

Personal development: strategic manager

Profession, Manager



Introduction

The concept of personal development covers a wider field than self-development or self-help. Personal development also includes developing others. This may be a function within the role of teacher or mentor, a personal competency (such as a manager's ability to develop the potential of employees), or as a professional service (such as providing training, assessment or coaching).

Strategic development in many organizations is viewed as a process for determining where an organization is going over the next year or more - typically 3 to 5 years, although some extend their vision to 20 years. In order to determine where it is going, the organization needs to know exactly where it stands, then determine where it wants to go and how it will get there. The resulting document is called the "strategic plan".

It is also true that strategic planning may be a tool for effectively plotting the direction of a company; however, strategic planning itself cannot foretell exactly how the market will evolve and what issues will surface in the coming days in order to plan your organizational strategy. Therefore, strategic innovation and tinkering with the 'strategic plan' have to be a cornerstone strategy for an organization to survive the turbulent business climate.

This assignment covers the personal development plan as a manager in TESCO organization. The study focuses on the personal development as a strategic manager. Here several issues such as identification of personal

skills, ability to manage personal leadership development, evaluation of effectiveness of leadership development program and the ability to develop healthy and safe environment are studied.

1. Identification of Personal Skills

Personal development plays an important role in propelling the company towards its strategic direction. This development is not only required during the implementation stage but also in the formulation stage.

Strategic direction of the organisation

Strategic direction is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or planning, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy, including its capital and people. Various business analysis techniques can be used in strategic planning, including SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) and PEST analysis (Political, Economic, Social, and Technological analysis) or STEER analysis (Socio-cultural, Technological, Economic, Ecological, and Regulatory factors) and EPISTEL (Environment, Political, Informatics, Social, Technological, Economic and Legal)

Strategic planning is the formal consideration of an organization's future course. All strategic planning deals with at least one of three key questions;

What do we do?

For whom do we do it?

How do we excel?

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Organizations sometimes set the direction by summarizing goals and objectives into a mission statement and/or a vision statement:

A Mission statement tells you the fundamental purpose of the organization. It concentrates on the present. It defines the customer and the critical processes. It informs you of the desired level of performance.

A Vision statement outlines what the organization wants to be. It concentrates on the future. It is a source of inspiration. It provides clear decision-making criteria.

Strategic skills required of the leader to achieve the strategic ambitions

The leaders possessed certain degree of management skills inculcated during their years of experience in business. But leadership is beyond just management skills.

The leaders prepare organizations for change and help them cope as they struggle through it. While management is about coping with complexity, leadership is coping with change. While Managing comprises planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving, Leadership comprises setting a direction, developing a vision of the future and aligning, motivating and inspiring people (Kotter. 2001)

Strategic skill is the ability to make excellent strategic decisions, and implement them effectively is one of the most significant leadership skills. Here are five strategic skills we can use to stretch and strengthen our organisation.

The following diagram defines the strategic skills required of the leader to achieve the strategic ambitions;

1. Use scenario planning

First, identify the variables that create the highest risks and opportunities for your company.

Then imagine the extremes – positive and negative – that could happen for each of these critical variables.

Next, push your imagination further. Envision much more positive and much more negative circumstances than originally came to mind for each critical variable.

Now, having stretched your sense of what might happen by envisioning extreme alternatives, choose a few scenarios that you think are most likely to happen.

Then, choose the most likely scenario. You may find it valuable to gather data to help you hone and verify your instincts about your choice.

Finally, consider what actions you would take for the scenario you think is most likely. Also consider actions you'd need to take if some of the other also-likely scenarios happened, rather than the one on which you're placing your bets.

2. Design for the solution after this one

The strategy you choose now, and the actions you take, as a result, will affect the future. That could prevent or solve future problems, and it could also create other problems.

To minimize the negative impacts of the strategy you choose, imagine when your company may need to choose its next strategic direction, whether in 5, 10 or more years.

Envision your strategic choices now fitting into the choices that must be made then. See if that perspective changes the strategic choices you planned to make now.

3. Learn and practice games of strategy

This idea doesn't need a lot of elaboration. Learn and practice leads to experience of the managers. This alternatively helps in improving the personal skills of manager.

4. Learn from the masters

Choose a few people who are or were legendary for their strategic abilities, whether in your field or another one. Read about them, watch documentaries and learn from other resources about their work, thought process and achievements.

What did they do that enabled them to be so successful and strategic in the way they worked?

Find ways to apply what you learned to your own work and strategic challenges.

5. Create the time and space so you can think strategically

A big part of strategic success is carving out the time and space so your strategic skills can be tapped.

