Tata consultancy services (tcs): organisation culture

Understanding an organization's culture from an employee as well as management point of view is as important as understanding one's own job profile and responsibilities to perform well in any structural setup. Given the continuously changing environment, employee insights on his or her work culture is very important for an organization to best define and upgrade its role and objectives.

To call for successful implementation of these objectives, it is pertinent to emphasize the importance of culture in motivating and maximizing the value of its human and intellectual assets.

Organizational culture can be defined as the pattern of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions considered being the appropriate way to think and act within an organization.

Seven key characteristics of what the organization values capture the essence of culture: (1) Innovation and risk taking, (2) Attention to detail, (3) Outcome orientation, (4) People orientation, (5) Team orientation, (6) Aggressiveness, and (7) Stability.

Organization

TATA Consultancy Services (TCS)
Culture of TCS relevant from the employees' perspective:

The Culture of TCS is observed to be highly ethical as is the case with most TATA Group Companies. The culture according to the various interviews was found to be highly networked although the job responsibilities and positions of employees were clearly defined. This helped the employees settle down in the organization quickly and effectively along with giving providing them the

autonomy to bring out the best in themselves due to highly networked nature of the environment. This is well exemplified by the fact that even the CEO of the company is addressed by his first name. The culture of TCS is also the one that supports growth and learning by providing and facilitating platforms for individuals to innovate and experiment even if that is not a direct requirement of their project. One of the most striking feature of this company is that employees are referred to as associates and not 'employees'. This reflects the pride the company wants to experience in being ' associated' with the concerned individuals and holds them as important and superior as the company itself. However since TCS is huge organization with approximately 170, 000 employees, many-a-times underutilization of human resources is observed before the project allocation. Hence periods of inactivity is observed in such cases. The size of the company and it's well defined hierarchy is centralized at higher management level and localized at domain or vertical level. The company is also studied to be too customer driven even when it's not a part of the customer requirement or specification.

TCS overall is an employee driven company, The Company provides the best in the class facilities to work and learn. TCS has a separate learning and development cell, which encourages the associates (yes the employees are called associates) to learn and develop their technical, managerial, interpersonal communication and other skills. The company provides a good mix of talent and challenging work which appeals to the associates. In the interviews, we didn't find one thing that was low on culture practices at TCS. The employees are well paid, well satisfied and love the culture. The

company has the lowest attrition ration of 9% for the last 4 quarters is a proof of the culture that prevails there.

Apart from the learning and growth prospects, TCS also provides timely work review, assessments, various bonuses, leaves and also growth opportunities. The boundary of management and associates is low and the management is easily assessable. The level of respect for every employee is very high and is maintained with the high to low management and associates.

Interview Guidelines:-

- The interviews should be conducted along different levels of hierarchy.
- The interviews should be conducted from equal participants from male/female employees
- The interviews should be conducted in such a way that there should be equal participation from both the fresher's and experienced.
- Avoid conducting the interviews during peak working hours, to avoid any responses based on immediate happenings.
- Try and accommodate the interview on different days of the week and at different timings.

Interview Transcripts

Participant: Vanshika Shrivastva

Designation: Asst. System Engg.

Working with TCS for: 2 Yrs

Q: How do you define the work culture at TCS?

R: The work culture at TCS is bifurcated in two aspects; there is the organization work culture which follows the Tata Group ethics and beliefs, good learning atmosphere and also a healthy place to work at. The other is the project specific work culture, as there are different client, the project culture varies according to the client and the work needs. But the overall culture is filled with learning and growth option.

Q: Can you elaborate with examples what are the learning and growth examples provided to you by TCS?

R: TCS has the work evaluation process twice a year, once for the appraisal and once for the review, which helps employees assess their working capabilities, There are timely seminars, webinars, trainings, workshops and other such events to promote learning. TCS also encourages its employees for continuous learning and certification drives to promote a more competitive and better working atmosphere.

Q: Are there any specific training program or department taking care of these?

R: Yes, there are various training programs available for the associates; we have a learning and Development cell which conducts trainings across various technological platforms, also around better working skills, communications skills, managerial skills, work life balance etc. Plus apart from this, the HR department of every project keeps a fun@work event once every month to promote a healthy working culture.

Q: What are the most striking features you find in the workplace at TCS?

R: TCS is my first organisation and I don't have any plans to change it in the near future. This is basically for the ethics and culture of work that we find with the company. We do not call anyone sir/mam even the CEO is called by the first name. Also TCS does not call its employees as employees they call us associates. Plus the timely review process at various levels, the apt compensation and the services at the disposal are really good at TCS.

Q: What is the hierarchy like at TCS, in terms of working?

R: The hierarchy is very well defined at this organisation. Apart from the technical associates like me, there are managerial hierarchies. I report to my team lead, he reports to the project lead, the project lead reports to the project manager and the project manager reports to the group manager. But the best part is, all the managers for the project/domain are present at the same location and are accessible to everyone. So the hierarchy is put across well and is also easily accessible.

