

Investigation into working from home



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a) Employees reluctant to work from home: Some employees are reluctant to work from home which may be due to the fear that they might be forgotten by their company. Being forgotten by an employer could affect employees working from home chances of career advancements, promotions, salary increment, and performance recognition. Reluctant to work from home could also be due to the inability of these employees to have the opportunity to meet and socialize with their colleagues and get to know each other physically. Not knowing each other physically could lead to the lack of sharing of ideas because sometimes it is difficult to share ideas with someone you have not met on the phone.

b) Communication breakdown between virtual teams and employees: Each and every employee has his or her own preferred method of communication, and the inability to implement the right method of communication between virtual workers could lead to communication breakdown. Communication breakdown could affect employees' performance as well as productivity of the company.

c) The concern of new employees working from home: New employees might not have the enough experience and exposure to handle their assigned tasks efficiently as telecommuters. Since they are new, they need to be exposed to a variety of tasks and allowed to handle some of the difficult and complex issues at the office. Handling difficult and complex issues might require the assistance of experience employees which could be readily available at the office. Also, new employees should be given the opportunity to learn from experienced employees and mentors at the office before letting them work from home. There is also the need for new employees to establish

relationships with their co-workers, superiors, and subordinates in order to be able to approach them for help when the need arises to get the job done.

d) Technology problems: Since virtual employees rely almost entirely on technology such as computers, telephones, fax machines, and so on to get the job done, everything will come to a standstill in case of technology failure such as computer crash. There is also the cost involved in sending IT technicians to individual location of virtual employees to fix the problem.

Even though these problems originate from both the company and the employees, I think the majority are problems and concerns from the employees. While the company could have measures in place to handle the majority of these problems and could provide all the necessary tools for its employees to function efficiently, the employees themselves will face problems such as isolation, ineffective communication, lack of mentorship, and so on.

2. Characteristics of people who adjust easily to telecommuting:

Characteristics: Self-motivation, organized, technologically inclined, strong communication skills, good work ethics, good problem solving skills, good sense of humor, and ability to get the job done. Employers can identify these characteristics during job interview. During the job interview, employers should ask questions that will allow applicants to demonstrate these characteristics. Employers could also identify individual with these characteristics by looking at the applicants past experience, accomplishments, and successes. Employers could also develop employees

to become better telecommuters through training, mentorship, problem solving exercises, and pairing with those proficient in telecommuting.

Chapter 2

Case Study 2.3 The Trouble with Business Ethics

1. Importance to encourage and support employees who report possible wrongdoings:

It is important to encourage and support employees who report possible incidents of ethical wrongdoing so that the employees will not be reluctant to report unethical behaviors and wrongdoing for fear of being exposed. By being exposed, the whistle blower could lose his or her job or position or will not feel comfortable working in his or her department or working for the company. By encouraging and supporting whistle blowers, problems and wrongdoings in the company could be brought to book for immediate action resolution. This could minimize damages to the reputation of the company. Also, by protecting whistle blowers, companies could retain its human capacity and good employees. According to article, 95% of whistle blowers lose their jobs, and some employees will prefer to leave the company instead of reporting ethical wrongdoing. Protecting whistle blowers could also prevent law suits from employees and the federal government.

In order to support whistle blowers, companies should create and enforce policies about reporting illegal or unethical practices in the company. Also, top executives and managers should exhibit highest standards of moral conduct and demonstrate strong commitment to supporting and encouraging whistleblowers. By showing strong commitment to ethical standards and

behaviors, other employees will do the same and employees will be encouraged to report wrongdoings.

2. Actions taken by companies to improve ethical standards:

Companies have taken actions such as firing of executives and board of directors who are found guilty of misconduct and wrongdoings. Some companies such as Boeing have instituted and enforce strict ethics codes, rules, and guidelines. Other companies have set up ethics departments and units and have hired top experts to head these departments and units. I think these actions are substantive changes because they are being enforced strictly. Also, the majority of companies leading the way of enforcing strict ethics policies has been struck with scandals and unethical activities in the past and would not want to be in the same or worse situation again.