You must get away from the day-to-day to be able to fully see the big picture, to anticipate issues well before they become problems, and to recognize great opportunities and how you can make the most of them.

Create the time and space regularly so that strategy and strategic skills can emerge, be implemented, and improve, as needed, as you move ahead.

Relationship between existing, required and future skills to achieve the strategic ambitions

The owners had the operational skills to certain extent. But the required skills were more of leadership. If the vision is set, the skills required for meeting the vision are the future skills to achieve strategic ambitions.

While management is about coping with complexity, leadership is coping with change. The important skill in leadership is setting the direction through the inductive process of gathering broad range of data and looking for patterns, relationships and linkages. This direction setting will result in vision and strategies. The leaders should ensure alignment of the team with vision through communication. Alignment will lead to empowerment and goal congruence. Good leaders should coach, provide feedback and role models. They should recognize and reward success. Leadership hinges on strong networks of informal relationships. They should create a culture of leadership by recruitment of people with potential and managing their career patterns (Kotter, 2001).

According to Daniel Goleman emotional intelligence would be the most important ingredient for a leader. When he calculated the ratio of technical skills, IQ and emotional intelligence as ingredients of excellent performance, emotional intelligence proved to be twice as important as the others for jobs at all levels. This had direct link to performance. His research further showed that emotional intelligence played an increasingly important role at the highest levels of the company. There was also a close link between company's success and the emotional intelligence of its leaders.

Therefore, the company in order to prosper in future should focus on developing emotional intelligence amongst top echelons in the company.

Personal leadership development to support achievement of strategic ambitions

The organizations are supplied with opportunities to support leadership development. The opportunities can be categorized into hardships, challenging assignments, learning from others and other events. Leadership lessons are obtained most during hardships and challenging assignments.

Leadership development refers to any activity that enhances the quality of leadership within an individual or organization.

Anybody can become a member of management if they know the right people and say the right things at the right time. But not everybody can be a leader. A manager or boss is somebody with a certain organizational title that heads or oversees a select group of employees. A leader, on the other hand, is somebody with that same title who commands and receives respect from the employees he or she oversees. What is that difference and how can you make that transition from manager to leader?

The opportunities to support leadership development

There are many different sources of information and advice to help the managers to improve the leadership and management skills in the organization of TESCO. The most appropriate will depend on the manager's individual needs. Following opportunities and supports are available to managers for the personal development plan. These are;

Train to Gain: Leadership and Management Advisory Service

This innovative Leadership and Management programme will help to equip the managers with the skills to become a more effective leader. A leadership and management broker will help managers to diagnose their skills needs and those of their management team and put together individual development plans. They will offer bespoke guidance on how to consolidate existing skills and improve in areas that will fast track personal development and ultimately boost the performance and competitiveness of their business.

LEAD

LEAD is a 10 month leadership programme designed specifically for owner-managers of businesses with less than 20 employees. It has a proven track record in delivering business growth for its delegates – 90% of businesses that have attended LEAD over the last 4 years have reported a significant increase in sales turnover as a result of attending the programme. The programme works by taking a very practical approach to both the development of the business and to the personal development of the owner-manager. LEAD tackles practical issues that owner-managers are facing in running their business rather than focusing on theoretical concepts and as a result has a direct impact on the growth of delegates businesses.

High Growth Coaching Programme

The High Growth programme is a three year business coaching initiative aimed at ‘high growth’ businesses and entrepreneurs. It will support budding entrepreneurs with ideas that can achieve a turnover of £500, 000

within three years, and established small and medium sized enterprises with ambition and capacity to expand by at least 20 per cent a year.

The Mentoring Programme

Mentoring for Northwest Businesses offers business owners, leaders and managers the chance to develop and fully realise their potential through a long term mentoring relationship.

Networking

This is another important type of skill development for business owners and directors. A wide variety of business networks exists – including those for new businesses, young owners and women owners. These allow employees to learn from people running similar businesses and facing similar obstacles.

Professional bodies

All the following professional bodies offer leadership and management development courses and opportunities:

Chartered Management Institute (CMI) is the only chartered professional body that is dedicated to management and leadership. It is committed to raising the performance of businesses of all sizes by championing management.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is the professional body for those involved in the management and development of people.

Construction of personal development plan to direct leadership development

The Personal Development Plan would focus on two facets of leadership development. The first is the managerial aspect and the other is the leadership aspect. Though the traditional management model includes leadership under management, many management gurus have propounded theories which focus on leadership. The area of managing comprises Planning, Organizing, Leading and Controlling. These activities will enable the person to manage complexities. The most important aspect is that of leadership, which would demand tremendous amount of emotional intelligence. The managing encompasses the appreciation of process, seeks stability and control and instinctively tries to resolve problems far too quickly. Leadership, in contrast emphasizes on tolerance to chaos and lack of structure and willingness to delay closure in order to understand the issues more fully. Leadership inevitably requires using power to influence the thoughts and actions of other people. In terms of personality, manager is a problem solver with emphasis on rationality and control. Leadership is a practical effort to direct affairs and to fulfill his or her task.