Participant: Ashish Rustagi

Designation: IT Analyst

Working with TCS for past: 4 yrs (onsite at US for past 1 yr)

Q: How do you like the work culture at TCS?

R: TCS is my second employer, I found the work atmosphere here challenging and refreshing at the same time.

Q: How would you rate the work ethics at TCS?

R: TCS is very high on work ethics, like any other Tata group company.

Q: Throw some light on your relation with peers, seniors and juniors.

R: At TCS there are no seniors, juniors when it comes to work, everyone is asked to make a contribution to every work, the team work is the driving force here. A team comprises of a good mix of people. So it's always challenging and fun as I mentioned.

Q: How does TCS help you shape your career?

R: TCS provides you immense opportunities to learn and develop your skills. As TCS serves a number of varied clients, so learning in every field is encouraged. The managers are given some technical training so that they can understand the associates better and the associates are given managerial training to maintain small management at work.

Q: How do you find TCS in providing learning and development opportunities?

R: TCS has a rich culture with learning, the learning and development cell has their weekly and monthly trainings. These trainings are conducted by industry specialist and sometime in house faculty. Even the initial learning program was a fantastic builder for confidence and learning platforms.

Q: How does the organisation looks towards the employees?

R: TCS believes that their best assets are their employees; Employees are given all sought of comforts to help them shape their future and also help

the organisation grow. With good services, Timely appraisals, proper work review, other team building activities makes you come to office with a smile.

Q: What is your take on the overall organisational structure at TCS?

R: TCS is divided into various segments, with multinational presence the company is divided into service segments called verticals. Apart from this, the various departments work hand in hand and with strength of over 170, 000 associates is still one of the best places to work.

Participant: Siddharth Khetawat

Designation: Associate Consultant

Worked with TCS for: 6 yrs (recently left TCS)

Q: Why did you leave TCS?

R: TCS was the first company I worked for; I had to move on to higher studies.

Q: Do you have plans to get back to TCS after your studies?

R: I would love to do that, if I get an opportunity.

Q: How did you find the culture at TCS?

R: TCS game me the perfect ground to work and provided great facilities to sharpen my skills. The infrastructure was well established, and it always felt good when you know everything is in place where you work.

Q: How was the management at TCS?

R: The management was very well established at TCS, they had a clear goal and mission stated and in my 6 years I learned that the long term plans were very well implemented.

Q: Do you have anything that you thought was lacking at TCS culture?

R: It's like answering one of the things for apple; you never know what you need till the time they give it to you. Same is the case with TCS, I always thought TCS gave the best work place for associates, Till they included the quarterly appraisal and reviews, then I thought it's the best possible thing, till they gave the TCS social service Maitri wing. Finally even before leaving, TCS gave me an opportunity to sign a 6 months working deal and sponsor me a big amount of money for my education. It's a great place to work and I am glad I was associated with them

Q: Did TCS provide sufficient learning grounds?

R: Indeed, TCS gave a great variety of learning platforms. I did 4 certifications from TCS including an auditor's certificate for 6 sigma. Now being an engg. Where can I get such an opportunity? It just reflects the amount of diversity TCS offers someone who is willing to learn.

Participant: Ragini Mishra

Designation: Group Lead (BFS2. 2 domain)

Worked with TCS for: Past 14 yrs

Q: Such a long time with TCS?

R: I worked initially for 6 years with TCS, when I was posted in London for the project. The client that I was working for gave me an offer and looking at the better prospects then I decided to join. But only 18 months into the job I realised that the money might be better but the culture was something that was not what I was used to. So I came back to TCS and since then have been climbing up the ladder.

Q: You started your career at TCS as asst. System engg trainee. And now a group lead.. So from technology to management . How was the journey?

R: Firstly the journey still continues, I joined TCS as a programmer like everyone else. Then climbing the ladder was easy. As TCS gives opportunities to learn and do everything that one wishes, I was inclined towards management, so after a few years as a technical associate I walked up to my manager and asked told him about it. He advised me to take up the training sessions from the L&D department for managerial skills. And since then it was a great transformation.

Q: How did TCS help you shape your career?

R: TCS provided an excellent ground for me to build my career. When I moved into lower management in the project, I was invited to learning sessions with mid level and upper level management to sharpen my skills and learn. And it proved a great experience and the participants were from the same league as me and all started with experience with TCS as an associate.

Q: Does TCS stand by the ' Experience Certainty' tag?

R: Oh hi bet we do it better than anyone else in the industry. We stand tall to our mission, vision and practices. And ensure that the client in projects experience certainty in our work and commitment. We believe in providing services of top most quality to our clients so that in turn they can provide better services to their clients.

Q: How does the work culture appeals to you at TCS?

R: TCS is an employee driven company. Here we believe in putting the Clients and employee first. The company ensures the best possible working environment with challenging and target driven associates. I was personally touched by the company culture when I was given a 3 months maternity leave and my Husband who also is a TCS employee was given a 1 month leave. No other organisation can understand you as good as TCS does.

