management of staff became 'defensive, solemn, businesslike' and his style became rationalised and methodical without regard for people. Bureaucracy has positives which are its efficiency and fairness – this can be seen in the formation of an internal market for services that the BBC which brought inances under control and improved transparency. On the other hand it can be inflexible, restrict innovation and de-motivating – this can be seen with the loss of talented producers. The BBC at the time Dyke took over is divisional. The BBC network operations were split into two major divisions: broadcast and production. However, the broadcast division became more powerful as they were the division that set the strategy and content. The structure created unhappy programme makers who began to leave the BBC and set up their own companies to tender for the production from the outside.

The structure was important to begin the re-structuring process of the BBC to make it a more transparent and accountable for its spending. However, the structure was causing the BBC to lose talented people and losing its

internal innovation and intellectual property by pushing it outside of the BBC. When Dyke joined the BBC the external market place was rapidly changing. Digital, pay TV and the internet were making the average consumer more needy than ever and the BBC was required to stay at the forefront of the changes as it was funded by households.

Audiences were becoming more and more fragmented and every new channel was gaining fewer viewers. For the BBC this meant that it was becoming difficult to provide programming for all and the BBC mission from 1922 was - to 'bring the best of everything to the greatest number of homes' (Keys, 2006). The structure at the time Dyke joined was causing the BBC to become reliant on outside talent and leaving it open to flounder in the future.

References

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