Chapter 3

Case Study 3. 2 How Failure Breeds Success

1. Experiential learning process mentioned in the article:

Learning through experience – this process involves engaging in an identified project or activity, reflecting on or analyzing the experience during the experience during the activity, and drawing conclusions. In drawing conclusions theories are formed about the result of the activity and experiment is performed to test the validity of the theories formed. In an experiential learning, the organization or its employees should have strong learning orientation in which new learning opportunities and ideas are welcome. Also, the organization and its employees should consider mistakes

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and failures as part of the learning process. Referring to the article, when Intuit Inc. adventurous marketing campaign to target young tax filers failed, the company performed a postmortem or analysis to find out the cause of the failure. By so doing, the company learned from their mistake and failure. Also, when Corning Inc. DNA microarray chip project failed, the company performed analysis of the failure. Through the analysis, the company discovered a new project and market for drug discovery and testing.

2. Perceptual problems managers need to overcome with failure:

Managers need to overcome attribution errors and self-serving bias. In order to minimize these problems, managers should be aware that perceptual problems do exist, they should have self-awareness of perceptual problems, and they should engage in meaningful interaction.

Chapter 4

Case Study 4. 2 Dispatches from the War on Stress

1. Stress management strategies applied most and least in the case study:

Of the types of stress management strategies described in the chapter, the strategy that is mostly applied based on the article is removing the stressor. On the other hand, the strategy that is least applied is changing stress perception. With regards to removing the stressor, some companies are helping their employees with better work-life balance programs such as job sharing through addition of extra employees; provision of personal services at the job premises such as car repairs and hair salon services; and setting of achievable goals.

2. Stress outcomes mentioned in the case study and stressors associated with the outcomes:

Stress outcomes mentioned in the case study include burning out, exhaustion, and committing suicide. Stressors associated with these stress outcomes are work overload, low task control, humiliating criticisms, and high-pressure management tactics.

3. Why serious stress outcomes result from failing to achieve performance goals:

Failure to achieve performance goals result in serious stress outcomes because of the consequences associated with the failure such as pressure from managers and unfavorable annual performance review. Failure to achieve performance goals leads to pressure from superiors in addition to the pressure already being experienced to achieve the goals. By pressurizing employees, their stress levels increases which leads to serious stress outcomes. Poor annual performance review prevent most employees from getting pay raises or being promoted to higher positions which also increases their stress level and results in serious stress outcomes. Higher expectations from employers lead to performance failure which in turn leads to serious stress outcomes due to criticisms and unfavorable conditions from employers. Success in achieving performance goals is affected by the difficulty of the set goals, and the more difficult it is to achieve the goals, the higher the level of stress will be.

Chapter 5

Case Study 5. 2 Motivating Staff When the Money is Tight

1. Drives and needs associated with strategies for attracting and retaining new employees in the case study:

a. Strong campus recruiting and use of interns:

Drives: drive to learn and to acquire

Needs: self-actualization, esteem, and physiological.

b. Extensive training programs, rapid advancement, and opportunities for leadership positions:

Drives: drive to learn, acquire, bond, and defend

Needs: belongingness, esteem, and growth and self-actualization

c. Provision of comp time, increased vacation time, and flexible work schedules:

Drives: drive to bond, and to acquire

Needs: belongingness/love, safety

d. Provision and improved mentoring programs:

Drives: drive to acquire, learn, bond, and defend

Needs: belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization

e. Competitive pay:

Drives: drive to acquire and bond

Needs: belongingness, physiological, and self-actualization

f. Opportunities for employees to develop their own new ideas:

Drives: drive to acquire, learn, and defend

Needs: growth and self-actualization, esteem, and belongingness

g. Providing ways for employees to give back to society and more time for volunteer work:

Drives: drive to acquire, bond, learn, and defend

Needs: belongingness/love, esteem, self-actualization, and safety

The drive to acquire and the need for growth and self-actualization seem to dominate in the article.

2. Reduction of feelings of inequity with attraction and retention initiatives described in the case study:

First of all, the comparison is with employees of different industries and not the same company/industry as Claire Pignataro and the other employees so with the appropriate attraction and retention initiatives in place to motivate employees, the feelings of inequity will be significantly reduced. The nature of the job of the employees of the different industry might be different from that of Claire Pignataro and his colleagues, hence the difference in pay. On the other hand, if the nature of the job is the same, with the proper attraction and retention programs in place, feelings of inequity will be

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reduced. Even though Claire Pignataro and the other recruits earn less than employees of different industries, they are being provided with resources and opportunities to fulfill their drives and needs. Claire Pignataro and his colleagues are being provided with incentives such as comp-time, flexible work schedule, and opportunities for early career advancement, which are all factors that will motivate them to stay with the company.

