

Organizational change



Recent years “ the best practice” approach in organizational change becomes very popular and widely used by all types of organizations. In general, successful organizational performance depends upon HR and management practices employed by a company in accordance with its structure and nature of business. Following John Purcell it is possible to say that “ organisations seeking to optimise the contribution that people management can make must develop policies and practices that meet the needs of individuals and create ‘ a great place to work’.

However, this does not mean just copying best practice” (Purcell, et al, 2003). The main problem is that organizational factors are interdependent, and cannot be copied in isolation. The main headings include the individual, the group, the organization and the environment which play a crucial role in general success of “ a great place to work” approach. “ A great place to work” helps individuals and organization to perform effectively and achieve specific goals including maintenance of high standards in order to deliver customer satisfaction.

Unique talents among employees, including superior performance, productivity, flexibility, innovation, and the ability to deliver high levels of personal customer service are ways in which people provide a critical ingredient in developing an organization's competitive position (Reed, 2001). People should be the main priority for such organization, because employees provide the key to managing the pivotal interdependencies across functional activities and the important external relationships. A great place to work” is based on unique blend of processes, procedures, personalities, styles, capabilities and organizational culture. Many

organizations are failed to achieve high results trying to copy “ best practices”. One reason why it fails is that employees and human capital are often neglected in the operational process of changes. Also, some organizations are failed because they do not see employees as a major driven force of “ best practice” trying to implement functional changes and structural changes only.

In addition employees are neglected during the development stage of “ best practice”, so they feel lack of motivation and lack of training which resulted in failure (Robbins, 2004). Trying to copy “ best practices” organizations create “ a good place to work”, but very often employees are be down in the dumps. The main problem is that it is impossible to force employees to act and react to changes in the same way as their “ colleges” do. Every organization is a unique unit with its traditions and environment that has a great influence on every employee.

Also, as environments change, they pose new problems for organizations, and “ old best practices” do not work in new conditions. “ Best practice” includes changing knowledge and technology, new values, new markets, and changes in the global distribution of wealth. New knowledge, for instance, can invalidate the existing knowledge of an entire industry. When environments become turbulent, complex, and resource constrained, the knowledge and skills that companies once possessed can become use-less, and even a hindrance to change (Schuler, 1998). A great place to work” cannot be copied because the core of success is people employed by the company and work they perform. In this situation it is impossible to imitate human capital and relations between employees. Effective communication

process is the main factor of “ a great place to work”. For example, difficulties in communication can arise with production systems where workers are stationed continuously at a particular point with limited freedom of movement.

Even when opportunities exist for interaction with colleagues, physical conditions may limit effective communication, and it is up to every unit to find its own solution to solve the problem (Lee, 2001). Also, “ a great place to work” creates an environment which encourages the creativity of all, and enables everyone to work without feelings of insecurity, and without insult. The policy about such issues may have been clear, but it is equally clear that it is not always implemented by those with responsibilities for others.

At peer level the treatment of some women and black males has been abominable, to the point where they have been forced to leave. Apart from the loss of talent to the organisation, there are increasingly the risks of expensive legal challenges, and high-profile media attention. Another problem is that organizations cannot model the best practices in all the possible variables showing their interconnection, and the way in which changes in one variable have an impact on others (Best practice in people management, 1997).

Benchmarking is an importance part of “ a great place to work” that increases confidence, motivation and commitment of staff; provide recognition, enhanced responsibility, and the possibility of increased pay and promotion (Hinton, et al, 2000). The analysis provided by Hinton (2000) shows that benchmarking is effective in both public and private sector

organizations. Raining is another important element of “ a great place to work”.

It gives employees a feeling of personal satisfaction and achievement, and broader opportunities for career progression; and help to improve the availability and quality of staff (Armstrong, 2003). Personnel should be connected directly to the concept of “ a great place to work” and create this very “ place” according to their needs and expectations while the role of a manager is to help them to implement these changes taking into account organizational goals and strategies. This approach stresses the importance of developing long-term partnerships between management team and employees.

Taking into account facts mentioned above, it is evident that “ a great place to work” is marked by employees involvement in work, their motivation, high organizational morale and values based on traditions and rituals, and supported by organizational policies aimed to treat every employee as a unique talent and personality. The organization under analysis is Apple computer Corporation, a leader in a computer market. The case study vividly portrays two different “ places to work” that have a direct impact on employees’ morale and motivation.

In the middle of the 1980s Apple’s culture can be describes as “ a great place to work” that reflects employees and organizational expectations and goals. “ Apple’s offices were bright, modern, high-tech buildings. The atmosphere was casual, reflecting the California lifestyle of many of the workers” (Gibbs, Beer, 1991). Taking into account this information, it is

possible to predict that if another organization tries to copy “ the best practices” employed by Apple, it will fail because in other parts of the country the Californian lifestyle does not work so successfully as in Apple Corporation.

As the most important, the great place to work in Apple is “ dominated by personality” (Gibbs, Beer, 1991). To offer different levels of best practices flexibility was obtained through advanced technologies or particularly skilled workers. Applelink was another unique “ best practice” employed by Apple that gave high response and efficiency. One employee commented “ There is no process, at least a consistent one. Every time we do something, we do it in a different way” (Gibbs, Beer, 1991).

This expression should be a slogan for all organizations trying to copy “ best practices” in order to create an ideal place to work. There are more than a dozen different types of flexibility that projects will not pursue—design, volume, routing through the production system, product mix, and many others. But involving employees into these projects can offer good results obtained from the projects. In order to bring greater controls and discipline to the company, new executive, John Sculley decided to “ institute reorganization of the top management” (Gibbs, Beer, 1991).

This “ best practice” originated itself in a change process and aimed to “ improve” management practices. Nevertheless, this change ruined a unique atmosphere between employees and turned “ a great place to work” to a traditional one. One employee admitted that “ People care so much here that if morale falls things can grind to a halt” (Gibbs, Beer, 1991). Apple created

its own unique code of norm and traditions followed by all members of this organization, and if these values had failed it could result in low productivity of the whole company.

Taking into account this example it is possible to say that “ a great place to work” is a place where management team take steps to assess and satisfy future people needs and to enhance and develop the inherent capacities of people – their contributions, potential and employability - by providing learning and continuous development opportunities. So, the concept of “ a great place to work” could be regarded as a philosophy governing how employees should be treated.

The value of “ best practice” lies not only in assessing the viability of a particular strategic proposal, but also in assessing the ability of the organization to adapt to this “ best practice”. “ A great place to work” focuses on how the employees interact. Thus, the systems perspective provides management with a broad and complete picture of an entire situation. Further–more, “ best practices” emphasizes the relationships between the various system components, employees and technology. Without considering these relationships, organisations are prone to fail.