In terms of attitude towards goals, Managers tend to adopt impersonal, if not passive, attitudes. In sharp contrast, the leaders are proactive in shaping the ideas instead of responding to them. They adopt a personal and active attitude towards goals.

Implementation process for the development plan

The implementation process would have a mechanism. This mechanism will not only lay down the program but also will ensure the employee to go

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through it. In the first phase, the candidate will go through the concepts of planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

The development plan in the area of planning would cover the process of identifying and selecting appropriate organizational goals and courses of action. The development in the area of organizing would cover creation of a structure of working relationships that allow organizational members to interact and cooperate to achieve organizational goals. Leading would involve articulating a clear organizational vision for its members to accomplish, and energize and enable employees so that everyone understands the part they play in achieving organizational goals. Controlling is the task of managers is to evaluate how well an organization has achieved its goals and to take any corrective actions needed to maintain or improve performance. The outcome of the control process is the ability to measure performance accurately and regulate organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

The development plan would then focus on enhancing the emotional intelligence of the candidate. The components of emotional intelligence are; Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social Skill.

While all other skills are not normally appreciated, social skills gets recognition as a key skill for a leader. Emotional skills can be learnt through well structured training.

The effectiveness of the leadership development plan

Assessment of the achievement of outcomes of the plan against original objectives

The original objectives were to develop the skill to plan, organize, lead and control. Further it was to enhance each component of the emotional intelligence. The outcomes were quantified in terms of the number of people exposed to the training period. These development programs would result in tangible improvement in performance parameters with a lag. Therefore outcomes were categorized into two categories; the outcomes and performance drivers. The performance drivers would result in outcomes. Assessment of only the outcomes will not help in ensuring the implementation. Since outcomes have already happened, there is no way to alter them. On the other hand monitoring of performance drivers would give valuable insights that would help in formulating mid-course corrections.

Every year the number of man-hours of development in terms of each of the areas of development, which are Planning, Organizing, Leading and controlling is targeted. Similarly the number of people trained in emotional intelligence in areas of Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social Skill is recorded. Tests were conducted periodically to assess the progress. A 360 degree assessment by people from different functional areas is done continually and plotted to see the growth. Statistical methods are used to assess the spread and standard deviation among the candidates. The development program would be thought to be extended, if the candidate does not show improvement.

The impact of the achievement of objectives on strategic ambitions

The strategic ambitions are framed in the form of a vision statement. The statement of vision was “ The Company will be a global conglomerate with dominance in the chosen field of endeavor”. In this context, the objectives of the company were:

To be a market leader in each business pursued

To be an ideal employer with attrition below 10%

To be profitable company with margin on sales exceeding 15%

To conform to ethical practices of business

To ensure maximum return to shareholders with return on equity exceeding 15%

To ensure the growth of business of over 20% per annum

To ensure succession plan for every leadership position in the company

To be proactive on environmental issues.

The development of managerial skills and leadership skills are crucial for the fulfillment of objectives. Unless leaders were developed in each functional area, it would be impossible to achieve the objectives. By focusing on the implementation of objectives through proper strategies and also monitoring through a suitable mechanism, we can move fast towards the vision of the stakeholders.

Review and update leadership development plan

Research on the most admired companies reports that top organizations take aggressive, innovative approaches to improve leadership at all levels by focusing on the following:

Disciplined leadership assessments and selection

Intensive leadership development programs that address individual needs and the organization's strategic goals

Values that emphasize the importance of people as well as financial results

Leadership models that include such attributes as self confidence and self control, achievement orientation, empathy, and teamwork – components of emotional intelligence

The career paths and leadership is shown in the following diagram. The leadership development plan would be reviewed at every stage in the career path culminating in leadership.

Periodic reviews take place every quarter. While technical competencies are inculcated till the middle management levels, the training in styles of leadership is provided as inputs after the middle managerial levels.

The reviews would focus on the extent of technical competencies absorbed by the employee up to a certain stage. Later the emotional quotient of the individual is assessed to make sure whether the person is ready to don the leadership role. The emotional quotient is measured to see the improvement over a quarter. If no improvement is found, the curriculum of training is

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modified to make it more effective. Here the assessment of the candidate by people from different functional areas at various levels is considered to arrive at a measure of leadership capability.