Chapter 6

Case Study 6. 2 How to Make a Microserf Smile

1. Changes Lisa Brummel made to Microsoft's performance and reward practices and why Microsoft had those performance and reward practices in place:

Lisa Brummel overhauled the performance review system. She abolished the unfavorable aspects of the forced curve in performance review evaluation. She changed the ranking system of evaluating employees that created rivalry among employees. Instead, Brummel created the grade system and the chance for best performing employees to earn bigger paychecks. Pay raises and bonuses were tied to the grade and managers had the flexibility to give whatever grade they wanted to give their subordinates. Brummel also initiated the Mobile Medicine program where doctors were sent to employees homes in emergency situations. She changed the services and food provided at cafeteria at the head office by allowing various restaurants to operate at the cafeteria in order for employees to varieties of food to choose from. Employees could also order their food to be delivered to their desks. Free shuttle were provided to transport employees to and from work. There was also free Wi-Fi access to employees. Old coffee machines were

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changed to the new star bucks i-cup machines where employees could brew fresh coffees instantly. Brummel also discontinued the delivery of groceries to employees' desk side since patronage was very low. Microsoft had these performance and reward practices in place in order to boost employees' morale, improve motivation and performance, and to retain their employees. The performance and reward initiatives also helped in attracting and recruiting potentials job applicants.

2. I think the changes to the performance and reward management were beneficial but could cause long-term problems. By allowing managers to assign whatever grade they want to their subordinates, misunderstanding between managers and their subordinates could be created. The new system could also lead to lost of trust in managers because there is no clear-cut as to how grades are assigned.

3. The encouragement of communication and feedback from employees improved feelings of empowerment. Holding town hall style of meetings and launching of an internal blog allowed employees to express themselves and also gave feedback to the company. These initiatives provided opportunities for employees to contribute to the success of the company, thus improving feelings of empowerment.

Chapter 7

Case study 7. 1 Employee Involvement Cases

1. Extent of subordinate involvement in the case studies:

In both cases, medium involvement where the problem is presented to a few subordinates to seek for any relevant information and recommendations is appropriate.

2. I chose this level of employee involvement because in case 1, the head of research and development lack technical expertise on the new sugar-substitute project which calls for involving other employees in the decision making. No or low involvement means making the decision himself or asking a few employees for information related to the project. Since the head of the department lack the technical expertise, this level of involvement will not yield the right solution to the problem. This is because the head of department will not be able to efficiently come up with and choose the right alternative solution to the problem. On the other hand, high level of involvement is not appropriate because not everyone in the research and development lab has the expertise or is familiar with the new project so involving extra people in the decision making process will not help. It might even impede the process of generating ideas and solution to the problem. Medium level of involvement is the ultimate choice because since only a handful of researchers are familiar and have the expertise in that field, involving just them in the decision making process will yield the most effective solution to the problem. Quality ideas and alternative solutions could be generated that will allow the leader to make a better decision.

In case two, the captain believes that whatever decision he will make will generate division among the crew members. In this situation, no or low involvement will not help with the problem because the captain still need to make the final decision without presented the problem to his crew members.

At the same time, high level of involvement will not help because of the possibility of generation of conflict and division among the crew members. Medium level of involvement is appropriate because it will involve a couple of crew members from both sides of the division and through generation of ideas and other alternatives, a better conclusion and solution could be achieved without generation of conflict and divisions among the crew members. The captain could serve as a mediator between the two groups.

3. In both cases, no or low level of employee involvement will not generate the appropriate solution to the problem. This is because in case 1, the head of research and development lack expertise in the field of the new project, and since no or low level of involvement only ask for information from employees without knowing about the problem, there is a possibility that the head of department could not appropriately and effectively put the pieces together to come up with appropriate solution to the problem. In case 2, because of the possibility of creating division among the crew members irrespective of whatever decision the captain will make, this level of involvement will not help. With regards to problems with more involvement, in case 1, only some of the researchers are familiar with the field of the new project so involving those without expertise in this field will not help. Involving those without the expertise will slow down research and projects they might be working on. Involving those without the expertise might impede the decision making process because they might make irrelevant recommendations for consideration. In case 2, more involvement might deepen the division among the crew members because the decision will come solely from the crew members without the captain.

Chapter 8

Case Study 8.1 The Shipping Industry Accounting Team

1. Team formed in the case study:

Virtual team was formed in this situation and it was necessary because the new company, Goldberg, had offices and branches across the nation. The virtual team was formed in order to bring together employees of the same expertise (shipping accountants) who could work together to achieve a common goal. The virtual team was also necessary to avoid relocation and the hassle and stress associated with it.

