

Organizational commitment and communication: southwest airlines

[Environment](#), [Air](#)



Leadership Southwest airlines, a company that is known to have strong employee relationships, believes that the happier an employee the better productivity they will have. Southwest Airline CEO, Gary C.

Kelly, has stated that in order to have a strong company he needs to take time building strong relationships as well. " Happy Employees = Happy Customers. Happy Customers keep Southwest flying" (Southwest). He created an environment that challenges employees to be Innovative which lead to creative solutions. Gary C. Kelly Is able to Initiate structure within the company, since he had a clear goal and direction for the company employees were not confused.

If Southwest Airlines was to change their leadership style to reflect a different way of approaching tasks, the company may not be as successful as they are today. Southwest Airlines would be like every other company, and may not have employees who are as committed to Southwest Airlines or their goals. For example, a transactional leader would be focused on employee rewards or discipline; these traits would make employees feel as though they are working for just a Job. When employees are made to feel like just employees It Is difficult to communicate with one another.

Even something as simple as calling Gary C. Kelly by his first name creates a trust between each other; this trust opens up communication and consideration within the company. Since employees are made to feel important, they are eager to go above and beyond on Issues that matter such as customer satisfaction. Southwest Airlines recognizes that they cannot focus solely on reward and discipline to run their company;

employees would feel scrutinized for their every move. Southwest Airlines was able to create an environment that creates relationships built on trust, respect and consideration for employees while maintaining structure and vision.

Since they have a balance between employee relations and work ethic they have created a successful company with employees who are committed to a common goal. Power The main source of power found at Southwest Airlines is referent power. Employees have a strong sense of loyalty to Southwest Airlines; their loyalty and admiration to Southwest CEO, Gary C. Kelly, makes the ability to influence the behavior of its employees easier. Original employees - many of whom say they considered him more of a father than a boss - wanted to please and emulate him.

Workers routinely went above and beyond the call of duty to help the airline thrive" (Trottman, 2003). Another form of power is reward power. There is an incentive for working at Southwest for a long time; Employees who work with Southwest Airlines receive benefits as well as stock options within the company. Southwest believes that hard work and dedication to the company should result in rewards and promotions. They do not rely on the reward system to motivate their employees, but they believe it is a great way to let employees know they are appreciated. Power such as coercive power will only hurt communication within an organization.

If an organization operates on the principle of fear and withholding of information employees will feel less inclined to communicate with one

another. This type of power creates an environment that stiffens creativity in fear that they will be punished. Another form of power that may hinder communication within an organization is legitimate power. This form of power is based on authority or position. If Gary C.

Kelly were to exert his authority over employees simply because he can employees would shy away from him. When a person uses their authority to hold power over people, resentment starts to build with the employees. Employees want and respect employers who use knowledge, persuasion, and collaboration as power rather than use pressure and fear. By using reward and referent power, the employer gains employee trust and admiration which leads to better communication and better productivity. Motivation One motivational theory that would be effective at Southwest Airlines would be the goal-setting theory.

The goal setting theory would be effective because people would have clear and set goals to accomplish. When an employer is able to define the tasks at hand it is easier for employees to accomplish them. Another aspect of the goal setting theory that would motivate employees is the ability to challenge employees. " Once someone accepts a challenging goal you can expect that the employee will exert a high level of effort to try to achieve it" (Robbins and Judge, 2011).

By setting more challenging goals employees are able to show their motivation and have the opportunity to rise to higher positions. The better communication an organization has the easier it is for an employer to share

his vision with his employees. An employer who has an established relationship with his employees can explain his vision in a way that employees will understand. It is highly unlikely that Gary C. Kelly speaks to all thirty-five thousand employees but managers who can express his goals to employees trickle his communication down.

Another motivational theory that would be effective at Southwest Airlines would be the self-efficacy theory. By making employees feel as though they are capable of performing a task an employer is able to motivate them. Southwest Airlines has been able to motivate their employees by appreciating the work they do. In the early days of the company, corporate den mother Ms. Barrett could send hand-written notes of compliment or condolence to many of the company's 517 employees.

She still writes notes, but only reaches a fraction of the company's more than 35, 000 workers, who are spread from Manchester, N. H. , to San Diego' (Trottman, 2003). Personalized notes raises self-efficacy within employees, productivity and it creates more trust and communication within an organization. It is important for employees to feel valued so they do not feel as though they are lost working in a large organization. According to The Wall Street Journal, Southwest Airlines also holds parties; picnics and they also hold seminars to re motivate employees who have worked for Southwest for a few years.

Commitment Southwest Airline employees have always had a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organization. Even though there have been

troubles in the past, Southwest Airlines has managed to uphold their views on employee relationships. The way Gary C. Kelly values his employees is the same way Southwest employees value the organization.

“ Southwest treats its employees so well, and really takes care of them if they stay,” says Susan Goodman, who joined Southwest in 1975... ” (Trottman, 2003).

Southwest Airlines want employees to have fun while being committed and hardworking. Employees find Southwest Airlines to be a company worth working for since they have excellent benefits and a friendly environment. Southwest Airlines has listened to employee concerns in the past and has been able to come to a compromise every time. Because of their commitment to the organization employees are also committed to the organization's communication. According to Bebe, communication is defined as “ the process of acting on information. ” That is what Southwest employees do, they act on information.

Gary C. Kelly believes that strong relationships with employees will bring about more productivity. Building strong relationships takes trust, consideration and communication in order to grow as an organization. Southwest Airlines is “ the only profitable airline among the nine U. S majors. .. ” because of their strong communication among employees.