Promoting Healthy and Safe environment that supports a culture of quality

Impact of Corporate and Individual health and safety responsibilities on the organization

Corporate and Individual health and Safety is one of the most important ingredients of an organization. This is not an event but a process. It is being inculcated that safety is not just the corporate responsibility, but the responsibility of everyone in the organization. The promotion of this aspect demands substantial cooperation between employers and employees in initiating, developing and carrying out measures to enhance the health and safety of employees at work. All these form a part of the Corporate and Individual health and safety policy in the company.

In order to ensure an accident free environment in the company, a mechanism needs to be instituted. This mechanism should monitor the safety practices within the company. The parameters that would be monitored are; number of accidents, absences due to injury and insurance premium.

The routines would be developed to control hazards which would be in consonance with regulations and standards.

An objective should be the promotion of co-operation between employers and employees in initiating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health and safety at work of employees.

The accidents could be due to unsafe acts, omissions or unsafe conditions. The company should monitor with data on accidents, diseases, near misses and the trends. Analysis of this data would enable risk assessment and also redesign or reengineering of processes to make them safer

Ways to promote healthy and safe environment in the work place

At the outset, it is necessary to draw the attention of the employees to the importance of health and safety to the individual and the organization.

Suitable posters and regular mails are necessary to keep alive the spirit of health and safety in the organization. There is a need to have a manual on safe and healthy practices integrated into System of operations. It is necessary to convene regular meetings to impress upon the employees and also to monitor the success of action plans to promote safety and health. A proper organizational setup for safety and health depending upon the size of the organization is a must. It must be headed by a safety officer. He may or may not have an elaborate setup. The top management's commitment should be communicated strongly with the CEO occasionally attending the safety meetings. The existing employees should be constantly reminded about the importance of health and safety. The new entrants to the company should be imparted training in safety and health as a part of the induction program.

Estimation of organization culture of quality on the achievement of strategic ambitions:

There are four types of cultural orientations which represent different values about motivation, leadership and strategic orientation in organizations. But normally an organization reflects a combination of the four cultural orientations. These four cultural orientations do not exclude each other and the relative emphasis placed by the organization on the orientations varies.

The group culture focuses on flexibility and internal integration.

Organizations

Emphasizing a group culture tend to value belongingness, trust and participation. The strategies used in these organizations concentrate on the development of human relations and member commitment. The leaders encourage teamwork, empowerment and concerns for employee ideas. The developmental culture emphasizes flexibility and external orientation.

Organizations with emphasis on this cultural orientation tend to focus on growth, resource acquisition, creativity,

and adaptation to the external environment. The strategies used to manage business include innovation, resource acquisition, and the development of new market. Leadership styles in such organizations are entrepreneur and innovator-type. The rational culture is focused on the external environment and control. Organizations with emphasis on a rational culture encourage competition and the successful achievement of well-defined goals. The strategies are oriented toward efficient planning and control of production to achieve competitive advantages and high productivity. The leaders tend to

be directive, goal-oriented, and functional. The hierarchical culture emphasizes stability and internal integration. It stresses centralization and regulations. The strategies emphasize clear rules, close control, and routinization. The leaders are conservative and cautious. (Xingxing Zu et al, 2006)

But in the company under study, the prevalent culture was hierarchical. In various studies by different researchers, it was found that group culture and development culture, two cultural orientations which emphasize flexibility and people in their underlying values, are commonly believed to be the ideal cultural orientations for implementing quality management programs.

Conclusion

Every organization has a vision or picture of what it desires for its future, whether foggy or crystal clear. The current mission of the organization or the purpose for its existence is also understood in general terms. The organization under study began as an apparel exporter and later diversified into various unrelated areas. These areas did not provide synergy to the existing businesses. Due to recession, all the businesses ran into losses.

The leaders in the organization were found to be lacking strategic skills to meet the strategic ambitions. A leadership development program was launched with emphasis on twin areas of management and leadership. While Managing comprises planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving, Leadership comprises setting a direction, developing a vision of the future and aligning motivating and inspiring people. The development plan would also focus on enhancing the emotional intelligence

of the candidate. The components of emotional intelligence are; Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social Skill. While all other skills are not normally appreciated, social skills gets recognition as a key skill for a leader. Emotional skills can be learnt through well structured training.

The organizations are replete with opportunities to support leadership development. The opportunities can be categorized into hardships, challenging assignments, learning from others and other events. In the midst of opportunities a personal development plan was formulated so also an implementation plans. This was also reviewed and updated. The evaluation was also done about the impact of corporate and individual health and safety and also on the support received by quality.