2. Strengths and weakness of the team's environment, design, and processes:

Strengths:

Team Design: members of the team had the same background and expertise to accomplish the tasks assigned to achieve the company's objectives. The size of the team (4 members) was manageable and the task characteristics (accounting practice) relates to the team members background and experience.

Weaknesses:

Team Environment: some team members lacked effective communication skills which created communication problems among the team members. Time differences of the location of the team members affected the team's effectiveness. Some team members had than 3 hours to share information

with other members unless the team members sacrifice their personal time.

The timing difference affected some employees' work-life balance.

Team Processes: There is lack of cohesion in the team as some members disagree on strategic and important issues. There is lack of trust as the team members do not understand each other on key issues. There is also lack of cooperation among the team members.

3. Recommended ways to improve the team's effectiveness:

Ways to improve team effectiveness include team building in which activities aimed to improve the development and effective functioning of the team is organized for team members. Activities to include in the team building program must include improvement of communication skills; clarification of team's performance goals; improvement of problem-solving skills; improvement of relations among team members; and activities to help team members to learn more about each other, tolerate each other, trust each other, and establish ways to manage conflict within the team. Another way to improve team effectiveness is to establish and reinforce team members' roles in the team. The team should also establish norms to regulate team members' behavior. The team should also work on their cohesiveness through understanding, tolerance, and respect for each other.

Chapter 9

Case Study 9. 2 It's all about the Face-to-Face

1. Reasons why executives meet employees and clients face-to-face:

According to the article, the reason why executives meet employees and clients face-to-face rather than through other communication channels are: to expand into new market areas; to negotiate important business deals; to attend to employees and clients urgent concerns and problems; to put out important information to employees and clients; to assure clients about the organization's commitments; and to recruit potential candidates to fill vital positions in the organization. I think all of these are logical because face-to-face meeting with clients and employees makes the meeting more important and legitimate than meeting through other channels. It is also more persuasive, especially when negotiating new deals and soliciting important clients. Face-to-face meeting also increases the credibility of the executives and the message or the information they send across.

2 Skills and knowledge required to make face-to-face communication work effectively:

The skills and knowledge that world-traveling executives require to make face-to-face communication work effectively include good communication skills and cultural awareness and appreciation. Good communication skills encompasses listening attentively, acknowledgement of language differences and different accents, being open minded, being aware of the information coming and going out, being concise and clear, and being able to access emotional reactions. Good communication skills involves conveying a message to another person or group of people clearly and concise. It also involves receiving information without or with little destruction. Executives must make sure that the message or the information they are sending out is understandable to the person or group of people receiving the information.

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By so doing, the executive will be able to get his message out without misinterpretation.

Cultural awareness and appreciation involves being sensitive to other people's culture, religion, beliefs, values, and having the ability to build rapport with people of different cultural backgrounds than yours. What might be wrong and unacceptable in one culture might be acceptable in another culture. Executives must be aware and sensitive to all these differences in order to communicate effectively to people with different cultural backgrounds and values. For instance, in Muslim communities, shoes must be removed before entering certain places and executives must be able to understand and appreciate that culture in order to be accepted by the community to deliver his or her message.

Chapter 10

Case Study 10. 1 The Rise and fall of WorldCom

1. Power bases:

Bernie Ebbers and Scott Sullivan relied on legitimate power, coercive power, expert power, and referent power to get away with the accounting fraud they committed.

2. Influence tactics:

Bernie Ebbers and Scott Sullivan used silent authority, assertiveness, information control, persuasion, and ingratiation and impression management to control employees and the company's board of directors.

3. Engagement in organizational politics:

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Bernie Ebbers and Scott Sullivan engaged in organizational politics because they engaged in and exhibited self-serving behaviors at the expense of other employees and against the interest of the entire organization. In other words, they engaged in selfish practices for their self gains. They used their power and influence to engage in fraudulent practices by preventing the flow and sharing of the organization's genuine financial information. They used their power and influence to manipulate others and altered the organization's financial statements and information.

Chapter 11

Case Study 11. 1 Tamarack Industries

1. Signs of conflict in the case study:

Rivalry and tension between the experienced workers and the Greek team

Retaliation and sabotage

Anger of the experienced workers

Slowing down of production of the Greek team by the experienced workers

Disagreement between the experienced workers and the Greek team

2. Structural causes and escalation of conflict in the case study:

a) Incompatible goals, differentiation, and communication problems are the structural causes of the conflict in the case study.

b) Demeaning comments by the members of the Greek team escalate the conflict between the two teams. Making demeaning comments heightens the

perception of the existence of conflict by the experienced workers. By heightening their perception of the existence of conflict, the experienced workers tend to retaliate through sabotage by hiding production tools, making dents in materials, and improper installation of components in order to slow production for the Greek team. The Greek team also reacts to the actions by the experienced workers by working smart to overcome their plans. These actions and reactions from both teams escalate the conflict.

