

# Case study: hitech: organizational reforms



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## Introduction

Numerous challenges have consistently hit HiTech over the recent years. The problems have led to derail in development in the company. The medium-sized software firm headquartered in Vancouver, BC, has continued to grow steadily over the last twelve years of operation. They have opened branches across ten countries and established virtual teams who network across the various countries. The problems directly affect the employees as well as the growth and development of the company. As the project manager, I recommend the management team first to handle the issues that directly affect their employees. The recommendation has been arrived at after applying the fact that employees are the ones who bring around growth and development of a company. Having an appointed team based at the headquarters that develops the designs for the firm should also be a consideration so as to avert some of these problems. Additionally, the firm should also halt the idea of increasing their workforce until the existing issues are resolved.

### The Existing Issues

#### Work-life Balance

Several factors have exerted pressure on employees across the world. Intensified global competition, technology changes, shifts in supply and demand are among these defining elements (Coughlan and Fisher, 2000). The factors have also posed a significant challenge to HiTech and the management team ought to ensure they take measures to adapt to these changes. In addition to these, the demographic distribution is also a related

factor. At HiTech, the highest percentages of the workforce are men accounting for 70% of the total. This difference brings complex work and personal diversity in the workforce. (Cascio, 2000), Defines work-life balance as any employer working conditions that help employees strike a balance between work and non-work burdens. The firm should introduce these initiatives which will cater for employees' personal lives and work.

HiTech may wish to implement short-term strategies such as part-time working, sharing jobs, and flexi-time arrangements whereby the employees leave the premises as soon as they achieve their daily goals. E- Working may also come in handy as an employee may be given the freedom of mobility and work from the comfort of their homes. Continuous support of work-balance strategies is an important aspect that affects workplace matters like organizational commitment, individual employee turnover, overall productivity, and job satisfaction (Darcy et al., 2012).

The demographic variations in employee composition have an effect on the work-life benefits. For the case of HiTech, we find that 70% of the employees are males who are between twenty-six and fifty-three years of age. The situation is favorable to the company since men are not distracted by household works as women are. Additionally, most women in managerial positions will tend to create a more complicated work-balance schedule that can accommodate their needs. The age distribution is also favorable with the majority of the employees being in an active age bracket. Darcy et al. (2012), argued that age is one core factor that brings the difference between what employees want from their work and their attachment to the organization. Company leaders must be willing to change the work

schedules, job tasks, and give assistance through recognition programs, training and enforcement of employee-employer communication. By so doing, the employees are aided in managing their work and non-work issues. Companies have continued to offer family-friendly policies although their acceptance of has been quite slow.

The managers' views and the culture of the company may be barriers towards the adoption of these policies (Allen, 2001). Most of these cultural practices are informal and counter any formal policies that are introduced to the organization. Managerial consideration of work-life benefits should always be emphasized. The management acts as the primary implementers of work-life benefit schemes and encourages their employees to accept these initiatives. To add onto these sentiments, the management's attitude and support are vital in determining the uptake of the work-life benefits and, therefore has a direct effect on work and family conflicts (McCarthy & Cleveland, 2005). It is right to say that the managers at HiTech have a crucial role in translating the family-friendly policies into actual practice. Lack of an accommodating family-friendly organizational culture may pose reluctance on the employees. When these work-life benefits become dependent on the manager's preference, the employees may consider them as favors and not entitlements.

### Conflicts within the Virtual Teams

The various branches of HighTech have proved challenging to coordinate especially during new service and product development. The virtual groups comprise of employees from across three countries. Before the introduction

of these virtual groups, each branch conducted its product development independently. There are constant conflicts within these groups which have resulted in the loss of some top designers at HiTech. Also, the conflicts have brought adverse effects on the customer service delivery.

The virtual groups are supposed to offer numerous benefits to the organization including swift response to international demand, save on travel expenses, and round-the-clock customer services. Diversity brought by virtual groups stimulates creativity and allow wide-range skills to deal with a particular problem. Regardless of these benefits, virtual teams may increase conflicts among members and reduce the team interrelation. Conflicts within the virtual groups may be as a result of delays in communication, lack of direct interaction, and differences in time zones. As for the case of HiTech, the branches are distributed across Europe, Australia, and America. This dispersion brings about all these differences hence the emergence of the conflicts. Task conflicts may arise from varying viewpoints concerning the team's task. It encompasses variations in resource and duty allocation as well as the differences in the manner to approach the issue at hand (Siebdrat et al. 2009). It is indicated that there are certain levels of virtual team conflicts that may be beneficial to the company. Virtual team diversity has mixed results, thereby, producing complicated concepts.

There are two categories of team diversity namely social diversity and functional diversity. Functional diversity results from differences in experience, education level, and expertise of the team members. The opinions of team members in functional diversity promote task conflicts. However, functional diversity may also bring benefits to the company such

as better strategy development, increased innovativeness, and faster adaptation to changes. On the other hand, social diversity involves the differences regarding gender, age, race, and culture among the team participants (Siebdrat et al. 2016). The cultural aspect of social diversity poses the biggest difference during virtual team conflicts. It incorporates differences in language and nationalism among the members of the group.

There are five dimensions of cultural diversity that include long-term orientation, masculinity, power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance. Individualism has been known to influence the corporate behavior of the members within a virtual team. The members of an individualistic society uphold personal time and freedom to conduct personal tactics in performing their duties. On the other hand, individuals from a collective culture society uphold and strive to attain team spirit. Task interdependence and routineness are also considered during performance and conflict within a virtual team. Interdependence refers to how much the members of a team depend on each other in order to accomplish the given task. Routineness is the extent of programmability and organization of the task.