Functional and Dysfunctional aspects of TCS culture/organization's culture in the light of its mission:

' To help customers achieve their business objectives by providing innovative, best-in-class consulting, IT solutions and services'

' To make it a joy for all stakeholders to work with us'

Functional Aspects

1. Well Defined Job Responsibility
2. Clear Hierarchy
3. High Values and Ethics
4. Employee Focus
5. Customer Driven

6. Highly open and networked culture

7. Learning Environment

Dysfunctional Aspects

1. Stress

2. Under-Resource Utilization

3. Inflexible Project Allocation

4. Regional Bias

5. Allocation of Base Branch

Action Plan

Stress Management at TCS

the workplace has become a high stress environment in many organizations cutting across industries. Employees are experiencing high level of stress due to various factors such as high workload, tight deadlines, high targets, type of work, lack of job satisfaction, long working hours, pressure to perform, etc.

Interpersonal conflicts at the workplace, such as boss-subordinate relationships and relationships with peers, are also a source of stress.

Experts believed that the dysfunctional aspects of stress could directly impact an organization's performance and also affect the well-being of its employees. Stress at the workplace is linked to absenteeism, higher attrition, and decreased productivity. Stress lead to fatigue, irritability, poor communication, and quality problems/errors.

High stress levels also affected the morale and motivation of the employees. Prolonged exposure to stress without effective coping mechanisms could lead to a host of physical and mental problems. For instance, stress could lead to stress-induced gastrointestinal problems, irritable bowel syndrome, acidity, acid reflux, insomnia, depression, heart disease, etc.

Moreover; stress could push the victim toward high risk behavior such as smoking, drinking, and substance abuse. Stress-related illness leads to increase in absenteeism and attrition affecting the profitability of the organizations.

Organizations cutting across industries are gearing up to provide employees with a stress-free healthy environment. The efforts to address this issue are more pronounced in some industries than others. Experts felt that, though stress at the workplace is a global phenomenon, professionals in some industries are more susceptible to stress than others.

For instance, surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007 in the UK and the US respectively, found that employees in Information Technology (IT) industry (including the ITeS outsourcing industry) are the most stressed. Accordingly, these organizations had started implementing various unconventional methods to decrease stress at the workplace.

Even in India, organizations had woken up to this menace and were resorting to novel methods including teaching the employees dancing and music, trekking, etc, to reduce stress at the workplace. For instance, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. had started different clubs like Theatre Club,

Bibliophile Club, Adventure & Trekking Club, Fitness Club, Sanctuary Club, Music Club and Community Services Club, etc.

TCS should focus on increasing self-awareness and provided the employees with guidance on how to cope with stress through a series of workshops by experts. In addition to conducting stress management workshops, TCS should also conduct off-site picnics, games, and inter-departmental competitions. Some companies were also using a system of mentors and promoted open communication to improve interactions and camaraderie at the workplace. Employees in most of the established companies had access to in-house counseling centers. It can also employ nutritionists to provide healthy food at the office canteens and counsel the employees on healthy eating habits and lifestyle. TCS can also consider employing psychologists to counsel their employees.

Experts felt that organizations are resorting to creative methods to address the issue of stress at the workplace, but more action was required on this front, both in terms of assessment of the situation and implementation of concrete steps to tackle the problem.

- Under-Resource Utilization

When new employees join TCS they are put on bench cause of lack of projects availability. It creates a lot of tension amongst them because they are mostly fresher's. The duration of the bench time usually varies from a month to even a year. Keeping the resource idle for such a long time makes them unproductive.

TCS has around 170000 employees and substantial amount of people on bench. TCS should be leaner ' they should focus on recruiting people as per requirement of the projects.

TCS should also engage people in internal projects and trainings so that people have enough stuff to do at home and they should not be idle.

- Inflexible Project Allocation

After the allocation of Projects to employees it's really hard for employees to get release from the projects. They also have hard time dealing with lower management. It finally leads to employee dissatisfaction.

The Project Allocation Process should be more transparent and employees should not have hard time to choose/change their projects as per company norms and employee interest.

- Regional Bias

There is a regional bias especially in some office locations of TCS wherein people perform conversation in their local languages at office and people from other regions of the country find it really awkward to adjust in the office environment. It happens majorly because majority of the people at office are from local region and they have bias towards conversations in their local languages.

HR of the respective locations should conduct regular sessions to let employees know about the company policies and ethics to be followed in the company.

- Allocation of Base Branch

The issue with the allocation of base branch is also a major problem at TCS wherein employees find it difficult to find a transfer request being accepted. Even the female employees are the victims wherein they don't have option to choose Base Branch of their choice.

The Allocation of Base Branch should be done after taking options from the employees and there should be guidelines to let employees decide the base branch and change after serving after certain duration at the respective location.