3. Recommendations of actions to be taking by Dan Jensen, the foreman:

If I were Dan Jensen, I would try and identify the underlying sources and causes of the conflict and then try and eliminate or reduce the causes. As noted in the case study, the causes of the conflict are incompatible goals, differentiation, and communication problems. Reducing incompatible goals did not help the situation because even though Dan Jensen equalized the production by allowing the teams to have similar production runs, the Greek team continued to meet their production schedule early.

I would reduce differentiation by intermingling people from the two teams. I would form teams comprising of people from the two different teams. By so doing, the experienced workers and members of the Greek team will share a common experience and goals which will minimize or eliminate the conflict. By reducing differentiation, communication and understanding will improve because sharing of the same goals and experience will provide the opportunity for the team members to communicate and understand each other.

Chapter 12

Case Study 12. 2 Mack Attack

1. Competencies that seem strongest in John Mack:

a) Personality – Mack possesses high extroversion personality. He socializes with employees and their families at events and introduce himself to people he does not know in the company when he meets them for the first time. He was approachable and open to new and fresh ideas from all employees. It was easy for him to lure people from other companies to his company.

b) Self-concept and Drive – Mack had confidence in his leadership skills and ability to achieve his objectives. Mack pursued his goals and objectives of transforming his company into a top notch financial institution despite criticisms from both insiders and outsiders. He made risky investments and decisions despite criticisms that paid off at the end. The company became a top financial institution from nowhere when Mack took over as the CEO. He pursued and persuaded people that he thinks will get the job done and helps with his transformation objectives to join his company.

c) Integrity – Mack was truthful and consistent with his actions and decisions. Decisions were made more speedily irrespective of whom and where the ideas and suggestions were coming from. Mack was also open to everyone.

d) Knowledge of the business – Mack had enough knowledge about the company's operations having worked with the company for many years. He knew exactly what decisions to make in order to make the company successful. He knew the company's weaknesses and strengths which made some of the decisions a little easy for him.

e) Cognitive Intelligence – Mack had the ability to quickly process and analyze information to arrive at a decision. Decisions were made quicker than before. Mack also used his broad experience in the financial sector to solve problems and made better decisions.

2. Transformational leadership behaviors:

Mack created a strategic vision and had a dream to transform the company's soft and timid culture in order to catch up with the company's competitors. To accomplish his strategic vision, Mack made significant changes in the company's ranks in order to increase commitment to his vision, goals, and dreams for the company. He persuaded and recruited people who will support his goals and objectives in order to transform the company. Mack wanted team players who believe in a common goal. He created a special team to look for more investment opportunities and innovative ideas. Mack communicated his objectives and goals to employees and stakeholders immediately he assumed office. He promised to bring back the company to the number one spot in the financial industry and also promised to double the company's pretax earnings.

Mack modeled his vision by stepping out to personally meet with clients across the globe. He once cut his vacation short in order to attend to the needs of his clients. Mack also motivated his employees and division heads to improve performance. He was consistent with his actions irrespective of criticisms. Mack built commitment toward his vision by staying on course to look out for more investment opportunities and innovative ideas in order to

attract more investors. Instead of cutting cost and managing profits, he expanded divisions that were bringing in more revenue.

In the end, Mack's strategic vision and dreams came true. He transformed the company from nowhere he assumed office into one of the top investment banks in the financial industry. Mack's transformation changed people perception about his company and investors that left the company started coming back.

Chapter 13

Case Study 13. 1 Macy's Gets Personal

1. Changes in terms of the four elements of organizational structure:

a) Decentralization of merchandize and marketing to local district managers in order to get customers to feel connected to the Macy's outlets in their area.

b) Narrow span of control with district managers being responsible for a smaller number of employees and average of 10 stores instead of 16 to 18. This will allow district employees and management to work more closely with each other. District managers will also have more control over decisions making within each allocated store.

c) Organic structure without wide span of control. District managers have more autonomy to personalize merchandize and marketing to suit the demand of customers rather than standardization irrespective of geographical location.

2. Contingencies suggesting appropriate organizational change:

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a) External environment:

Dynamic environment - Macy's is respo